

Report from the
UCS Assessment Task Force

Presented April 2008

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Introduction – The Mission of UCS: Policy v Activism

The UCS constitution states that the mission of UCS is to “Represent students and the interests of students in all matters of university life and all areas of university operations.” However, the current manifestation, or lack thereof, of this guiding principle leaves much to be desired. Indeed the present relationship between UCS and the undergraduate student body is strained at best.

During our review we have spoken with current UCS members, past UCS members, student leaders from different activities and members of the Brown community. While the perspectives varied slightly the consensus is one of discontent and disconnect. Students view UCS as a powerless and unrepresentative student group and thus place little trust or confidence in the ability of UCS to affect campus policies in any substantial fashion. If students do not believe that UCS can effectively advocate on their behalf, they have no reason to take an interest in UCS. This general lack of support for UCS has the unintended and unfortunate consequence of further derailing UCS initiatives. This cyclical paradox has resulted in the Council’s longstanding inefficacy. As such, the goal of the UCS Assessment Task Force has been to review the status and procedures of UCS and make recommendations to improve the organization’s effectiveness, accessibility and transparency. Many of our proposals hold the potential for affecting wide spread changes in both the structure and function of UCS.

We begin our review with a discussion of what is currently preventing UCS from fulfilling its representative missions and how UCS can adapt to better satisfy this responsibility. Currently, UCS conducts itself largely as a policy body. After deliberating on an issue, UCS merely passes a resolution and then moves onto the next item on the agenda. The problem in such a system comes from the lack of legislative power held by UCS resolutions. While the university appreciates student input and certainly considers it while making decisions, UCS resolutions do little to sway the university.

The Task Force believes that in order for UCS to better connect with the student body, UCS must transform from a policy body into an activist organization. The Council’s responsibilities do not begin and end with resolutions, but rather embody a continued commitment to representing student opinions and ensuring that the university administration is held accountable for its responses to those opinions. Consequently, the Task Force has outlined concrete procedures to improve the efficacy of UCS actions and push UCS towards adopting a more activist role in campus affairs. However, this shift requires an accompanying fundamental change to how UCS operates and how it interacts with the student body. UCS should be viewed as a unifying presence on campus while working for campus-wide change. Moreover, UCS and the entire student body would benefit substantially from a greater degree of cooperation between UCS and student groups, as UCS resolutions accompanied by written letters of support from student groups hold more power than a resolution alone. If these resolutions are presented in conjunction with visible mobilization and popular demonstration, this efficacy increases further.

With this goals of more open communication and increased activism in mind, the Task Force reviewed the key components of UCS and made appropriate suggestions. The largest proposed change involves restructuring UCS’s membership policy to make UCS more accessible and thus better enfranchise the student body. Other recommendations include reexamining UCS resolutions, strengthening UCS’s relation with university committees and improving communications between UCS and other students groups. Lastly, Task Force also reviewed and condensed the UCS Code and Constitution to increase the Council’s transparency.

Membership of UCS

UCS meets weekly in a general body meeting to discuss a broad range of issues concerning the Brown community, and in particular those facing undergraduate students. Most of the Council's work occurs outside these weekly meetings, however, in the form of committee meetings or individual members' efforts. At present, this council of 27 students is one of the smallest among Brown's peer institutions. Each representative and committee is stretched thin. At the same time, UCS must turn down enthusiastic students during internal elections. At every election this year, there have been more students running than available positions. The Task Force believes that UCS should enfranchise all students who wish to be voting members and active participants of UCS. In doing so, UCS will become a more representative and diverse council, and more students will be available to work on various projects.

In the following proposal, the Task Force calls for the elimination of class representative positions. Instead, all students who wish to participate may become At-Large Representatives with a signed petition and good attendance. This is a major change to the structure of UCS, with the potential for both positive and negative consequences. We address those objections to our plan that we have foreseen below. Having considered these concerns, we believe that a change of this nature is worthwhile and necessary. Please see the appendix for the proposed constitutional amendment to effect these changes.

STATUS QUO:

UCS currently comprises a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Student Activities Chair, Academics and Administrative Affairs Chair, Campus Life Chair, Admission and Student Services Chair, and five representatives from each class. These positions are filled annually in an April election open to all undergraduates, except the position of freshman class representative, which is elected in early September. The Council also elects, from within its membership, a Secretary, Appointments Chair, Communications Chair, Corporation Liaison, Alumni Liaison, and other positions as may be defined by the Code of Operations.

Each officer and representative has one vote on the Council. In order to be placed on the ballot, students must submit a petition containing either 400 signatures (for an officer position) or 100 signatures (for a representative position). Any vacancy in an officer or representative position is filled by an internal election (i.e. the Council members vote to select a new member). Students also have the option to become an associate (or non-voting) member by submitting a petition of 50 signatures. Members of the Council are expected to attend all meetings and can be removed for excessive absence by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

PROPOSAL:

1. **Membership:** The Task Force proposes that all undergraduates who wish to become active, voting members of the Council have the ability to do so. All students who submit a petition of 125 signatures will be considered full, voting members of the Council with the title of "At Large Representative." The position of elected class representative will be eliminated. At Large Representatives will not be able to vote until they have submitted this petition and attended either two general body meetings or the first general body meeting of the semester. After meeting these requirements, the general body will formally recognize the new At Large Representatives.

