



# UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

## *A Short Guide for Student Representatives and Leaders*

### I. History and Purpose of University Council

In April 1963 the University administration and the Faculty Senate jointly agreed to form University Council. The *Almanac*, then as now the University’s publication of record, announced the establishment of University Council and summarized its purpose, as “designed to eliminate the present duplication of faculty-administrative committees and to provide a more effective means for the faculty to participate in policy discussions.” University Council as we know it today, however, dates to March 1969, when the faculty and administration voted to amend Council bylaws to provide for student representation; 2009 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that decision.

University Council is a deliberative and broadly representative body, which serves an advisory role to the president, provost, and senior administration of the University. The purpose of University Council is best described in its bylaws, which state that Council “exists to consider the activities of the University in all its phases, with particular attention to the educational objectives of the University and those matters that affect the common interests of faculty, staff and students.” University Council has fulfilled that role capably, advising no fewer than six University presidents since 1963.

*-Mark Frazier Lloyd, University Archivist (Retired)*

### II. Representation

Representation on Council and its committees is comprised of administrators, faculty, staff, and students who are elected by their respective constituencies. Representatives to undergraduate seats are appointed by the Undergraduate Assembly (UA) or the Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC). Graduate student representatives are appointed by the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA). (Further details about the full composition of University Council can be found in Section II. 1. of the Council bylaws, which can be viewed here: <https://secretary.upenn.edu/univ-council/bylaws-university-council>. The names of representatives are due to the Office of the University Secretary at the beginning of the fall semester in order to ensure that participants receive all relevant materials before the first meeting.

*Student representation on University Council and its committees is as follows:*

<b>Committee*/Body</b>	<b>Undergraduate Students</b>	<b>Graduate Students</b>
<b>University Council</b>	16 students	15 students
<b>Steering Committee</b>	2 students	2 students
<b>Committee on Committees</b>	1 student	1 student
<b>Committee on Academic and Related Affairs</b>	2 students	2 students
<b>Committee on Campus and Community Life</b>	2 students	2 students
<b>Committee on Diversity and Equity</b>	2 students	2 students
<b>Committee on Facilities</b>	2 students	2 students
<b>Committee on Honorary Degrees</b>	2 students	2 students
<b>Committee on Open Expression</b>	3 students	3 students

*\*The general committee charges can be found in the Council bylaws.*

### III. Responsibilities of Representatives

Individual representatives to University Council and its committees are appointed at the beginning of the fall semester and expected to serve for the entire academic year. (There is one exception to this rule. The NEC may appoint new representatives to Council mid-year from those groups whose leadership changes in December. The NEC is responsible for forwarding the complete list of new representatives to the Office of the University Secretary by the beginning of the spring term in any given year, prior to the first spring meeting of Council.)

University Council does not permit the use of alternates on Council or its committees. Each seat is tied to an individual rather than a group. One of the basic principles of parliamentary procedure is the importance of personal participation of its members at meetings.

### IV. University Council and Committee Meetings

The president of the University is the presiding officer of Council, but the meetings are run by the moderator, who is appointed each year by the president with the consent of Council. The Steering Committee of University Council sets the agenda for each Council meeting. Representatives are expected to attend Council meetings and are encouraged to participate in discussions.

Any member of the University may suggest questions or proposals for the consideration of the University Council by submitting them in writing to the Steering Committee addressed to the Chair of the Steering Committee, in care of the Office of the Faculty Senate ([senate@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:senate@pobox.upenn.edu)). At any Council meeting, a member of the Council may propose and a majority of those voting may adopt an item for the agenda of the next meeting. (Section IV. 3 of the University Council bylaws.)

The University Council meets approximately once a month during the school year. All meetings are held on Wednesday, from 4:00pm – 6:00pm, in Hall of Flags, Houston Hall. The Office of the University Secretary publishes the schedule of meetings each year in *Almanac* and on the University Council website at <https://secretary.upenn.edu/univ-council>.

The University Council also has several committees that require student participation (see list on previous page). The Office of the University Secretary works closely with the Office of the Faculty Senate and the chairs of the respective Council committees to select committee meeting times in advance of the school year to facilitate the selection of representatives who can attend the stated meeting times. In the event that an appointed representative can no longer fulfill his or her duties, the representative must notify his or her constituency leadership (e.g., GAPSA, UA, the NEC) so that a suitable replacement can be found. Constituency leaders must keep the Office of the University Secretary informed of any changes in representation, and these notifications must be received prior to the first Council meeting attended by the new representative(s).

### V. Open Forum

Per the University Council bylaws (Section IV. 3 (c)), a portion of the November or December Council meeting will incorporate an Open Forum, to which all members of the University community are invited to bring issues for discussion. In 2007, the Steering Committee of University Council voted to include an additional Open Forum session during the spring term. Announcements for each Open Forum session are distributed to the entire University community via e-mail, and they are also placed in *Almanac*, *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, and on the Office of the University Secretary's website (<https://secretary.upenn.edu/univ-council/open-forum>).

Individuals who wish to be assured of speaking at Council must inform the Office of the University Secretary ([ucouncil@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:ucouncil@pobox.upenn.edu)) by the stated deadline in the announcement. Registrants must indicate the topic to be discussed. Those who have not so informed the Office of the University Secretary will be permitted to speak only at the discretion of the moderator of University Council and in the event that time remains after the scheduled speakers.