Parliamentary Procedure
Guidelines for Local Senates
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I. Origins of Parliamentary Procedure

English Law

In the historical sense, *parliamentary law* referred to the customs and rules related to business in the English Parliament. These rules provided the following guidelines:

1. Treat one subject at a time
2. Alternate between opposite points of view in discussion
3. Always have the chair tally votes for both sides of the issue
4. Maintain decorum in discussion and avoiding personalities in debate
5. Confine debate to the merits of the question under discussion (PLI 1995:4).
6. Division of a question—members may be for one part of a question and not for another (Robert 1981:xxxi).

These rules applied to a *deliberative assembly*, "a group of people meeting to decide on a common action" (PLI 1995:5).

Early Developments in Parliamentary Law: Jefferson and Cushing

In 1801 Thomas Jefferson published the first book on parliamentary law, *Manual of Parliamentary Practice*. Jefferson, in response to the publication of his guide, wrote, "The proceedings of Parliament in ancient times, and for a long while, were crude, multiform, and embarrassing" (ibid.).

In 1844 Luther Cushing, clerk of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, published the *Manual of Parliamentary Practice: Rules of Proceeding and Debate in Deliberative Assemblies*. The manual soon was known as "Cushing's Manual." It was the first sourcebook on parliamentary law that spoke to the procedural needs of the many growing voluntary societies in the United States (Robert 1981:xxxv).

General Henry Martyn Robert
Eventually parliamentary law was being used at all levels of government, yet the rules for deliberative assemblies had not yet been modified for use by smaller organizations. Henry Martyn Robert, an army engineer, took about the task of making such a modification. Though originally conceiving of a work of less than twenty pages, General Robert's "manual" eventually encompassed over two hundred pages and was published as *Robert's Rules of Order* in 1876. By 1915 more than one half a million copies of the guide were in print and soon Robert's manual would become a standard for deliberative assemblies everywhere. Today, there are over 4.5 million copies of *Robert's Rules of Order* in print.

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II. What is Parliamentary Law?

Parliamentary law "is a system of rules that are designed to protect the rights of those people attending and running a meeting" (PLI 1995:6). Procedurally, the "object of rules of order is to facilitate the smooth functioning of the assembly and to provide a firm basis for resolving questions of procedure that may arise" (Robert 1981:12-13). The procedural standards established by rules of order allow an assembly to focus on the specific issues to which it is charged. The basic provisions of parliamentary law include:

1. Ensure the right of the majority
2. Protect the rights of the minority
3. Defend the rights of individual members
4. Safeguard those people absent from the meeting
5. Guard all these together (Robert 1990:xliv).

A deliberative assembly is "free to do whatever it must to ensure these protections to all members" (PLI 1995:6). Accordingly, each assembly must borrow and adopt Robert's Rules as it sees fit. As Lehr Fess suggested, "all law is based on custom. Like the common law, parliamentary law is largely based upon the customary practices regulating procedure in group action as developed throughout the centuries. While the fundamental rules are applicable to all group action, a wide difference in detail must necessarily exist when the rules are applied to different groups" (in Jones 1971:ix). The *parliamentary authority*, the rules of order specific to any given organization (Robert 1981:3), vary from society to society. As General Robert had suggested, it is important that the deliberative assembly, regardless of its purpose, membership and the like, should maintain parliamentary authority consistent with other deliberative assemblies, if not for consistency alone.

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III. Membership and Officers

Rights of Members

1. Receive notices of meetings
2. Attend meetings
3. Make motions
4. Second motions (when applicable)
5. Debate motions (when applicable)
6. Vote on motions (except on those on which the person has a conflict of interest)
7. Nominate persons for office and be nominated for office
8. Elect people to office and be elected to office

9. Know the meaning of the question being debated
10. Object when rules are being violated
11. Appeal the decision of the chair
12. Not have to suffer personal abuse and attack
13. Have access to all minutes of meetings
14. Have a copy of the organization's bylaws (PLI 1995:9).

Responsibilities of Members

1. Attend meetings
2. Be on time
3. Stay until the end of meetings
4. Be ready to talk knowledgeably and intelligently on a topic
5. Be attentive and open-minded
6. Treat everyone with courtesy
7. Speak openly, but allow everyone to have their turn to speak
8. Follow the rules of debate
9. Make a point concisely
10. Attack issues, not people
11. Insist on law and order at meetings
12. Work to create dignity and decorum
13. Actively participate in meetings
14. Work with others in a cooperative fashion
15. Be familiar with the basics of parliamentary law
16. Obey the rules of the organization
17. Respect the rights of others in the organization
18. Abide by the final decision of the majority
19. Be familiar with the bylaws
20. Select qualified officers
21. Participate in committees
22. Respect the chair's rulings
23. Promote the organization's growth and influence
24. Enhance the organization's reputation (PLI 1995:10).

Officers

The officers of your local senate will vary with its size, membership, bylaws and the like. The most common senate officers are President, Vice-President and Secretary (Recorder). A Parliamentarian is an office common to larger senates. The Treasurer and the Sergeant-at-Arms are two additional offices found in some senates. The specific duties of each of these offices again varies from senate to senate. Further clarification of duties are specified in this document. As well most parliamentary guides offer a sample listing of officer duties.

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IV. Understanding Motions

Using Motions to Help Run an Effective Senate

One of the real keys to running a successful deliberative assembly, and, for that matter, of being an able senator, is understanding the variety of motions, their rankings, uses and the like. People are often leery of parliamentary procedure because they wrongly believe it to be stifling and confusing.

Below is a list of the eight keys to understanding motions, followed by the major types of motions. Please note that all of the motions indicate the following: whether secondable/type of vote/whether debatable. The chair of your senate may wish to develop his or her own individualized guide to the motions commonly used by your senate. This guide provides a general explanation of motions, a motions at a glance chart, a motion guide by circumstance and an alphabetical listing of motions.

Understanding Motions

1. *Raking*: learn which motion has precedence over the other
2. *Situations*: each motion applies to a specific situation
3. *Timing*: when can a particular motion be put forth?
4. *Seconding*: some motions do not require a second
5. *Debatable*: some motions can be debated, others cannot be
6. *Amendable*: some motions can be amended, others cannot
7. *Votes*: how many votes are needed for a motion to pass?
8. *Reconsideration*: can a motion be reconsidered?