2. **Attendance:** All members will be required to attend every meeting, unless they have been excused in advance by the Vice President. Members who are absent for a non-excused reason will lose the privilege of voting at the next meeting. Members who are absent three times for unexcused reasons will be automatically removed from UCS, and will be ineligible to rejoin until the start of the next semester. It will be incumbent upon the Secretary to be very organized in keeping records. The Secretary must maintain an accurate list of At Large Representatives, and must record attendance at each meeting. This official attendance record will determine who may vote at the next meeting.
3. **Officers:** The Task Force recognizes that for the purpose of efficiency and organization, the Council must exist within the framework of an executive structure. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the undergraduate student body still elect a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Student Activities Chair, Academics and Administrative Affairs Chair, Campus Life Chair, and Admission and Student Services Chair every April. Beyond that, the Council would be able to internally elect any other positions defined by the Code of Operations (Secretary, Appointments Chair, etc.). Additionally, the Task Force recommends the consolidation of the executive board to increase the effectiveness of this guiding body. The positions of Alumni Liaison and Corporation Liaison should not be members of the executive board.
4. **Internal Elections:** Internal elections will be held at the second meeting of the first semester. The first meeting will function as an organizational meeting, and will be an opportunity for candidates to learn about the available positions. All At Large members who attend the first meeting with their completed petitions will be eligible to run for these positions and vote at subsequent meetings.
5. **Term Lengths:** The officers' term lengths will not be altered. Terms of At Large Representatives will last from the time of submission of a signed petition until the last day of final examinations in the academic year. Students wishing to serve on the Council the following year must submit a new petition at the start of the academic school year.

REASONING:

1. Current student interest in joining UCS as a full voting member largely exceeds the number of elective offices. At the same time, those who are so interested, but who are not voted into office, rarely pursue associate membership. In short, by not extending a voting position to any interested students, UCS is currently falling short in terms of tapping into student talent and potential. The new system will reward student interest and participation.
2. UCS currently spends a relatively large portion of its time on internal elections, most of which occur for vacancies in class representative positions. Under this new system, the number of necessary internal elections will dramatically decrease. Additionally, UCS will no longer have to wait to hold freshman elections before holding its first meeting.
3. The Task Force does not feel that there are enough inherent differences between the classes to justify having members represent their specific years.
4. The Council will be more responsive to and representative of student opinion. Instead of having an indirect vote on matters facing the school through the medium of an elected delegates, every student who feels motivated enough can have a direct say in the actions of UCS. This shift in membership structure would also defuse any charge that UCS is somehow elitist, exclusive, or inaccessible.

5. The potential for more members than under the current system means there will be more people to help with committee work. At present, Brown has one of the smallest student governments among its peer institutions. UCS has many initial responsibilities handed to it by the university, including student group governance and appointing students. More members will allow UCS to fulfill its duties and focus on new projects.
6. Maintaining the requirement of a signed petition allows those who are joining the Council to demonstrate that they are dedicated to the organization, that they have not simply joined on a whim, and that they have some degree of support among the student body.

POTENTIAL CONCERNS

1. **Under the new system, gaining voting privileges on the Council would be much easier. Students could join UCS and have the power to vote but then fail to become active, dedicated members of the organization.**
 - This proposal's stringent attendance policy removes the possibility of this concern. After missing three general body meetings, an At-Large representative automatically loses their membership on the Council for the duration of the semester. Additionally, members may not vote at a general body meeting if they have missed the previous meeting for an unexcused reason.
2. **Membership will fluctuate, and there will be a greater turnover in membership.**
 - This is not necessarily true. Most other student organizations have virtually no requirements for memberships and they develop a steady, consistent base of members.
3. **The proposed system leaves more room for disorganization and confusion.**
 - The Council can be disorganized no matter what system governs its membership. It is always incumbent upon a strong Executive Board to facilitate organization. In particular, the Secretary will have an important role in ensuring that membership and voting privileges are recorded properly and that there is no confusion in the execution of the rules.
4. **The Council could grow too large, as there will be relatively few barriers to entry.**
 - More people will result in a more diverse set of opinions and ideas. In addition, UCS can accomplish more if it has more people to work on its projects. Most of the Council's work happens in committees or on an individual level. An increase in the membership will enable more productivity, not less. The Task Force does not feel that there can be "too many" students on UCS.
5. **The Council might not be "representative" of the student body.**
 - UCS is not representative of the student body at present. Under the present system vacated Class Representative positions become At Large Representatives that are internally elected by UCS. At present, there are only five Class Representatives (with the potential for twenty) who serve on the Council solely as Class Representative. By enfranchising all undergraduate students UCS will become a far more representative organization. It will also be less exclusive and more responsive to student voices.

