



Graduate Student Senate

O H I O U N I V E R S I T Y

Policies and Procedures

Parliamentary Procedure Guidelines

Revised 1-4-04

GSS uses “Robert’s Rules of Order” as a guide to Parliamentary Procedure, which is a set of rules for conduct at meetings to allow everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. Parliamentary Procedure is the protocol generally employed by legislative bodies to facilitate meetings. The goals of Parliamentary Procedure are to protect the rights of the minority, maintain the rule of the majority, and promote the most efficient meetings. Some Senates use very strict forms of Parliamentary Procedure; others are very loose in their interpretation. **We are somewhere in the middle;** openness and ease of discussion are emphasized because the interpretation we use does not require many of the more complex techniques of strict Parliamentary Procedure.

TIPS

- **Most importantly, *BE COURTEOUS* and *RELAX!***
- We are always in the process of learning, so don’t worry if it feels awkward at first. Parliamentary Procedure is just like any habit: After a few times doing it, you don’t even think about it.
- Let members obtain the floor properly.
- Speak clearly and concisely.
- **When in doubt, blurt your thoughts loud!** The important thing when starting is to get the thought out before the Senate. The President or Parliamentarian will be happy to clarify your intentions so you’ll know what to do next time.
- Obey the procedures of discussion/debate. When in doubt, you can always ask for clarification.

TERMS

- Parliamentary Procedure only allows for certain actions to be performed at certain times during the meeting.
- Actions allowed are referred to as “in order” and those not allowed are called “out of order.” In general, actions that are germane to the topic of discussion are in order.

Quorum

- To conduct business and vote, there must be a quorum present at the meeting.
- The quorum is the number of voting members that the Senate considers to be sufficient to carryout official business. This number is stated in the Bylaws.

The Floor

- A member or guest who “has the floor” has the right to speak without being interrupted (for the most part). A member with the floor may entertain questions proposed by other members or guests without yielding the floor.
- When the member or guest is done, he/she must yield the floor.
- The President always determines who has the floor. A member must have the floor to make a motion, but not to second one.

Move and Motion

- To “Move” is to make a “Motion” or suggestion to the Senate to take a specific action.
- Any member of the Senate may propose a motion (provided it is in order).
- Bills and Resolutions in New Business are *Main Motions* are used to help resolve the issue.
- Only one main motion can be considered at a time.

Second

- Most motions proposed to the Senate require that at least one other member support consideration of the action.
- Remember, just because a motion is seconded by someone, doesn't mean he/she is agreeing with it. Seconds allow the motion to be debated and voted on, at which time members can express any supportive or opposing sentiments to the motion.

Resolution

- A resolution is a detailed statement of sentiment or a recommended course of action to be carried out by the Senate.
- Consists of several "whereas" clauses, which outline the reasons, and one or more "resolved" clauses outlining the opinion of the Senate.
- These may be written and sponsored by any member(s) of the Senate.
- A template to write a new resolution is available on www.ohio.edu/~gss, then click on "General Info".
- Resolutions need at least two sponsors by voting members of GSS, and can be as long as you want, but preferably around one page.