

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

SENATE TASK FORCE FOR SENATOR ALLOTMENT

In December 2018, the Faculty Senate of the Florida Institute of Technology established a Task Force to investigate and recommend alternative schemes for the allotment of senators. A member was invited from among the senators of each academic unit, for a total of 13 initial members (4 members were lost during summer, from COES-MCE, COES-OEMS, CoPLA-BA, COA, and two replacements joined from COA). Feedback was also provided by other faculty.

Formation of this Task Force was in response to the merger of the College of Engineering and the College of Science to create the College of Engineering and Science. There was general concern in the Senate that some programs might lack adequate representation due to the merger.

Based on proposals and votes of its members as of October 9th, 2019, the Task Force for Senator Allotment selected, studied, and presents in detail three ways of reorganizing the Senate.

Therefore:

The task force suggests the Senate will discuss and vote to select between the current structure and one of the following three alternative structures.

(Note: the task force deliberated using this forum:

https://vote.fit.edu/senate_allotment/ , where the whole Senate has access and can continue deliberation.)

PROPOSAL 1

The senator allotment per academic unit is computed as 8.8% of the faculty in the unit, plus 0.2% of the number of enrolled students, plus one tenth of the student enrollment growth percent per year capped at 10%. Three special units will have fixed numbers of senators: the Library will have two representatives, the Business Online program one, and Extended Studies one.

Context and motivation: This proposal includes an important stakeholder of each college, namely the student numbers. The idea is also to associate representation with growth, and further incentivize each College via their student numbers growth. Further, the rules are made independent from the composition of large colleges. The selected numbers try to avoid departing too much from a proportional representation of each College's faculty in the university population.

Immediate impact: The number of senator positions for CoPLA would be reduced by 1. COA gets 1 position this year. CoPLA and COES would have to set a separate committee to decide how to split their senators among departments.

Arguments from taskforce members:

- Reduce the number of senators (the current Senate is perceived by the sponsors of this proposal as ineffective due to having too many members).
- Let the colleges decide representation per unit (as other colleges should not be bothered with one's internal college allotment).
- Have the representation mirror metrics of unit relevance used by business executives (the function of the senate is perceived by proposal sponsors as an advisory board to the executive branch of the university).
- Prevent over representation due to rounding in computing allotment, for a college above its proportion to the university faculty composition.

Dissent statements from taskforce members:

- The formula is perceived as complex and the dynamic impact on allotment difficult to manage, requiring annual updates.
- The senate low rate of issuing resolutions was due to the difficulty of addressed issues.
- The senate at Florida Tech also has a function of shared governance by the faculty.

PROPOSAL 2

The number of senators for an academic unit is the maximum between:

- The number of full-time faculty divided by 10, rounded up.
- The sum between:
 - o The number of programs with at least 5 faculty.
 - o The number of programs with 2-4 faculty, divided by 2, rounded up.

Context and motivation: This proposal formalizes ideas mentioned in the Senate meeting where the Task Force was commissioned and compensates effects of merger of colleges, as per one of the motivations raised for this Task Force creation.

Immediate impact: The number of senator positions grows by 4 (to values before merger of colleges, for departments like OEMS and CES).

Arguments from taskforce members:

- Enables faculty in programs with special requirements to have representation and a voice in the senate.

Dissent statements from taskforce members:

- The associations between faculty and programs is currently maintained by graduate programs, but the continuation of this practice needs to be ensured.
- Some Task Force members from a smaller college recommend against continuing the practice where departments of larger colleges are considered academic units.

PROPOSAL 3.

Each academic unit is represented by at least **one tenth** of the full time faculty. Additional senators can be named as decided by academic units based on the trade-offs between their needs and their available faculty resources.

Context and motivation: In recent important decisions, senators were asked to vote as assigned by the ratio of positions of their constituents. This can be formalized as follows:

The purpose of the proposed version of the senate is:

- (1) To discuss and analyze university-wide issues,
- (2) To formulate resolutions concerning improvement proposals for consideration by university faculty, and
- (3) To formulate informed arguments to be made available to faculty voters and administration, concerning these resolutions.

The final vote on each issue will be an online referendum by the faculty. (Note: Additional senators create no voting power equilibrium issue, since senators are not voting, but just formulating resolutions and arguments.)

Immediate impact: The number of senator positions is reduced by 1 position, namely for COES (AAPS).

Arguments from taskforce members:

- This enables the alignment of the official function of the senate with its practical history: a board of advisors to the faculty and the administration.
- Enables the application of modern technology for the creation of a democratic constituency (by referendum) that has the authority to take over and give substance to the function of shared governance by the faculty.

Dissent statements from taskforce members:

- After how much time would this setup grow old on faculty?
- Some Task Force members from a smaller college recommend against continuing the practice where departments of larger colleges are considered academic units.

Notable alternative discussed: There was support for a version where academic units are represented by **one seventh** of their full time faculty, rounded up.