

## Report of the Senate Review Committee

The Senate Review Committee was constituted by the Gymkhana Review Committee in its first meeting. Its members were:

- Sarthak Chandra (Convener)
- Srijan Shetty
- Shashank Bhandari
- Karthik Balasundaram
- Ankit Bhutani
- Anurag Sahay

The committee met twice, once from 11:00 PM, 26th September, 2013 to 12:30 AM, 27th September, 2013 and once from 9:00 PM, 15th October, 2013 to 7:00 AM, 16th October, 2013.

The following issues were discussed, and accordingly the following solutions are being proposed by the committee:

Issue:

Attendance of Senators and rules regarding nominees

Proposed Solution:

It is proposed that the current rules be made to the following:

- If a Senator is Absent without Notification the Chairman shall issue a showcause notice to the Senator. If two-thirds of the Senate is unsatisfied with his/her response, then the Senator stands removed from the post.
- A Senator will be removed from his position if he/she is Absent without Permission for 2 meetings
- A Senator will be removed from his position if he/she is Absent with or without Permission for 3 meetings
- A Senator may send a nominee to 20% of the meetings that have as yet occurred rounded up or 2 meetings, whichever is higher.
- A nominee must be of the same batch as the Senator
- Written permission is to be sought before a deadline fixed by the Chairperson, who shall reply as soon as possible. The list of people who have been given permission shall be circulated 2 hours before the meeting
- If a senator leaves the meeting for 10 minutes, he shall be considered absent with or without permission.

Issue:

Size of the Senate

Proposed Solution:

It is proposed that the Senator to batch mate ratio be decreased to 1:150. Also, it recommended that the actual size of the Senate should ideally be around 40 members, and in future years the Senate may

review this ratio as need be.

Issue:

Conflict of Interest for Senate office bearers

Proposed Solution:

The committee was only able to come up with a part solution. It proposes that the following posts should be considered conflicting posts and should not be held by the same individual:

- Members of the Finance committee & Individuals with financial executive responsibilities
- Festival Teams & Senate nominees to the COFA
- Finance Committee & COFA

For the following the committee could not agree on whether a conflict of interest existed:

- HEC members & Students' Senate Nominee to COSHA
- Conveners of standing committees & any other position

The committee felt that the President, Chairman and the General Secretaries should not hold any other position unless explicitly appointed by the Senate.

Finally the committee agreed that if the Senate at a later time feels there is a conflict of interest, the person in question may be asked to resign from one of the posts.

Issue:

Lack of Information flow

Proposed Solutions:

- The Senate website should be greatly improved. In specific, the following points must be looked into:
  - Maintaining the names of all members of subcommittees and all information pertaining to the senate.
  - The Senate website should be as updated as possible
  - Tags should be added to every agenda item so they can be searched at a later time
- A Facebook page should be maintained by the Chairman wherein the agenda items should be uploaded as soon as they are admitted. Additionally the draft minutes should also be uploaded once prepared.

Issue:

Sub-committees take too much time to submit report.

Proposed Solution:

The Chairman and the Senate should be particular about deadlines, especially through the use of a regular ATR. The terms of reference (Purview and Mandate) be clearly specified in the minutes at the time of constitution, and should include the deadline of submission.

Issue:

Emergency committee never meets

Proposed Solution:

It is proposed that the Emergency committee be dissolved. In place, the quorum requirement for Emergency Senate meetings be changed to the following:

- Atleast 1/4th of the total strength of the Senate
- Atleast one Senator from every batch with 4 or more senators

Furthermore, any decision taken under Emergency quorum must be ratified by the full sitting Senate in the next meeting. The decision taken shall be enforced until said ratification

Issue:

Conflicts of interest in the nominations committee

Proposed Solution:

The committee came up with two possible solutions to the current issue:

- The nominations committee towards the end of its tenure nominate a panel consisting of graduating students for nominating students to various posts
- The nominations committee shall make clear who they are nominating to the standing committees before calling for nominations. These individuals can be in the interview panels without any issue.

The guidance of the GRC is sought between these two solutions.

Issue:

Senators do not read the constitution, and the agenda items before coming for meetings

Proposed Solution:

It is proposed that hard copies of constitution be handed to senators during elections. Additionally, all agenda items should be sent to the Senate list directly, so that Senators have the time to read them well in advance of the meeting. However, it shall remain the right of the Steering Committee and not the Senate over the mailing list to reject or admit an agenda.

Issue:

Information regarding the ratified posts one holds does not reach the student

Proposed Solution:

It is proposed that a nominations portal be setup online, in a similar nature to that of PAS, used by the SPO. All call for nominations shall be uploaded on this portal, and all results for any call that is put on the portal must also be put up on the portal. Similar to how the SPO works, once a student is appointed to a post, he/she should be made to acknowledge their appointment. Only once this entire procedure is over shall the student be ratified in the Senate. This will also prove handy in keeping record of various posts held by people, for verification by the SPO.

