

Resolution to Include Student Voices in the Election of the SGA Chairperson

Preface

For many years, some students have argued that the SGA Chairperson should be popularly elected by the entire NYU student body. Others have made arguments against popularly electing the Chairperson. The question has often been brought before the Organization and Governance Committee, where it has been discussed extensively in recent years. The natural turnover rate of students and committee members coupled with inter-committee disagreements has previously prevented the Organization and Governance from reaching final conclusions related to the issue.

Resolution

WHEREAS, the SGA Chairperson is internally selected by the outgoing voting members of the SGA, of which some members are themselves internally selected;

WHEREAS, presidents and chairpersons of student government organizations across NYU and many peer institutions are popularly elected;¹

WHEREAS, in February 2020, the Organization and Governance Committee created a poll to gauge the NYU student body's opinion on the election of the Chairperson and the results of the poll, consisting of 527 respondents, showed that 62.4% of students preferred the option to “vote for my Student Representatives and also vote for the Chairperson of the NYU Student Government”;²

WHEREAS, the SGA Chairperson currently has responsibilities to a specific constituency in addition to their responsibilities to the entire student body;

WHEREAS, an SGA Chairperson elected with the inclusion of more student voices could act as a stronger executive within SGA to hold all members accountable to the constituents they were elected or selected to represent;

WHEREAS, an SGA Chairperson elected with the inclusion of more student voices may have increased influence and ability to drive an agenda by having a mandate supported by weight of a fair election; and

¹E.g. *Student Bar Association of New York University School of Law Constitution*, Art. 9, § 6; *Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Council, New York University Tandon School of Engineering*, Art. V, § 2; *Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Council, New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies*, Art. VI, § 4; *New York University Graduate School of Arts & Science Graduate Student Council Constitution and Bylaws*, Art. III § A; e.g. also *Constitution of the Senate of the Undergraduate Student Government of Princeton University*, Art. VII, § 804; *Constitution of the University of Michigan Ann Arbor Campus Student Body*, Art. III, § 1; *Constitution of the Georgetown University Student Association*, Art. II, § 1; *University of Florida Student Body Constitution*, Art. IV, § 2.

² 2020 *Organization and Governance Committee Poll.*

WHEREAS, an SGA Chairperson elected with the inclusion of more student voices may have an increased influence with university administration because they will be the voice for the entire student body;

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED, that more student voices shall be included in the election of the SGA Chairperson;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that an SGA ad-hoc committee be formed, which will, beginning immediately and spanning AY 2022-23, complete the following tasks, and report findings and a proposal to the SGA during the spring semester of 2023:

- (1) poll the general student body – graduate, undergraduate, local, and global - to gauge interest in SGA Chairperson elections and explore ways of enhancing SGA accessibility and outreach;
- (2) deliberate on the feasibility and equity of implementing a new system of chair elections, including but not limited to the inclusion of provisions in the final proposal that safeguard the enfranchisement of minority, non-traditional, and less-engaged constituencies;
- (3) propose a concrete timeline for the implementation of amended chair elections; (4) determine eligibility, nominations, and other administrative election procedures for the election of the SGA Chairperson, and;
- (5) compose all relevant Bylaws to achieve these ends;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that each member of the SGA, voting and non-voting, will be allowed the chance to join this committee. every effort will be made to include non-SGA affiliated students on the committee;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the membership of the committee will be composed of, at minimum, two school senators, two senators-at-large, and two presidents, each of whom will not be graduating in the 2022-23 academic year, as well as the Elections Commissioner;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that following the report of the ad hoc committee's findings to the SGA in the spring semester of 2023, the SGA, at a stated meeting, will conduct a vote on the proposed Bylaw changes, which requires a two-thirds vote of the quorum present at the meeting.

As proposed by the 2021-2022 Organization and Governance Committee, Patrick Angiolillo, Senator at-Large for Student Caregivers, and Christopher Van Demark, Senator Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.