

**PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS OF SENATE**  
**The Revisions of “Functions of the Senate” (1982)**  
**as proposed by SORC in a Senate notice of motion, 25 Nov. 2010**

**Comparison, with Comments, by Mark Jones**

**1982 = Current “Functions” Document, 1982**  
***Proposed* = Proposed Revision, as attached to Senate Agenda, 25 Nov. 2010**

\*\*\*

**Text of *Proposed*, with parallels from 1982 in red, and comments in [ ] brackets:**

**Senate Purpose:**

The Senate determines all matters of an academic character that affect the University as a whole, and is concerned with all matters that affect the general welfare of the University and its constituents.

*1982:*

1. To determine all matters of an academic character which affect the University as a whole, and to be concerned with all matters which affect the welfare of the University.

[Comments:

(1) What is listed as the first “function” of Senate in *1982* is now removed from the list of “functions” and **becomes only a “purpose.”** This subtly weakens it, insofar as a “function” is essential, but a “purpose” may or may not be fulfilled.

(2) *Proposed* adds “and its constituents,” which appears unobjectionable.]

**Functions of Senate:**

***Legislative Functions:***

1. To approve, subject to the ratification of the Board of Trustees, any faculty, school, centre or institute.

*1982:*

3. To establish, subject to the ratification of the Board of Trustees, any faculty, school, institute, department, or chair.

[Comments:

(1) **“To establish” is downgraded to “To approve.”** Query, does this position the Board of Trustees as primary authority (or could it, if the Board’s terms of reference were revised correspondingly)?

(2) *Proposed* expands “institute” to “centre or institute”

(3) *Proposed* omits **“department, or chair”**; but see *Proposed*, item 2, below. ]

2. To approve, subject to ratification of the Board of Trustees, the establishment of named and funded chairs and professorships.

[Comments:

- (1) This appears to be new, but it partly corresponds to “**department, or chair,**” in 1982, function 3 (see above).
  - (2) In that light, the omission of “department” may be significant. **In Proposed, it will no longer be a “function” of Senate to “establish” a department.**
  - (3) Likewise, it will no longer be Senate’s “**function**” to “**establish**” a chair, but only to “approve . . . the establishment of named and funded chairs”]
3. To approve and review cyclically all programs of study leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate, together with the conditions of admission thereto and the qualifications and standards required.

1982:

4. To approve, on the recommendation of the respective Faculty Boards and Schools and the Queen's Theological College, all programs of study leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate, together with the conditions of admission thereto and the qualifications and standards required.

[Comments:

- (1) *Proposed* adds “and review cyclically”
  - (2) *Proposed* omits “**on the recommendation of the respective Faculty Boards and Schools and the Queen's Theological College.**” Does this envision a loss of autonomy or initiative on the parts of the Faculty Boards and Schools?]
4. To approve and periodically review the terms of fellowships, scholarships, medals and prizes.

1982:

7. To establish the terms of all fellowships, scholarships, medals, and prizes; and to award all fellowships, scholarships, medals and prizes which are offered in open competition throughout the University.

[Comments:

- (1) *Proposed* downgrades “**To establish**” to “To approve,” and removes “**all.**”
  - (2) *Proposed* adds “and periodically review”
  - (3) *Proposed* omits “**and to award all fellowships, scholarships, medals and prizes which are offered in open competition throughout the University.**” Is this an oversight, or is this function transferred to a different University body?]
5. To grant all honorary degrees and to grant on the recommendation of faculty boards and schools all earned degrees, diplomas, and certificates awarded by the University.

1982:

8. To grant all honorary degrees, and to grant on the recommendation of the respective Faculty Boards, Schools, and the Queen's Theological College, all earned degrees, diplomas, and certificates awarded by the University.

[Comments:

(1) *Proposed* omits “and the Queen's Theological College.”]

6. To approve policies and procedures regarding student academic and non-academic matters and to have final responsibility for the discipline of students, including the power to require a student to withdraw. The power to discipline students may be delegated to student organizations.

1982:

11. To have responsibility for the well-being of students and to have final responsibility for their discipline including the power to dismiss students for cause. The Alma Mater Society of Queen's University and the Society of Graduate and Professional Students share responsibility for, and have the right to promote, the well-being of their members. In the discharge of its disciplinary power, the Senate shall have regard to the initial responsibility of the Alma Mater Society of Queen's University and the Society of Graduate and Professional Students for the discipline of students in non-academic matters; the Senate may review the decisions of the Alma Mater Society of Queen's University and the Society of Graduate and Professional Students with respect to the discipline of students, and may take such action as it deems appropriate.

