



## Basic Rules of Parliamentary Procedures Academic Senate (2013/14)

1. The rights of the organization as a whole supersede the rights of individual members.
2. All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations
3. A quorum must be present to conduct business and/or to take legal action
4. Only one main motion (question) may be on the floor at a time
5. Only one member/speaker can have the floor at a time <sup>a</sup>
6. Debatable motions must receive full debate <sup>b</sup>
7. Personal remarks during debate are always out of order <sup>c</sup>
8. Once the question has been decided, it or a similar question cannot be brought up again at the same meeting <sup>d</sup>
9. The majority rules <sup>e</sup>
10. Silence means Consent <sup>f</sup>

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- (a) *Once a member has been recognized by the Chair, he or she has been given “the floor” and may not be interrupted by another member. If another member interrupts the speaker, the Chair will advise the interrupting member to wait until he or she has been recognized by the Chair, and then ask the original speaker to continue.*
  - (b) *Every member has the right to understand the meaning of any question presented during a meeting and to know what effect any decision will have. Discussion alternates between opposite points of view, and debate can occur only when members in favor of or against a motion want to speak, during the agenda item’s time. Debate may only be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the members present, when members with opposite points are desirous of speaking during the agenda item’s time.*
  - (c) *Debate must be directed to the motion on the floor, not motives; to principles, not personalities. The presiding officer must rule all personal remarks out of order. The issue—not the person—is the topic of discussion. Members address their comments to the Chair, not to other members.*
  - (d) *If a member attempts to bring a question—or a motion that is essentially the same as a previously voted-on question—at the same meeting, the presiding officer should rule the motion out of order*
  - (e) *The minority has the right to be heard and to take part in debate; however, once a decision has been reached by a majority vote of the members present, the minority must respectfully abide by the decision.*
  - (f) *Members who abstain (chose to not vote) actually agree to go along with the decision of the majority by their silence. A majority means “the majority of members voting”; abstentions do not count in the total vote count.*

## Motions

A **motion** is a formal proposal that certain action be taken; it is the means by which all business is introduced.

### Making a Motion

Business is introduced by a “main” motion after obtaining the floor:

#### **Step 1: Addressing the presiding chair.**

A member may raise a hand floor and await recognition.

#### **Step 2: Assigning the floor/Being recognized by the presiding chair**

### Handling the Motion:

There are three steps by which a motion is brought before the group:

**Step 1: Making the motion.** A member makes the motion (I move that.....)

**Step 2: Second the motion.** <sup>g</sup> Another member “seconds” the motion, opening the topic for discussion

**Step 3: The presiding chair states the motion and asks if there is any discussion.**

NOTE: The motion as stated by the presiding officer is the motion that will be voted on; if the motion is restated differently by the presiding officer, the originator of the motion must be recognized and correctly state the motion.

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### **(g) No Second, No Debate!**

*To second a motion is to agree that the motion is worthy of discussion and consideration.*

*Don't want to consider it? Don't say a word!*

*Motion is not considered for lack of a second.*

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### Considering the Motion

#### **Step 1: Members debate the motion.**

- The presiding chair allows debate with the originator of the motion speaking first.
- The originator of the motion may not speak against his/her motion; however, he/she may vote against or withdraw the motion.
- Debate continues, alternating pros and cons to the issue, as each member is recognized by the presiding officer. NOTE: Members speak through the presiding officer, addressing the presiding chair and confining their remarks to the motion under discussion.

#### **Step 2: When the debate appears to be finished, the presiding chair puts the motion to a vote.**

The presiding chair restates the question/motion, reading the motion as it was made (“I have a motion and a second to...”), then taking the vote (“All in favor of the motion, say aye,” “Those opposed, say nay”)

#### **Step 3: Announcing the result of the vote.**

The presiding chair announces the results of the vote for example “The ayes have it, and the motion carries”; or “The nays have it, and the motion fails (or is lost).”

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## Resolution

A 'resolution' is a written statement, prepared in advance for important or complex questions, or when greater formality is desired for members to review before the meeting. **It includes a formal pre-written statement of the motion** usually preceded by the words "Resolved that..."

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## Member Rights in debate

- The maker of a motion has the right to be the first to speak on it.
  - All remarks must be limited to the merits of the subject immediately before the assembly
  - All remarks must be addressed to and through the Chair
  - A member can speak no more than twice on the same question on the same day.
  - Each speech must be time-limited (2-3 minutes)
  - Personal remarks should be avoided and motives of members must not be questioned; the item, not the person, is the subject of debate.
  - Members should be seated when another member is assigned the floor and during any interruption by the presiding officer.
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## Resources:

- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. 10<sup>th</sup> Edition*
- *Robert's Rules for Dummies*
- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Robert's Rules*