

# Student Government Association Senate Bylaws

## I. Decorum

- a. All elected and appointed position-holders in the Senate are required to treat each other in a polite and professional manner.
- b. This conduct of politeness and professionalism is further extended to all guests who are invited to address the Senate.
- c. The responsibility to monitor proper decorum will lie in the hands of the parliamentarian.
- d. If a member of the Senate perceives that the parliamentarian has failed to address a violation in the proper decorum, that person may report that concern to the president after the conclusion of Senate meeting.
- e. It will be up to the president to determine if a violation of decorum has taken place. The president's determination will be final.
- f. Should a member be found guilty of violation of decorum, that member will be asked to apologize. Failure to do so will result in the matter being transferred to the Ethics and Oversight Committee.
- g. The Ethics and Oversight Committee will make a judgement and declare their recommendations to the Senate.
- h. As part of that judgement, the EOC Chair may present the Senate with a bill to expel the guilty member.
- i. A 2/3 majority will be required to expel a member from the Senate.

## II. Quorum

- a. There shall be quorum when at least 15 senators are present along with the president or the vice-president.
- b. At the start of the Senate meeting, attendance will be taken by Senate secretary or the President.
- c. The parliamentarian will make the determination if quorum exists.
- d. If the quorum is not met, Senate will not conduct any business and must suspend the meeting for that week.

## III. Attendance

- a. Attendance is mandatory for all members in the Senate.
- b. A member is allowed three unexcused absences in the year
- c. Three excused absences shall make up one unexcused absence
  - i. The president can make exceptions, such as extreme illness.
- d. The EOC Chair, upon the recommendation of the president, may present the Senate with a bill to expel the absent member.
- e. A 2/3 majority will be required to expel the member.

## IV. Floor Proceedings

- a. The Senate floor proceedings will start with the roll call which will be conducted by either the secretary or the Senate president.
- b. At the end of the roll call, based upon quorum, the parliamentarian will determine the appropriate figures for having a simple majority and 2/3 majority. Once determined, an announcement will be made to the Senate body.

- c. Roll call may be followed by special reports. Special reports may include but are not limited to any important announcements by individual senators.
- d. Special reports will be followed by committee sessions for no longer than 10 minutes.
- e. Following committee sessions, committee chairs may provide oral or written reports to the Senate.
- f. Committee reports will be conducted in alphabetic order of the names of the committees.
- g. After committee reports, any old business will be addressed. This may include any tabled bills.
- h. In the event, the majority of Senate wishes to address new business rather than old business, a senator may call for re-tabling of old bills via a motion.
- i. The motion must be seconded and will require a simple majority to carry.
- j. At the conclusion of old business, any new business may be entertained. This may include any bills that were brought up in the committee reports.

#### V. General Order

- a. During general order, those wishing to speak shall raise their hands and the Vice President shall form a list dictating the speaking order.
- b. If the Senate is presented with a conflicted topic, then a senator may call for a moderated debate via a motion.
- c. The motion must be seconded and will require a simple majority to carry.

## VI. Moderated Debate

- a. During a moderated debate, senators will speak for a pre-determined amount of time in turn-based order.
- b. The motion will designate the length of debate as well as individual speaking time.
- c. A senator may petition the senator who made the motion to alter the length of debate and/or speaking time. Should the senator agree, the new time will be adopted. Otherwise, a simple majority of the senate will choose between the times.
- d. During moderated debate, those wishing to speak shall raise their hands and the Vice President shall form a list dictating the speaking order.
- e. The speaking list will be made available so that senators know the speaking order.
- f. The speaking list will be held sacred unless a motion is made. All motions need to be seconded and passed by simple majority.
- g. To interrupt the moderated debate in order to make a motion, a senator must wait till whoever is speaking to finish and then stand and raise their hands. The president will immediately recognize that senator.
- h. After the conclusion of a motion, the moderated debate will continue with the next person on the speaking list.
- i. Some motions such as motion to table the debate result in the premature conclusion of the moderated debate, it is advisable that these motions be used rarely.

- j. The president may ask the senator to withdraw the motion in the interest of keeping the moderated debate going. Should the senator agree with the president's recommendation, then the motion will be withdrawn. Otherwise a simple majority of the senate will choose between the motion and continuing moderated debate.

## VII. Emergency Sessions

- a. The Senate President can call for Emergency sessions if and when the need arises.
- b. A 2/3 majority will be required to have the emergency session.
- c. All rules and procedures will apply including quorum.
- d. If a senator cannot attend an emergency session, it will not count against his/her absences.

## VIII. Voting

- a. To begin voting, a senator must call for a motion to vote on the bill. The motion must be seconded. A simple majority is required to pass a motion.
- b. To pass most bills, a simple majority will be required.
- c. Senators will reserve the right to abstain during any votes.
- d. In the interests of time the president may use of lack of objection by any senator to a bill to skip the formality of voting on the bill.
- e. A lack of objection will be established by the president whenever voting begins on a bill via the use of the question, "Are there any objections to the bill?" If there are none, then the bill will pass unanimously but if there is an objection then the bill will be voted on by the Senate.

- f. During voting, only one motion will be allowed: the motion to question the parliamentarian on the rules and procedures. The motion will allow senators to clarify any confusions that may arise.
- g. The motion must be seconded and be passed by a simple majority.
- h. A 2/3 of the Senators present will be required to make changes to the Senate Bylaws.

#### IX. Guests

- a. There may be times when a guest such as a fellow student, a faculty or administration member wishes to address the Senate.
- b. To allow a guest to address the Senate, the president will call for a motion to suspend the rules and allow the guest to address the Senate.
- c. The motion will be seconded and passed by simple majority.

#### X. Motions

- a. There are 7 recognized motions:
  - i. Motion to table a [name of bill/topic]
  - ii. Motion for moderated debate on [topic/bill] for [length of time] with the speaking time [length of time each individual person can speak]
  - iii. Motion to vote on [topic/bill]
  - iv. Motion to question the previous speaker.
  - v. Motion to question the parliamentarian on rules and/ or procedures
  - vi. Motion to suspend the rules and allow the [name of the guest] to address the Senate
  - vii. Motion to divide the question.

- b. In the interest of time management, the president may use of lack of objection by any senator to a motion to skip the formality of voting on that motion.
- c. A lack of objection will be established by the president by asking the question, “Are there any objections to the motion?” If there are none, then the motion will pass without the formality of voting but if there is an objection then a simple majority will be required to pass the motion.

#### XI. Amending Bylaws

- a. Any member can submit an amendment to the bylaws to the Senate, where it will be debated and voted on.
- b. 2/3 of the Senators present will be required to make changes to the Senate Bylaws.
- c. All amendments to the bylaws cannot contradict the SGA Constitution.