Main Motion

The main motion, the most common of motions in parliamentary workings, introduces a new item of business. Ironically, these are the lowest ranking of motions. You will often hear the term *resolution* used interchangeably with *motion*. A resolution is typically a more formal motion which is presented in writing. Commonly a resolution may be the result of committee work and the research of the committee is presented in the formal style of a resolution.

Subsidiary Motion (ranked)

A subsidiary motion is one applied to other motions to help members dispose of main motions. It is important to note that they may never stand alone. They include

(1) Lay on the Table: (needs 2nd, majority, no debate) when members wish to set aside a motion without specifying a time to resume debate on the issue, the majority of the assembly has the power to immediately halt debate on the question. Commonly the motion to lay on the table is used when another matter of pressing importance has arisen. It is often ruled out of order if its intent is to "kill" debate. It is often confused with "postpone indefinitely" and "postpone to a certain time" and is also mistakenly known as a motion "to table" (Robert 1981:177). A question that has been laid on the table may be removed from the table with a motion to *take from the table* in the same or subsequent session through a majority vote. If the question is not taken from the table by the next meeting of the assembly, it dies but may be reintroduced later as a new question (Robert 1981:253)

(2) Previous Question: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate), (a.k.a. "motion to close debate") when members wish to bring a motion to an immediate vote they may "move the previous question" to limit discussion.

(3) Limit or Extend Limits of Debate: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate) the assembly may decide to either limit or extend debate, such as the length allotted to speeches or that the question shall be put to a vote at a specific time

(4) Postpone to a Certain Time: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable) (a.k.a. "postpone to a certain time") allows the assembly to postpone consideration of a question to a future time or date. Should not be confused with "postpone indefinitely" which actually kills the motion.

(5) Commit or Refer: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable) allows the motion to be sent to a committee for further study or redrafting.

(6) Amend: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable) allows a motion to become more specific when it is unclear or broad. This is the most common of subsidiary motions used in an assembly. An amendment must be *germane*, that is, it must have bearing on the subject of the motion being amended (Robert 1981:109). For more information see the following section on amendments.

(7) Postpone Indefinitely: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable—unlike other sub. motions, debate can actually discuss merits of main motion) this is a motion used if the assembly declines to take a position on the main question. Its adoption kills the main motion (for the duration of the session) and avoids a direct vote on the question (Robert 1990:123). In other circumstances, if a member has brought a main motion that could cause people to become embarrassed or uncomfortable, a motion may be made to remove it from the assembly. Strategy: the only real purpose of this motion is to get a sense of how the assembly will vote on the main question without having to actually come to a vote (Jones 1990).

Subsidiary motions take precedence over main motions and they are listed here in order or precedence ("Lay on the Table" is the highest, "Postpone Indefinitely" is the lowest). You may make any of these subsidiary motions when a lower order motion is on the floor, but you may not make a subsidiary motion if a higher one is being considered. The key here, to review our eight tips to understanding motions, is "ranking."

Incidental Motion (unranked)

An incidental motion always comes from another motion on the floor. These motions take precedence over all other motions except privileged ones. They must be made at the correct point in the debate. The key here, to review our eight tips to understanding motions, is "timing."

(1) Point of Order: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate): when a member thinks the rules of an assembly have been violated, she may make a point of order, thereby calling for the chair's ruling to restore order.

(2) Appeal: (needs 2nd, majority*, debatable) used to appeal the chair's ruling on an issue. *a majority or tie sustains the chair's ruling (the chair can vote).

(3) Objection to the Consideration of a Question: (no 2nd, 2/3 against consideration required to sustain objection, no debate) after a motion has been made, but before debate on the motion occurs, a member may motion to object to the consideration of a question. Such a motion is made if a member feels that a main motion made will harm the organization. The purpose of the motion is not to cut off debate but to prevent discussion of a pointless or potentially inflammatory topic.

(4) Requests and Inquiries: the purpose of this class of incidental motion is to (a) obtain more information, (b) have the assembly do something which requires its permission (Robert 1990:283). They include:

(a) Reading Papers: (no 2nd, consent or majority with objection, no debate) a request that papers be read before the assembly, usually for the purpose of gaining more information. If there were no general rule against reading, a member could theoretically read from books and reports to no end.

(b) Withdrawing or Modifying a Motion: (no 2nd, consent or majority with objection, no debate) used only when a motion is pending. Remember, after the chair restates a motion or resolution, it becomes the property of the assembly. If there is an objection to consent, the chair may request a subsidiary motion of amend.

(c) Parliamentary Inquiry: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate) a member may request of the chair her ruling on the matter of parliamentary procedure. This is answered by the chair.

(d) Point of Information: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate) a request for information about the matter being debated. Also answered by the chair.

(e) Request to Be Excused from a Duty: (no 2nd, consent or majority, debatable) this may only be granted by the membership.

(f) Request for Any Other Privilege: (no 2nd, consent or majority, no debate) may only be granted by the membership. An example being a member who wishes to make a presentation when there is no pending motion.

(5) Suspending the Rules: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate) a motion that is used when the assembly wants to discuss an issue in a way that violates standing rules or rules or order; may not interfere with the organizational bylaws and may not be made when a question is pending.

(6) Division of a Question: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate) When a motion contains several parts which may be individually debated, a motion may be *divided* (known as "division of the question" or to "divide the question.")

(7) Division of the Assembly: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate) (a.k.a. "calling for a division," not to be confused with the "division of a question") if any member questions the result of a voice vote or a show or hands, she may call for a division, thereby requiring the vote be taken again by rising.

(8) Motion on Voting: (2nd, consent/majority vote, no debate) a member may request the method of voting on a question, such as a ballot vote. There are even allowances for a member to request a "special" voting method, such as the use of white and black balls.

(9) Motions Relating to Nominations: (needs 2nd, majority or 2/3, no debate) this motion applies to periods of nomination in an assembly and how the assembly will specifically make its nominations for officers (cf. Robert 1990:280-3).

(10) Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim: (needs 2nd, majority, no debate) a report or long motion can be broken up and considered by opening the different parts to debate and amendment separately, without division of the question (Robert 1990:272).

Privileged Motion (ranked)

Privileged motions do not deal with any business on the floor, rather they have to do with special matters of pressing importance. They take precedence over all other motions, hence their name. They can interrupt any business without discussion or debate. They include:

(1) Fixing the Time to which to Adjourn: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate)

(2) Adjourning: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate)

(3) Recess: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate) allows for a short intermission. Acts as a privileged motion only if a main motion is pending. If no motion is pending, this motion is actually a main motion to recess.

