

Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure

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Goals of Parliamentary Procedure

Like-minded persons who make decisions by consensus have minimal need for parliamentary procedure.

Its primary value lies in regulating disagreement.

Benefits from Regulating Disagreement

- An orderly process for considering minority views can improve outcomes.
- An orderly process allows the body to move through its business efficiently, while allowing consideration of dissenting views.
- Members on the losing side are more likely to accept the outcome if they believe their views have been properly heard and considered and votes properly taken.
- A strong process helps protect the body from external criticism, from whoever disagrees with the results.

Role of the Parliamentarian

- Reports to and advises the Presiding Officer (P.O.).
- May intervene if a procedural error has occurred or seems imminent.
- Has no authority to make decisions.
- Questions to the Parliamentarian, during a meeting, should go through the Chair.
(Written questions to the Parliamentarian, outside of a meeting, may be answered but the writer should assume that Senate leadership is copied on the reply.)

Authorities on Senate Roles and Processes

(in order of precedence)

- Arizona statutes
- ABOR policies
- Faculty constitution and bylaws
- Robert's [remarkably expanded] Rules
- Presiding Officer

The following documents have authority by age or origin, but the boundaries of that authority are not precisely clear.

- "Guidelines for Shared Governance" (2005)
- "Parliamentary Procedures to Accomplish Three Fundamental Objectives" (2010)
- "Faculty Senator Guide to Shared Governance and Communication" (recent)

Notes:

The Senate is unusual in having no clear and internally adopted set of procedural rules. The listed documents do not combine to form a coherent whole.

The Office of the General Counsel has recently opined that the Senate is not subject to Arizona's Open Meeting Law.

Basic Principles for Debate

The limited time should be allocated to allow all sides to speak.

Personal criticisms and allegations concerning motives are inappropriate.

Debate ends by:

- Resolution by vote of the issue being debated; or
- Action of the Presiding Officer; or
- 2/3 vote by the body (for cloture or a time limit)

Basic Principles for Motions

Almost any motion requires a second, and it must receive that second before it can be discussed. Otherwise it fails immediately.

Motions must state clearly and completely their content, so there is no ambiguity in the text or substance of what the body may approve. This statement may refer to written text submitted before the meeting.

Basic Principles for Motions (2)

The seconded motion does not formally exist until the P.O. recognizes that a motion is on the floor. If there is any ambiguity in the statement of the motion, then the P.O. must restate it precisely, for the record. (It is good general practice always to restate the motion.) The meeting minutes must include the exact statement of any adopted motion.

The Parliamentarian will issue a summary taxonomy of the main kinds of motions.

Basic Principles for Votes

The P.O. decides whether a particular vote will occur by *voice vote* or *show of hands* by *open* or *secret ballot*. Except: the Senate can decide by majority vote to require a secret ballot; in the absence of such a vote, if seven members (10%) of the Senate request an open ballot, then it must be open.

The P.O. must announce the result of the vote during the meeting, directly following the vote. For open votes, the meeting minutes must record individual members' votes.

If votes are tabulated electronically, then the Senate should adopt policy defining the procedures to be used.

Basic Principles for the Agenda

The Executive Committee sets the distributed agenda.

The Senate adopts the distributed agenda, or a modified agenda, by majority vote at the start of the meeting.

Once a meeting agenda is adopted, any further changes to the agenda require a 2/3 vote.