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Fourteenth Faculty Senate

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March 16, 2015

From: Senate Executive Committee (Log No. 5137)

To: Senate and Review Committee members

Subject: Electronic Participation in Committee Meetings

Advances in information technology continue to make available new options for interpersonal and organizational communication. The Senate's Parliamentary Authority, *Robert's Rules of Order*, counsels prudence in the application of electronic media to discussion and voting, so that the fundamental principles of elected representative governance is not violated: discussion conducted in such a way that all members present can see and hear each speaker, members must have equal opportunity to engage in discussion, and members must be present to vote.

It is the opinion of the Senate Executive Committee that the state of current technology makes it possible for these conditions to be met for meetings of the senate's standing committees, special committee, and review committees, providing that

- 1) When using video-conferencing media, each member participating in the meeting can see the face and hear the voice of each of the other members participating in the meeting
- 2) The quorum requirement is met (i.e., a majority of the committee's member is participating in the meeting as described above)
- 3) Voting can proceed by voice or hand vote in such a way that the committee can unequivocally ascertain and agree on the outcome of the vote
- 4) Minutes of the meeting (i.e., a record of decisions) can be kept and approved in accordance with the Senate's and the committee's rules
- 5) If the above criteria are met, each member thus participating in the meeting can be counted as present

With the concurrence of the Senate, the Senate Executive Committee proposes that the above practice be adopted on a pilot basis for use by the Senate's committees, until the practice or some modification of it is formally incorporated into the Senate's Standing Rules (i.e., *Senate Handbook*).

The Senate, itself, however, is not yet equipped to accommodate electronic participation in Senate meetings, so traditional practices will still apply to Senate meetings, i.e., members must be physically present in the Senate meeting room to participate in discussion and voting.