# 2017 - 2018 Proposed Initiatives

*Compiled together by the Student Government Association
Executive Vice President and Senators.*

To the Academic Administration and Faculty of Emerson College:

We would like to begin by thanking you for partnering with our Student Government Association Senators throughout this past year to help address students' concerns. We recognize that changes have been implemented, and the Academic Initiative is considered and highly regarded when finding ways to better our academic programs by department heads and administration alike. However, we realise that many changes have not been implemented from past Academic Initiatives. Additionally, there are many other facets of Emerson College that students have raised their concerns about needing to be addressed that do not fall under the realm of academics. These Proposed Initiatives are put forward to breach this gap; they are another step forward into creating a better environment for our students, faculty and staff to keep pushing the limits of innovation in the arts and communication, a goal that has driven Emerson's mission statement for so many years now.

Since 2014, the Student Government Undergraduate Senate has been creating an Academic Initiative every spring semester. In the four years that Senate has been proposing these initiatives, many changes have been implemented. However, there are also many requests that have not been met. The Accountability section of these Proposed Initiatives intends to address this. Additionally, space on campus has been a topic of conversation for the past year, specifically focusing on Space Allocation. The Space Allocation Policy section of these initiatives focuses on creating a system for allocating space on campus, as there is not one in place already. The final section of these initiatives focuses on Communication within the college. This is an issue that is campus wide, as many students are unaware of the multiple services the college offers. As a communication school, Emerson should be focused on ensuring students are aware of the multitude of opportunities that exist for them through the college.

We ask that all sections of this initiative be read in their entirety, and the concerns they address. Thank you again for working to ensure the needs of students are met and addressed. We hope these initiatives are a step toward further conversations around these topics below, and look forward to continuing these conversations.

Sincerely,

**Greg  Massimino-Garcia**
Class of 2018 President and
Acting Communication Sciences
Disorders (CSD) Senator

**Madeline Ramaley**
Executive Vice President
Speaker of the Senate

**Megan Raible**
Writing Literature and
Publishing Senator

**Joseph Miranda**
Individually Designed
Interdisciplinary Program Senator

**Raz Moayed**
Visual Media Arts Senator

**Melissa Close**
Class of 2018 Senator

**Anne Noel**
Class of 2021 Senator

**Rahul Thayil**
Communications Senator

**Patricia De La Garza**
Performing Arts Senator

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# Accountability Initiative

*The Student Government Association is proud to present the first ever Accountability Initiative.*

The purpose of the Accountability Initiative, much like the Academic Initiative, is to address opportunities for improvement within the institution of Emerson College. Its primary goals are to increase transparency between the institution and its constituents, and to propose procedural policies that will hopefully resolve issues that have been allowed to continuously fall by the wayside. This document should be considered as a new branch of the Academic Initiative, as many of the subjects it attempts to process go hand in hand with the issues raised in its partner publication.

In each new Academic Initiative the Student Government Association looks forward to providing detailed and timely feedback to the college, and hopes that the suggestions contained within each unique iteration will be taken into consideration when faculty members go about reforming the internal operations of their departments. Over the course of the last few years, however, the Student Government Association has been concerned by the a lack of response regarding specific items in the Academic Initiative. Senators have found themselves repeatedly including the same or similar items, without a clear understanding of either what progress has been made or why departments have not taken steps to resolve select issues. Some examples of this phenomenon include multiple requests for cultural competency training that students have yet to see the results of, as well as demands for increased funding in classes expecting students to spend large amounts of money on projects or film shoots out of pocket.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the concerns and issues raised within the Academic Initiative are given the respect and consideration they deserve. It is tantamount that

students and faculty work together to enact reform in the most effective way possible in order to ensure that all students can receive a fulfilling and enriching education. We expect each year, regardless of the items contained within a specific initiative, that a committee of faculty members be formed to discuss and propose solutions to all of the concerns that students have raised. Should an academic department fail to make quantifiable progress on an item listed in the academic initiative over the course of two consecutive years, the department should follow the following procedure:

- Meet with their departmental senator within the Student Government Association to discuss the specific issues and ways they might be addressed.

