

Senate Rules of Order

May 27, 2024

1. The Chair shall conduct the meetings of Senate according to the provisions of these Rules and, for any matter not present in these Rules, will be guided by the American Institute of Parliamentarians – Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (AIPSCPP).
2. Quorum is 28 members. If a quorum is present when the Chair calls the meeting to order, the quorum is presumed to continue until adjournment. If, in the course of the meeting, quorum is challenged and it is ascertained that a quorum is no longer present, the meeting shall be adjourned.
3. Call to Order: After the Chair has called the meeting to order, only one person may speak at a time, and only after being recognized by the Chair, except as provided below.
4. Agenda: The Chair shall recommend an agenda at the beginning of each meeting, which shall become the order of business unless a motion to amend it is made and adopted. Discussion will be in order on each subject as it comes up on the agenda, and may be on any aspect of each subject as a whole until a specific motion is introduced.
5. Notice of Motion: The normal Notice of Motion period for main motions is ten days. The standard procedure for placing a motion before Senate is for the motion, along with its supporting rationale, to be communicated to Senate Executive, through the Clerk, in time for the meeting of Senate Executive preceding the relevant Senate meeting. Senate Executive meets ten days before the Senate meeting, giving the ten-day notice period requirement. One way for a member of Senate to meet this deadline is to raise the issue under Other Business at a meeting of Senate; this then becomes a Notice of Motion for the next meeting. See Rule 6 for cases where this advance notification of a motion is not possible. Procedural and courtesy motions do not require advance notice.
6. Waiver of Notice of Motion for main motions: The requirement for Notice is an important principle and should only be waived in the most serious situations. A Senator may place a motion before Senate without proper notice (see Rule 5) only if all of the following conditions are met:
 - (a) The motion has been received by the Clerk at or before the start of the meeting;

- (b) The motion responds to circumstances that developed after the date for proper notice;
- (c) The action specified in the motion cannot be delayed to permit consideration at the next meeting of Senate;
- (d) The motion addresses an issue of importance to the University;
- (e) A 2/3 majority of those present agrees to waive the requirement for notice after hearing the motion read.

The Chair will rule a motion as out of order if any of these conditions fails be met.

7. The Chair may request a motion when they believe a motion will aid the discussion. In doing so, the Chair may not go against the principle of giving Senators proper notice of main motions.
8. When a motion is properly made and is seconded and stated by the Chair, it becomes the business on the floor, and all discussion must apply to it until it is disposed of, except for those procedural motions that are in order.
9. Only members of Senate may speak at a Senate meeting, with the exception that the Chair may allow a person who is not a Senator to provide Senate with information.
10. The Chair may summarize discussions and present alternatives for consideration when no motion is pending, but may state their own opinion only (a) during general discussion when no other member requests the floor, (b) by relinquishing the Chair, (c) in deciding a point of order, or (d) if the pending question is an appeal from a ruling on a point of order.

11. Voting and Records

11.1 All members of Senate are entitled to vote on Senate business with the exceptions of the Chair who does not vote except to break a tie.

11.2. In order to vote, a Senator must be present. Proxy votes are not allowed. Individuals formally appointed into an Acting position that carries an ex officio voting membership on Senate may participate in Senate as voting members, unless they are already a voting member. (A Senator may only have one vote on each motion.)

11.3 When a motion has been made and seconded, the Chair shall state it and call for discussion on it. When every member who wishes to speak has done so, the Chair shall call for a vote. Approval by a majority of those voting or by consent without objection shall be necessary to adopt a motion, unless otherwise specified in these Rules. A tie vote shall defeat the pending motion.

11.4. Voting shall be by show of hands unless some other method is decided upon by motion, as long as voting, whether in person or virtual, is open and transparent to all Senators at the meeting. An exception to this rule would be elections, in which voting shall be by secret ballot wherever there are more nominees than places. Votes shall be counted by the Clerk, and recorded, whenever the Chair is in doubt as to the result or any member requests a count through a point of order.

11.5 The record of a vote in the minutes is normally one of: Passed unanimously, passed, and defeated. When a vote is counted, pursuant to 11.4, the decision and the count of the vote will be recorded. In particular, the fact that a Senator chooses not to vote is not normally recorded. However, a Senator may request (at the time of voting) that their abstention be recorded in the minutes.

11.6 Proposals may also be approved by consent. This means that, in the absence of opposition, the Chair declares the item approved. This method of approval is usually restricted to items of regular business such as approving the agenda, approval of minutes and adjournment when all business is complete.

12. Motions:

Senate does much of its work through the consideration of clear statements called motions. A list of motions including the order of precedence and the essential governing rules is presented in the reference chart at the end of this document.

There are 4 types of Motions: Main, Subsidiary, Privileged and Incidental.

12.1 A Main Motion pertains to the main work of Senate and may establish a policy, set up a committee, award a degree or propose a new program, for example. Once a main motion has been introduced, it becomes the focus of attention; it must be dealt with in some way before another main motion is introduced.

Specific main motions that act upon previously considered motions include the following (a complete list is provided in the reference chart at the end of this document).

12.1.1 Motion to reconsider: This motion asks that the vote on a main motion already taken at the same meeting be set aside and that the motion be reconsidered again as though no vote had been taken on it. The effect is to remove the previous vote as if it had never happened, and debate is resumed.

12.1.1 Motion to rescind: The motion asks that a motion or part of a motion approved at a previous meeting now be considered defeated. Such a motion is not retroactive and actions already taken as a result of the rescinded motion remain unchanged.

12.2 Subsidiary motions propose some action to the main motion on the floor. These include:

12.2.1 Motion to Amend: This is a motion that proposes a change in the wording of a main motion already on the floor. The motion to amend can, itself be amended.

