

November 17, 2009

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

**Re: Senate Request for Postponement of Action on the Governance Report**

The Academic Senate, on behalf of faculty, respectfully requests postponement of action on the Final Report (“Report”) submitted by President Schutte and the Academic Governance Oversight Committee (“AGOC”).

- The Senate was entirely excluded from the process, notwithstanding that the Erikson Report conditioned the Governance Facilitator’s recommendation on input from the Senate (see Erickson’s Recommendation 13). The Senate was not consulted and was not even sent a copy the AGOC’s Report until November 9, 2009, after it had been finalized.
- As it stands, the Report does not identify or address critical infrastructure and procedural issues, and would, without any justification, limit the independence and participation of the Senate in maintaining academic standards at Pratt. The Academic Senate is the duly elected representative body of the faculty in academic matters and governance (See Attachment B, Senate By-laws approved in 2005 by the Board of Trustees).
- Beside the substantive concerns, wholesale implementation of the Report implicates troubling procedural issues. The proposal would call for amendment of the Senate’s By-laws by the administration. Beside the intrusion of administration into an independent body, valid amendment of the Senate’s formation document requires, among other compliance, two semesters’ notice, super-majority vote by Senate members and Board approval.

Accordingly, the Academic Senate calls upon the Board to postpone action on the AGOC recommendations. Consistent with Erikson’s suggestion, we ask the Board to permit input by faculty in order that it may respond in an informed manner to the Governance Report.

The Academic Senate



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By Jenny Lee, President

Cc: President Thomas F. Schutte  
Senate constituents, faculty and chairs

### **Definitions of *Senate*:**

1. An assembly or council, usually with high deliberative and legislative functions.
3. A governing body of some universities charged with maintaining academic standards and regulations, usually composed of the principal or representative members of the faculty (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

## **SENATE RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Academic Senate respectfully submits the following responses to specific recommendations.

### **President/AGOC Recommendation 1**

The Academic Senate shall elect from within its membership and/or from the faculty at large members of the committee as follows:

- 3 from Art and Design, with no two from the same department
- 1 from Architecture
- 1 from Liberal Arts and Sciences (SLAS)
- 1 from Information and Library Science (SILS)
- 1 from Library (add)**

Senate bylaws provide for election and representation of Senate constituents and they should be followed. IWCC members elected by the Senate shall represent the academic interests of the Academic Senate; not the respective constituents or departments. (See Attachment B, Senate By-laws and Faculty Governance Structure)

### **President/AGOC Recommendations 4, 14 and 15**

Recommendations 4, 14 and 15, in summary, seek to define institutional policies and "establish clear roles for various groups in the academic policy review and approval process." These recommendations seek to address fundamental standards of governance and require re-examination and further discussion and development. Definitions and examples of new and revised Academic Policies (add, **and Procedures**) should be mutually developed and affected stakeholders should be identified and included.

The proposed system is not a decision support system. It is linear and does not provide mechanisms for feedback (notification, acknowledgement and influence) and accountability. The graphic diagrams do not accurately illustrate the textual description of process and groups. There is confusion in identifying governance as well as administrative groups and reporting structures.

The Report defines a **policy** as "a way of doing something that is so established (either explicitly or by custom) that alternatives are either prohibited, made very difficult or considered to be exceptions." **Academic policies** "directly shape the content or process of teaching and research and/or the academic activities of the faculty and students and carry out the vision of our academic leadership."

**The Senate respectfully proposes a more structured approach, guided by rules built on shared meaning and language, rather than individual discretion, including custom: Policy and procedures go together, but are two distinct things. A policy is a set of principles intended to govern actions. Procedures are the actions taken to implement the policy. Institute policies are designed to support Pratt's educational mission.**

Please consider a Memorandum of Understanding regarding what constitutes academic policies and procedures.

#### **President/AGOC Recommendation 16**

The Academic Senate does not report to the Provost's Office. It should not, therefore, be subject to guidelines for budget management used for departments, which are under the Provost in the administrative hierarchy. A budget process that is appropriate for the Academic Senate should, therefore, be mutually developed that is in accordance with the nature and purpose of a governance body outside of the administrative reporting structure. As an interim measure, the Provost's office should continue signing off without comment, review or management, on the expenditures and transfers by the Academic Senate as approved by the Senate.

Please consider a Memorandum of Understanding between the administration and the Senate regarding budget procedures for a non-administrative body like the Senate.

#### **President/AGOC Recommendation 10**

The Senate strongly supports sound management practices, including organizational infrastructure and administrative guidance, support, and development for faculty, Deans, Chairs, and Departmental/School curriculum committees. It is essential that the enumerated individuals and bodies have practical knowledge of policies and procedures related to curricular development, review and approval. In addition to contributing to an effective process, this empowers faculty and "move[s] decision-making downward to the extent possible," an underlying principle in Erickson's Recommendation 1.

### **President/AGOC Recommendation 16**

This unsupported recommendation, which actually contradicts the premise of conforming practice to Senate By-laws is unacceptable. Until some compelling reason, if any, is shown, the integrity of the relationship between the Academic Senate and the Institute President outside of the administrative hierarchy, represented by the “dotted line,” must be retained in the organizational chart, in fact and on paper.

### **President/AGOC Recommendation 17**

Recommendation 17 would call for amendment of the Senate’s By-laws by the administration. Built into Senate By-laws, approved by the Board, are structural obstacles to casual change. Valid amendment requires, among other compliance, two semesters’ notice, super-majority vote by Senate members and is effective only after Board approval. The Report ignores these requirements, and, additionally, would insert, without authority, the administration into review, and amendment of, Senate Bylaws.

