

Amending the Bye-Laws to clarify the status of virtual Council Meetings

Proposed by: Alex Auyang (Council Chair)

Seconded by: Michaela Flegrová (Deputy President Education), Abhijay Sood (Union President)

Union notes:

1. Due to the outbreak of SARS-CoV-2, we are unable to hold meetings of Union Council or its subcommittees in person.
2. The Board of Trustees section of the Bye-Laws (Section B) features a clause allowing for virtual meetings to be held under certain circumstances (Clause B67). Council does not have a specific clause addressing this.
3. Clause C11 of the Bye-Laws specifies that "*In the case of a Meeting of the Union Council or one of its sub-committees, no decisions that require a two-thirds majority can be ratified via an electronic vote*". This clause was created to prevent two-thirds majority decisions from occurring via means such as email votes, which would prevent adequate discussion of the topic.

Union believes:

1. If virtual Council meetings' votes are considered 'electronic', then Council would be unable to perform many of its vital duties.
2. The current Union Bye-Laws must be amended to account for virtual Council meetings. Specifically, a distinction must be made between "electronic votes" (email votes) and votes made during an entirely virtual meeting using technology that allows for robust discussion.

Union resolves:

1. To add an additional clause to section C of the Bye-Laws clarifying that virtual Council meetings' votes are not considered to be 'electronic votes'. (Appendix A).
2. To form a working group (Appendix B) to investigate and discuss other conflicts arising from online only Council meetings. This group will make recommendations to be discussed at the next formal meeting of Union Council.

Appendix A

Proposed clause to add to Bye-Laws section C

"If in-person meetings of Council and its subcommittees are not possible due to extraordinary circumstances, they may be held by virtual means, in which all participants may communicate simultaneously with all other participants. In virtual Council meetings that meet these requirements, voting is not considered an 'electronic vote'."

Appendix B – Terms of Reference for Working Group

Due to the need for virtual meetings in the 2020-21 academic year, a working group should be set up to establish how online meetings should be run. This group will report back to the next formal meeting of Union Council (in October-November 2020).

Proposed membership:

- Council Chair – Chair
- The Union President
- The International Officer
- At least one Council member who has not been on Council until this academic year
- One additional Council member