

## Guidelines for the Use of Chat during Academic Senate Meetings

One important characteristic of our Senate meetings is the ability of the Chair to control the floor. This allows everyone a chance to speak, to keep the meeting moving forward effectively and efficiently, and to encourage full, free and respectful consideration of the Senate's business. As the official voice of the Faculty it is essential that Senate function in this fashion, and thus that the Chair's ability to facilitate meetings be unimpaired. The pandemic-induced necessity of using Zoom poses a range of new challenges. The subject of these guidelines is the subset of issues concerning the use of chat.

The unrestricted use of chat would allow anyone to address the whole body as often and whenever they chose, vitiating the Chair's role absolutely. At the same time, perhaps a URL or display contributed by a Senator would, in the judgment of the Chair, benefit the whole body. In this latter instance, Zoom provides a positive advantage over our normal face to face meeting. *With the permission of the Chair*, a Senator can share a link with a chat entry to 'Everyone.' Another advantage of Zoom over the face to face meeting is the ability for one Senator to have a private chat with another Senator --what would, in 978-P007, be a conversation whispered on the floor, or during a brief exit from the room. Zoom allows this to take place without any distraction to those outside the dyad. This is a chat *directed to a single recipient*, which can be responded to or ignored by choice. This use does not alter the Chair's ability to control the flow of the meeting.

For good or ill, Zoom does not allow for the careful crafting of internal rules with this much definition, so the Senate must rely on every participant for adherence to the guidelines. Violations of the use of a chat entry to 'everyone' will be obvious to all and should invoke a rebuke by the chair. Care should be taken to avoid inadvertent use-- the unfortunate "Reply to All" mistake that we regret. Unwelcome private chats are rude and may be disruptive (each of us engages the Zoom experience with our own expectations and in different platforms). Hence the one-to-one chat should be used judiciously and only with a clear expectation that the recipient will welcome the intrusion. We might adopt **DND** as a simple response to signal "Do Not Disturb," or let silence speak the same message. With simple guidelines decorum and Chair control can be maintained while still taking advantage of those useful characteristics of Zoom.

The Guidelines:

- A. The Senate Chair and Vice Chair and Senate Office Staff may use chat feature to share relevant information.
- B. The Chat function may be used to address "Everyone" *only with explicit prior permission, granted by the Chair orally after the requestor has been recognized to speak.*
- C. Speakers who have been recognized by the Chair should indicate that they would like to use the chat box to share information.
- D. A one-to-one chat may be used, judiciously, only when the expectation exists that the message will be welcomed by the recipient [one-to-one chat is recorded and provided to the participants in the chat]
- E. In chat, as with all Senate business, demonstrate respect for every person, in language and message. [Chat to everyone is recorded by the host]