Administrative and Internal Review

RESOLUTIONS: INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF UCS RESOLUTIONS

1. **UCS must solicit a written response from university officials after passing a resolution.** Resolutions often ask for a “written response” from university officials, but this is an empty request unless UCS is persistent in requesting a response. UCS must continue to support their resolutions to ensure that they have their greatest impact. This should include:
 - i. Requesting and receiving a written response from the appropriate university official for each resolution. This will allow UCS to determine the next step necessary to further the interests of the undergraduate student body.
 - ii. Providing a year-end summary of the resolutions that UCS passed, and the responses that UCS received from the administration. This might be something that could be included with UCS’s Annual Program, and Mid-Year Reports.

2. **UCS must provide better notifications to the student body after passing a resolution.** A resolution is UCS’s strongest statement, and the student body should be informed about passed resolutions. Additionally, students should expect updates from UCS as the resolution develops. This should include:
 - i. Announcing of UCS’s resolutions in campus wide e-mails
 - ii. UCS should submit a press release or an editorial to the BDH after passing a resolution to discuss the reasons for creating the resolutions, the broader implications of the resolutions, and the next steps UCS is taking to support the resolution. This will be the responsibility of the sponsors of the resolution.

3. **UCS must increase the efficacy and impact of a resolution.** The fact is, a resolution carries no legislative power, and it is imprudent for UCS to consider that its work is done after passing a resolution. UCS should consider its relationship to the Administration and be prepared to take on a more aggressive role when necessary. This should include:
 - i. Demonstrating concrete student support for a resolution. UCS members should be able to call for a petition campaign and collect as many student signatures as possible in support of a resolution. This will make a resolution more powerful when it is submitted to the university administration and the Brown Corporation.
 - ii. Organizing student demonstrations outside of University Hall or during corporation meetings, when appropriate. These demonstrations are both notices, and often appreciated by university officials. Polite, but persistent activist work will not damage the relationship between UCS and the administration.

ACTIVISM: UCS AS AN ACTIVIST BODY

1. **UCS has the responsibility of maintaining an awareness of university decisions or projects and informing the undergraduate body of any policy changes.** Many decisions are made behind closed doors or in obscure meetings, and the student body is notified or alerted too late to organize an effective response.
 - i. This responsibility should be delegated to a member of the Academic and Administrative Affairs Committee. This person would be responsible for tracking decisions made by the College Curriculum Council, University Resources Committee, Academic Priorities Committee and others.

- ii. The Academic and Administrative Affairs committee has the responsibility of reporting these decisions to UCS and the student body.
2. **UCS must improve the appointments process.** The undergraduate body is given a representative voice on over twenty university bodies – these committees, council, task forces and advisory boards are where the decisions are made that affect student life. From public safety to changes in the curriculum to changes to the meal plan. This process should include:
 - i. Make the appointments process more consistent. All positions should be advertised at the same time so that UCS can run a single, large advertising campaign. When UCS advertises a different committee position every week students lose interest.
 - ii. UCS should hold appointments at the same time at the beginning and end of the year so that students can prepare for appointments.
 - iii. Create a web-resource on the UCS website that details all of the available position. Each position should have a basic overview of the committee, the length of the appointment, the frequency of meetings, and contact information for previous committee members.
3. **UCS must work with the students they appoint to ensure that they have the necessary resources to represent the student body.** UCS's job is not finished after students are appointed to committees. Given the importance of committees UCS must continue to work with and support these students. In turn, these students can serve as liaisons that can represent UCS and student opinion and update UCS on important issues. This process should include:
 - i. Each standing UCS committee should be the designated liaison to a set number of university committees.
 - ii. These standing committees will be responsible for coordinating and assisting the Appointments Chair.
 - iii. Each committee must meet monthly with its assigned student representatives. These meetings will allow UCS to ensure that students are being given every opportunity to represent the student body and that they aren't being stifled. This will allow UCS to be alerted to upcoming decisions so that it can plan an appropriate response if necessary.
 - iv. It is the responsibility of each committee to ensure that the students it is responsible for are fulfilling their duties. If committees find this is not the case then the committee should take the necessary steps to find a student who will represent the student body well.
4. **UCS must advocate increased student representation and input on University Committees, Councils, and Task Forces.** While student representation is welcomed on many university committees, students are still shut out from many of the most important standing groups.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. **UCS must strengthen its Communications committee.** The Council depends on a strong communications committee to ensure that the student body is always aware of UCS and University decisions. The proposed changes to the structure of UCS will further tax the Communications committee and the Council should implement the following changes to ensure successful communications:
 - i. The Communications committee should become a standing committee so that there is always a dedicated group of students who can support UCS communications
 - ii. The Alumni Liaison and UCS Webmaster should both be members of the Communications committee in order to ensure a focused and collaborative communications effort from UCS.
 - iii. The Communications committee must make recruitment of new members and retention of current members a priority.
2. **UCS must develop new methods of communications with the student body.** Students inundated with UCS e-mailings have learned to delete them without reading them. This should include:
 - i. Developing a sensible e-mail policy that keeps e-mails to a minimum (bi-weekly to once a month)
 - ii. Ensuring that e-mails are well constructed to increase accessibility
 - iii. Exploring other possible media
 - iv. Advocating UCS space in the BDH, perhaps weekly. This space can include upcoming resolutions and projects that UCS is working on, asking for input, advertising open committee positions and upcoming UCS related events.
3. **UCS must continue to support and publicize its previous projects.** Some of UCS's most popular accomplishments are not credited to UCS and not maintained. By improving advertisement and maintenance of past projects UCS will increase visibility and generate student support. This support should include:
 - i. Providing information on how to make the best use of the meal plan
 - ii. Increase support and advertising for Friedman DVD Library
4. **UCS must improve communications with student activities.** The Task Force acknowledges that UCS is in the process of revising student activities. However the means for activities to communicate with the student body, with UCS and with each other must improve. Doing so will benefit student activities and UCS. These efforts should include:
 - i. The Student Activities committee should complete a formal review of the myGroups program. There have been a number of complaints about the user interface and the whether or not the system is kept up-to-date.
 - ii. Improved communications with student activities will improve activist efforts by UCS. It is easier for UCS to coordinate with student group leaders when obtaining signatures of support and organizing protests than trying to organize a large group of people.
 - iii. The Student Activities committee must support groups that are not granted category status. Regardless of the validity of the reason for rejecting a group, UCS members should work with these student organizations to help them meet the requirements.

