

To: Purdue Graduate Student Senate
From: Andrew Mitchell, Parliamentarian, Purdue Graduate Student Government
Date: April 16, 2024
Re: LRC Constitutional Review and Annual Report

Introduction

Every two (2) years the Legislative Review Committee is required by the Bylaws (III.C.3.e) to “perform a formal review on the Constitution and Bylaws... which shall be reported to the Senate with recommendations.” As this report was not issued last year, it must be completed this year. The following is the required report as well as the annual report from the Legislative Review Committee as requested by the President for inclusion in the PGSG annual report.

Methodology

Among other things, the LRC established a code of operations (CoO) to guide the committee on matters not outlined in the governing documents. One of the matter that is addressed is the governing document review for which it states;

1. In the fall semester of odd numbered years, the LRC must begin a review of the PGSG Governing Documents
 - a. This must include the Constitution, Bylaws, Financial Code of Operations, and all relevant Appendices
2. The LRC must take into consideration the comments of PGSG during the review
 - a. The Chair of the LRC must solicit comments from the Executive Board to be received by the LRC no later than the end of the Fall semester
 - b. The LRC must put out a call to the PGSS for comments no later than the first meeting following the PGSS Retreat
 - c. The LRC must create a list of their own comments to be delivered to the Senate before the end of the Fall semester
 - d. These comments should focus on areas in need of changes as well as suggested changes to address concerns and operational shifts that have arisen since the last review
3. The LRC must prepare a report in which all of the received comments are addressed either by proposed amendments or justification for maintaining the status quo
 - a. This report must be delivered to the PGSS before the conclusion of the Spring semester
 - b. The format of this report is at the discretion of the LRC

4. Amendments resulting from this review may be presented separately, as a single amendment, or as any number of amendments divided as the LRC deems appropriate
 - a. Amendments may be presented at any time during the review process so as to not bog down the Senate with a sudden influx of legislation
 - b. Any amendment authored by the LRC during the review should be in response to some comment received in accordance with the previous sections

Given that the CoO was ratified part way through the Fall semester, not all timelines were met exactly. However, the Parliamentarian requested comments from the executive board and received none. The Parliamentarian also provided a form to senators to provide feedback (included in PGSS minutes and shown as a QR code during a meeting). This form received no responses. As a result, all comments originated from the Parliamentarian or the LRC except for several informal conversations that will be noted below.

Review:

The review will be broken into three sections; Pending, Passed, and Failed encompassing all pieces of legislation drafted as part of the review of governing documents. The LRC addressed all legislation submitted and so pending refers to legislation that the PGSS did not have time to address. In some cases the LRC recommends that these pieces be reintroduced in the following year for proper consideration. Such recommendations will be noted for each piece of legislation.

Pending:

This report comes before the final session of PGSS for the year. As such some of these pieces may have been passed or failed. Please refer to PGSS minutes to ensure the validity of this report after the final PGSS session. If the president permits the Parliamentarian intends to update this section following the final PGSS session to be fully accurate, but if this statement is still here then that didn't happen.

SP24-B005 - *"To Update the Election Order of PGSG Executive Officers" (for Vote)*

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240307_06_SP24_B005.docx](#)

Rationale: Bylaws IV.B.3.e sets the order of elections which is mirrored here. If this is not adopted then these elections must still be held in this order, but are significantly more confusing.

Recommendation: First, add Chief of Staff to this piece (may be done my amendment as this is pending). COS should be elected following the president as required by Constitution III.2.E. A bylaws amendment to reflect that COS is elected second (rather than Senate Chair) should also be authored next year (this was only noted as an issue when elections were held, too late to write and introduce a new bill).

Reintroduce?: Yes, with a companion bylaws amendment (still needs to be written) mainly to make the election process more clear.

SP24-B007 - *"To Update the Title of VP for Operations to Chief of Staff in the PGSG Bylaws"*

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Origin: LRC

Link: [20240307_04_SP24_B007.docx](#)

Rationale: VP of Operations is not a position that exists in the constitution and it appears that it was replaced by Chief of Staff.

Recommendation: This piece should be simple and straightforward. It needs no other changes.

Reintroduce?: Yes, this should be a quick one because of its simplicity.

SP24-B008 - “To Reflect the Restructuring and Renaming of the Graduate School”

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240307_08_SP24_B008.docx](#)

Rationale: The University Senate voted to restructure the Graduate School and move it to be under the Office of the Provost (Senate Document 23-42). As such the name changed and this needs to be reflected in the PGSG governing documents. During initial discussion the president clarified that a majority of PGSG’s oversight is not from the Student Life office rather than the Graduate School and make an amendment to change this where appropriate.

Recommendation: This piece should be simple and straightforward now that the President has provided insight on how the organization is structured within the university. a trigger clause may still be desired to make this change coincide with the official renaming of the Graduate School.

