

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

September 5, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Steering Committee

FROM: Tyler Silvestri
Secretary for Academic Governance

SUBJECT: Process for Referring Items to Academic Governance Bodies

The process for referring items to academic governance bodies is described in the *Bylaws for Academic Governance*:

3.2.4.5. The Steering Committee shall receive proposals for action in academic governance from individual faculty or students, and from faculty or student groups and organizations.

3.2.4.5.1. The Steering Committee shall, where appropriate, refer matters brought to it to councils or committees for consideration.

3.2.4.5.2. When an issue is referred to more than one university-level Standing Committee for consideration, the Steering Committee shall designate one university-level Standing Committee the "lead committee" on that issue and make it responsible for any report on that issue.

3.2.4.6. The Steering Committee shall prepare the agenda for meetings of the University Council. Before each meeting of the University Council, the Steering Committee, or a sub-committee designated for matters of agenda shall hold a duly announced open meeting at which suggestions for agenda items will be heard.

3.2.4.7. The faculty members of the Steering Committee, or a sub-committee designated for matters of agenda, shall, in consultation with the President or Provost, prepare the agenda for meetings of the Faculty Senate and the Academic Congress. Before any meeting of those bodies, the Steering Committee will hold a duly announced open meeting at which suggestions for agenda items will be heard.

Last year, the Steering Committee experimented with changing this process. According to the October 4, 2022 minutes:

Secretary Silvestri explained that he frequently receives questions regarding the efficiency and purpose of the Steering Committee, mostly



Office of Academic Governance

Owen Graduate Hall
Michigan State University
735 E Shaw Ln, Room W32
East Lansing, MI 48825

517-355-2337
acadgov@msu.edu
acadgov.msu.edu

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involving complaints that the Steering Committee needs to review matters at its monthly meetings before they can be referred to committees, even when it is obvious which committee is responsible under the Bylaws for Academic Governance.

...

After extensive discussion, the committee agreed by consent to give the secretary for academic governance the authority to refer items to the relevant standing committees between Steering Committee meetings, subject to a report at each Steering Committee meeting. This authority was granted on a trial basis for the 2022–2023 academic year, and the committee agreed that it would retain the power to overrule the secretary on any given referral.

The committee did not overrule or amend any of my referrals last year.

Personally, I found the Steering Committee's experiment was far more efficient and led to more productive Steering Committee meetings. I write to request that the Steering Committee consider re-authorizing the delegation of referral authority to the secretary for academic governance for the 2023–2024 term.



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