

Platform for Academic Senate Chair Candidate Mike Costarell

I first joined the Academic Senate in the Spring 2020 semester and attended nearly all the Senate body meetings since. During that time, I've made many observations about what has worked well and what needs attention.

Below is a summary of those observations, along with suggested actions to ensure that the Senate remains a viable part of shared governance.

Observation:

Though 100 or more senators are described in the charter, it is common to only get 60 to 70 during a meeting, and only 70 to vote in the chair election.

Proposed Action:

As Chair, my focus will be to increase the vitality and important leadership and advisory function of the Academic Senate. To do this, I recommend the following:

- Senate should create and award new regalia for senators to wear at commencement (h/t Senator Caven)
- Ask that Senate Executive Committee members be invited to the Chairs retreat.
- Propose that Monthly meetings should focus on review and development of academic policy, not on training.
- All new representatives should receive training on or be proficient at Robert's Rules.

Observation:

Workforce at The Excellence Training Center (ETC) is not represented in Senate.

Proposed Action:

Revise the Charter to include seat(s) for Workforce.

Observation:

The university plans to achieve R2 research status.

Proposed Action:

I recommend that the existing Academic Research committee be tasked to guide the university in the staffing, budget, lab space, and marketing needed to achieve R2 status.

Observation:

Some of the existing Senate committees have up to 18 members, many of which are not senators, and are appointed by the office of Academic Affairs. Furthermore, some of the Senate committees also exist as departments in Academic Affairs.

The preamble of the academic Senate charter states:

“In recognition of the essential role of the faculty in the development of policies concerning the academic functions and activities of the University, it is appropriate for the Senate to have primary responsibility for the development of new policies, or changes in existing policies, integral and essential to the academic functions and activities of the University.”

Proposed Action:

I recommend that committees be evaluated for redundancy and that most of the voting committee members are faculty and students.

Further, the paragraph above needs revised to mention the important input of the SGA representatives.

Observation:

The undergraduate catalog is only revised once per year, severely delaying the implementation of necessary curriculum changes. Exceptions are made to this rule frequently, including the most recent revision to course prerequisites in September of 2026.

Proposed Action:

I propose that the Senate work with the office of Academic Affairs to evaluate if the undergraduate catalog can be revised every semester.

Observation:

University policy and websites are presented through the campus organizational chart. While these make sense to those that have been on campus for 20 years, these are exceptionally difficult for students, and sometimes faculty, to navigate.

Proposed Action:

I propose to create an ad hoc committee of students and faculty to reorganize the university websites and student handbook.