



University Senate TRANSMITTAL FORM

Senate Document #:	15-16-19
Title:	Senate Candidate Contact Information Requirement
Presenter:	Jess Jacobson, Past Chair, ERG Committee
Date of SEC Review:	August 30, 2016
Date of Senate Review:	September 7, 2016
Voting (highlight one):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On resolutions or recommendations one by one, or 2. In a single vote 3. To endorse entire report 4. For information only
Statement of Issue:	<p>In December 2015, a proposal was submitted to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) to revise Senate election procedures to provide full names and contact information for all candidates running for election on each ballot, so that voters may contact candidates prior to casting a vote. The proposal raised concerns related to the campus community's ability to accurately identify and contact those individuals running for election to the Senate and suggested the proposal would improve informed choices by voters. The SEC reviewed the proposal in January 2016 and charged the ERG Committee with considering the proposal and making any appropriate recommendations related to Senate election procedures.</p>
Relevant Policy # & URL:	Not Applicable.
Recommendation:	<p>The ERG Committee voted unanimously that the University Senate should not revise its procedures for Senate elections to include candidate contact information on the ballot. The ERG Committee affirms that the current procedures followed for Senate elections are appropriate and should continue.</p>
Committee Work:	<p>The ERG Committee began its review in February 2016. It met with the Senate Director on current elections practices, and consulted with the proposer for additional information. The committee reviewed example ballots from the spring 2016 elections and discussed the principles related to expectations for Senators and candidates as it considered the charge.</p>

	<p>The Senate began conducting its elections online in 2008, using a system that provides online applications and voting. The system links with the University Directory, which automatically populates a candidate’s information. The candidate’s contact information is collected for administrative purposes, and the name and unit of the candidate appear on the ballot during the election, along with the optional 250-word candidacy statement. The Senate has received very few requests for candidate contact information in the past, and candidates are not required to respond to inquiries as part of their candidacy.</p> <p>The ERG Committee found that the ballots provide sufficient information for candidate contact information to be found through the University Directory or common online search tools. The committee focused its deliberation on the principles of representation and access. The ERG Committee agreed that it is expected that Senators be available to their constituents, but noted that the same expectation does not apply to candidates. The committee raised concerns that including contact information could discourage potential candidates. The committee also noted that the proposed changes raise concerns for ballots in student elections, where privacy may be a factor.</p> <p>After consideration, the ERG Committee found that contact information is readily available through the University Directory and common online search tools. The ERG Committee noted that including contact information on the ballots may discourage candidates by changing how potential candidates perceive the election process. On May 9, 2016, the ERG Committee voted unanimously to recommend that no changes be made and the current ballot procedures continue.</p>
Alternatives:	Not Applicable.
Risks:	There are no associated risks.
Financial Implications:	There are no financial implications.
Further Approvals Required:	Not Applicable.

Senate Elections, Representation, & Governance Committee

Report on Senate Document #15-16-19

Senate Candidate Contact Information Requirement

August 2016

2015-2016 ERG Committee Members

Jess Jacobson, Chair
Kathleen Denz, Ex-Officio VP IRPA Rep
Deidra Adams, Ex-Officio Director of Human Resources Rep
Alice Altstatt, Faculty
Virginia Brown, Faculty
Toby Egan, Faculty
Charles Fenster, Faculty
Andrew Horbal, Faculty
Anne Raugh, Faculty
Holly Rollins, Exempt Staff
Cliffonia Royals Pryor, Non-Exempt Staff
Kevin Fitzgerald, Graduate Student
Kimberley Hannah, Graduate Student
Sudeep Roy Choudhury, Undergraduate Student
Leslie Joy, Undergraduate Student

BACKGROUND

In December 2015, a proposal was submitted to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) to revise Senate election procedures to provide full names and contact information for all candidates running for election on each ballot, so that voters may contact candidates prior to casting a vote. The proposal raised concerns related to the campus community's ability to accurately identify and contact those individuals running for election to the Senate and suggested the proposal would improve informed choices by voters. The SEC reviewed the proposal in January 2016 and charged the ERG Committee with considering the proposal and making any appropriate recommendations related to Senate election procedures (Appendix 1).

COMMITTEE WORK

The ERG Committee began its review in February 2016. It consulted with the Director of the Senate on current practices related to the online elections system, and consulted with the proposer for additional information regarding his concerns. The ERG Committee reviewed example ballots from the spring 2016 elections to learn how candidates appear on the ballot, and discussed the principles related to expectations for Senators and candidates as it considered the charge.

The ERG Committee met with the Senate Director on March 24, 2016, to discuss current practices. The ERG Committee learned that the Senate began conducting its elections online in 2008. The system used to administer the elections provides an online application to run for the Senate and online ballots for voting in Senate elections. This system links with the University Directory; when members of the campus community log in to the system with a Directory ID and password, the system automatically populates the information found in the University Directory for that individual. The candidate's name and contact information is collected on the application; the contact information is used for administrative purposes by the Senate Office, and the name and unit of the candidate appear on the ballot during the election, along with the optional 250-word candidacy statement. The Senate Director noted that it would be technically feasible to add contact information to the ballots, but suggested that the ERG Committee focus its deliberation on the principles behind the proposal before making a recommendation.

In discussions with the Senate Director, the ERG Committee learned that the Senate Office has received very few requests for candidate contact information in the past. In the few cases where information was requested, the Senate Office pointed the requester to the University Directory, advising them to use the directory (www.directory.umd.edu/search) to find contact information for the candidates on the ballots. The Senate Office has also stated to requesters and to candidates that candidates are not required to respond to inquiries they receive as a part of their candidacy for election to the Senate.

