



Memorandum

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TO: Senate

FROM: Mr. Stephen Stropale, Secretary-General

SUBJECT: October 18 Senate Open Discussion: Making Senate meetings more meaningful: Enhancing discussion and engagement

DATE: October 10, 2013

DOCUMENT #: D13-17

ACTION REQUIRED: INFORMATION APPROVAL/DECISION

ISSUE & EXPECTED OUTCOME: Several Senators have expressed an interest in moving to a meeting format that would allow and encourage a greater exchange of ideas and increased engagement at Senate meetings. The goal of this open discussion is to consider strategies for enabling more meaningful Senate meetings and mechanisms for acting on recommendations that may arise.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE: The current structure of Senate meetings reflects several influences.

The University's Calendar of Business, which is developed by the Secretariat in consultation with multiple units across the University, outlines the items which will be brought forward to Senate in a given governance year. The Calendar of Business contains both routine matters which are brought forward to Senate each year such as annual reports as well as special initiatives to develop or revise policy and regulations. The Calendar of Business, in turn, is informed by section 6 of the Statutes which sets out the matters within Senate's purview.

The order of the agenda (and the meeting) is prescribed by the Senate Standing Rules of Procedure (article VI). The order prescribed by the Rules of Procedure has the effect of deferring the consideration of substantive matters to well after the beginning of the meeting.

The Steering Committee reviews and recommends approval of Senate agendas. One approach to encourage greater exchange of ideas has been to schedule open discussion at some Senate meetings. An open discussion is one where Senate is able to discuss a topic of academic interest without having a pre-determined outcome or purpose. In recent years open discussions have been included on two or three agendas each year.

In response to a recent invitation to all Senators to submit topics for such open discussion, Secretariat received six submissions.

**MOTION OR
RESOLUTION**

N/A

FOR APPROVAL:

**PRIOR
CONSULTATION:**

N/A

NEXT STEPS:

Establish a working group to prepare a report on mechanisms and actions identified during the discussion for consideration and implementation by the Steering Committee.

APPENDICES:

N/A