

TO: SLA Faculty Assembly Executive Committee
FROM: Bylaws Review Committee, Herbert Brant and Scott Weeden, co-chairs
SUBJECT: Proposal on Membership of Committees by Program
DATE: 10 January, 2020

The ad-hoc Bylaws Review Committee recommends the following action item for consideration by the Faculty:

Change of language in Article IV, Section 2.c of the Bylaws

Current situation:

The current bylaws impose a limit on committee membership in the following manner:

“Section 2.c. Limitations on membership.

No committee shall have more than two members from the same academic department or program and whether standing or elected, committees should have balanced representation from the humanities and the social sciences.”

Proposed new language:

“Section 2.c. Limitations on membership.

~~No~~ Committees shall have no more than two members from the same academic department. *In such cases, those two members must exercise their primary duties in different officially constituted programs within the department.* Whether standing or elected, committees should have balanced representation from the humanities and the social sciences.”

Rationale:

The Bylaws Review Committee supports the principle that greater diversity of viewpoints and wider representation of academic disciplines should be made an explicit consideration in the appointment or election of committee members.

However, disciplinary viewpoints are not necessarily coterminous with departmental boundaries as some of the largest departments in the School are essentially confederated departments composed of multiple distinct programs (e.g., Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Film Studies, and Creative Writing are separate disciplines and are frequently housed in separate departments from English and American Literature at other institutions; similarly, the study of French, German, Japanese, Spanish, and other languages, literatures, and cultures have dedicated departments at many universities). As a result, two committee members from the same department at IUPUI will not necessarily represent the same disciplinary approach to issues. To honor the departments’ internal multiplicity of academic programs in the School of Liberal Arts, the programmatic variety of a committee’s composition should be unambiguously prescribed in the Bylaws.

Known and expected benefits:

Inclusivity is a value that we esteem greatly in the Liberal Arts. By specifying programmatic distinctions in the composition of the School's committees, we validate our commitment to broadening representation, diversifying perspectives, and expanding participation in faculty governance.