Notwithstanding the above, the committee recommends the following:

- Change in voting procedures for elections of the Chairperson conveners of standing sub-committees of the Senate
  - It is proposed that the nominations procedure to be similar in structure to the currently followed method, but be carried out differently. The call for nominations should be made around 72 hours before the Senate meeting where the final voting will occur. The deadline for accepting nominations is to be set at 48 hours before the meeting. At this time, the Chairperson will send out a mail to the Senate list informing all Senators of the students that have been nominated for the posts. Then a second deadline is set at 24 hours before the meeting, before which students may choose to file nominations themselves if they have not done so earlier, or withdraw their currently existing nominations. The final list of candidates shall be declared 24 hours before the meeting.
  - A student may not be nominated for more than one post. A student who has not nominated himself for any post may not nominate anyone else for any post. A student who has not nominated himself may nominate at most one person per post.
  - For all Senate officebearers, (ie, Chairperson, Parliamentarian, Conveners of Standing Subcommittees), it is proposed that the General Secretaries, including the President, should not have the right to nominate or vote.
- Guidelines for SSF and review of Financial affairs
  - The committee strongly feels that there is requirement for a complete review of the SSF, and a committee be formed within the GRC to complete this task, as well as look into other possible financial issues within the Gymkhana
- General Body Members in standing sub-committees
  - It is proposed that while Senate nominees to the standing sub-committees of the Senate should ideally be Senators, the rule should be relaxed so that if a General Body Member is proposed by one Senator and seconded by two Senators, he/she may also contest the elections for senate nominees.
- Senate Grievance Redressal Committee
  - It is proposed that a Senate Grievance Redressal Committee (SGC) be setup as a standing subcommittee of the Senate. The purpose of this committee shall be manifold. It shall be another level of redressal before approaching the Grievance Redressal Committee of a GC event or the elections. Furthermore, any grievance that any student has at any point of time with any body, whether in the Gymkhana such as a club/hobby group/festival, or the Senate, or a General Secretary, or the Institute authorities may be submitted to the SGRC, who shall determine if the grievance is legitimate, and shall submit to the Senate any possible remedies. The guidance of the GRC is sought on this item particularly.
- Nominations committee
  - It is proposed that after every meeting of standing committees of the Academic Senate, the Students' Senate nominees shall report to the nominations committee in writing the decisions taken. The nominations committee will then compile these, which will be sent to the Senate for noting.
- Motion for Caucus
  - It is proposed that the concept of "Caucus" be introduced into Senate proceedings. In

particular, if the discussion or debate in the Senate floor goes on for too long due to lack of consensus, any Senator may Move for Caucus. If 1/3rd of the present and voting Senators vote in favour of the motion, the Senate shall enter into an unmoderated Caucus for 5-10 minutes wherein Senators mingle among each other to freely discuss their opinion on the agenda and resolve issues individually. With the consent of half the present and voting Senators, a Caucus may be extended up to 20 minutes. No Caucus may last for more than 20 minutes. A Motion for Caucus can be called only once for any agenda item.

- Commendation and Reprimands
  - It is proposed that whenever a Senator, Convener, or Committee does any commendable work, then appropriate commendations be noted down in the minutes of the meeting.
  - Conversely, if someone fails to do their required work to the satisfaction of the Senate, an appropriate reprimand shall also be noted.
- Unified format for ratifications
  - It is proposed that a uniform format and form be used for all ratifications. This will automatically happen if the issue regarding *“Information regarding post ratifications does not reach the person who is ratified”* be resolved in the manner proposed above.
- Special/Emergency Senate meetings
  - It is proposed that the definitions and rules and procedures pertaining to Special Senate meetings and Emergency Senate meetings be updated in the Constitution.
- Posts recognized under the Students' Gymkhana
  - It is proposed that all positions that exist should be defined in the Constitution. If any new post is being created or appointed by the Senate, the recommending authority should make clear what post in the Constitution it is equivalent to.
- Impeachment voting rules
  - The current rules for impeachment are not clear with respect to what constitutes a majority. It is proposed that impeachment rules be changed to the following:
    - For removing/impeaching any body in a position appointed by the Senate, the motion to impeach shall pass by simple majority, ie. if half the Senators present and voting vote in favor of the motion.
    - For removing/impeaching any body in a position appointed by the General Body, the motion to impeach shall pass by special majority, ie. if two-thirds of the Senators present and voting and at least half the strength of the total Senate vote in favor of the motion.
    - For removing/impeaching any body in a position appointed by the a fraction of the General Body, the motion to impeach shall pass by special majority, ie. if two-thirds of the Senators present and voting and at least half the strength of the total Senate vote in favor of the motion.
- Minutes of Meetings
  - The committee strongly recommends that the Minutes of Senate meetings should be necessarily be prepared within 2 weeks of the Meeting. Additionally, if there is a change to be made in the minutes during confirmation, the change may not be confirmed in the same meeting, and must be brought again in the next Meeting of the Senate. However, the other parts of the Minutes may be partially confirmed by the Senate.
- Election procedure and functioning of ad-hoc subcommittees

- It is proposed that the election procedure and functioning outlined in the Constitution be edited to bring them in line with the current established practice. In particular, the concept of having separate Chairs and Conveners/Secretary should be codified, as well as their responsibilities.
- Decision making process
  - It is proposed that the decision making process of the Senate outlined in the Constitution be revised according to the current established practice. In particular, an intermediate method of decision making by show of hands should be codified.
- Constitution waiver clause
  - It is proposed that to counteract any ambiguities and redundancies in the Constitution, a waiver clause be included in the Constitution which allows the Senate to waive some articles of the Constitution unanimously as a special case. That is, if even one present Senator objects to the waiver, it may not take place. Following this waiver, it shall be necessary that a Constitutional amendment to the same effect be tabled in the next Senate meeting.