5. **UCS should explore changing its name.** UCS is being needlessly dragged down in the eyes of students because of a bad reputation the current members have neither earned or deserve. The name of UCS no longer seems to hold respect in the Brown student body.
 - i. Changing the name of UCS would accentuate the dramatic nature of the changes being made to UCS's mission statement and organizational structure. Since the Task Force envisions a different government, there is no reason to imply to students that it is the same government by keeping the name the same
 - ii. Changing the name of the government may get students interested in other changes that are being made, and reinvigorate interest in student government in general.
 - iii. Policy, marketing and communications thought generally suggests changing the name of a troubled "brand" will be beneficial, but only if the underlying problems for that brand's struggles are also addressed
 - iv. Possible suggestions for name changes: Brown Student Forum, Brown College Forum, Brown Democratic Student Forum, Brown College Council
6. **UCS must improve communications with student activities.** The Task Force acknowledges that UCS is in the process of revising student activities by for the time being status quo relations should improve, doing so will benefit student activities and UCS. These efforts should include

Conclusion

The Task Force firmly believes that the implementation of these changes will generate dramatic and positive change within UCS and the undergraduate body as a whole. However, we are the first to admit that this is completely contingent on the actions of students. The future of UCS depends not only on next year's executive board – who will be guiding UCS through its period as a revitalized representative and activist group – but also on the entire undergraduate population. In our attempt to make UCS more effective and more accessible we have simplified the process to become a full member of UCS. Now more than ever, it is the responsibility of undergraduates who are unhappy with the status quo to become UCS member and work for change.

We recognize that this review of UCS is incomplete and will require more work in the future. Due to the truncated review process we focused on large scale changes to UCS – the membership, general efficacy and relations with the university administration. There are many other areas of UCS that merit examination, including the electoral process for executive officer positions, the appointments process for university committees, and student activities. UCS must take the initiative to continue to appoint future assessment task forces so that UCS can continue to evolve and improve.

It is easy to fall into a trap of complacency; our proposed changes are designed to shake UCS from its stagnant condition and empower UCS and the undergraduate body. The Task Force is hopeful that the suggested changes can begin the transformation of UCS into a successful, activist organization that students can trust. However, it is undeniable that the changes we have proposed are only as effective as the students who implement them. The foundation has been laid, the rest lies in the hands of UCS.

Sincerely,

Jerry Cedrone '11
Juliana Soic '08
Ben Struhl '09
Tyler Rosenbaum '11
Clay Wertheimer '10

Appendix

Constitution and Code of Operation Changes

The following is the referendum that will go before the student body during the UCS/UFB Elections (April 15th – 17th 2008). UCS voted unanimously to put this referendum on the ballot on April 2nd, 2008 at its general body meeting:

Do you approve of the following change to the Constitution of the Undergraduate Council of Students, which would take affect if approved by more than two-thirds of voters?

Be it hereby resolved by the undergraduate student body of Brown University that Article VIII of the Constitution of the Undergraduate Council of Students shall be repealed in its entirety, and shall be replaced with the following text:

“Article VIII: Composition of the Undergraduate Council of Students

VIII.1 The undergraduate student body shall, in April of every year, elect the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Coordinator of Student Activities, and three program area Coordinators of the Undergraduate Council of Students.

A. Elections for these positions shall be by majority vote. In the event that no candidate for a position obtains a majority vote, a run-off election will be held between those two candidates having the largest plurality for a position in order to establish such a majority.

B. The Council shall elect the Secretary, Coordinator of Appointments, and Coordinator of Communications by a simple majority vote from among eligible, voting members of the Council on or after the Council’s second general meeting of the academic year.

C. All of the officers mentioned in the above section shall be members of the Executive Board.

VIII.2 Every member of the undergraduate student body who obtains the signatures of a certain number of the members of the undergraduate student body on a Petition of Election shall become At-Large Member of the Undergraduate Council of Students.