Reintroduce?: Yes; check on official implementation of the restructure before reintroducing and ensure that it is still accurate and necessary. Sections regarding Student life can be reintroduced regardless of Graduate School restructuring.

SP24-B006 - “To Update the Title of President Pro Tempore to Senate Chair in the PGSG Bylaws”

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240307_05_SP24_B006.docx](#)

Rationale: For several years the Pres. Pro Temp. has not been elected or utilized. The LAO indicated that the Senate Chair used to be called the Pres. Pro Temp. and the Parliamentarian agreed that this change would mostly make sense and be the simplest way to eliminate the unused position.

Recommendation: This piece has a major amendment drafted which would be needed to make the transition seamless. Aside from that it is good to go.

[20240307_05_SP24_B00X_PresProTemAmendment.docx](#)

Reintroduce?: Yes, use the above linked amended version. This should be another quick one.

SP24-B010 - “Mandating that all PGSG minutes be made public excepting executive sessions and updating the constitution appropriately”

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240307_15_SP24_B010.docx](#)

Rationale: Transparency is important in government and releasing minutes is part of that transparency. No minutes for executive sessions have been released up to this point and this legislation seeks to make these minutes public as they are not part of an executive session (the only instance that allows minutes to be approved and remain confidential).

Recommendation: Good to go as is. Given that this deals mostly with the Executive Board, the Senate will likely be willing to pass it with just a few clarifying questions.

Reintroduce?: Yes; hold the organization accountable and release minutes (including those from past years).

SP24-B012 - “Amending the Financial Code of Operations to provide equity in PGSG member incentives”

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240307_13_SP24_B012.docx](#)

Rationale: BOSO will not allow any more of the budget to be allocated to officer payments. They will, however, allow the organization to redistribute the amounts if we want. This legislation divides leadership into tiers and reallocates funds (mostly away from the president) to provide more incentive for people to run for the positions.

Recommendation: This will be a long discussion to reach a point that all senators agree on. The important part is that the sum of all payments must not change. BOSO will approve a deduction, but the organization will never be able to increase the amount again and any increase will be denied by BOSO.

Reintroduce?: Not strictly needed. Reintroduce this at your own risk, it will be a long discussion about equity and effort and comparing different positions.

SP24-B015 - “Constitutional Amendment To Better Divide Legislative and Executive Powers in Teams and Committees”

Origin: Comment from the senator from chemistry requesting better division of powers

Link: [20240307_10_SP24_B015.docx](#)

Rationale: This is a beastly piece of legislation. The main goals are to unify teams and committees (make them all committees, but don't change how they function). The legislation then goes a step further and separates legislative and executive leadership. Legislative leaders do not get a vote on executive committees and vice versa. This reduces the Executive Committee to just 6 voting members but keeps all current legislative members as non-voting to maintain a voice in the space.

Recommendation: This is a long piece of legislation and needs to be understood. This will take time and makes the bulk of discussion just explanation. There are pros and cons to dividing powers this way and if the senate doesn't want to give up votes on the Executive Board (via Team and Committee Chairs) then this might not be the right way to go. Regardless, the mentions of teams should all be removed from governing document because functionally they are not different from committees (the name of the various committees can still be Life/Career/Diversity/Community Team to avoid confusion and reaffirm that functionally nothing changes)

Reintroduce?: Yes; reach out to the past parliamentarian if you would like to reintroduce this to help with explanation and justification. (LRC knew there wouldn't be time to pass this through PGSS but getting this far leaves a better record for it to be reintroduced). Needs an amendment to account for FA23-B005.

SP24-B016 - “Bylaws Amendment To Better Divide Legislative and Executive Powers in Teams and Committees”

Origin: Comment from the senator from chemistry requesting better division of powers

Link: [20240307_12_SP24_B016.docx](#)

Rationale: Same as above. This also eliminates the Appendix because most of those documents have been lost over the years and the Appendix is generally a bad idea unless the documents are actually included in the file.

Recommendation: Same as SP24-B015

Reintroduce?: Same as SP24-B015

Passed:

FA23-B003 - “Establishment of the Purdue Graduate Student Government Diversity Team”

Origin: Diversity Officer

Link: [20230912_02_FA23-B003.docx](#)

Rationale: Diversity is a key part of making all feel welcome and there is a lot of diversity among graduate students. A committee will enable better programming and networking to take place.

Recommendation: Reassess the statement of purpose occasionally and nail down a Code of Operations for the Committee

FA23-B005 - “Executive Board Voting Clarification”

Origin: LRC

Link: [20231027_09_FA23-B005.docx](#)

Rationale: Some Executive Board members serve as both an officer and a team chair, both of which are granted a vote. While Roberts Rules of Order makes it clear that these individuals may vote only once on each piece of business, this makes that fact clear and goes further to provide a vote for the LRC on the Executive Board via the Vice Chair (previously represented by the Parliamentarian who cannot vote because they are appointed and not elected)

Recommendation: This becomes a moot point if the organization is restructured.