(4) Raise a Question of Privilege to Make an Urgent Request about a Person's Rights: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate) allows a request or main motion to be brought up immediately because of its urgency, while doing so would typically be called out of order (Robert 1990:223). Other possibilities may involve a matter of confidentiality or problems with the air conditioning or heat in a hall. There is no debate and no vote as the chair rules on the matter of privilege or not.

(5) Call for the Orders of the Day: (no 2nd, no vote*, no debate) (a.k.a. "to enforce the schedule") if the agenda is not being followed, a member may call for the orders of the day. *Must be enforced immediately unless the assembly, by 2/3 vote, votes to set aside the orders of the day.

As with subsidiary motions, privileged motions fall into an order of precedence (1 the highest and 5 the lowest). Again, *rank* is the key to understanding the privileged motion.

Restorative Motion (unranked)

Restorative motions are ones that allow a deliberative assembly to change its mind on a matter. These allow the assembly to bring up a question again. They include:

(1) Rescind: (needs 2nd, majority vote and *previous notice* or 2/3 vote if not, debatable) a motion used to quash or nullify a previously adopted resolution, motion, bylaw, section or paragraph that has been adopted at some previous time (Robert 1981:256). There is an explicit right of any member to make the motion, without time limit, unlike the case in take from the table.

(2) Amend Something Previously Adopted: (needs 2nd, majority vote and *previous notice* or 2/3 vote if not, debatable)

(3) Rescind and Expunge from the Minutes: (needs 2nd, majority vote of entire membership, debatable) generally considered an ill-advised motion for an assembly because of its obvious political and legal ramifications.

(4) Reconsider: (needs 2nd*, majority vote, debatable) allows a group to reconsider the vote on a motion. *It may only be made by someone who voted on the winning side of the motion; this is to help prevent abuse. As well, there is a time limit on any motion to reconsider, generally during the same or next session.

(5) Take from the Table: (needs 2nd*, majority vote, no debate) the motion must be made at the appropriate time in the order of business. *Additionally, the motion to take from the table can only be made during the same or next session of the assembly (see subsidiary motion 1).

(6) Discharge a Committee: (needs 2nd, majority vote and *previous notice* or 2/3 vote if not, debatable) allows the assembly to take a matter out of a committee's hands, before the committee has formulated a report, and allows the assembly itself to deal with the issue (Robert 1990:304). "So long as a question is in the hands of a committee, the assembly cannot consider another motion involving practically the same question" (ibid.).

Motions At a Glance

Privileged Motions (ranked)

Take precedence over all other motions. They fall into an order of precedence (1 the highest and 5 the lowest).

(1) Fixing the Time to which to Adjourn
(2) Adjourning
(3) Recess
(4) Raise a Question of Privilege to Make an Urgent Request about a Person's Rights
(5) Call for the Orders of the Day

Incidental Motion (unranked)

An incidental motion always comes from another motion on the floor.

(1) Point of Order
(2) Appeal
(3) Objection to the Consideration of a Question
(4) Suspending the Rules
(5) Division of a Question
(6) Division of the Assembly
(7) Motion on Voting
(8) Motions Relating to Nominations

(9) Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim
(10) Requests and Inquiries:

(a) Reading Papers
(b) Withdrawing or Modifying a Motion
(c) Parliamentary Inquiry
(d) Point of Information
(e) Request to Be Excused from a Duty
(f) Request for Any Other Privilege

Subsidiary Motions (ranked)
A subsidiary motion is one applied to other motions to help members dispose of main motions. Cannot stand alone.

(1) Lay on the Table
(2) Previous Question
(3) Limit or Extend Limits of Debate
(4) Postpone to a Certain Time
(5) Commit or Refer
(6) Amend
(7) Postpone Indefinitely

Restorative Motion (unranked)
Restorative motions are ones that allow a deliberative assembly to change its mind on a matter. These allow the assembly to bring up a question again.

(1) Rescind
(2) Amend Something Previously Adopted
(3) Rescind and Expunge from the Minutes
(4) Reconsider
(5) Take from the Table
(6) Discharge a Committee

Motions by Alphabetical Listing

It is often useful to have an alphabetical listing of the major motions handy. This will allow the chair of your senate to quickly verify motions made by the assembly.

Adjourning: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate)
Amend Something Previously Adopted: (needs 2nd, majority vote and *previous notice* or 2/3 vote if not, debatable)
Amend: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable)
Appeal: (needs 2nd, majority*, debatable)
Call for the Orders of the Day
"Call for the Question": (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate)
Commit or Refer: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable)
Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim: (needs 2nd, majority, no debate)
Discharge a Committee: (needs 2nd, majority vote and *previous notice* or 2/3 vote if not, debatable)
Division of a Question: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate)

Division of the Assembly: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate)

Fixing the Time to which to Adjourn: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate)

Lay on the Table: (needs 2nd, majority, no debate)

Limit or Extend Limits of Debate: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate)

Motion on Voting: (2nd, consent/majority vote, no debate)

Motions Relating to Nominations: (needs 2nd, majority or 2/3, no debate)

Objection to the Consideration of a Question: (no 2nd, 2/3 against consideration required to sustain objection, no debate)

Parliamentary Inquiry: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate)

Point of Information: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate)

Point of Order: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate):

Postpone Indefinitely: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable)

Postpone to a Certain Time: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable)

Previous Question: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate)

Raise a Question of Privilege to Make an Urgent Request about a Person's Rights

Reading Papers: (no 2nd, consent or majority with objection, no debate)

Recess: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate)

Reconsider: (needs 2nd*, majority vote, debatable)

Request for Any Other Privilege: (no 2nd, consent or majority, no debate)

Request to Be Excused from a Duty: (no 2nd, consent or majority, debatable)

Rescind and Expunge from the Minutes: (needs 2nd, majority vote of entire membership, debatable)

Rescind: (needs 2nd, majority vote and *previous notice* or 2/3 vote if not, debatable)

Suspending the Rules: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate)

"Table": (needs 2nd, majority, no debate)

Take from the Table: (needs 2nd*, majority vote, no debate)

Withdrawing or Modifying a Motion: (no 2nd, consent or majority with objection, no debate)

Motions by Circumstance and Situation

The following guide lists all of the major motions allowed under parliamentary procedure. They are listed under major categories (agenda and rules of conduct, voting, etc.) and are listed in a "how-to" form making it easier to prepare for using parliamentary procedure in meetings. After a description of the motion, the type of motion being addressed is given (privileged, subsidiary, etc.).

