



ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
California State University, Los Angeles

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: ASI Executive Committee
From: Neyda Umana, Vice President of Academic Governance
Elise Dang, Undergraduate Academic Senator
Rene Romero, Undergraduate Academic Senator
Jackie Acosta, Undergraduate Academic Senator
I’Jazz Brooks, Graduate Academic Senator
William Hess, Graduate Academic Senator

Re: Restructure Resolution

We have reviewed the ASI President’s plan for restructure and would like to offer our feedback, given that this plan would significantly affect the Shared Governance Unit of ASI. To begin, we would like to inquire the reasoning behind the restructure. The proposal states that the purpose of the document is to “have ASI support my pursuit for this restructure”. What initiated the need for restructuring? In other words, what was broken and needs fixing? We would need a strong case to achieve institutional support from College Deans.

College Councils

Department Student Representatives - Are these just students with a major from each respective department? What specific roles and duties would they have, and would it be a paid ASI position? Given our previous recruitment efforts, how likely are we able to recruit 1 student per each department? Who would be responsible for this recruitment?

The Merging of College Reps and Academic Senators

The proposed structure appears very similar to what we have within our current organizational structure, with the exception of the reduction of 6 college reps and restricting Academic Senators to college representation rather than student body representation. All ASI members are already asked to sit on university committees. The given responsibilities for “College Senators” are also current duties of Academic Senators within the codes of procedure:

From Policy 015, Cabinet of Academic Senator Code of Procedure, p. 3:

3. Each Senator shall actively seek out the opinions, needs, and desires of constituents(CSULA Student Body) and ensure that all necessary activities and policies are initiated, carried out for the student body at large and equally voiced and considered alongside faculty and administrators on issues affecting the CSULA student body.
5. Coordinate with at least one set of college representatives to understand the issues that students in that particular college are facing.

From Policy 024, Executive Senate Offices, p. 3:

Commented [1]: I'm gonna delete some of these examples

Commented [2]: Cool makes since



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C. Senate Office of Collegiate Collaboration

The Senate Office of Collegiate Collaboration shall:

- i. Coordinate Senator and College Representative collaborative efforts and initiatives.
- ii. Attend the Cabinet of College Representatives and communicate any issues that may affect their college or any collaborative initiatives that can be executed together.

From Policy 023, Shared Governance Council (this includes College Reps), p. 3 Article I:

C. Work with all appropriate areas in order to ensure that genuine Shared Governance is being upheld between students, faculty, and administration. These areas include but are not limited to: A.S.I College Representatives, Department Chairs, Students, etc.

Proposed Restructure Undermines Principles of Shared Governance

The Academic Senate is the central governing body of the university. If students are to be adequately involved in the process of Shared Governance, there needs to be a distinct body (i.e. cabinet) within which student Academic Senators work. Not only will the merging of the two bodies increase the workload and make the position inefficient, it grossly undermines the critical role that Academic Senators play in shared governance. ASI should operate under the assumption that we believe students should play a critical role in shared governance and not dilute our responsibilities.

The proposed restructure removes the only graduate representation that is within student government, effectively marginalizing graduate students. Without a designated position for Graduate students, there is no guarantee of recruiting graduate students within our organization. Furthermore, the Academic Senate and University-Wide committees have multiple Graduate student seats within their committees, including some that do not allow for Undergraduate representation (i.e. Graduate Student Subcommittee, Institutional Review Board - Human Subjects).

Restricting the Academic Senators to representing and working with only 1 college severely limits their capacity to represent the Cal State LA student body as a whole and understanding issues across all colleges. Academic Senate and University-Wide Committees do not function on a by-college basis, and the principles encouraged by the Academic Senate constitute representation for the benefit of all rather than by college. Faculty senators are expected to abide by these principles, as should we. Keeping the Academic Senators separate from College Representation empowers them to represent more students and help create policy affecting students of all majors.

The restructure chart doesn't adequately reflect the flow of information on campus.



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Responsibilities of the Vice President for Academic Governance

The current responsibilities of the VPAG are to ensure the collaboration between the BOD and the Cabinet of Academic Senators, the Executive Senate, and committee members. The current state of the VPAG position is not due to the nature of the position itself, rather the lack of organizational support to strengthen and organize the Shared Governance Unit in the past years. Therefore, we recommend considering the additional measures below in regards to organizational support to resolve the administrative measures of securing a strong Shared Governance Unit.

