

The Basics of Using Robert's Rules of Order for SGA Meetings

SGA Uses Robert's Rules of Order - Revised

- ▶ Meetings that use Robert's Rules of Order...
 - ▶ Run in the same manner
 - ▶ No matter where the meeting is held

Purpose of RRO

- ▶ Based on common sense and logic...
- ▶ The rules protect:
 - ▶ (a) the rights of the majority to decide
 - ▶ (b) the rights of the minority to be heard
 - ▶ (c) the rights of individual members
 - ▶ (d) the rights of absentees

The Ten Basic Rules

1. The Rights of the Organization Supersede the Rights of the Individual Members
2. All members are equal and their rights are equal
3. A quorum must be present to do business

The Ten Basic Rules

4. The majority rules
 - ▶ All questions at any legally convened meeting shall be decided by simple majority of the votes cast, unless stipulated otherwise in the Constitution.
5. Silence means consent
 - ▶ Those members that do NOT vote AGREE to go along with the decision of the majority by their silence.
6. Two-thirds vote rule
 - ▶ A 2/3rds vote is necessary whenever limiting or taking away the rights of members or changing a previous decision.

The Ten Basic Rules

7. One question at a time and one speaker at a time.
 - ▶ *Motions must be related to matters under consideration*
8. Once a member has been 'recognized' this individual has been granted 'the floor' and may not be interrupted by another member
 - ▶ Motions must receive full debate
9. The meeting chair may not put a motion to vote as long as members wish to debate it
 - ▶ The debate can only be cut short by a 2/3rds vote

The Ten Basic Rules

- 9. Once a decision made, an identical motion must not be brought forward at the same meeting
 - ▶ Such a motion shall be ruled out of order by the meeting chair
- 10. Personal remarks in a debate are ALWAYS out of order
 - ▶ Debate Motions not Motives
 - ▶ Debate must be directed to Principles and not Personalities

Running a Meeting Effectively

CHAIR CHARACTERISTICS

In control of the floor
Impartial
Composed
Precise: restates motions before votes
Focused: stays on track with discussions
Temperate: uses the gavel sparingly

ON TIME AND STAYS ON TIME


ORGANIZED AND PREPARED

PREPARED: KNOWS THE RULES AND BYLAWS

A PARLIAMENTARIAN: KEEPS THE GROUP WORKING TOGETHER

Keeping Minutes

- ▶ Minutes are the written record of the meeting
- ▶ Minutes are the permanent and legal record of the meeting
- ▶ They should be written as concisely as possible
- ▶ Secretary's duty



Keeping Minutes

- ▶ Approval of Minutes
- ▶ At each meeting, review minutes from prior meeting
- ▶ Allow for corrections
- ▶ Reminder to members of previous decisions and discussions



Motions

- ▶ A motion is a formal proposal for consideration and action.
 - ▶ Only one motion can be made at a time,
 - ▶ No main motion can be made while the body is already considering a prior motion.
- ▶ Motion procedure:
 - ▶ Motion is made ("I move that...")
 - ▶ Motion is seconded
 - ▶ Motion is debated/discussed
 - ▶ Motion is voted on

8 Steps in Processing a Motion

1. When nothing else is pending, a member will address the Chair or raise their hand.
 - ▶ Say "Speaker____."
2. Chair recognizes the member by stating their name or otherwise acknowledging them.
 - ▶ Chair says: "Senator____."

8 Steps in Processing a Motion

3. Member will state their motion.

- ▶ Say "I move that ____."

4. Another member seconds the motion.

- ▶ Other member raises their hand and says "Second."

8 Steps in Processing a Motion

5. Chair will re-state the motion and open discussion.

- ▶ Chair says: "It is moved that ____."
- ▶ "Is there any discussion?"

6. Members now have the right to be recognized and debate the motion. During discussion, subsidiary motions (amend, refer, etc..) may be introduced.

8 Steps in Processing a Motion

7. The Chair will now re-state the question put the question to a vote.

- ▶ "The question is on the adoption of ____."
- ▶ "All in favor say 'Aye', all opposed say 'Nay'."

8. The Chair will announce the results and transition to the next order of business.

- ▶ "The motion is carried [lost]: We will [Will not]..."
- ▶ "The next order of business is..."

Types of Motions

1. Main Motion
 - ▶ Brings new business before the body.
2. Subsidiary Motion
 - ▶ Changes how a motion is handled.
3. Privileged Motion
 - ▶ Concerns matters of high importance that are unrelated to the pending business.
4. Incidental Motion
 - ▶ Provides a means of questioning procedure.

Frequently Used Motions.

1. Amend
 - ▶ Used to insert or strike out words.
 - ▶ Clarifies or improves the original motion.
 - ▶ Must be germane to the original motion.
2. Call for the Orders of the Day
 - ▶ Demands a return to the order of business.
3. Commit or Refer
 - ▶ Refers a question to committee.

Frequently Used Motions.

4. Lay on the Table
 - ▶ Temporarily suspends further action on a question.
5. Limit/Extend Debate
 - ▶ Modifies rules of debate to allow for more/less time.
6. Postpone Indefinitely
 - ▶ Rejects a main motion without bringing it to a vote.
 - ▶ Allows bodies to reject motions without taking an official position.

Frequently Used Motions

7. Reconsider

- ▶ Can re-open debate on a closed question.
- ▶ Motion can only be made in the same meeting by a member of the prevailing side who has changed their mind.
- ▶ Can also be used to reconsider a question if it is discovered an illegal action has been taken.

8. Suspension

- ▶ Allows the lawful violation of certain rules.
- ▶ Must be clearly specified.

Asking Questions

1. Parliamentary Inquiry

- ▶ A question to the chair, to clarify some aspect of parliamentary rules or procedure.

2. Point of Information

- ▶ A question pertaining to the matter at hand.
- ▶ Directed to the chair, or to another member through the chair.

Voting

▶ There are 3 voting responses:

- ▶ In Favor: You approve of adoption of the question
- ▶ Not in Favor: You disapprove of the adoption of the question.
- ▶ Abstention: You withdraw from the vote.
 - ▶ Abstention is only in order if there is a distinct conflict of interest, or if the member is not well enough informed (through prior absence or some other extenuating circumstance) to make an educated decision.

Types of Votes

- ▶ Vocal Vote
 - ▶ Ayes or Nays. If the majority is unclear, a hand vote is necessary.
- ▶ Hand Vote
 - ▶ The extension of the hand to indicate approval/disapproval.
- ▶ Roll Call Vote
 - ▶ The Secretary proceeds through the roll call list and records each member's vote individually.
- ▶ Unanimous Consent
 - ▶ An automatic approval of a question, pending no objections.
 - ▶ If even one member objects, the chair must state the question and proceed through normal voting processes.

Questions?

References:

- ▶ Robert's Rules of Order, 11th edition Newly Revised. Published 2012, De Capo Press.
- ▶ Pollack, A. & Scalice, N. Parliamentary Procedure Workshop, FAU Student Government. 2009.