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### **REFERENCE ON THE PUBLIC WEB**

Academic Senate website: <http://www.prattsenate.org>

Pratt Institute Governance Review: <http://www.prattsenate.org/gov>

Senate By-laws, approved by the Board: <http://www.prattsenate.org/bylaws>

About the Academic Senate: <http://www.prattsenate.org/about>

Formation and history of the Senate: <http://www.prattsenate.org/history>

Senate Archives of Minutes, Actions and Reports: <http://www.prattsenate.org/archives>

Senate Academic Programs and Policies Committee: <http://www.prattsenate.org/appc>

Pratt Institute’s accreditation and strategic planning documents: <http://tinyurl.com/yj7g35p>

# ACADEMIC SENATE BYLAWS

## 1 NAME OF ORGANIZATION

Academic Senate

## 2 NATURE & PURPOSE

**A. Nature of organization:** A faculty/administration governance body that will relate directly to the President and Provost without review by any other group.

**B. Purpose:** To give faculty and chairs responsibilities including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Approving academic policies and procedures;
- b. Reviewing structures of programs, curricula, and schools;
- c. Providing for appropriate review of course additions and changes;
- d. Reviewing academic services;
- e. Establishing committees on appropriate subjects;
- f. Interviewing prospective deans, vice-presidents; provosts, and presidents;
- g. Appointing faculty members to Board standing committees;
- h. Nominating Faculty Trustee;
- i. Formulating structure and procedures of search committees, and appointing faculty and chair membership.

## 3 MEMBERSHIP

**A. Full-time Faculty:** At least one full-time faculty member from the Library Faculty and each of these schools of the Institute: Architecture, Art and Design, Graduate Information and Library Science, Liberal Arts and Sciences; in schools with more than 12 full-time faculty, a representative for each 12 or major fraction thereof. (Three-year terms)

**B. Part-time Faculty:** Four part-time faculty members elected from the part-time faculty of the School of Art and Design; two part-time faculty members elected from the part-time faculty of the School of Architecture; one part-time faculty member elected from the rest of the part-time faculty (the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of Information and Library Science, and the Library). [These numbers represent a current proportional representation from the schools of Architecture and of Art and Design and from the remaining faculty at large, the ratio being approximately 1 to 120.] (Three-year terms)

**C. Chairs:** One chair from each of the undergraduate and graduate units of the Institute having chairs (Undergraduate Architecture, Graduate Architecture, Undergraduate Art and Design, Graduate Art and Design, Liberal Arts and Sciences). (Three-year terms)

**D. Alternate member:** In the event that a Senate position becomes vacated, the person receiving the next highest vote for that position will become the representative, provided that the voting body and the pool of potential nominees remains the same. An interim election will be held if either the voting body or the pool of potential nominees has changed significantly.

## 4 ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

A. Faculty: Full-time, adjunct, and visiting faculty.

B. Chairs: Those who teach regularly scheduled classes in their subject areas.

## 5 OFFICERS OF THE ORGANIZATION

President; Vice-President; Secretary; Treasurer.

A. These officers (who serve three-year terms) constitute the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate. They are elected by secret ballot.

B. The Executive Committee has the authority to act when the Senate is not in regular session.

C. If the President is chosen from among the members of the Senate (as opposed to the faculty-at-large), the replacement shall be the alternate member. (see 3D.)

## 6 STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing committees of the Academic Senate will be established, as needed, by the Academic Senate.

## 7 AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the bylaws may be proposed at any time, but will be voted on no earlier than the eighth (8th) week of the following Fall or Spring semester. Passage requires seventy-five percent (75%) of the members of the Academic Senate voting in a secret, written ballot. Approved amendments become effective upon approval by the Board of Trustees.

## 8 QUORUM

Quorum for Academic Senate meetings: Sixty percent (60%) of the elected members.

## 9 MEETINGS

A. Regular meetings will be held biweekly during the Fall and Spring Semesters, or as often as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.

B. The Academic Senate will convene at least once, after the eighth week of each of the semesters, Fall and Spring, a meeting of the faculty and chairs, presided over by the President of the Academic Senate.

Reports on:

a. issues confronting the Institute and

b. academic governance will be made by the President of Pratt Institute and the President of the Academic Senate.

## 10 RULES

The rules contained in the Modern Edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Academic Senate in all cases where they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the Senate may adopt.

*Original bylaws unanimously adopted by the Faculty Council on 23 April 1991.*

*Article nine (9) unanimously approved 2 May 1991.*

*Revisions unanimously approved 6 May 1993.*

*Article three B (3 B) unanimously approved On 9 December, 2003.*

*Article five (5) unanimously approved on 4 May, 2004.*

*Both amendments approved by the Board of Trustees on 5 May, 2005.*

Faculty Handbook, Approved by the Board of Trustees 2002;  
updated August 2005, August 2006 and August 2007, August 2008, August 2009

## PART 01. ORGANIZATION & GOVERNANCE

### FACULTY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The charter of Pratt Institute vests the Board of Trustees with the primary responsibility for the educational and financial well being of the institution. The Board, in turn, authorizes the president and administration to direct the Institute in its many and complex operations. The Board, the president and the administration recognize the important role of the faculty in developing, implementing, and monitoring the content and quality of Institute programs, curricula, and courses. To this end the Institute has established an academic senate composed of faculty and chair representatives elected directly by the faculty and chairs of the Institute. The academic senate is a faculty administration governance body that relates directly to the president and provost without review by any other Institute group.