Proposed Solutions

The main issue seems to be the disconnect between the Shared Governance Unit and the College Representatives. We recommend the following possible resolves as edits to the current bylaws and codes rather than a whole organizational restructure:

- I. Adding all Academic Senators to the Board of Directors to improve communication between both bodies and allow equal representation in decision making. Academic Senators can provide an advisory role to university policies affecting topics discussed at BOD.
 - A. Allowing Graduate Senators on the BOD also aids the complete lack of Graduate representation on the BOD.
- II. Adding the responsibility of working with Academic Senators to Policy 002, B.O.D. Code of Procedure under Section 10, C so that the duty of communication is equally dispersed. We suggest the following:
 1. Coordinate with at least one Academic Senator to notify them on the issues that students in your particular college are facing, and learn about relevant policy changes passing through the Academic Senate and University Wide Committees.
 2. Assist the Shared Governance Unit in dispersing pertinent policy information affecting students, and retain student feedback to report back to the Shared Governance Council.
 3. Assist the Shared Governance Unit in recruiting students to sit on college-specific committees.
- III. Responsibilities of the Vice President for Academic Governance
 - A. To help empower the VPAG provide support to the Shared Governance Unit, we recommend removing the VPAG from unnecessary ASI internal committee obligations so that they have time to sit on the Academic Senate and its standing



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committees. We suggest the removal of obligations to the Personnel & Strategic Planning committees, although, it would be best to evenly delegate ASI committees between Execs so none are required to sit on an excessive amount of committees.

- IV. We have created the attached guide with questions that the College Representatives can respond to and bring to the Shared Governance Council to help the Academic Senators better understand the concerns of students.

Organizational Support

The current state of the organizational culture and accountability structures within ASI require analysis and improvement. While the ASI Biweekly and Workflow Ad Hoc Committee currently works on systems that will support organizational efficiencies as a whole, we'd like to draw attention to certain needs lacking in the Shared Governance Unit that will help this and other areas function better as a whole.

1. Training.

- a. We request that the following be incorporated to future training to ensure that students in this area are empowered with the necessary tools to succeed within ASI, the Academic Senate, and other University-Wide committees:
- i. Strong practice and training of Robert's Rules of Order, including a Shared Governance Council Meeting during ASI summer training to train all ASI members on the importance of Shared Governance and the purpose/function of the council.
 - ii. Student-friendly scheduling of ASI training. Be more flexible and strategic about scheduling ASI training to ensure all students can go. If students miss, ensure the student is caught up with information vital to the function of their position.
 - iii. Understanding the mechanics of ASI committee structures and how to create change through the Shared Governance Council (Workshops on Student Impact Statements, Resolutions, Recommendations)
 - iv. Organizational training and support for student-at-large committee representatives. These individuals have the potential to contribute more to the organization but lack direction and support. The VPAG cannot single handedly train all committee representatives without staff support.

Commented [3]: Reminder to re-work student-at-large committee rep role to incorporate more support for the senators



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2. Recordkeeping.

- a. Due to its highly administrative function, the recordkeeping in the Shared Governance Unit should be supported by an ASI staff member consistently maintains and updates the committee database. Since ASI staff members do not change from year to year, they are in a better position to save and maintain any committee relationships made throughout the year. Currently, Alix is helping fulfill this role.
 - i. Improving communication with departments and committee chairs to maintain accurate committee information.
 1. Consistently updating the committee database with new membership.
 2. Maintaining online updates with committee information, available listings, times, dates, and membership.
 3. Sending inquiries in August, before Fall semester, regarding committee chairs, meeting times and dates.
 4. Sending inquiries in mid-Spring semester regarding predetermined committee information, and a reminder to include ASI staff in all committee notifications (VPAG where needed).
 5. Informing the incoming VPAG on status of all committees, communications regarding committees, areas of concern or that are inactive from the prior year.
 6. Creating memorandums for new student appointees to respective committee chair and departments.
 7. Assisting the VPAG with communicating with other areas of the university to promote student representation and inclusion.
 - b. Committee Reports
 1. Collecting, organizing and keeping track of all committee reports and agendas to the Shared Governance Unit.
 2. Uploading the reports online to promote transparency.
 3. Archiving reports for access and historical use.
- 3. Advisement.** The VPAG and Academic Senators would greatly benefit from a larger advisement role from ASI staff. Advisement includes knowledge of the university, historical context to ASI relationships with Academic Senate, departments, committees, and best practices to promote student interests.
- a. Helping prepare students to meet with Provost, VP of Academic Affairs, or University President (brief and debrief)



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- b. Helping students navigate playing field with faculty and administrators
 - i. Channels of reporting issues

Final Comments

Finally, we would like to be informed on any further changes that will be requested from the Academic Senate. Given that the addition of a 6th Undergraduate Senator has already been added to the 1st Draft of the Academic Senate Constitution without consulting the ASI Shared Governance Unit, we request to be notified in advance of any further changes so that we may reasonably weigh in.

We are currently revising Policies 015, 023, and 024 with further changes to help inefficiencies within our unit. It is our recommendation to keep the Shared Governance Unit as is and apart from the College Representatives.