



ECSU Student Center and Student Activities Office *Co-curricular education for student organizational leadership*

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for conducting a meeting. It allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions ... without confusion! It means democratic rule, flexibility, protection of rights, and a fair hearing for everyone ... which means it can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.

A time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings, parliamentary procedure originated in the early English Parliaments (discussions of public affairs), then came to America with the first settlers. In 1876, it became uniform when Henry M. Robert published his manual on parliamentary law. Today, Robert's "Rules of Order" is the most widely used common sense approach to rules for group leadership.

PRESENTING A MOTION

A motion is a proposal for discussion within the context of a meeting. Following are the steps required to present a motion:

1) Obtain the Floor

- a) Wait until the last speaker is finished.
- b) Address the chair.

3) Wait for a Second

- a) Another member will say, "I second the motion."
- b) Or the chair will call for a second.
- c) If there is no second, your motion will not be considered.

5) Expand on Your Motion

- a) Mover is allowed to speak first.
- b) Direct all comments to the chairperson.
- c) You may speak again after all other speakers are finished.

2) Make your Motion

- a) Speak clearly and concisely.
- b) State your motion affirmatively.
- c) Avoid personalities and stay on the subject.

4) Chair States Your Motion

- a) The chairperson must say, "It is moved and seconded that we..."
- b) After this happens, debate or voting can occur.
- c) Your motion is now "assembly property" and you can't change it without consent of the members.

6) Calling the Question

- a) The chairperson asks, "Are you ready for the question?"
- b) If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.

4 TYPES OF MOTIONS

Main Motions introduce subjects to the assembly for its consideration. They cannot be made when another motion is before the assembly. They yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions. For example, "I move that we purchase..."

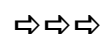
Subsidiary Motions change or affect how the main motion is handled (these are voted on before the main motion). For example, "I move the question before the assembly be amended by striking out..."

Privileged Motions are most urgent about special or important matters not related to pending business. For example, "I move we adjourn."

Incidental Motions are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions. This type of motion must be considered before the other motion. For example, "I move to suspend the rules for the purpose of..."

OTHER QUESTIONS RELATING TO MOTIONS

- ◆ Is it in order? Your motion must relate to the business at hand, and be presented at the right time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous, or against the by-laws.



- ♦ May I interrupt the speaker? Some motions are so important that the speaker may be interrupted to make them. The original speaker regains the floor after the interruption has been attended to.
- ♦ Do I need a second? Yes. A second indicates that another member would like to consider your motion. It prevents spending time on a question which interests only one person.
- ♦ Is it debatable? Parliamentary procedure guards the right to free and full debate on most motions. Some privileged and incidental motions are not debatable.
- ♦ Can it be amended? Some motions can be altered by striking out, inserting, or both at once.
- ♦ What vote is needed? Most require only a majority vote but motions concerning the rights of the assembly or its members need 2/3 vote to be adopted.
- ♦ Can it be reconsidered? Some motions can be redebated and revoted to give members a chance to change their minds. The move to reconsiders must come from the winning side.

CONDUCTING BUSINESS AT A GLANCE

To do this:	You say this:	May interrupt speaker	Requires a second	Debatable	May be amended	Vote required	May be reconsidered
MOTIONS USED IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE							
Adjourn meeting	I move that we adjourn	no	yes	no	no	maj	no
Call an intermission	I move that we recess for...	no	yes	no	yes	maj	no
Complain about the heat, noise, etc.	Question of privilege	yes	no	no	no	no vote	no
Temporarily suspend consideration of issue	I move to table the motion	no	yes	no	no	maj	no
End debate and amendments	I move the previous question	no	yes	no	no	2/3	before vote
Postpone discussion for a certain time	I move to postpone this discussion until...	no	yes	yes	yes	maj	yes
Give closer study of something	I move to refer the matter to committee	no	yes	yes	yes	maj	yes
Amend a motion	I move to amend the motion by...	no	yes	usually	yes	maj	yes
Introduce business	I move that...	no	yes	yes	yes	maj	yes
MOTIONS NOT USED IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE							
Protest breach of rules or conduct	Point of order	yes	no	no	no	no vote usually	no
Vote on the ruling of the chair	I appeal the chair's decision	yes	yes	yes	no	maj	yes
Suspend rules temporarily	I move to suspend the rules so that...	no	yes	no	no	2/3	no
Avoid considering an improper matter	I object to consideration of this motion	yes	no	no	no	2/3 in neg.	before debate
Verify a voice vote by having members stand	I call for a division or "Division"	yes	no	no	no	no vote	no
Request information	Point of information	yes	no	no	no	no vote	no
Take up a matter previously tabled	I move to take from the table...	no	yes	no	no	maj	no
Reconsider a hasty action	I move to reconsider the vote on...	yes	yes	usually	no	maj	no

REFERENCE

Adapted from: St. Norbert College, Department of Leadership, Service & Involvement

*Additional resource handouts are available as well as consultation services.
For more information, contact the Student Activities Office in the Student Center at 465-4450.*