

USG Referendum: Proposed Student Government Representation Changes

Currently, the USG Senate has 31 student senators. 11 represent the school governments (broken down as follows: 3 Liberal Arts, 3 Science/Engineering, 3 Business, 1 Architecture, & 1 Public Health). The remaining 20 seats are filled with Senators at-large voted on by the entire undergraduate student government. In order to ensure senators of each class, there are 3 seats reserved for sophomores, juniors, and seniors respectively while USG reserves 5 seats for incoming freshmen.

The referendum proposes to eliminate the current 'at-large' system, with student representatives from schools and residence halls. School representation will continue to be based on the d'Hondt method for allotting seats based on population. Each residence hall government (RHG) will send one representative, and three students will represent a proposed Off Campus Residence Association (OCRA). Under the proposed changes, all senate elections will take place in the fall (as opposed to the spring), and all representatives would report to both USG and their respective residence hall/school government.

Pro. The proposed restructuring of the government will allow for more accountability as every student senator will have a clearly defined constituency to which to report. It will also allow the residence halls (one of our largest constituencies) to have a voice in the student government.

Con. The proposed restructuring allocates senate seats disproportionately to each residence hall. For example, Paterson House will have 1 seat for approx. 150 students while Mayer, Irby, and Phelps will share 1 seat for over 1000 students. Additionally, the proponents of this measure overestimate issues of accountability.