

End-Term Report

Rules and Procedures Committee, Students' Senate 2012-13

The Rules and Procedures Committee, Student's Senate 2012-13 has had four meetings in the 2012-13 term, which were held on July 31st, 2012, October 2nd, 2012, October 31st, 2012, and February 13th, 2013, and one Emergency Meeting, which was held on November 11th, 2012. The following is the summary of the recommendations made by the Committee to the Senate on the various agenda items discussed.

1. Discussion on expansion of the Steering Committee

It was recommended that

- a. Two new posts be introduced for the Students' Senate, those of Web-Master, Students' Senate, to manage the website of the Senate, and a Secretary, Students' Senate, with the responsibility of preparing the ATR, following up on various issues, and any other responsibility as decided by the Senate
- b. The posts should be open to General Body Members
- c. A constitutional amendment should be brought about after trying out the proposed system for some time

2. Discussion on the constitutional validity of the proposal for the submission of mid-term and end-term reports by Senators

The Rules and Procedures Committee discussed the matter and the following conclusions were reached:

- a. Since the work of the Senate is purely legislative, the Senate cannot accept any report citing any non-legislative work done by the Senators, as any such work would be independent of their duties as a Senator, and hence be irrelevant for submission as a report from a Senator to the Student's Senate
- b. In order to give credit where it is due, the Executives can include the names of any Senators who assisted them with any executive work in their Councils mid-term and end-term reports
- c. The Rules and Procedures Committee strongly feels that the Senate should review its decision on the submission of voluntary mid-term and end-term reports by the Senators, as this proposal is constitutionally unsound

3. Discussion on the role of the Finance Committee in managing the finances of the Students' Gymkhana

The committee discussed the division of roles between the executive and the legislative arms of the Senate at length and came to the following conclusions:

- a. The Constitution has laid out a distinction between the executive and the legislature, and the Finance Committee, being a sub-committee of the Students' Senate, has a purely legislative function, and it is their responsibility to 'control and supervise the expenditures incurred by the executive wings of the Gymkhana' (article 4.04), 'to finalize

the budget' (article 7.05) and carry out all policy-making decisions related to the finances.

- b. The chapter on the 'Rules and Procedures Regarding the Financial Affairs of the Gymkhana' states time and again that all responsibility to get any expenditure approved, to verify bills and carry out the actual financial procedures lies with the executives.
- c. The Finance Committee members who are ex-officio members of the various Councils have the responsibility to advise the Council on all financial procedures, and to ensure that all rules and procedures related to the finances are being carried out appropriately. Since they are ex-officio members of the Council by virtue of being members of a sub-committee of the Students' Senate, and 'no sub-committee of the Students' Senate shall have any executive function whatever' (appendix 2.1), these members shall not have an executive role in the councils to which they belong, rather, a purely advisory and supervisory role.

4. Discussion on the proposed constitutional amendment regarding the composition of the COSHA

The constitutional amendment proposed by the COSHA Convener regarding the change in composition of the COSHA was discussed and the following conclusions were reached:

- a. The proposed amendment was favored by the Rules and Procedures Committee
- b. The Policy/Procedure document which was submitted by the COSHA Convener was also discussed, and it was felt that while the first two points of the document were valid, points 3 and 4 were redundant, as they are clearly laid down in the Constitution of the Students' Gymkhana, and need not be present in the document.

5. Discussion on the new proposed system for Senator Elections

A new Constitutional amendment was proposed for Senator elections in the Gymkhana, which follows a single transferable preferential voting system instead of the preferential voting system currently being followed, and was discussed by the Committee in detail.

It was felt by the committee that:

- a. In principle, the new method of voting would help solve some major problems in the current voting system being followed, such as providing a fairer opportunity for people who want to contest the elections to contest the same, by de-incentivizing the imposition of a restriction on the number of candidates contesting for a particular post in the election from a particular community of people sharing common interests.
- b. However, a rigorous mathematical analysis of the proposed system suggests that for any post, the total number of preferences a voter must give would be the number of people contesting for the post minus one. It was felt that a problem which could come up in such a scenario could be that in the case of a very large number of people contesting for a particular post, the prospect of choosing such a large number of preferences could lead to a larger population choosing not to vote.

- c. Thus, taking the implementation of the proposal into consideration, it was felt that a deeper analysis is required to try to find a way around the problems in the proposed system, but it was also agreed that in spirit, the proposed system would certainly have some significant advantages over the current system.

6. Discussion on the following issues regarding Vox Populi referred to the Rules and Procedures Committee by the Senate:

- a. 'Can a club of the Student's Gymkhana function independently without the supervision from the corresponding General Secretary?'

The Constitution of the Student's Gymkhana clearly lays down in article 5.07 that the General Secretary, Films and Media Council, being the Chair of the council, shall supervise and coordinate all its activities, and thus, it was felt by the committee that as per the present structure of the Gymkhana, a club cannot function independently of the supervision of the corresponding General Secretary.

- b. 'Can the President, Student's Gymkhana over-rule a decision taken by a particular club in a council?'

The Constitution of the Students' Gymkhana lays down in article 2.16 that the President, as the chief Executive of the Gymkhana can attend the meetings of all the councils/committees of the Senate except the Finance Committee, the Rules and Procedures Committee and the Steering Committee as a full-fledged member and can over-rule any decisions taken by them. In the event of the President doing so, he/her shall be obliged, if requested by the concerned body, to requisition a meeting of the Senate and place his/her decision before it. In the light of this article, the Rules and Procedures Committee opined that the President does have the discretion to over-rule a decision taken by any council and therefore, club, of the Gymkhana, and in such an event the concerned body can request that the matter be taken up in the Senate for consideration.

7. Drafting of the following proposed constitutional amendments

- a. **Replacement of the word 'ratification' with the word 'confirmation' when used in relation to the minutes of the Senate meeting to better reflect the act carried out by the Senate in the process**

The Rules and Procedures Committee felt that the change would better reflect the act carried out by the Senate in relation of the minutes of the Senate meetings, and also bring the terminology in alignment with that used in the Academic Senate of the Institute.

- b. **Renaming the post of 'Convener, Students' Senate' to 'Chairperson, Students' Senate' in order to better reflect the responsibilities associated with it**

The constitutional amendment regarding the renaming the post of 'Convener, Students' Senate' to 'Chairperson, Students' Senate' was discussed by the Rules and Procedures Committee, and it was felt that the term 'Chairperson' better describes the responsibilities

carried out by the Convener, and thus the proposed amendment was favored by the committee.

c. Reorganization of the Office of the Students' Senate

The proposal was for the addition of an additional part to the clause under Chapter 1 of Appendix 1 of the Gymkhana Constitution regarding the Office of the Students' Senate. The Rules and Procedures Committee discussed the proposed amendment, and felt that this clause would indeed help streamline the work of the Office of the Students' Senate. Thus, the proposed amendment was favored by the committee with the addition of the following line:

The name(s) of the person(s) for the post(s) shall be proposed by the Convener to the Senate for ratification.

d. Holding elections for the Conveners of the various standing committees of the Senate along with the election of Convener, Students' Senate

The Rules and Procedures Committee favored the proposed amendment, as it was felt that this practice would help the Conveners of the various standing-committees to have some time before they have to start carrying out their duties, and hence would give them the time to learn about the responsibilities and duties of the post they are taking up.

Members:

Jyoti Gupta (Chair)

Shouvik Sachdeva

Srinivas Chitturi

Ankit Bhutani, Convener, Students' Senate (Ex-officio member)