VIII.3 All officers and representatives of the Undergraduate Council of Students shall take office on the last day of final examinations for the academic year in which they are elected and shall serve until the last day of final examinations in the following academic year.

VIII.4 Any Member of the Council may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the whole Council, after said member has been notified 120 hours prior to removal. This question takes precedence over all other questions and may be brought to the floor either by the motion of a Member of the Council or upon presentation to the Council of a petition signed by 300 members of the undergraduate student body.

VIII.5 In the event of a vacancy in the position of a member of the Executive Board, the Council must hold a special election no fewer than seven and no more than fourteen days

upon the vacation of the position. This election takes precedence over all other matters, except that of removing a Member of the Council.

A. Any Member who has three unexcused absences shall immediately cease to be a Member of the Council, and shall not be eligible to rejoin until the beginning of the following semester. The Secretary shall be tasked with enforcing this requirement.”

Be it further resolved that the provisions of this Amendment shall take effect immediately after having been approved by more than two-thirds of voters in a school-wide referendum. Be it further resolved that every class representative who shall be elected under the pre-existing provisions of this Constitution shall automatically become an At-Large Representative in the fall.

Be it further resolved that the following changes to the Code of Operations, which define the voting rights and attendance requirements of the At Large Representatives be and hereby are approved:

“A. The Petition of Election shall be submitted to the Secretary, who shall record the Member’s name on the Council’s official attendance roster.” The number of signatures shall be later determined by UCS. Subsequent clauses shall be renumbered accordingly.

B. In section 5 §7 shall be added a new clause 7.4, which shall read: “Non-voting At-Large Members may still debate issues before the Council.” Subsequent clauses shall be renumbered accordingly.

C. At the end of section 5 shall be added a §8, which shall be entitled “Voting Privileges.” Clause 8.1 shall read: “Non-voting At-Large Members of the Council first gain the right to vote after having attended two sessions of the Council, or after attending the Council’s first meeting of the academic year. Members of the executive board always have a vote.”

D. In section 5 §8 shall be added a clause 8.2 which shall read: “Every voting At-Large Member of the Undergraduate Council of Students may debate and vote on all issues before the Council, except as set forth in section XII, clause 2.3.”

E. In section 12, §2 shall be added a clause 2.3 which shall read: “Only those voting At-Large Members who have attended or been excused from all meetings in the current semester prior to a vote of confidence in the President and/or Vice-President may participate in such a vote.” Subsequent clauses shall be renumbered accordingly.

F. Section 5, §4.1 shall be replaced by the following: “All Members are expected to attend all meetings of the Council. If a voting At-Large Member must be absent from a meeting, it is incumbent upon him or her to request a leave of absence from the Vice President. If the Vice President determines that the absence is justified, he or she shall notify the member that the absence shall be considered excused and notify the Secretary. If the voting At-Large Member is notified that the absence will not be considered excused, or if the Member does not request a leave of absence prior to the meeting in question, he or she shall lose the right to vote. This loss shall be effective immediately at the beginning of the Council’s next regular meeting. The Council may, by amendment to its Code of Operations, delineate what

may be considered a justification for an excused absence and what may not. In all cases of ambiguity, the Vice President's judgment prevails, unless the Council explicitly approves by a simple majority a motion to the contrary.

G. In section 5, §4 shall be added a section 4.2, which shall read: "At-Large Members who lost their voting rights regain them after having attended one regular meeting of the Council." Subsequent clauses shall be renumbered accordingly.

H. In section 5, §4 shall be added a section 4.3, which shall read: "In all cases, the Secretary shall keep records of the status and attendance of each member of the Council, and the rulings of the Secretary, insofar as they are supported by such regularly kept records, shall not be subject to appeal. In cases of ambiguity or absence of the appropriate records, the Secretary's ruling may be overturned if the Council explicitly approves by a simple majority a motion to that effect." Subsequent clauses shall be renumbered accordingly.

Be it further resolved that the Undergraduate Council of Students shall as soon as possible enact all those alterations to its Code of Operations as can be reasonably deemed necessary to bring the Code in line with both the spirit and letter of the changes effected by this Amendment."

The following code changes are intended to change the code so that it supports and clarifies the proposed referendum:

- All current instances of UCS Representative or UCS Class Representative or any of their plural forms shall be changed to At-Large Member, in such a form as may be appropriate.
- Section 3 §2.1 shall be changed to remove spelling error and reference to class representatives:

2.1 The Coordinating Board shall have selected a dates for the UCS Officers, ~~UCS Class Representatives~~, UFB Chairperson, and UFB Representatives election by the end of February of that semester. The Election shall take place at least one week before the first day of the reading period, without exception.

- Section 3 §2.2 shall be deleted and appropriate renumbering shall occur:

2.2 In addition to the spring election, annual elections shall be held, in accordance with the guidelines listed in this section, during September for UCS first-year Class Representatives.

