

Referendum Question No. 1

Princeton University Undergraduate Student Government Election—Spring 2018

Sponsored by CHRISTOPHER UMANZOR '19, Honor Committee Member

On March 25, 2018, the USG Senate approved the language of this condensation (ballot question) and referendum resolution as being neutral and clear.

Members in favor (11): Rachel Yee, Alison Shim, Olivia Ott, Tania Bore, Michael Asparrin, Brad Spicher, Elizabeth Bailey, Kevin Zheng, Dora Zhao (substituting for Nick Wu), Wendy Zhao, Diego Negrón-Reichard.

Members opposed (1): Kade McCorvy

Members abstaining (4): Nate Lambert, Liam Glass, Ruby Guo, Olivia Grah.

Condensation (Ballot Question)

Should the Honor Constitution be amended to allow an Honor Committee member to evaluate and potentially petition to replace the Clerkship or the Chairship? In this process, a member of the Honor Committee is afforded the opportunity to submit a statement outlining their grievances with the Honor Committee leadership to the USG Senate. In addition, this member may have the opportunity to submit their candidacy for the Clerkship or Chairship. In this process, a committee of elected USG Senate members and current and former Honor Committee members would interview both the member submitting the evaluation and the current Clerk or Chair under evaluation. This committee would determine by 2/3 vote which of the two will serve as the Clerk or Chair moving forward.

Explanation (Submitted by the Sponsor)

The sponsor's explanation is due Tuesday, April 10 and may be revised before that date.

Currently, the leadership on the Honor Committee—that is, the Clerk and the Chair—has limited accountability to the student body given the Clerk, who automatically becomes the Chair after a year, is appointed from within rather than elected by the students. This becomes a problem given the great amount of authority held by the leadership. For example, the Chair is responsible for not only the formal tasks on the Committee, such as submitting a recommendation for punishment to the administration, but also informal tasks, such as facilitating fair discussion during adjudication, coordinating the training of each new member, and communicating at their discretion the precedent for punishment during deliberations. As a result, the Honor Committee may at some point be led by a Clerk or Chair who, while adhering to the Constitution, does not perform the informal tasks professionally or in accordance with the values of the student body. This problem is then exacerbated by the lack of transparency between the leadership of the Honor Committee and its other members, as well as the student body at large. Ultimately, these issues compound to form a startling accountability problem on the Committee.

The mechanism in this referendum seeks to address these concerns. It affords the members of the Honor Committee the opportunity to bring their concerns with the leadership to the USG, thereby informing the student body of Honor Committee behavior. It allows Honor Committee members appointed after the Clerk has been selected to apply for the position, whereas these students would currently never get the chance. In rare cases, members can petition to replace a Clerk or Chair, whereas now only a constitutionally-errant Clerk or Chair can even be scrutinized. I believe that the potential alone for these actions to take place will go far in keeping the leadership accountable.

THE UNDERGRADUATES OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Princeton, New Jersey

Referendum Resolution ____-2018
Referendum Question No. 1 (Spring 2018)
Sponsored by CHRISTOPHER UMANZOR '19, Honor Committee Member

Referendum Resolution

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the Honor System to create a system for evaluating and potentially petitioning to replace the Clerkship or Chairship.

EXPLANATION—Matter in *bolded italics* is new; material with ~~strikethrough~~ is material to be omitted.

Resolved by the undergraduates of Princeton University,

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO HONOR CONSTITUTION.

Article I, Section D of the Honor Constitution is amended to read as follows:

D. Clerk, Chair and Chair Emeritus

1. Clerk. Every academic year, after the first of December, a subcommittee comprising the senior class members of the Honor Committee, the Undergraduate Student Government president, and the Clerk will select a sophomore member of the Committee to serve as Clerk of the Honor Committee during the following spring and fall semesters. This subcommittee will interview all interested sophomore members of the Committee and appoint one sophomore by a majority vote. This sophomore member will automatically become a member of the Committee the following year. In the event that the Clerk withdraws from the University, or is otherwise unable to serve as Chair, the subcommittee described above will convene to select a new Clerk from the Committee members in the spring semester of their sophomore year or fall semester of their junior year.

2. Chair. The Clerk will become the Chair of the Honor Committee at the beginning of the spring semester in their junior year. In the event that the Chair withdraws from the University, or is otherwise unable to serve as Chair in the spring semester of their junior year, the Chair Emeritus will serve as Chair until they graduate, at which time the Clerk will become Chair. In the event that the Chair withdraws from the University, or is otherwise unable to serve as Chair, in the fall semester of their senior year, the Clerk will become Chair.

3. Chair Emeritus. The former Chair will take on an advisory role, in addition to their responsibilities as a committee member, as Chair Emeritus during the spring semester of their senior year, to guide the new Chair. The Chair Emeritus may serve as acting Chair if needed.

4. Evaluation. *Each Honor Committee member that is not currently nor ever has been the Clerk or the Chair will be afforded ONE opportunity to “evaluate” the Clerkship or Chairship.*

The evaluation process will proceed as follows:

- a. A member of the Honor Committee will initiate the process by providing a statement outlining their reasons for the evaluation to both the Undergraduate Student Government Senate President and the sitting Chair of the Honor Committee. The member should declare upon submission of this statement whether or not they plan to continue with the subsequent steps of the process, keeping in mind that they are allotted only ONE opportunity to conduct an evaluation. If the member chooses not to continue with the subsequent steps of the process, the evaluation ends here.*
- b. If the member chooses to continue with the process, both the member that has submitted the evaluation and the Clerk or Chair then under evaluation will interview before an independent committee. This will only take place provided that the member belongs to the constitutionally appropriate year for the position under evaluation.*
- c. The independent committee will be selected by the Undergraduate Student Government President and composed of nine students. Three of these students must have at least one full semester on the Honor Committee, at least one of whom must be a current member of the Honor Committee. The remaining students must be elected Undergraduate Student Government Senate officials.*
- d. The independent committee will then determine by a two-thirds vote whether the sitting Clerk or Chair will be replaced in their executive capacity by the member submitting the evaluation.*
- e. Should the independent committee choose to change the Clerkship or Chairship, such a change is only to take place the following semester, thereby providing a period for transition during the recess.*
- f. The independent committee will release a statement outlining the criteria upon which the outcome was decided, regardless of whether or not there was a change. This will be done with due consideration for confidentiality for all those involved in the process.*

SECTION 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

In accordance with Article VI of the Honor Constitution, this amendment becomes effective upon approval by a 3/4 vote of the undergraduates in a referendum.

Approved April __, 2018.

LAURA ZECCA '20,
Chief Elections Manager

Attest:

CHITRA PARIKH '21,
Executive Secretary of the Senate.