

Governance Council

Procedures for Senate Meetings:

Preamble: Prior to the pandemic, senate meetings were scheduled for 90 minutes. Given everyone's busy schedules and the time commitments they require, we are hoping to gradually return to this schedule. In order to do so, we are in discussions with senior administrators about making their presentations at the meetings more efficient, but we will also implement the following:

- 1) We will distinguish between open ended discussions and actual Senate business. We have a history of having forums for senators to gather, discuss issues with members of the executive committee, craft proposals and raise concerns that will eventually become motions to be voted on the Senate. **In the future GOV will regularly schedule these forums, make them open to any interested parties, and use them to encourage anyone who wishes to discuss, advocate, plan.**
- 2) In Senate meetings however, we will abide more strictly by parliamentary rules. These include:
 - a. We will reserve limited time at the end of each report for questions. Anyone may ask questions about reports, but questions will be limited to one question per person (if there is time permitting at the end of questions, further questions can be asked).
 - b. When a motion is before the Senate, any interested party may have opportunity to speak once to the motion. They will be expected to begin their comment by indicating whether they are for or against the motion. Comments must be directly related to the motion on the floor. Participants will be afforded an opportunity to respond to a comment made by another party only if they believe a factual error has been made and that the record requires correction. A mere difference of opinion does not constitute the basis for a rebuttal.
 - c. When amendments are proposed, individuals who have spoken previously to the motion are entitled to speak to the amendment.
- 3) We will abide by Robert's Rules of Order. The core value of these rules is that they are transparent and knowable, and available to any Senator, which ultimately democratizes our process, though Senators are sometimes unfamiliar with the nature of these rules, and it at times creates confusion. The rules that are most relevant here include the following:
 - a) **Points of Order** – This used only to call attention to a rules violation in the Senate. Appropriate if a Senate rule has been broken, and must be accompanied by specific reference to the rule that has been broken.
 - b) **Points of Information** – this is a request for information. It does not entail providing information. You can address the chair in asking for information

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relative to a report or motion, but you cannot use it to contribute to debate.

- c) **Points of Privilege** - there are several contexts for this. (The following is directly quoted from www.lawinsider.com) It can mean a statement calling attention to a matter where “the integrity of an individual (personal) or the entire Council is perceived to be in question” Point of Privilege can also mean “the procedural mechanism by which a member may rise to address incorrect, defamatory or slanderous statements made about the Council, councillors, or employees...” It can further mean something simple, like “I cannot hear what is said because the air-conditioning is too loud, or the tech is not working. **It does not afford special privilege to members of the executive committee, nor does it entitle someone to speak on something that is not related to the proper functioning of the senate and its processes.**

- 4) **Quorum** – prior to the pandemic, quorum was a real problem for the Senate. One reason for this was that the Senate often seemed unable to conduct its business, and buy-in from Faculty was pretty weak. We note here the importance of this issue because at any point in any meeting any senator is entitled to call the quorum, and if a count indicates we have lost quorum, we are required by rule to adjourn. The Zoom meetings have had a positive effect on attendance, but not necessarily buy- in. As we contemplate a return to in person meetings, we plan the following:
 - A) When we return to in person, we retain the ability to attend over zoom. This not only addresses our three campus problem, but will generally make it easier for Senators who have other obligations and find it difficult to not just carve out these hours, but to be on campus at that time.

 - B) Should we fail to achieve quorum, on a regular basis, we will revisit our rules on this matter.

- 5) **Order of Business:** We want to give administrators a chance to know the timing of their presentations and do them early in the meeting, but it might make sense to have the first report to the Senate be given by the Chair. It establishes the orderly functioning of the senate. It might make sense to standardize our agenda around this following broad organizational principles:
 - 1) Approval of Agenda
 - 2) Approval of Minutes
 - 3) Chair’s Report
 - 4) Reports/Presentations by Administrators
 - 5) Items Requiring a motion and a vote (Old Business and/or General Orders)
 - 6) Council Reports
 - 7) New Business