- Section 3 §3.1 and 3.2 shall be changed as follows:

3.1 During the spring election, the following positions will be open: those elected UCS Officers listed in Section II, Officers and Representatives, Article 1.1 of this Code: President, Vice President, Coordinator of Academic and Administrative Affairs, Coordinator of Admissions and Student Services, Coordinator of Campus Life, Coordinator of Student Activities; ~~five (5) Representatives from each of the following rising classes: senior, junior, and sophomore~~; Chairperson and Vice-Chairman of UFB; and five (5) UFB Representatives. Candidates for UFB must first be approved for candidacy through the Appointments Committee, which will refer candidates to the Election Board (see Section VIII, Appointments).

~~3.2 During the September election, five (5) UCS first-year class Representative positions will be open.~~

- Section 3 §5.2 changed as follows:

5.2 All UCS Officers and UFB Representatives shall submit a petition with the signatures of 400 registered undergraduates to qualify for the ballot. ~~Candidates for the position of class Representative shall submit a petition with the signatures of 100 registered undergraduates from their respective class to qualify for the ballot.~~ Such petitions shall be made available to all candidates by the Election Board not less than fourteen (14) days before the election. Any undergraduate may sign more than one such petition.

- Section 3 §9 shall be changed as follows:

9.1 As required by the Constitution of the Council, elections of UCS Officers, UFB Chairperson and UFB Vice-Chairperson shall be by a majority vote with at-large balloting. In the event that no candidate receives a majority vote, a run-off election will be held between the top two vote-getters. ~~The five (5) Representative candidates from each class with the most votes shall be elected to Representatives' positions. In the event of a tie for the fifth position, a run-off election will be held between those candidates tying for fifth place.~~ The five (5) UFB Representatives with the most votes shall be elected to Representative positions. In the event of a tie for the fifth position, a run-off election will be held between those candidates tying for fourth place.

9.2 In order for candidates, including write-in candidates, to fill ~~the UCS Class Representative positions,~~ they must have received at least five percent of the total votes cast by their respective class. ~~In the case of UCS Officers and UFB Representatives~~ *positions*, all candidates, including write-in candidates must receive at least five percent of the total votes cast in the election in order to be elected. If no candidate for a UCS officer position, UFB chairperson, or UFB vice-chairperson receives five percent of the vote there will be an internal UCS election for the position at the first meeting of the following year. ~~If five candidates for UCS class representative do not each receive more than five percent of the vote, those candidates winning more than five percent of the vote shall be elected, and the remaining positions shall be filled at an internal UCS election held at the first meeting of the following year. Similarly, if five candidates for UFB representative do not each receive more than five percent of the vote, those candidates winning more than five percent of the vote shall be elected, and the remaining positions shall be filled at an internal UCS election held at the first meeting of the following year.~~

- Section 3 §11.2 shall be changed as follows:

11.2 The Council must hold a special internal election in the event that the position of UCS Officer; ~~UCS Representative,~~ or UFB Representative is vacated. Such an election must be held at the next full meeting of the council in the case of an officer position, and no fewer than seven and no more than fourteen days upon the vacation of office for a representative to either the council or the Undergraduate Finance Board. The election takes precedence over all other business before UCS at the meeting during which it is to be held, except for the time designated for comments from the community. If the presidency is vacated, the next Officer in the line of succession shall assume the duties of the president until the position is filled by a special internal election.

- Section 3 §11.4.1 shall be changed as follows:

11.4.1 At the beginning of the meeting the Vice President shall announce all those positions that are open for election and the order in which they shall be filled. ~~All representative positions must be filled before the election of any open officer positions take place.~~ Elections for open officer positions must be done in the order of succession outlined in Section II, Article 1.1 of this code. At the beginning of the meeting after the time allotted for comments from the community, the council shall elect either a member of the community or an associate member of the council to assist in the

counting of the ballots, as outlined in Section III, Article 12.4.7 of this Code. Prior to the announcement of any given election, the Vice President shall be responsible for stating the responsibilities and role of the specific position, and the presiding officer may recognize any member of UCS to speak on behalf of a position before the full council.

- Section 11 § 1.3 shall be deleted and 1.4 shall be renumbered 1.3:

1.3 Upon the receipt of a resignation, a vacancy is created on the Council, and proceedings should begin immediately to fill the vacancy in accordance with Section III, Elections, Article 12.

The following changes are intended to support the Communications committee, and clarify the roles of the Alumni Liaison, Corporation Liaison and UCS Webmaster. In addition, the Task Force identified the following areas being unnecessary, redundant, or ambiguous. In the interest of improving accessibility, the Task Force recommends the following changes:

- Replace all instances of "coordinating board" with "executive board" to reflect current usage.

- Section II §1.1 shall be changed as follows:

1.1 The Officers of the Undergraduate Council of Students shall be, in their respective order of succession, the elective Officers: President, Vice President, Coordinator of Academic and Administrative Affairs, Coordinator of Admissions and Student Services, Coordinator of Campus Life, Coordinator of Student Activities, Treasurer; the internal Officers: Secretary, Coordinator of Appointments, and Coordinator of Communications, Corporation Liaison, and Alumni Liaison; and the summer Officer: Summer Liaison.