The ERG Committee noted that the proposal described a situation where sufficient information was not available on the ballot to find candidates in the University Directory. However, the ERG Committee could not replicate this difficulty, as the name and unit of the candidate appear exactly as they appear in the University Directory, and the Senate Office does not alter the information before the ballots are released. The ERG Committee also noted that there is sufficient information to find candidates through common online search tools, especially in the case of faculty or staff candidates. Committee members felt that since the ballot reflects the name and department found in the University Directory, it would likely not be difficult to find the appropriate contact information.

Given that it should not be difficult to locate contact information and given that there would be minimal technical impediments to including the information on the ballots, the ERG Committee focused its deliberation on the principles of representation and access. The ERG Committee agreed that it is expected that Senators be available to their constituents, and noted that the Senate Leadership has recently been encouraging Senators to speak with their constituents about Senate business. Contact information for

Senators is shared on the Senate website. However, the ERG Committee questioned whether the same expectation should exist for candidates who have not yet been elected to the Senate. The ERG Committee also raised concerns that including contact information may discourage some candidates from running, since including the information may send a subtle message to candidates implying that they should expect to be contacted and should be responsive to those messages in order to be elected. The Senate has never required or endorsed campaigning for Senate elections, and the ERG Committee agreed that any messaging to candidates that indicates they should be in regular contact with the electorate may be contradictory.

The ERG Committee also strived to consider the impact of the proposed changes on all constituencies. The Senate Office runs elections for all student seats on the Senate, as well as for seats for staff and various single-member constituencies representing faculty or staff. The ERG Committee acknowledged that it would be cumbersome to have different procedures for any one constituency or ballot. In discussing the impact of including contact information on the ballot in student elections, the ERG Committee raised concerns related to privacy and noted that the Senate may have difficulty obtaining the appropriate permission to display student contact information.

After due consideration, the ERG Committee found that contact information is readily available through the University Directory and common online search tools. The ERG Committee agreed that including contact information on the ballots may discourage candidates by changing how potential candidates perceive the election process. At its meeting on May 9, 2016, the ERG Committee voted unanimously to recommend that no changes be made and the current ballot procedures continue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After much deliberation, in May 2016, the ERG Committee voted unanimously that the University Senate should not revise its procedures for Senate elections to include candidate contact information on the ballot. The ERG Committee affirms that the current procedures followed for Senate elections are appropriate and should continue.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Senate Executive Committee Charge on Senate Candidate Contact Information Requirement

APPENDIX 1 - SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHARGE ON
SENATE CANDIDATE CONTACT INFORMATION REQUIREMENT



**University Senate
CHARGE**

Date:	February 23, 2016
To:	Jess Jacobson Chair, Elections, Representation, & Governance Committee
From:	Jordan A. Goodman Chair-Elect, University Senate 
Subject:	Senate Candidates Contact Information Requirement
Senate Document #:	15-16-19
Deadline:	May 6, 2016

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) requests that the Elections, Representation, & Governance (ERG) Committee review the attached proposal that requests that candidate contact information be included on the ballots for Senate elections.

Specifically, we ask that you:

1. Consult with the proposer.
2. Consult with the Executive Secretary & Director about the existing elections system.
3. If appropriate, recommend changes to current Senate elections procedures.

We ask that you submit your report and recommendations to the Senate Office no later than May 6, 2016. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Reka Montfort in the Senate Office, extension 5-5804.

Attachment

JAG/rm



University Senate PROPOSAL FORM

Name:	Ronald Lee Aughenbaugh II
Date:	December 14 th , 2015
Title of Proposal:	Senate Candidates Contact Information Requirement
Phone Number:	301-405-4242
Email Address:	raughenb@umd.edu
Campus Address:	CSS4419
Unit/Department/College:	Division of IT
Constituency (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate):	Staff
Description of issue/concern/policy in question:	Current policies do not require candidates running for senate positions to provide valid names, or contact information, only a candidacy statement.
Description of action/changes you would like to see implemented and why:	<p>All candidates running for senate positions should be required to provide his or her full name as saved in the University Directory (directory.umd.edu), and provide valid contact phone number, and campus email address. Provided contact information would then be included when candidate information is posted to https://www.senate.umd.edu/ during election time periods.</p> <p>My reasons for requesting such a change: I am a relatively new employee to UMCP, who started in March 2013. I tried to get involved in wisely evaluating the candidates running for senate positions the following year. However I ran into the following problems. The candidates are only required to submit a "why you should vote for me" statement which is posted on the Senate website. When I contacted the director on how I could contact the candidates I was told, "look it up in the directory". Well the problem with doing that is, not every candidate provided his or her legal name, or the one that was recorded in the directory. Additionally there are many people with the same name. The end result I was only able to contact half of the candidates. I am not suggesting that candidates are required to answer any questions posed to them by potential constituents. I am only suggesting that their correct contact information be available.</p>

<p>Suggestions for how your proposal could be put into practice:</p>	<p>The committee responsible for collecting candidate submissions should validate candidate contact information provided to confirm that it matches that of candidate in directory.umd.edu. Candidate information including contact information and candidacy statement will be posted to the senate website at the appropriate election time period.</p>
<p>Additional Information:</p>	<p>I was requested to provide my contact information to submit this proposal. How hard is it to request the same of candidates?</p> <p>To be honest, I did not bother participating in the elections in 2015, as I could not be bothered to try and track down the correct candidate based on possibly incorrect candidates names. I like to be involved in the selection of those who represent me. I cannot make a decision to vote for someone based on a three-sentence candidacy statement. People bemoan the lack of participation in the political process, it could be because it is too difficult to get involved and contact their potential representatives.</p>

Please send your completed form and any supporting documents to senate-admin@umd.edu or University of Maryland Senate Office, 1100 Marie Mount Hall, College Park, MD 20742-7541. Thank you!