

January 25, 2013

Dr. Martha Nell Smith
Chair, University Senate
3238 Tawes Hall
College Park, MD 20742-8878

Dear Dr. Smith,

The Elections Representation and Governance (ERG) Committee has considered a wide range of important questions on matters of shared governance over the past three years. In addition to reviewing the Plan of Organization for almost every College and School at the University, considering how Senate quorums should be calculated, modifying Senate committee memberships, and developing procedures for deciding contested elections and filling vacant Senate seats, the Committee has promulgated a new and comprehensive set of best practices in shared governance to provide guidance throughout the University as appropriate. As you know the Committee plans to prepare a series of memoranda concerning the upcoming University Plan of Organization Review (POR), in order to bring critical issues to the attention of the POR Committee. Many of these issues will be based on questions raised in ERG research and discussion over the past few years.

In addition to the items mentioned above, the Committee feels that a thoughtful review of shared governance institutions and practices across the campus would provide invaluable insight for the POR process. At its last meeting on December 14, 2012, the ERG Committee voted unanimously to formally request that the SEC charge the Committee:

1. To determine, to the extent possible, what College and School bodies of shared governance regularly meet and how they function in practice.
2. To investigate what other non-formal bodies of shared governance exist on the campus and their relationship to formal shared governance (e.g. the Student Government Association).
3. To investigate any significant differences in how the University of Maryland, College Park, carries out Board of Regents mandated shared governance and how it is implemented at other System institutions.
4. To present to the SEC any additional issues which are discovered in the course of carrying out this charge which may warrant consideration by the University Senate, and make recommendations as to whether existing practice is sufficient or whether any changes should be recommended for consideration to the POR Committee.



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Based on the forecast workload for the Committee this coming semester, we anticipate that a structure for carrying out this charge would be developed by the February meeting, with collation and consideration of data during March and April with the goal of presenting findings, and perhaps some preliminary recommendations, to the Senate in May. The Committee anticipates that making a full set of recommendations on the findings and delivering them to the SEC and the POR Committee would require the work to continue into the 2013-2014 academic year. Thank you for your consideration in bringing this matter before the SEC, and we look forward to receiving a formal charge from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Devin H. Ellis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D".

Devin H Ellis
Chair, Elections Representation and Governance (ERG) Committee