The Agenda and Rules of Conduct

<u>If the Agenda is Not Being Followed and You Want to Get the Chair Back on Track…</u>

Call for the Orders of the Day: (no 2nd, no vote*, no debate) (a.k.a. "to enforce the schedule") if the agenda is not being followed, a member may call for the orders of the day. *Must be enforced immediately unless there is a 2/3 vote to set aside the orders of the day. Privileged

<u>If a Senator Feels that the Rules of the Assembly Have Been Violated…</u>

Point of Order: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate): when a member thinks the rules of an assembly have been violated, she may make a point of order, thereby calling for the chair's ruling to restore order. Incidental

If a Senator Disagrees with the Ruling of the Chair on Any Matter…

Appeal: (needs 2nd, majority*, debatable) used to appeal the chair's ruling on an issue. *a majority or tie sustains the chair's ruling (the chair can vote). Incidental

If There is a Problem in the Room (Air Conditioning, etc.)…

Raise a Question of Privilege to Make an Urgent Request about a Person's Rights: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate) allows a request or main motion to be brought up immediately because of its urgency, while doing so would typically be called out of order. There is no debate and no vote as the chair rules on the matter of privilege or not. Privileged

If an Issues of Confidentiality Arises and Members Wish to Address that…

Raise a Question of Privilege to Make an Urgent Request about a Person's Rights: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate) allows a request or main motion to be brought up immediately because of its urgency, while doing so would typically be called out of order. There is no debate and no vote as the chair rules on the matter of privilege or not. Privileged

If a Member has a Question for the Chair on a Matter of Parliamentary Procedure…

Request: Parliamentary Inquiry: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate) a member may request of the chair her ruling on the matter of parliamentary procedure. This is answered by the chair. Incidental

If a Speaker Wishes to Read Papers before the Assembly…

Request: Reading Papers: (no 2nd, consent or majority with objection, no debate) a request that papers be read before the assembly, usually for the purpose of gaining more information. If there were no general rule against reading, a member could theoretically read from books and reports to no end. Incidental

If a Member has a Special Request…

Request for Any Other Privilege: (no 2nd, consent or majority, no debate) may only be granted by the membership. An example being a member who wishes to make a presentation when there is no pending motion. Incidental

If You Wish to Discuss an Item Earlier than It is on the Agenda…

Suspending the Rules: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate) a motion that is used when the assembly wants to discuss an issue in a way that violates standing rules or rules or order; may not interfere with the organizational bylaws and may not be made when a question is pending. Incidental

If You Wish to Adopt a Resolution without Actually Debating It on the Floor…

Suspending the Rules: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate) a motion that is used when the assembly wants to discuss an issue in a way that violates standing rules or rules or order; may not interfere with the organizational bylaws and may not be made when a question is pending. Incidental

Breaks of Recess and Adjourning

If You Feel Tired and You Would like to Have a Recess…

Recess: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate) allows for a short intermission. Acts as a privileged motion only if a main motion is pending. If no motion is pending, this motion is actually a main motion to recess. Privileged

If You Wish to Adjourn at a Certain Time…

Fixing the Time to which to Adjourn: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate) Privileged

Or, Just Adjourn…

Adjourn: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate) Privileged

The Main Motion

If You Wish to Consider Parts of a Motion, or Vote on Them Piece by Piece…

Division of a Question: (needs 2nd, majority vote, no debate) When a motion contains several parts which may be individually debated, a motion may be *divided* (known as "division of the question" or to "divide the question.") Incidental

Or…

Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim: (needs 2nd, majority, no debate) a report or long motion can be broken up and considered by opening the different parts to debate and amendment separately, without division of the question. Incidental

If You Wish to Begin Consideration of a Previously Table Motion…

Take from the Table: (needs 2nd*, majority vote, no debate) the motion must be made at the appropriate time in the order of business. *Additionally, the motion to take from the table can only be made during the same or next session of the assembly. Restorative

Debate

If You Wish to Set a Time Limit on Speeches, Lengthen Them or Vote on a Motion at a Specific Time…

Limit or Extend Limits of Debate: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate) the assembly may decide to either limit or extend debate, such as the length allotted to speeches or that the question shall be put to a vote at a specific time. Subsidiary

If You Wish to Have More Information on a Matter Being Debated…

Request: Point of Information: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate) a request for information about the matter being debated. Also answered by the chair. Incidental

Modifying Motions

If You Wish to Alter or Change a Main Motion While It is being Considered…

Amend: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable) allows a motion to become more specific when it is unclear or broad. This is the most common of subsidiary motions used in an assembly. An amendment must be *germane*, that is, it must have bearing on the subject of the motion being amended. Subsidiary

If You Wish to Take Back or Modify a Motion You Made While It is Pending…

Request: Withdrawing or Modifying a Motion: (no 2nd, consent or majority with objection, no debate) used only when a motion is *pending*. Remember, after the chair restates a motion or resolution, it becomes the property of the assembly. If there is an objection to consent, the chair may request a subsidiary motion of amend. Incidental

Voting

If You Wish to Immediately End Discussion of a Question and Take an Immediate Vote…

Previous Question: (needs 2nd, 2/3, no debate), (a.k.a. "motion to close debate") when members wish to bring a motion to an immediate vote they may "move the previous question" to limit discussion. Subsidiary

If You Wish to Request the Method of Balloting Used to Vote on a Question…

Motion on Voting: (2nd?, consent/majority vote, no debate) a member may request the method of voting on a question, such as a ballot vote. There are even allowances for a member to request a "special" voting method, such as the use of white and black balls. Incidental

If a Member Questions the Result of a Vote…

Division of the Assembly: (no 2nd, no vote, no debate) (a.k.a. "calling for a division," not to be confused with the "division of a question") if any member questions the result of a voice vote or a show or hands, she may call for a division, thereby requiring the vote be taken again by rising. Incidental

Killing and Not Considering Motions

If You Wish to Not Even Consider a Motion Brought before the Assembly because it is Embarrassing…

Objection to the Consideration of a Question: (no 2nd, 2/3 against consideration required to sustain objection, no debate) after a motion has been made, but before debate on the motion occurs, a member may motion to object to the consideration of a question. The purpose of the motion is not to cut off debate but to prevent discussion of a pointless or potentially inflammatory topic. Incidental

