

Standing Rules of the University Senate¹

The University of Connecticut Senate operates under Robert's Rules of Order,¹ except as modified under these Standing Rules.

Principles Underlying Parliamentary Law

Parliamentary rules are intended to balance the rights of the majority, minority, and individual Members, with due regard for every Member's opinion.

Pattern of Formality

The Moderator and Members follow customs of formality in order to help preserve an objective and thoughtful approach that discourages *ad hominem* arguments and maintains the Moderator's position of impartiality.

Customs Observed by Members of the University Senate

- The Presiding officer is addressed as "the Moderator" or "the Chair".
- Seating:
 - Elected Senators sit at the tables at the center of the room.
 - Ex-officio Senators sit at the side tables near the doors.
 - Visitors sit in the chairs along the walls at the side and back of the room.
- Only Senators can participate in the question and answer period following each presentation. A Senator may request permission of the Senate for a visitor to speak if they have specific information or expertise to offer. Such permission may be granted by the Moderator "without exception" but otherwise requires a 2/3 majority vote to be given.
- Senators should stand before speaking, identify themselves, and address each other with the title "Senator".
- At 5:15, the Moderator will ask: "Is there any new business to be presented to the Senate today?" This represents the last opportunity to add new business to the agenda.
- Only one question may be considered at a time
 - i.e. a main motion, amend, postpone, refer, previous question, point of order, appeal, consideration by paragraph or seriatim, division of the assembly, division of the question, table.
- Obtaining the floor
 - To make a motion or speak in debate, a Member must be recognized by the Moderator.
 - The Moderator normally calls on Members in the order in which the Moderator notices their interest in speaking, with four exceptions:
 - The maker of a motion normally speaks first to it.
 - The Moderator may call upon an individual with particular expertise to address a question that has arisen.
 - Senators who have not yet addressed the issue take precedence over those that have spoken already.
 - When positions are known, the Moderator will attempt to alternate between pro and con positions.

Handling of a Motion

- Written copies of motions should be submitted to the Senate Office one week prior to the meeting.
- Committee reports often include motions.
- A Member makes a motion, for example "I move..."
- Another Member seconds the motion, for example "I second."
 - A motion from a Senate committee does not require a second because it has support of at least two Senators.

¹ Robert's Rules of Order: Newly Revised, 1990 Edition, Henry M. Robert, III and W.R. Evans, (Ed.). All items are quoted or paraphrased from this source.

- The Chair "states the question" or repeats the motion. A motion comes before the Senate once the Chair "states the question."
- Some motions are not debatable, e.g. a motion to adjourn or a motion to call the question (end debate).
- Motions that involve a by-law change are not voted on at the same meeting in which they are first presented. Exceptions to this rule require a 2/3 majority.
- Motions of direct relevance to undergraduate students are not considered at Senate meetings that coincide with final exam week.
- Normally, voting is done by voice vote.
- Normally, we avoid unnecessary motions and seconds.

Issues That Are Often Misunderstood

- A "motion to table" or to "lay on the table" enables the Senate to set aside the pending question temporarily *when something else of immediate urgency has arisen*.
 - The motion cannot be qualified in any way. It is not debatable.
 - Discussion on the pending question resumes at the will of the majority.
 - If the intent is simply to postpone consideration of the pending question, rather than to allow debate on another topic, then the appropriate motion is to "postpone indefinitely" or to "postpone to a certain time," e.g. the next regular meeting.
- There is no such thing as a "friendly amendment"
 - Once the Chair has "stated the question" there is no "friendly" or modified amendment that the maker may accept without the consent of the Senate.