- Section II §3.1 shall be changed as follows:

3.1 Representatives shall be internally elected to Secretary, Coordinator of Communications, Coordinators of Appointments, Corporation Liaison, and Alumni Liaison. ~~all of whom serve on the coordinating board.~~ **The Secretary, Coordinator of Communications, and Coordinators of Appointments will serve on the coordinating board.** Responsibilities of the aforementioned positions will be in addition to the normal Representative responsibilities.

- Section II §3.6 shall be changed as follows:

3.6 The Alumni Liaison is the official UCS liaison to the alumni of Brown and shall have the chief responsibility for UCS's interaction with the alumni organizations, including keeping the Council informed on the activities of alumni and keeping the alumni informed of the activities of Council. **The Alumni Liaison will be a member of the Communications Committee.**

- Section VII, §6.1 shall be changed as follows:

6.1 The alumni incorporate an important part of Brown. Communications with and awareness of the alumni's involvement will help students when they leave campus and harbors good will toward Brown through a worldwide constituency, and is thus important to the general student body and to the Council in particular. **The Alumni Liaison in consultation with the Communications Committee shall** be responsible for maintaining communication with the alumni organizations, ~~and~~ individuals and the student body

- To Section VII, a §8 shall be added, entitled "Communication with Prospective Members." §8.1 shall read:

The Communications Committee shall be charged with ensuring an adequate number of members on the Council. To this end, at least one member of the Communications Committee should be a coordinator of Recruitment and Retention. It shall be this person's, and the Committee's as a whole, responsibility to recruit new members and to encourage current members to remain.

Cliff Notes for Code of Operations

As part of our process we have reviewed the constitution and the code of UCS. While the nuances of the code are not often referred to they do provide necessary guidelines over points of contention. However, the code is largely inaccessible to the general body. It is over 40 pages long and does not invite new members or students to learn more about the inner-working of UCS. As a useful document for future members and the student body in general we have summarized the code of operations so that essential information can easily be accessed.

Section I: Constitution supersedes Code

Section II: Officers and Representatives

- The order of succession among e-board (coordinating board) members is: President, Vice President, AAA chair, ASS chair, CL chair, SA chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Appointments chair, Communications chair, Corporation liaison, and Alumni liaison.
- Each representative must
 - a) be available to hold office hours for an hour per week
 - b) be available one hour per week to help communications (box slipping, table slipping, etc.)
 - c) be assigned to serve as UCS liaison to several student groups

Section III: Elections

- Elections board must be composed of 6 community members and 4 UCS members, including a chair, with a maximum of five seniors. UCS fills the community spots, the communications chair fills UCS spots, and UCS approves the panel as a whole.
- All candidates for UCS coordinating board member or UFB member need 400 signatures, while normal representatives need 100. Position papers should not exceed 350 words.
- Officers win by majority; if there is a tie or if no one gets a majority of votes, a runoff election must be called. The top five vote-getters for class representative and UFB representative get the spots. There must be a run-off in the case of a tie. All winners must have gotten at least 5% of the vote. If not, UCS fills the vacant spot(s) in September.
- Special elections
 - a) An associate member or community member must help the Vice President and secretary count ballots. This person must be designated by a vote before the election.
 - b) The Vice President describes the position, calls an election, and all those running stand to indicate candidacy and leave the room
 - c) In uncontested elections, the candidate must still receive 20% of the vote.
 - d) The order of presentation of candidates' speeches (not to exceed 2 minutes) is determined by random drawing. UCS may question them for up to five minutes after their speeches.
 - e) The VP must create ballots, must be collected in container. Abstentions must be cast as such

- f) Counters must seal and initial ballots and keep them for at least four weeks
- Five hundred signatures are necessary to call a recall election for officers, whereas three hundred are necessary for normal representatives.

Section IV: Annual Program

- Annual Program addressing major areas of student life must be published on a semesterly basis
- Each representative shall write a report on his project and other UCS activities for inclusion in the report
- The treasurer shall prepare a UCS financial statement for inclusion in the report

Section V: Meetings

- A special meeting may be called by three e-board members or five council members
- A majority is a quorum. Quorum is necessary for business
- A two-thirds vote of UCS can expel non-members from room. This is called an Executive Session.
- Excessive unauthorized absences constitute grounds for removal
- All UCS statements or resolutions must be presented at least a week before the final vote and are approved by a 2/3 affirmative vote of present members.

Section VI: Committees

- UCS members can only serve on more than one committee (internal or University) by 2/3 UCS vote
- Eboard shall make all appointments of UCS members to UCS and University committees
- VP chairs the Internal Affairs Committee, which
 - a) Is in charge of office management, constitution, removal, legislation, elections, etc.,
 - b) Every year that is divisible by four it shall review Official UCS Documents (code, applicable resolutions, and the Constitution)
- UCS has three representatives on UFB: treasurer, SA chair, and an internally elected position.