- Release a form to all members of the department—both students and faculty—requesting their feedback and suggestions on the issue.

- Release a statement to members of the department regarding what progress has been made in addressing recurring issues.

- Produce a long-term plan that will address and remedy the source of the issue. Share this plan with the department.

- Delegate items to appropriate faculty members and keep record of which members are responsible for troubleshooting which issues. Regularly follow up with these members on their progress.

Implementing these requests will increase accountability among departments, and will also provide a clear course of action for students and faculty members wishing to foster a dialogue on any item contained within the Academic Initiative. The true responsibility of approving and enacting these policies falls on the faculty and staff of Emerson College, who must take

responsibility in their roles as leaders and role models for faults of the institutions in the hope that this recognition will spearhead future progress. As students, faculty, and staff members of Emerson College, we must all be held accountable for all of the shortcomings that are part and parcel of the Emerson experience.

## Space Allocation Policy

A primary concern for the Student Government Association for the last few years has been space and its allocation, utilization, and optimization. As such, we would like to propose the swift development of a Space Allocation Policy for Emerson College. The objective of the policy is to standardize the principles and rules for allocation of space in order to fulfill the College's needs. Space is a valuable and limited resource that must be managed, maintained, and allocated to contribute in the fulfillment of the College's mission.

To create this proposal, SGA combined constituent feedback and comments from various organizations throughout the student body. SGA supplemented this primary research with extensive secondary research into Space Allocation, benchmarking with other notable academic institutions to further develop this policy proposition. Presently, and in the past, there's been no policy concerning space allocation at Emerson College.

New space should be assigned based on campus community priorities, in accordance with Emerson's mission statement. These priorities include, in the following order: (I) academic programs and departments, (II) student engagement and campus life, and (III) programmatic needs. Existing space reassignment, should be done to those in immediate priority and to achieve gross impact. In the absence of a defined process for space allocation, we risk a lack of consistency and transparency concerning the decision making process, making it susceptible to bias. This fosters an increasingly siloed, competitive approach to the institution's physical space on all levels.

Space must be defined as an independent resource, and not one owned by separate departments. Its allocation must be based on needs of a specific activity, to contribute to that activity's success. Emerson College needs to set the expectation that, as activities shift in priority, space reallocation will be accommodated. The benefits of a single Space Allocation Policy include providing clarity, transparency, and consistency, as well as fostering better collegiate relations and accessibility in the student and faculty sphere.

This responsibility, however, will be on Emerson College to further and fulfill this initiative, as it is not a Student Government Association responsibility to continue the implementation into the administration. SGA looks forward to assisting in the creation of concrete change concerning ideas within the proposed policy. It is our request that a committee is brought together to discuss this policy, hold responsibility for this initiative, develop a strategic and actionable plan, and enact an effective Space Allocation Policy for the campus within the next two years.

## Overview:

Space is a central resource to Emerson College. The allocation of space is conducted in a consistent and strategic manner designed to optimize the productive use of this resource, and to advance the missions and strategic priorities of the campus.

Space allocation is driven by the following principles:

- Space is a limited resource of the campus and is not owned by divisions, departments, or current occupants. However, the advantages of assigning continuous space for accreditation requirements and/or programmatic needs will be taken into account.
- Academic programs and departments, student engagement and retention, and building campus community will be given priority in space allocation.
- Responsibility for assignment and reassignment of space will generally follow college organizational hierarchies.
- Oversight for development and implementation of space management policies is the joint responsibility of the Space Allocation Committee and the Space Utilization and Optimization Committee.

