SPEAKING TURNS

REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Senate Executive Committee

Brief History of Issue - why the issue is being considered:
According to Robert’s Rules of Order only members have the right to speak. In fact, RRoO does not even mention the process of yielding to a non-member to take a turn at speaking during debate. RRoO actually prohibits yielding to a member. Page 376: “Unless the organization has a special rule on the subject, a member cannot yield any unexpired portion of his time to another member”.

While Senate doesn’t have any written rule, the generally agreed-upon procedure of Senate has been for the Chair to allow members of the gallery to speak when appropriate. This process has been questioned. If the process is to continue, the bylaws should be updated to reflect this procedure.

Currently policy states:
- During debate, Senators may speak only twice to any motion or amendment. Each speaking term is limited to ten (10) minutes. The chair will add names of those wishing to speak to a speakers list upon recognition.
- Everyone wishing to speak to an issue will be allowed to speak once before second-round speaking terms begin.
- Debate of the second reading on a given issue will be limited to 30 minutes (each speaking term will be limited to five (5) minutes). If at the end of 30 minutes the body is not ready to conclude debate, the Chair will entertain a motion to postpone further debate either to the next meeting or to the end of the current meeting.

Points Discussed by Committee:
- Historically, the gallery could add after everyone has finished or a senator could yield their time to allow them to speak
- Students are currently mutually recognized and this should be in our bylaws
- Should think about if we really want the gallery to have 2 speaking terms and limit it in no other way than that
- Discussions should be limited to a certain length of time
- Chair can recognize for points of information, factual information and clarification
- Do not want non members to have the option of introducing motions – this should be the right of only members
- Wording of the motion was intentionally chosen: the student liaison has speaking rights (i.e., may speak twice to a motion or amendment); a non-member may be granted a speaking turn (i.e., one opportunity to give information).

Pros of Recommendation:
- Clarifies who can be recognized and given a speaking term

Cons of Recommendation:
- Restriction of a non-member being able to voice an opinion may be seen as a con by some.

Committee Recommendation:

That the following item be inserted in the Bylaws of the University Senate as item number 11 and the numbering of the subsequent items in the current Bylaws be updated.

Speaking Rights

11. Each member of the University Senate shall have the right to speak twice to a given motion or amendment during debate. Upon approval of the majority of the body, a member may be granted a third speaking turn. During the period of debate, the presiding officer may grant speaking rights to a liaison from the Student Senate and may grant a speaking turn to any non member of the body for clarification or informational purposes.
SPEAKING TURNS

MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The University Senate Committee: Senate Executive Committee

by a vote of 11 for to 0 against on November 17, 2009

Recommends that

The following item be inserted in the Bylaws of the University Senate as item number 11 and the numbering of the subsequent items in the current Bylaws be updated.

Speaking Rights 11. Each member of the University Senate shall have the right to speak twice to a given motion or amendment during debate. Upon approval of the majority of the body, a member may be granted a third speaking turn. During the period of debate, the presiding officer may grant speaking rights to a liaison from the Student Senate and may grant a speaking turn to any non member of the body for clarification or informational purposes.

Implementation Date: upon approval

Signed: Susan Harrison
Chair of the Committee