12.2.1.1 Amendments which are still pending are considered one at a time as presented. Amendments to amendments (amendments in the second degree) may be made, but not amendments in the third degree.

12.2.1.2 An amendment does not require previous notice. It must be germane to the motion and may not negate the motion.

12.2.1.3 Friendly Amendment: During the course of debate, the mover and seconder may receive suggestions from the floor about the wording of motions. If the mover and seconder agree that the intent of the motion would be clarified by a change of wording, they may, with the agreement of the Chair, alter the wording of the motion accordingly. This is called a friendly amendment.

12.2.2 Motion to Refer to a committee: This motion directs that the debate be terminated in Senate and the issue be referred to a specified committee, which may be required to report back to Senate at a specific time.

12.2.3 Motion to Postpone until a specific time: this motion closes debate at this point but requires that Senate return to consideration at a specified time.

12.2.4 Motion to limit or extend debate (requires a 2/3 majority vote)

12.2.5 Motion to close debate and vote immediately (requires a 2/3 majority vote)

12.2.6 Motion to Postpone consideration until another unspecified time: this motion ends the debate without a conclusion or a specific time to return. It thus closes debate for today.

12.3 Privileged Motions are undebatable and include:

12.3.1 Point of Privilege: A point of privilege is a statement relating to the rights and privileges of Senate or any of its members. For example, the issue may be that a statement reflects on the reputation of a member, Senate or the university. It may also relate to the conduct of a person or the physical conditions of the meeting. Action to be taken in response to a point of privilege is decided by the Chair without debate.

12.3.2 Motion to Recess: This motion proposes a break in proceedings without terminating pending business. It must state the time to resume the meeting.

12.3.3 Motion to Adjourn: Senate is adjourned automatically when there is no further business to discuss. At an earlier stage, a member may move for adjournment if this is in the best interests of Senate. The effect is to terminate consideration of any pending business.

12.4 Incidental Motions are concerned with procedure and process. A full list of incidental motions is provided in the reference chart at the end of this document. The most common examples include:

12.4.1 Motion to Appeal: When a decision is made by the Chair rather than by vote, a member may appeal that decision by calling out, "I appeal the ruling of the Chair". In that case the Chair and the member making the appeal shall state briefly the reasons for their views, after which an immediate vote shall be taken, a majority of those voting being sufficient to uphold or overrule the ruling of the Chair. The Chair does not participate in this vote.

12.4.2 Request to divide the Motion: If a motion has been presented in a sequence of distinct parts, a member may request that these parts be considered separately. This is a request, it does not require a seconder and is decided by the Chair.

12.4.3 Request to withdraw: If discussion of the motion convinces the mover that the motion was ill advised, the mover may withdraw a motion at any time, with the consent of Senate.

12.4.4 Point of Order: A member who believes that the Rules are being violated or that action is needed to handle an emergency, or who wishes a count on a vote may call out "point of order" at any time, in which case they shall be recognized for the sole purpose of stating briefly what they believe to be the correct procedures. Action to be taken in response to a point of order is decided by the Chair without debate.

12.4.5 Point of Information: Any member wishing information on a point under discussion when no one else has the floor may call out "point of information", in which case the Chair shall recognize the member for a brief question, and either give an answer or recognize someone to do so. Points of information may also be raised while a member is speaking, unless the speaker has asked not to be interrupted, and such questions will be directed by the Chair to the speaker.

12.4.6 Request for a Counted Vote – This is a request to the Chair to count the votes if the result of the vote is unclear.

12.5 A Courtesy Motion is a brief statement of the will of Senate in a special situation, typically as a vote of thanks, congratulations, or condolence. A Courtesy motion does not need to be submitted in advance.

13. Rules applicable to all Motions:

13.1 All motions require a mover and a seconder, except Point of Order, Point of Information, Point of Privilege and requests of the Chair.

13.2. Motions that are noted as not subject to debate or amendment may be debated and amended by two-thirds majority consent or at the discretion of the Chair.

13.3 It shall be the duty of the Chair to rule out of order all motions and tactics designed to delay or divert the work of Senate and any undignified behavior or remarks. Such rulings by the Chair remain open to appeal except in the case that the behavior ruled against is a repetition of an appeal from a ruling of the Chair on the same or similar issue where this ruling has already been upheld at the meeting.

Principal Rules Governing Motions (adapted from AIP Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure)¹

Motions in order of Precedence (highest to lowest)²

Motion	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required
Privileged Motions			
Adjourn	No	Yes ³	Majority
Recess	No	Yes ⁴	Majority
Point of Privilege	No	No	None
Subsidiary Motions			
Postpone to unspecified time	No	No	2/3
Close Debate & Vote immediately	No	Yes ⁵	2/3
Limit or Extend Debate	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone to a specific time	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to committee	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	Yes	Yes	Majority
Main Motions			
The main motion	Yes	Yes	Majority
Restorative Main motions:			
Reconsider	Yes	No	Majority
Rescind	Yes	No	Majority

Incidental Motions (no order of precedence)

Motion/Request	Debatable	Amendable	Votes Required
Motion to Appeal	Yes	No	Majority
Request: Counted Vote	No	No	Majority
Request: Point of Order	No	No	N/A
Request: Point of Information	No	No	N/A
Request: Withdraw a motion	No	No	N/A
Request: Divide the Motion	No	No	N/A

¹ American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, 2nd edition, 2023.

² Motions are in order if no motion higher on the list is pending.

³ Can be amended to establish a continued meeting.

⁴ Can be amended for time to reconvene or length of recess.

⁵ Amendable as to the motion(s) to which it applies, if more than one vote is pending (for example if there is a main motion plus amendments).