## Space Inventory and Requests for Space Assignments:

The Space Allocation Committee is responsible for the maintenance, periodic review and evaluation of the official inventory of space coding, use, allocation, and assignment. Each unit is responsible for providing current information on the use and assignment of the space allocated to it to the Space Allocation Committee.

Specifics concerning these responsibilities are but not limited to:

- Maintenance, oversight, and development to the College's space inventory (the central database of space assignments)
- Routine audits of buildings and divisions/units to verify the accuracy of the space inventory.
- Receiving and analyzing requests for additional space.
- Routine analysis and reports of campus space needs at the department and divisional level and for selected space types such as classrooms, laboratories, and office space.
- Input and analysis regarding space needs in new building construction and major renovations.

Responsibility for assignment and reassignment of space will generally follow college organizational hierarchies. While any and all space assignments are subject to change based on the authority of the President, the ability to assign and re-assign space will adhere to the following guidelines:

- When more than one room or office is vacant or when new spaces are created through construction or reconstruction, Senior Staff (Deans and Vice Presidents) will consult with the Space Allocation Committee for guidance. The Facilities Group may be consulted prior to making a recommendation. Following the receipt of proposals and after consultation, the Senior Staff will make a recommendation to the President.
- Assignment of a single office space to an employee or to a program may be done by the Dean or the Vice President (or their designate) to whom the previous occupant reported.
- Space vacated by a physical move, renovation, or new construction is allocated back to the campus. Likewise, space vacated due to a reduction in program size, reduction in workforce, or program elimination is also allocated back to the campus. It is the responsibility of the Space Allocation Committee to evaluate the

type and the condition of vacated space, and to update the official space database accordingly. The Space Allocation Committee will review potential uses of the space consistent with the college's mission, the already established priorities, existing space requests and proposals, current campus space utilization. The Space Allocation Committee will review the recommendation and consult with the Senior Staff, as necessary.

○ Leasing of the College's space to outside groups requires approval of the Space Allocation Committee.

## Space Allocation Committee:

- The Space Allocation Committee will be comprised of:
    - Senior Associate Vice President for Real Estate: Arthur Mombourquette
    - Vice President for Administration and Finance: Maureen Murphy
    - A representative of Office of the Arts
    - A representative of Academic Affairs
    - A representative of Athletics
    - A representative from Student Affairs
    - 2 Joint-Session representatives, 3 additional  student representatives

## Space Utilization and Optimization Committee:

# Communication

Emerson College brands itself as an institution with a "variety of offices and programs to support our students' needs". However, currently, the College itself is not providing the students accurate and timely information on the services they provide. All students have the right to easily accessible and current information, or news on academics, student life, and financial aid. In addition, Emerson coordinates a number of events, panels, departmental programs, trip opportunities intended to enrich students' collegiate and professional experiences. To ensure students receive the full benefits of these events, there is a need for a singular and concise platform for students to find all sorts of modern news articles and updated master calendars, students would be aware of all the access they could tap into. The purpose of this policy is to hold the faculty and staff accountable for providing the student body with the information they deserve.

This includes:

- Contacting the student body about any and all changes made to the Student Handbook.

- Keeping Departmental and major websites updated with the latest requirements and courses.

- Creating an updated list of current College policies, including anything that could interfere with a students daily life here at Emerson, and combining those that become redundant.

- Continuously making students aware of the services the College offers throughout their tenure at Emerson, not just during Orientation.

- Assign a task force within IT to examine the frequency with which certain Emerson-related applications and platforms are being used and updated and how less effective applications could be condensed or eliminated.

- In the meantime, create a consolidated webpage with descriptions of the different platforms and what information can be found on each.

- Create mandated intersectional department pathways / FAQ's

The word communication implies the interactions of spreading knowledge, ideas, theories, voices, concerns, etc. The majority of this faculty teaches in this department therefore we know it is possible to create ways or systems to accurately compile aggregate data, institutional trends, statistics and rates; to tell students of new committees forming within your departments, to let students know that we are being heard.