If You Wish to Not Take a Position on a Question, Perhaps to Revisit It Later…

Lay on the Table: (needs 2nd, majority, no debate) when members wish to set aside a motion without specifying a time to resume debate on the issue, the majority of the assembly has the power to immediately halt debate on the question. Commonly the motion to lay on the table is used when another matter of pressing importance has arisen. It is often ruled out of order if its intent is to "kill" debate. A question that has been laid on the table may be removed from the table with a motion to *take from the table* in the same or subsequent session through a majority vote. If the question is not taken from the table by the next meeting of the assembly, it dies but may be reintroduced later as a new question. Subsidiary

Or…

Postpone to a Certain Time: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable) (a.k.a. "postpone to a certain time") allows the assembly to postpone consideration of a question to a future time or date. Should not be confused with "postpone indefinitely" which actually kills the motion. Subsidiary

Or…

Postpone Indefinitely: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable) this is a motion used if the assembly declines to take a position on the main question. Its adoption kills the main motion (for the duration of the session) and avoids a direct vote on the question. Subsidiary

If You Wish to Send a Motion to a Committee for Further Study and/or Redrafting…

Commit or Refer: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable) allows the motion to be sent to a committee for further study or redrafting. Subsidiary

Rethinking, Revisiting, Reconsidering

If You Wish to Take a Second Look at a Motion which was Passed…

Reconsider: (needs 2nd*, majority vote, debatable) allows a group to reconsider the *vote* on a motion. *It may only be made by someone who voted on the winning side of the motion; this is to help prevent abuse. As well, there is a time limit on any motion to reconsider, generally during the same or next session. Restorative.

If You Wish to Negate a Previously Adopted Motion…

Rescind: (needs 2nd, majority vote and *previous notice* or 2/3 vote if not, debatable) a motion used to quash or nullify a previously adopted resolution, motion, bylaw, section or paragraph that has been adopted at some previous time. There is an explicit right of any member to make the motion, without time limit, unlike the case in *take from the table*. Restorative

Or, for the Brave…

Rescind and Expunge from the Minutes: (needs 2nd, majority vote of entire membership, debatable) generally considered an ill-advised motion for an assembly because of its obvious political and legal ramifications. Restorative

If You Wish to Amend a Motion which has Already Passed…

Amend Something Previously Adopted: (needs 2nd, majority vote and *previous notice* or 2/3 vote if not, debatable) Restorative

Committees

If You Wish to Send a Motion to a Committee for Further Study and/or Redrafting…

Commit or Refer: (needs 2nd, majority, debatable) allows the motion to be sent to a committee for further study or redrafting. Subsidiary

If You Wish to Remove a Matter from a Committee's Hands…

Discharge a Committee: (needs 2nd, majority vote and *previous notice* or 2/3 vote if not, debatable) allows the assembly to take a matter out of a committee's hands, before the committee has formulated a report, and allows the assembly itself to deal with the issue. "So long as a question is in the hands of a committee, the assembly cannot consider another motion involving practically the same question." Restorative

If You Wish to Move into a Committee of the Whole for Less Formal Consideration…

Commit or Refer (to a Committee of the Whole): (needs 2nd, majority, debatable) allows the organization to enter into a committee of the whole, making for less formal discussion among members of the organization possible. Subsidiary
((Note: For organizations covered by the Brown Act, committees of the whole are not allowed.))

Miscellaneous

If You Wish to Make a Motion on Nominations…

Motions Relating to Nominations: (needs 2nd, majority or 2/3, no debate) this motion applies to periods of nomination in an assembly and how the assembly will specifically make its nominations for officers. Incidental

If You Wish to Resign from Office or from a Committee…

Request to Be Excused from a Duty: (no 2nd, consent or majority, debatable) this may only be granted by the membership. Incidental

Dilatory Motions

A motion is considered dilatory if it seeks to obstruct or thwart the will of the assembly as clearly indicated by the existing parliamentary situation (Robert 1981:290). Any main or other motion that is absurd in substance is dilatory and cannot be introduced. Examples include a member constantly raising points of order, repeatedly moving to lay motions on the table, or continually moving to adjourn.

Improper Motions

Motions that conflict with the organizational bylaws, with the U.S. Constitution, or with national, state or local law are considered out of order (ibid.). "Likewise motions are out of order that present practically the same question as a motion previously decided at the same session, or that conflict with a motion that has been adopted by the society and has been neither rescinded, nor reconsidered and rejected, after adoption" (Robert 1981:291-2). There is a similar rule related to the inability to renew a motion in the same session (cf. Robert 1990:330-336).

Manipulating Motions

To Help DEFEAT a Motion	To help PASS a Motion
Do not second the motion/ Remain silent	Second the motion
Speak against the motion	Speak for the motion
Vote against the motion	Vote for the motion
Move to postpone indefinitely to kill motion	Vote against indefinite postponement
Amend the motion to complicate it	Defeat adverse amendments
Move to refer motion to committee to prolong	Vote against referring the vote to committee
Move to postpone motion until next meeting	Vote against such postponement
Move the question to close discussion of the motion's good points	Defeat previous question
Move to table a motion	Vote against tabling
Move to recess to secure additional votes	Defeat the motion to recess to and to delay the vote in order to vote now (PLI 1995:43-4).

Amendments

The purpose of an amendment is to improve and perfect a motion, most often a main motion, in an attempt to make it more acceptable to the assembly. Once a motion has been moved, seconded and repeated by the chair, you do not need permission of the mover to amend because the motion then belongs to the assembly.

Types

1. *Primary* (first-degree) amendments: affects the main motion
2. *Secondary* (second-degree) amendments: seeks to change a primary amendment

   Note: Two amendments of the same degree may not be considered at the same time. Any amendment must be seconded and must pertain to the motion on the floor. As we may recall, an amendment must be *germane* for it to be considered by the assembly.

Amendments Involve

1. Adding words to the end of a motion (*first* process)
2. Insert words at any place in a motion (first process)
3. Strike out words (*second* process)
4. Strike out words and add others (*third* process)
5. Substitute another motion, replacing the pending motion in its entirety with another motion related to the same subject (third process)

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V. Rules of Debate

Role of the Chair

The chair of any parliamentary society is obviously an important figure in the running of the society's meetings. A chair should act as a facilitator—being fair, compassionate and acting in as unbiased manner as possible. The key to running a meeting using *Robert's Rules of Order* is to effectively balance the formal needs of the society with its informal needs. A chair who is unyielding will ultimately bring the criticism of the assembly. A chair who is too flexible will discover meetings where no business is accomplished. As is the case with any society, the academic senate must respond to its members needs in the ways it sees fit. Each academic senate adapts parliamentary law in its own way, and once the balance between the formal rules of order and the needs for informality have been found, it is likely that the senate will find itself in very good shape. Aside from the necessary tools to run the meeting—a gavel, a copy of the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, and a copy of the senate bylaws—the academic senate chair needs to bring fairness and commitment to the role of chair.

