



Overview of Senate Activities, 2022-2023

Below is a summary of items currently under consideration by the University Senate that have ramifications for BSOS faculty, staff, and students.

Review of a Policy Regulating the Naming of Facilities and Programs

- Activity:** In September, the Senate’s Educational Affairs Committee was charged with reviewing a revised University Policy and Procedures on the Naming of Facilities and Programs.
- Background:** The university adopted this revised policy in response to a directive from the University System of Maryland. The policy covers procedures for naming new or existing facilities, major outdoor areas, or academic programs (which include colleges, departments, centers, and academic programs). It also establishes procedures for removing an existing name. The policy distinguishes between namings associated with a philanthropic gift and those that do not have a monetary component but are intended to honor a distinguished individual.
- More Detail:** [Interim Policy & Procedures on the Naming of Facilities and Programs](#)

Possible Changes to the Codes of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

- Activity:** In October 2021, the Director of the Office of Student Conduct submitted a proposal calling for changes to the Code of Student Conduct and the Code of Academic Integrity. The Senate’s Student Conduct Committee was charged with reviewing the proposal and recommending any necessary changes to the codes.
- Background:** The proposed updates to the codes include updating terminology and revising language to make provisions less legalistic, more accessible, and less ambiguous. They would also streamline hearing board procedures to facilitate more timely resolutions, and update the possible sanctions for violations of each code, including when the grade of “XF” is given.
- More Detail:** [Senate Document #21-22-22](#)
[Proposal from the Director of the Office of Student Conduct](#)
[Code of Student Conduct](#)
[Code of Academic Integrity](#)

Possible Changes to the Student Fee Process

- Activity:** In September 2021, the Senate received a proposal from the leaders of the Student Government Association, Graduate Student Government, and Residence Hall Association calling for specific changes to the process for setting student fees. The Senate referred the proposal to the university’s Vice President & Chief Financial Officer for consideration during the FY23 fee-setting process.

Background: The process for setting student fees has been a source of tension between student organizations and the administration. Since at least 2012, students have called for greater transparency throughout the process, and for more meaningful opportunities to participate in the process. While a “Policy on the Review and Approval of Student Fees” was agreed to by the President in 2008, it is not included in the formal [list of university policies](#), and has not been consistently followed. In 2021, a new Maryland law went into effect that established new provisions for how presidents of USM institutions communicate information about student fees. The Senate Executive Committee referred the proposal to the university’s CFO, and requested that they report on how the changes in state law were implemented during the 2021-2022 fee-setting process.

More Detail: [Senate Document #21-22-13](#)

Proposal to Remove Explicit Requirements for Final Exams

Activity: In September 2021, the Associate Dean for General Education submitted a proposal that would remove the requirement that every course include a final exam.

Background: Current university policy requires that undergraduate courses include a final exam (though exceptions can be made with approval by the unit head). The proposed change would remove this requirement, and introduce language intended to ensure that students are not given excessive amounts of work during the week before finals in courses that choose not to give an exam.

More Detail: [Senate Document #21-22-11](#)
[Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Courses and Student Grievance Procedure](#)

Proposal to Revise the Excused Absence Policy

Activity: In August 2021, the Senate received a proposal to revise the Policy on Excused Absence to better address student mental health needs and change requirements surrounding physician-signed notes, which the proposal argues can present equity issues. The Senate’s Academic Procedures & Standards Committee was charged with considering the proposal.

Background: The current Policy on Excused Absence allows students to provide self-signed documentation for a single absence (once per course) that does not coincide with a major assignment or due date. All other “medically necessitated absences” require documentation from a physician or the University Health Center.

More Detail: [Senate Document #21-22-04](#)
[Policy on Excused Absence](#)

Review of the Interim Policy on Consulting

Activity: In October 2022, the President implemented a University of Maryland Policy on Consulting on an interim basis pending Senate review. The Senate Executive Committee charged the University Research Council with reviewing the interim policy and recommending revisions as appropriate.

Background: After reviewing federal regulations, state ethics laws, and other USM policies, the Division of Research and Office of General Counsel identified a pressing need for a policy addressing consulting by university employees. A stakeholder group then drafted the interim policy, which: establishes a general definition of “consulting,” clarifies exclusions to this definition, defines limits on consulting, establishes a balance between those activities and a University employee’s regular institutional responsibilities, and details new administrative requirements and paperwork required from those who engage in consulting.

More Detail: [Senate Document #22-23-13](#)
[Proposal from the Director of Research Transparency & Outreach](#)
[Interim University of Maryland Policy on Consulting](#)