Section VII: Communications

- The eboard can compel dorm rounds and assign topics; results should be collected and published
- UCS should have weekly office hours during which students can meet them
- UCS by 2/3 majority may put a referendum to the student body at the next election
- Any undergraduate may collect 300 signatures and ask UCS to hold a referendum
- UCS is obliged to act in keeping with the sentiments expressed in the referendum

Section VIII: Appointments

- The VP shall appoint a UCS member to help the Appointments chair, the two of whom will then nominate members of an appointments committee. This must be approved by 2/3 of UCS. For each vacancy, the committee selects a panel of two members of itself, a current undergraduate member of the committee it's trying to appoint someone to, and a UCS member whose interests fall under that committee's jurisdiction.
- No one may serve on more than two university committees, not counting UFB.
- All interviewing panels for search committee vacancies must be approved by 1/2 of eboard or more
- If an appointee misses two meetings during the semester, they will be removed and replaced.
- The council may remove members it appoints
- UCS votes to approve appointments by 2/3

Section IX: Finance

- The Treasurer formulates UCS's budget to present to UFB. The President selects two UCS representatives to present the proposal to UFB.
- The President, Vice President, and Treasurer have signing power over UCS's funds.

Section X: Affiliation

- UCS should be affiliated with Ivy Council, and with at least one state organization to facilitate communication between RI colleges

Section XI: Resignation

- Resignations are official upon presentation to the full council. Eboard members may step down and become a simple representative even if there are no vacancies in representative positions (thereby temporarily creating more representatives than there were positions).

Section XII: Removal

- Any member may be removed by a 2/3 vote of UCS
- Five weeks from the first meeting of each semester there shall be a vote of confidence in the President and Vice President. Two-thirds shall be necessary to remove someone from office. In the event that two-thirds of the votes are not in favor of impeachment, the results shall remain secret.
- Members may be removed for: unexcused absence from University committee meetings, or 20% of the scheduled meetings over a semester period; unexcused absence from three UCS meetings (an absence is if you come later than 30 minutes, or if you leave without having been there at least three hours); unexcused absence from three eboard meetings; acting in flagrant violation of the code as determined by 2/3 of eboard; or failing to heed a formal warning from the VP and eboard that he is on a two-week warning status.
- If the eboard votes by a 2/3 majority to remove the member, he or she may either resign or face the whole council.
- If an officer is being removed only from his position as an officer, and 2/3 of UCS votes to remove, then he will become a simple representative.
- UCS may remove a member of a University committee by a 2/3 majority vote.

Section XIII: Amendments

- Amendments to the code are approved by a 2/3 vote of UCS after a 1 week waiting period.

Section XIV: Constituting Process

- In order to be categorized, a group needs:
 - a Constitution that fits 8 specific requirements (name, purpose statement, definition of membership, description of positions, election procedures, financial responsibilities, description of duties of official advisor, and amendment procedure)
 - ten signatories of members for category 1, and fifteen for other categories
 - a representative to send to SA committee meetings
 - a successful motion to constitute in UCS (majority approval)
- VERY detailed descriptions of responsibilities of category 1, 2, and 3 groups as well as their privileges.
- In order to maintain categorization status, a group must
 - register their leadership and membership at the beginning of each year.
 - Hold an official meeting or event at least once every other semester and remain in contact with the SAO and UCS.
- UCS may decategorize groups that fail to adhere to UCS, UFB, SAO, or University regulations.

Charge

This seven-person committee, consisting of four non-UCS members and three non-executive board UCS members, is charged with producing a report, which will include recommendations to assess the procedures of UCS, focusing on transparency, communication, accountability, structure, and efficiency.

Membership

Gerad Cedrone '11 – Gerad is a first-year from Washinton Township, New Jersey. He serves as an Associate Member on the Undergraduates Council of Students and is a member of the Campus Life committee. Gerad hopes his work with the Task Force allows UCS to be a more accessible, transparent and effective organization.

Juliana Soic '08 – Juliana is a senior from San Diego, California. Over the past few years she has been active with a variety of student groups, mostly notably as the president of Students for Sensible Drug Policy in 2007. She joined th Task Force in an effort to foster increased cooperation and dialogue between UCS and other studen-run organizations.

Ben Struhl '09 – Ben Struhl is a Junior Literary Arts concentrator from Wilmette, Illinois. He works as a consultant for the Democratic Party. Ben spent months pushing for the formation of a UCS reform Task Force because he feels very strongly that Brown University undergraduates need to be served by a strong and open advocacy organization.

Tyler Rosenbaum '11 – Tyler is a first-year and a native of Seattle, Washington. He joined the Undergraduate Council of Students in Septmeber 2007 as an Associate Member and has worked on the Academic and Administrative Affairs committee coordinating the development of Departmental Undergraduate Groups. In November he was elected to an At Large Representative position on the Council . Tyler hopes to advocate for institutional change and increased efficiency.

Clay Wertheimer '10 – Clay is an English Concentrator from Juneau, Alaska. Clay joined UCS as an At Large Representative in September 2007 and he been worked on improving communication with the student body and on increasing student representation on university committees. Since joining , Clay has advocated increased transparency and efficiency within UCS and he is excited to be part of Task Force to ensure that these changes occur.