Useful Suggested Phrases for the Chair

There are some useful phrases which some chairs may find appropriate in facilitating their meetings.

(1) Call to Order: "Being there is a quorum, the meeting will come to order." "Good afternoon, the meeting will come to order" [tap gavel once]
(2) Minutes: "Are there any objections to waiving the reading of the minutes aloud?" "Are there any corrections to the minutes?" "The minutes stand approved as read [corrected]"
(3) Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees: "Does the Instructional Technology committee have a report?" "Are there any questions?" The report will be filed with the minutes of this meeting."
(4) Discussion: "Two members have spoken in favor of the motion, is there a member who wishes to speak against the motion?"
(5) Making a Motion: "I move that…"
(6) Irrelevant Discussion: "The senator will confine his/her remarks to the pending question."
(7) Voting: "The question is on Senate Budgets. As many as are in favor please signify by raising your hands. As many as are opposed please signify by raising your hands."
(8) Results of a Vote: "The ayes have it. The motion is carried (adopted)." "The nos have it. The motion is defeated (lost)."
(9) Nominations: "We have an order of business being the nomination of Adjunct Faculty Representative to the Faculty Senate. All nominations are to be made from the floor. Nominations for this office are now in order."
(10) Adjournment: "If there is no further business and there is no objection, the meeting will be adjourned. [pause] There being no objection, the meeting is adjourned."

Tips for the Chair

Some of the most significant things a chair can do are very simple things. These include:

1. **Starting the meeting on time:** starting a meeting late can signify to the body that you do not care.
2. **Being prepared for the meeting:** in addition to having your senate bylaws, your rules of order and the like, you should come prepared with information specific to the day's agenda. This information may help expedite the discussion. In some cases, having the information handy will allow the senate to dispense with a dilatory motion, such as one conflicting with the senate's bylaws.
3. **Adapting**: much of the role of being an effective chair involves adapting to the needs of the senate. Your senators will let you know when you are moving in a direction contrary to their wishes.
4. **Sticking to the agenda:** when you do not, the assembly will call for the orders of the day. Remember that the agenda is composed to allow the effective treatment of business before the senate.
5. **Remaining neutral:** the chair should always attempt to stay clear from direct discussion of issues and any indication of partiality. Likewise, if the chair only calls on senators speaking in favor of a motion, the chair may appear to be partial. A good idea is to ask for the opposite view in this case and to generally alternate between pro and con positions in debate.
6. **Staying focused:** particularly when discussing political and controversial issues, the chair should keep the senate on task and he or she should help senators maintain their focus. Discussion of a resolution often goes off track. In such cases the chair should advise the assembly to confine its remarks to the pending question.
7. **Controlling the floor**: General Robert is often cited for his remarks about not attending another meeting until he knew more about parliamentary law. Though a chair should be flexible and attentive to the needs of the senate, a chair who lets things get out of control need not be a chair. By assigning the floor and controlling the procedures and demeanor of debate, an effective chair will assure that business is conducted in a fair and efficient manner.
8. **Don't be afraid to teach:** a chair should help senators out when there is a question about parliamentary procedure or another matter. If the assembly seems to be moving in one direction, the chair can help expedite matters. Likewise, if a senator makes a long speech that seems to be a diatribe, the chair can ask the senator if he or she would like to make a motion. A chair should also explain any decision that he or she makes. If a senator is called out of order or if an amendment is declared to not be germane, a good chair will state the reasoning behind the parliamentary decision.
9. **Let the senate do the work:** the most effective senate chair will facilitate, not dominate. In so doing a chair must keep in mind the needs of the senators. It is they who direct the course of action; a chair should only keep things running smoothly.

Expediting Business

Some effective tips for expediting business include:

1. **Using general consent when possible**
2. **Using acclamation to determine uncontested elections**
3. **Assisting members in phrasing motions**
4. **Keeping discussion on track** (such as in restating the motion)
5. **Using general consent to allow for the withdrawal of motions**
6. **Using a consent agenda for uncontroversial business** (Zimmerman 1997:25-29).

Actions Before Debate on a Question

1. **A motion must be made**
2. **A resolution may be made: a resolution is typically presented in writing as it is longer and more formal than a motion**
3. **The motion must be *seconded***
4. **The chair must state the motion**
5. **The motion is then said to be *pending*** (open to debate)
6. **After a motion has been made it may be *modified* or *withdrawn***
7. **During the vote on the motion, it may be:**

    a. **Adopted or carried**
    b. **Lost or rejected**

1. **The chair announces the result of the vote**

This is only a general list as any number of motions can impact the order, nature and handling of motions brought before the senate.

Obtaining the Floor and Speaking on Matters

(1) Before you can bring a matter before people in a meeting, you must ***obtain the floor*** —that is, be recognized by the chair as having the right to be the only person speaking at that time (PLI 1995:14). The chair must recognize any member entitled to request the floor, nevertheless, the chair has the right to ask the member the purpose of the speech. When a member has finished speaking she *yields* the floor, thus signaling to the chair that another member may be recognized. A member is considered *out of order* when she interrupts another member.

(2) If the ***chair claims the floor***, any member must automatically yield the floor to the chair

(3) ***Order of Speaking***: "any member who has had the floor once during a debate may not have it again while the same issue is being debated, if there is any member who has not had a chance to speak yet. Once everyone who desires a turn has had a chance to speak, then members may seek the floor a second time. This rule helps ensure equal representation" (PLI 1995:17).

Interruption of Member Assigned the Floor (Robert 1990:378-80).

"When a member has been assigned the floor and has begun to speak—unless he begins to discuss a subject when no motion is pending or speaks longer in debate than the rules of the assembly allow—he cannot be interrupted by another member or by the chair except for one of the following purposes, and only when the urgency of the situation justifies it:

(1) A Call for the Orders of the Day
(2) The raising of a question of privilege
(3) A Point of Order
(4) A call for a separate vote on one or more of a set of independent resolutions on different subjects that have been offered by a single motion
(5) A request or inquiry that requires an immediate response
(6) An Appeal (in special circumstances)
(7) An Objection to the Consideration of a Question (in special circumstances)
(8) A Division of the Assembly (in special circumstances)

Notes on Decorum in Debate

Robert's Rules of Order (Ninth Edition) suggests the following guidelines in helping to maintain civility and fairness during discussion. These guidelines are particularly pertinent when controversial issues arise in discussion.

