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## DOC 2006-01 Sense of the Senate Document -- Change in the Timing of Election for Faculty Representatives to the Senate and for Election of Officers of the Senate

University of Dayton. Faculty Affairs Committee

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## PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE

TITLE: *Sense of the Senate* Document - Change in the Timing of Election for Faculty Representatives to the Senate and for Election of Officers of the Senate

SUBMITTED BY: Faculty Affairs Committee

DATE: February 10, 2006

*Prior to engaging in detailed revision of the Senate Constitution, the Faculty Affairs Committee wishes to get a sense of the senate on this matter*

**General Proposal:** Change the timing of election and beginning of the term for faculty representatives of the Academic Senate and election of the Executive Committee and Officers of the Senate. Among the affected articles of the Constitution include:

**Article IV.B.3.** Elections shall take place in the fall of the year and all terms of office shall begin with the first Senate meeting of the winter term.

**Article VI.C.2** The President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of the Academic Senate shall be elected by the Senate from the elected members of the University tenured and tenure-track faculty serving on the Executive Committee. Elections shall be held at the initial meeting of each new Academic Senate

**Article VI.E.2.** Vacancies of the Executive Committee shall be filled through elections by the Senate at the initial meeting of each winter term, except for the undergraduate student, whose election shall take place at the initial meeting of each fall term.

### **Suggested Change:**

Move Senate elections from the fall to the winter term of the academic year. A meeting of the new senate would be held as the last meeting of the winter term for purposes of election of officers. All terms of office would begin after May 15.

### **Rationale**

In early 1990's (Circa 1991-1992) , Article IV.B.3 was changed so that senate elections would take place in the fall term and the new senate would begin with the first Senate meeting of the winter term. At that time, the Academic Senate and its officers were involved in directly consulting on the budgetary and financial decisions of the university (through the Educational Leadership Council), which began deliberations in the Winter term. By beginning terms of

office at the first meeting of the winter term, faculty representatives could be more familiar with the issues before the Senate as they entered into budgetary consultation.

However, the budgetary process of the University has changed in recent years, reducing the role of the Academic Senate and its officers to one of commentary on budgetary decisions. The Educational Leadership Council meets less frequently than it once did and much of the work of academic planning now takes place in the Provost Council meetings during the Fall term. Thus there is no need to have the terms of the Senators coincide with the budgetary process. The change in the election dates should not compromise the ability of faculty to influence budgetary decisions.

The majority of Senators are faculty and students whose lives center around the academic year (e.g., faculty contracts run from August to May). Most of the business of the Senate seems to follow an academic year cycle. Therefore, the change in faculty representation in the middle of the academic year appears to be disruptive to the business of the Senate, resulting in committee changes and less familiarity with ongoing issues. Student representatives serve terms consistent with an academic year; thus terms of faculty and student representatives do not coincide, again creating difficulties in continuity.

For the above reasons, it is being proposed that elections for faculty representatives take place in the winter and with their terms beginning at the last AS meeting of the winter term. The purpose of this meeting would be the election of officers and to establish committee meetings times prior to the beginning of the fall term.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. Do we want to make this change?
2. If so, should current terms be extended or reduced to accommodate the change?
3. If so, when would the new Senators take office? Should the new Senate take effect immediately after the final meeting of the Academic Senate in the academic year (normally late April)? ...at the end of the contract year (May 15)...at the beginning of the new contract year (August 15)???
4. If so, when should the elections be held for the executive committee and its officers? When would their term take effect?