SP24-B001 - “To Update the Title of VP of PR to PRO in the PGSG Constitution”

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240117_SP24-B001.docx](#)

Rationale: VP of PR is not a position that exists in the Bylaws or FCO and it appears that it was replaced by the Public Relations Officer (PRO).

Recommendation: Continue fixing outdated info like this. It makes good practice legislation early in the year.

SP24-B002 - “To Correct exec “board” to exec “officers” in the PGSG Constitution”

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240117_SP24-B002.docx](#)

Rationale: With current wording team chairs are removed from their senator position once elected chair. Based on the operation of the organization this does not seem intentional. Most chairs start as senators and get involved in a team/committee from there, so they can be some of the most active senators and are a resource for the legislative branch.

Recommendation: Look into better division of powers. This legislation prompted the more indepth restructuring legislation in the pending section.

SP24-B003 - “To Amend the Constitution Concerning the Establishment of Senate Meeting Dates”

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240117_SP24-B003.docx](#)

Rationale: Prior to this the Senate Chair had no say in the dates set for the meetings that they are required to lead. This could lead to problematic conflicts, so the Senate Chair should be allowed to have input on when PGSS meetings are held.

Recommendation: Ensure that the Senate Chair is taking responsibility for this and that the President is taking them into consideration. Stronger language may be needed if conflicts arise.

Failed

No legislation relevant to the review was failed.

Other Legislation

This legislation is not relevant to the mandatory review, but provides a concise list of all other LRC activities from the year.

Pending

SP24-R003 - *“Holiday/Winter Pay Contingent to Position(s) Revision”*

Origin: Introduced Previous Year

Link: [20231206_03_SP24_R003.docx](#)

SP24-B011 - *“Bill to Empower GRAC Oversight on Grant Policies”*

Origin: GRAC Chair

Link: [20240304_02_SP24-B011.docx](#)

SP24-B013 - *“Funding the Small Research Grant”*

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240401_1_SP24-B013.docx](#)

SP24-B014 - *“Amendments to the Financial Code of Operations”*

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240401_2_SP24-B014.docx](#)

SP24-R004 - *“Resolution Establishing the Small Research Grant”*

Origin: LRC

Link: [20240401_3_SP24-R004.docx](#)

Passed

FA23-R001 - *“Resolution establishing the recognition of Juneteenth on the Purdue University Academic Calendar”*
[20230913_06_FA23-R001.docx](#)

FA23-B001 - *“Establishing a Graduate Student Shuttle Voucher Program”*
[20230912_01_FA23-B001.docx](#)

FA23-B002 - *“Emergency Bill to Provision of Financial Support for Gaza”*

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[20231018_08_FA23-B002.docx](#)

FA23-B004 - *“Amendment to FY 2023-24 Budget”*

[20231010_07_FA23-B004.docx](#)

FA23-R002 - *“Resolution Empowering Graduate staff to use or be compensated for vacation time”*

[20231023_08_FA23-R002.docx](#)

FA23-R004 - *“Resolution Adding Mental Health Action Week to the Purdue University Academic Calendar”*

[20231124_11_FA23-R004.docx](#)

SP24-R002 - *“Resolution opposing Indiana Senate Bill 202”*

[20240221_SP24-R002.docx](#)

SP24-B009 - *“Bill to Amend Policies of the Transitional Housing Grant”*

[20240304_01_SP24-B009.docx](#)

Failed

SP24-R001 - *“Resolution on Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions at Purdue University”*

[20240115_SP24-R001.docx](#)

Conclusion

For the next LRC and Parliamentarian, it is still advisable to continue reviewing the governing documents and making improvements. A few tips:

- Keep in mind that legislation will pile up at the end of the year as committee members get more comfortable with writing it.
- Ask before legislating; it will burn fewer bridges, speed implementation, and allow for more pressing matters to be the focus.
- If there was one good way to do something then we would probably have found it by now. No solution will be perfect and people will value fixing different aspects of the same problem. This can make discussion long and legislation contentious, but remember to keep an open mind and compromise/amend when possible.

Recommendations for future work: More work needs to be done on the FCO and currently the LRC is the only committee with a known CoO, so these are both good things to focus on between constitution and bylaw review years. There will also be a budget for the LRC for the first time in several years. It is recommended that this be used to host events to educate senators on Roberts Rules of Order, legislation writing workshops, or resources to help committee members and senators better navigate parliamentary procedure.

Sincerely,

Andrew Mitchell

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Parliamentarian, PGSG, 2023-2024
Chair, Legislative Review Committee

