

# Proposal for a new USG Election Procedure

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## 1 Current state

Currently, there are election at the end of each Spring and each Fall semester during which the Collage representatives and the Focus area representative and the treasurer are elected respectively. The Collage representatives chair the CAC, the focus area representatives chair the AAC and the treasurer the FAC. Additionally, during the Spring/Fall semester the president/vice president of the USG is elected. These elected member of the USG form the USG Parliament.

## 2 Problems with the current system

**The problem of continuity** The problem is that often inexperienced students are elected into the USG and secondly, that the experience of the previous members is hardly passed on to the new ones. This, leads to the USG working on the same issues over and over again, without learning from previous attempts. As pointed out in the handbook the student body (including the USG) has a collective memory of at most 18 month.

This was the reason to have the elections at the end of the semesters and to invite the newly elected as a standing guest for the remaining semester, before putting them into office officially. While improving the situation, the problem is still present. Furthermore, the new chair of a committee might be amongst the least experienced members of the committee when elected.

**Unfamiliarity with the USG procedures** Up until now, a vast majority of elected USG members had no previous experience in the USG and were not familiar with the rules and procedures in the USG when elected. Furthermore, the new chair of committee should be familiar with the procedures and customs of the committee. Particularly, the chairs of a committee should be previous members of that committee and accepted amongst the members of the committee.

**The right of the committees to have a say in the choice of their chair** Currently, the current members of a committee have no say in the election of their chair. This, is suboptimal for various reasons:

- The chair is not accustomed with the workings of the committee.
- The chair might not know the other members before coming into office, limiting them ability to chair the committee meetings.
- The committee members can judge the strength and weaknesses of the other members they worked with. Their experience is neglected in the process of selecting a new chair.

**Equal representation of committees in the parliament** It is important that all committee's interests (after all the actors in the USG with most manpower which do most of the work) are well represented in the parliament and to ensure a good cooperation between the parliament and the committees. Also different committees can have different interests and it is important that they are all as equally as possible represented in the parliament.

**Inflexibility of the election system** Currently, Collage representatives are allowed only to chair the CAC, Focus area representatives are only allowed to chair the AAC and only the treasurer is allowed to chair the FAC. This way if a member of a USG committee wants to run for an elected office to chair their committee, they can only run in the Fall semester to chair the FAC or AAC and only in Spring to chair the CAC. However, forcing committed committee members running in an election to chair a different committee, leads to the above problems. Therefore, committee members running in an election to (co)-chair their committee are currently unnecessarily restricts from running.

### 3 Suggestion

The idea is to elect the members of parliament from current USG members and to allow the committees to decide on their own chair. In practice the Members of Parliament and Committee chairs would be chosen as follows.

At the end of each semester, candidates from the USG can run as candidates for members of parliament. Additionally each USG member can decide to run for the position of the (vice)-president in the Fall/Spring semester respectively. These candidates are then voted on by the student body and the  $n$  candidates with most votes form the newly elected members of parliament (where  $n$  denotes the number of committees in the USG). Additionally, the (vice)-president is elected. Amongst the elected candidates from each committee, the committee may elect its (co)-chair (requires the parliaments approval). Alternatively, or if no candidate from the committee got elected, either the committee may decide on a chair amongst its non-elected members (requires the parliament's approval) or the committee may accept a different member of parliament as a (co)-chair (requires the committee's approval). In the first case the chair of the committee is invited as a standing guest to the parliament and granted the same rights as a member of parliament, but with voting power limited to decision in the responsibility of the committee, in order to properly represent the committee to the parliament. If no co-chair is elected the previous chair (if not eligible, the previous co-chair) becomes the new co-chair by default.

In case parliament and committees can't agree on chairs for a committee, the parliament can decision on the chair (one of the members of parliament) with a 2/3 majority of members including the president. The committee, can reject this decision with an absolute 2/3 majority, in this case an election by the USB between the candidate from the committee and from the parliament is carried out to decide the issue.

Each USG member may have at most one (co)-chair position in a committee.

## 4 Discussion

**The problem of continuity and unfamiliarity with USG procedures** This problem is mostly addressed by the proposal, since all elected members must be previous USG members and in case of the committee usually committee members and since they are present at the parliament for some time at the end of the semester in which they got elected without yet being in office.

**The right of the committees to have a say in the choice of their chair** This problem is addressed by the proposal, unless no committee member got elected or approved by the parliament (this should be rare). In this case, there is no good solution which still allows the student body to elect its leaders, so this is a necessary compromise.

**Equal representation of committees in the parliament** This problem is not very well addressed, although the situation is somewhat improved by the committee's additional influence in the election of their (co)-chair. Furthermore, by this procedure a stronger connection and cooperation between the parliament and the committees is facilitated.

**Inflexibility of the election system** This, is partially fixed, in fact the proposed election system gives the USG a lot of flexibility.

**Agreeing on a chair** The main weakness of this proposal is the difficulty of selecting a chair for the committees, specifically in case of a conflict between the parliament and the committee. However, assuming a minimal degree of cooperation and acceptance for compromises on both sides, such issues can still be resolvable.

On behalf of the:  
USG Parliament  
Undergraduate Student Government

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