1. Confining Remarks to the Merits of the Pending Question<: "In debate a member's remarks must be germane to the question before the assembly" (pp. 387-8).
2. Refraining from Attacking a Member's Motives: "When a question is pending, a member can condemn the nature or likely consequences of the proposed measure in strong terms, but he must avoid personalities, and under no circumstances can he attack or question the motives of another member. The measure, not the member, is the subject of debate" (p. 387).
3. Addressing All Remarks through the Chair: "Members of an assembly cannot address one another directly, but must address all remarks through the chair. If, while a member is speaking in debate, another member wishes to address a question to him…the member desiring to ask the question should rise and address the chair, proceeding as…[a] Point of Information" (ibid.).
4. Avoiding the Use of Members' Names: "As much as possible, the use of names of members should be avoided in debate. It is better to describe a member in some other way, as by saying, 'the member who spoke last'…a member's debate is expected and intended to be partial, and the first person is quite acceptable" (pp. 387-8)
5. Refraining from Speaking Adversely on a Prior Action not Pending: "In debate, a member cannot reflect adversely on any prior act of the society that is not then pending, unless a motion to reconsider, rescind, or amend it is pending, or unless he intends to conclude his remarks by making or giving notice of one of these motions" (p. 388).
6. Refraining from Speaking Against One's Own Motion: "In debate, the maker of a motion, while he can vote against it, is not allowed to speak against his own motion. He need not speak at all, but if he does he is obliged to take a favorable position" (ibid.). If a speaker wishes to do so, the person may make a Request to Withdraw the motion.
7. Reading from Reports, Quotations, Etc., Only without Objection or with Permission: "If any member objects, a member has no right to read from—or to have the secretary read from—any paper or book as part of his speech, without permission of the assembly. Members are usually permitted to read short, pertinent, printed extracts in debate, however, so long as they do not abuse the privilege" (ibid.).
8. Being Seated During an Interruption by the Chair: "If at any time the presiding officer rises to making a ruling, give information, or otherwise speak within his privilege, any member who is speaking should be seated" (pp. 388-9).
9. Refraining from Disturbing the Assembly: "During debate, during remarks by the presiding officer to the assembly, and during voting, no member should be permitted to disturb the assembly by whispering, waling across the floor, or in any other way" (Robert 1990:389).

Attack Issues Not People

The greatest bit of advice for any chair of a parliamentary society is to avoid personalizing issues. The phrase "attack issues, not people" effectively summarizes the goals of effectively debating matters brought before the academic senate. Any personal remark must be ruled out of order by the chair: "Bob is a whiny anarchist and for that reason I cannot support his resolution."

Voting

(1) **Votes:**
A majority vote is defined as more than half of the votes cast. Example: 20 votes cast

(11 in favor and 9 opposed) = motion is adopted.
A two-thirds vote is defined as at least twice as many votes on the winning side. Example: 30 votes cast (21 votes in favor and 9 opposed) = motion is adopted. Zimmerman (1997:89) suggests a quick way of determining a carried motion: multiply the negative vote by two. This number must be equal to or less than the number of the affirmative votes for the motion to carry.
A plurality vote is the largest number of votes given to any candidate or proposition when there are three or more choices (Zimmerman 1997:89). Example: Candidate A (15 votes), Candidate B (13), Candidate C (6). Candidate A is elected by plurality, yet without a majority. Generally, a plurality vote should not determine elections unless it is so specified in the bylaws of the organization.

(2) **Abstentions are never counted in any votes**. Very often abstentions are misunderstood and therefore misused by assemblies. The idea of abstaining is to not vote on matters in which the senators have a personal stake. Oftentimes abstaining occurs in non-secret voting because senators do not wish to upset their friends on votes which may have political or controversial overtones. All members do have the right to abstain. Senators should be encouraged to take positions on issues, rather than remain politically neutral for the sake of friendship. Shared governance means that you must take a position to be a part of governance.

- The *presiding officer* votes as all other members when the vote is by ballot. In other circumstances, she:

  a. Votes (though not obliged to) whenever her vote will affect the result—that is, she can vote to break or cause a tie or, in the case of two-thirds votes, she can vote to either cause or block the attainment of the two-thirds requirement.
  b. In particular, on a tie vote, a motion requiring a majority vote for adoption is lost, since a tie is not a majority. Thus, if a tie exists without the presiding officer's vote, she can vote in the affirmative (causing the motion to be adopted), or, if there is one more affirmative than the negatives (for example 72 votes in favor and 71 votes opposed), she can vote in the negative to create a tie (thus causing the motion to be rejected).
  c. The presiding officer may also abstain in cases of her voting, as well affecting the outcome of the vote.

1. **Voting Methods:**

   Unanimous or General Consent: such as in the reading of minutes; if one member objects, the matter must be put to a vote
   Acclamation (or voice or viva voce): a method of voting in which members indicate their vote by an "aye" or "no."
   Ballots: ballots involve the use of slips of paper on which members indicate their vote. Ballots may allow for greater anonymity on controversial votes.
   Rising: the members of the assembly stand up to be counted.
   Roll Call: members of the assembly respond with their vote when their name is called.
   Show of Hands: members raise their right hands to indicate their vote on the issue.
   Absentee voting or proxy voting: some senate bylaws do provide for votes cast by senators who are not in attendance. Though this procedure may have merit, it is important to keep in mind the value of having more senators present to debate issues brought before the assembly.

2. **Changing one's vote**: a member may change her vote up until the time when the result of the vote is announced

3. **Right for a recount:** parliamentary procedure allows members to request the recount of a vote. The method of requesting is through the incidental motion Division of the Assembly, sometimes referred to as a "division."
4. **Silence is consent:** "those members who do not vote agree to go along with the decision of the majority by their silence" (Zimmerman 1997:9).

((Note: For organizations covered by the Brown Act, secret ballots are not allowed.))

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VI. Other Areas of Rules of Order and the Senate

The Importance of Committees

Most organizations are too large to have all of their work handled during the meeting of the assembly alone and committees are important to the success of any deliberative assembly. A committee is "a group of one or more persons, elected or appointed to consider or take action on a specific matter" (PLI 1995:49). To fulfill its mission, any committee must report to the assembly, describing its findings and including any resolutions it wishes to recommend.