[Comments: This revision appears to be largely a matter of compression, but

(1) a disciplinary responsibility in non-academic matters that in 1982 was “shared” with student organizations and in fact was formulated as their “initial responsibility” is now attributed to Senate but may be “delegated” to the student organizations.

(2) Language concerning both Senate’s and the student organizations’ “responsibility for the well-being of students” has been omitted.]

7. To approve university policies governing the central academic services of the University such as the library and information technology systems.

1982:

13. To establish university policy governing the central academic services of the University such as the library system and the computer system.

[Comments:

(1) Again, “To establish” is downgraded to “To approve”;

(2) “policy” becomes “policies”;

(3) “the computer system” becomes “information technology systems.”]

***Academic Planning and Educational Environment Functions:***

8. To participate in University planning as it relates to the two primary roles of the QUPC:
  - a. To review, comment and make recommendations on new and proposed plans, including the University Academic plan;
  - b. To advise on the University's budget development process.

*1982:*

2. To participate in planning the development of the University.  
[and]
9. To review the main elements of the approved operating budget of the University so as to advise the Principal on its consistency with the general needs and interests of the University and on any considerations for future budgeting.

[Comments: These are complex revisions, and to be fully understood one must consult the terms of reference for [QUPC](#). But:

(1) Vis-à-vis the simple statement of function 2 in *1982*, the more elaborate language of function 8 in *Proposed* serves to restrict Senate's planning functions.

**(2) As occurs elsewhere in *Proposed*, the new function 8a uses language ("To review, comment and make recommendations") that restricts Senate's function to a merely advisory level; yet the planning functions envisioned here specifically include "the University Academic plan." Surely Senate should have the initiative and final authority for the University's academic plan, rather than merely a right to comment and recommend. Query: recommend to whom? If not Senate, what body is envisioned here as having the final authority?**

(2) The new function 8b, "To advise on the University's budget development process," would downgrade the Senate function of "advis[ing] the principal" on the "operating budget" in relation to "general needs and interests of the University and on any considerations for future budgeting," to advising "on the budget development process." There is no longer any language according Senate the right to advise on the operating budget itself.

9. To approve the proposed annual enrolment plan developed by the University Registrar.

[Comments:

(1) There is no parallel stipulation in *1982*, but the right to determine enrolment is implicit in *1982*'s first function, "To determine all matters of an academic character which affect the University as a whole, and to be concerned with all matters which affect the welfare of the University."

(2) Here again, *Proposed* appears to downgrade Senate's function from "To determine" to "To approve." To maintain the powers of *1982*, it seems there should be language providing Senate the right to *direct* the University Registrar on matters of enrolment. ]

10. To commit, through policies and programs, to the creation of an environment

at the University that recognizes equity and diversity as being vital to and in harmony with its educational purposes and standards of excellence as an institution.

[Comment: There is no parallel stipulation in 1982. The addition should be welcome.]

***Appointment/Selection Functions:***

11. To share with the Board of Trustees the responsibility for selection of the Principal through a committee composed equally of members of the Senate and the Board.

*1982:*

14. To share with the Board of Trustees the responsibility for the selection of the Principal through a committee composed equally of members of the Senate and the Board and instructed to recommend to the Board a virtually unanimous choice.

[Comment: Identical wording, but omitting the stipulation of 1982, “and instructed to recommend to the Board a virtually unanimous choice.” The reason for and meaning of this deletion are not clear.]

12. To appoint, establish terms of reference, and have responsibility for committees to carry out the purpose and the related functions of Senate.

*1982:*

15. To appoint such committees as it may deem desirable and to specify, consistently with the functions enumerated above, the terms of reference of any such committees.

[Comment: Re-worded, but the practical meaning appears to remain the same.]

***Collegial Functions:***

13. To serve as a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas among the members of the academic community.

[Comment: There is no parallel stipulation in 1982. The addition should be welcome.]

**Functions of 1982 that do not appear to be represented in *Proposed* (why not is not stated):**

5. On the recommendation of the respective Faculty Boards, Schools and the Queen's Theological College to publish the University calendars.

6. On the recommendation of the respective Faculty Boards, Schools and the Queen's

Theological College to conduct examinations, and to decide finally all matters relating thereto.

10. To advise the Board of Trustees through the Principal as to what buildings and other capital facilities are required to meet the needs of the University and in what order of priority.

12. To establish the procedures to be followed in the appointment of members of the academic staff, vice-principals, deans, and heads of departments, and to establish policies and procedures concerning the conditions under which, in the case of academic staff, promotions shall be given, tenure granted, appointments terminated and sabbatical or other leave granted.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Collective Agreement between Queen's University and Queen's University Faculty Association supercedes the provisions of Function 12 that apply to members of the academic staff and heads of departments covered by the Agreement. Function 12 applies to clinical faculty. [Note appended by SORC]