

FIFTH STUDENT SENATE
THIRD SESSION

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
FALL 1986

Senate Bill No. 1A-6

INTRODUCED BY
MR. PRESIDENT

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT

BE IT ENACTED BY THE STUDENT SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
AT AUSTIN:

Section 1. The following referendum shall be placed on the
ballot in the next general election of the Students' Association:

QUESTION _____. Do you support the staggering of terms for at-large
student senators, by providing for the election of three one-year
and three two-year senators in March and nine one-year senators
in October? (Currently, four one-year and four two-year senators
are elected in March; none are elected in October.)

Section 2. Upon passage of the referendum by the student body
of the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Texas
System Board of Regents, Sections 3.31 and 3.32 shall be amended
as follows:

3.31 One undergraduate student elected for each two thousand (2000)
undergraduate students, or major fraction thereof, with a
minimum of one student elected from each school or college,
enrolled in the School of Architecture, College of Business
Administration, College of Communication, College of Education,
College of Engineering, College of Fine Arts, College of
Liberal Arts, College of Natural Sciences, School of Nursing,
College of Pharmacy, School of Social Work, and any subsequent
undergraduate school or college, and one graduate student elected
for each two thousand (2000) graduate students, or major fraction
thereof, enrolled in the Graduate School and School of Law, with
a minimum of one student elected from each of the following:
Graduate School of Business, School of Library and Information
Science, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, and any
subsequent graduate school or college. These students shall be
elected by the members of the Students' Association who are
enrolled in the respective school or college which they
represent, and shall serve for a term of one year. Students
pursuing joint degrees may vote and run for the Student Senate
under either school in which they seek to receive a degree,
providing that such students may vote and run in only one
school during a single [academic-year] long session semester
or summer session. Each student may cast one vote per candidate
for up to the number of Senate seats available for the respective
school or college. The candidate(s) receiving the highest

number of votes for the seat(s) available shall be certified as Student Senators. The general election for these senators and the officers referred to in 3.33 and 3.34 shall be held on the first Tuesday and Wednesday in March.

- 3.32 ~~[Twelve]~~ Eighteen students elected at large by the members of the Students' Association. ~~[Eight]~~ Six students shall be elected for two-year terms, with ~~[four]~~ three students elected ~~[each-year]~~ during each March general election. ~~[Four]~~ Twelve students shall be elected for one-year terms~~[+]~~, with three students elected during each March general election and nine students elected during each October general election. The general election in the fall semester shall be held on the third Wednesday in October.

Section 3. The provisions of Section 2 of this act shall take effect beginning with the March 1987 general elections.

Section 4. This act will not affect the terms of any student senators or officers of the Students' Association that were specified by election or appointment prior to passage of this act.

A PROPOSAL IN THE INTEREST OF CONTINUITY IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

by Andrew Chin

Background

The resignations of two at-large senators, having been accepted by the Coordinating Committee pursuant to 1984 Bylaws I.2, leaves the 1986-87 Student Senate with a rare, convenient opportunity to bring greater continuity to the leadership of the Students' Association.

Precedent for this proposal exists in the 1955-56 Student Assembly, as described in David Scott Goldstein's Student Government Experience at the University of Texas at Austin, 1932-33 to 1982-83 at page 92:

The other ... changes did necessitate constitutional amendments. The first required staggered terms for Student Assemblymen -- half to be elected in October and half in April -- so as to provide a greater degree of continuity in the Assembly. After passage of this amendment in spring 1956, a full slate of Assemblymen was elected the following October, and the new representatives then drew lots to determine whether they would serve for one or two semesters -- a system similar to the one used in the Texas Senate decennially after district lines are redrawn.

What the Proposal Would Do

1. Currently, there are 4 one-year senators-at-large and 8 two-year senators-at-large, with terms beginning and ending in April. The proposal would phase out three positions, leaving 3 one-year senators-at-large and 6 two-year senators-at-large.
2. The proposal would introduce 9 one-year senator-at-large positions, with terms beginning and ending in November. This would result in a net increase of 6 student senators.
3. The proposal would never affect the length of any terms for which senators already have been elected.

Timetable/Logistics

If Student Senate places referendum on ballot:

October 1986: Special election to elect senators to fill all declared vacancies. Constitutional referendum.

If referendum passes and is approved by the Board of Regents:

March 1987: General election. At-large seats will be elected as follows: 3 senators April 1987-April 1988; 3 senators April 1987-April 1989.

October 1987: General election. Declared vacancies will be filled. At-large seats will be elected as follows: 9 senators November 1987-November 1988.

March 1988: General election: At-large seats will be elected as follows: 3 senators April 1988-April 1989; 3 senators April 1988-April 1990.

End results would be fully implemented by March 1988.

Results

1. Currently, only four members of the Student Senate retain their seats through the turnover month of April. The proposal would triple this number to 12.
2. Currently, the Student Senate sees violent ebbs and flows of legislation, as senators learn during the course of the year how to draft and pass bills. Most committees experience a shock every April, sometimes during the course of vital projects, as a new chair is selected and membership turns over almost completely. The November senators would provide a bridge over these gaps in SA leadership.
3. The November senators, together with the continuing two-year senators, would represent a significant and important source of experience that could be tapped by incoming senators, officers and committee chairs.
4. As long as any Student Senate seats are left vacant after April general elections, October elections will remain a constitutional necessity -- even to fill just one seat in Library Science. Binding and non-binding referenda and at-large resignations will continue to require October general elections. In the interests of turnout, interest and publicity, we would do well to raise the stakes in these elections.

5. In recruiting current campus leaders, the Students' Association would score a coup over other organizations by providing the only opportunities for leadership tailored for students planning to graduate in December.
6. The Students' Association develops student leaders on a continuing basis, not year-to-year. The proposal would provide the prospect of inviting leaders who had demonstrated service to the Students' Association in the spring to run for the Student Senate in the fall.
7. Persistent and motivated (but unsuccessful) candidates for the Student Senate would get twice as many chances to run, win and serve.

Special Note

The affirmative action of the Student Senate on this proposal will not put its terms into effect. It will place the referendum below on the October 1986 general election ballot. If you believe that the student body deserves the opportunity to consider this proposal, vote FOR the bill.

Proposed Referendum Item

Do you support the staggering of terms for at-large student senators, by providing for the election of three one-year and three two-year senators in March and nine one-year senators in October? (Currently, four one-year and four two-year senators are elected in March; none are elected in October.)