Types of Committees

There are three major types of committees common to deliberative assemblies.

1. **Standing Committees:** committees with a continued existence
2. **Special (Select or Ad Hoc) Committees**: committees appointed for a purpose that cease to exist once that purpose has been served
3. **Committees of the Whole**: composed of the entire assembly; allows the assembly to consider an issue with the informality of a committee. Such a committee may not, however, alter the resolution it is debating. Increasingly, smaller deliberative assemblies are using *informal consideration of a question* to speak openly on a matter.

The Advantages of Committees

Consider using committees to deal with issues which may need further research or clarification. Some distinct advantages of committees include:

1. Size
2. Informal procedure
3. Fewer distractions
4. Deliberations
5. Privacy
6. Expediency

Good of the Order

Many deliberative assemblies observe what is called the "good of the order." This is a time, generally at the end of official business, in which members can make comments, offer commendations, or just "clear the air" in an "off the record" manner. The good of the order speaks to the aims and values of the organization. It is often a good time for the senate to come together, particularly after controversial or divisive business has been heard.

Minutes

As one source on parliamentary procedure suggests, the minutes "are the legal record of the meetings of an organization and may be subpoenaed" (Zimmerman 1997:31). The minutes of the senate should be concise, but detailed enough that readers will be able to understand the transacted business of the assembly. Minutes should include all adopted and defeated motions, the name of the maker of a motion, the number of votes on each side in a ballot or counted vote, the names of those members elected or appointed. Minutes should not include discussion or personal opinions, the name of a seconder of a motion, motions withdrawn or entire committee reports.

Like the bylaws of any senate, there is much variation in the composition and detail of the minutes. Some excellent samples are available on numerous California community college senate web pages. The secretary is often in a thankless position, especially when business is moving fast. In some senates the secretary acts in both the recording and attendance capacity, further complicating the duties of the office. Some sources suggest using short hand to assist in manual note-taking. An example:

Have Academic Senate Fundraiser—J. Palmer
at Manning Hall
at 7:00 p.m. Friday
Refer to fundraising committee
Close debate
Table (in Jones 1971:XLI)

The use of the laptop computer is more common in today's modern senate. The laptop allows for convenience as well as shorter turnaround in distributing the minutes to senators and others on campus. As mentioned, many California community college senates post their minutes and agendas on their web sites. This is extremely useful when senators wish to check on prior resolutions. Any secretary will get tired of continually photocopying and e-mailing minutes and resolutions to senators.

Bylaws

In addition to establishing the use of parliamentary rules in the senate, it is important to have the bylaws reflect the specific educational and legal requirements such as the *Ralph M. Brown Act*. Any California community college district will have different stipulations which will undoubtedly affect the specifics of the senate's bylaws. An example may be how "academic" is defined in local board policy and how membership is thus defined in the senate bylaws.

Sample Bylaws

Bylaws may include the following elements (articles), but again there is variation from senate to senate: Preamble; Name; Membership; Officers (Duties of Officers); Meetings; Executive Committee; Committees; Parliamentary Authority; Amendment of Bylaws. A number of California community college senates have excellent organizational bylaws posted on their web sites.

Modern Technology

Contemporary advances in technology have altered the parliamentary landscape of the deliberative assembly. Members of higher education are quite familiar with the varied uses of

technology in the classroom and in the educational world. In terms of the senate electronic technology has impacted numerous aspects of its operation. Some areas include:

(1) **E-mail:** the use of electronic mail has aided senates in their daily operations. Most notably e-mail has allowed senators, officers and committee members to more effectively and efficiently communicate on matters of business. Resolutions may be worked out over e-mail, allowing more time for other business during senate meetings. Committees can also use e-mail to work on drafts of reports, resolutions and the like.

(2) **The Web**: the availability of the World Wide Web has again impacted senates and parliamentary matters. The statewide academic senate web site (http://www.academicsenate.cc.ca.us/) offers excellent resources for the local senate. Position papers, links to relevant educational and legislative sites and other resources offer valuable and easily accessible information. Local senates have also used the web to communicate with their members and others. The posting of minutes, agendas and bylaws on the local senate web site is a great way to increase internal and external senate communication.

(3**) Teleconferencing:** electronic technology is also aiding senates in the meeting of committees, particularly through teleconferencing (PLI 1995:82). The growth of handheld e-mail communication technology will no doubt allow senate members and officers to better communicate, particularly in spontaneous senses.

(4) **Presentation Technology:** the above examples of technology generally relate to the benefits offered in the area of senate communication. A notable exception is the use of technology for the smoother running of senate meetings. Senate chairs and senate secretaries can use technology to both expedite business and assure accuracy in meetings. The senate secretary can use a laptop computer to transcribe the minutes of the meeting. A computer may also be handy for the taking of attendance during the meeting. Senate chairs will find other new technologies to be useful in the smooth running of their senates. An example is the common use of a projector. An electronic projector can be used to display computer screens to senators. A web site may be recalled for the meeting or a senator can use the projector to display Power Point slides. A projector which is able to display hard copies and papers is also useful. Senators can graphically display charts or reports for consideration. The chair can use the projector to work on the wording of resolutions and amendments. All of these technologies may potentially benefit the local senate in better communicating, in expediting business, in accessing accurate information, and in encouraging officers and senators to come prepared for business.

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VI. How to Use these Guidelines in Your Local Senate

These guidelines were written to help the local senate chair in running meetings and in considering the issues which impact deliberative assemblies and senates in particular. Every senate has its unique needs, and no guide can ever encompass the differences that are reflected statewide. Like any text this guide should be modified according to your senate's needs.

Making It All Work for your Senate

As a local senate we can adapt *Robert's Rules of Order* in productive and meaningful ways. The balance between total flexibility and parliamentary rigidity should be determined by each local senate. By maintaining order in our meetings, we may find that we can deal with more issues rather than less and that we can deal with issues in a more effective manner. General Robert intended that voluntary societies use parliamentary order as a manageable means to the ends of the society. It is important to remember our goals as a senate and how we may use strategies for effective senate meetings to help all of our constituencies. To achieve these goals any senate must be able to function as a coherent whole and to consider the best plans of action to achieve them. Robert's Rules seek to allow the deliberative assembly to operate in the best possible manner. It is up to each local senate to adapt rules of order in the ways it sees fit.

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