

# The Basics of Using Robert's Rules of Order for SGA Meetings

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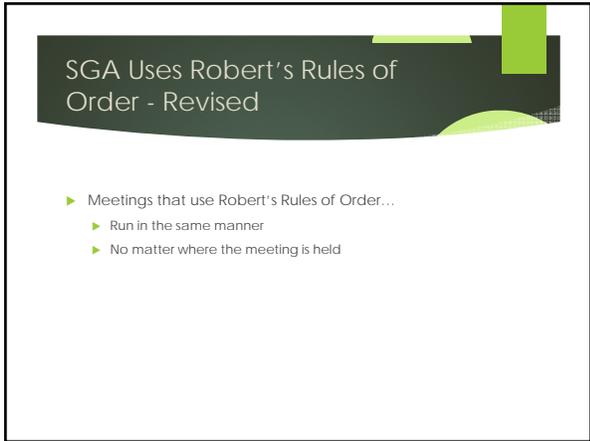
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## SGA Uses Robert's Rules of Order - Revised

- ▶ Meetings that use Robert's Rules of Order...
  - ▶ Run in the same manner
  - ▶ No matter where the meeting is held

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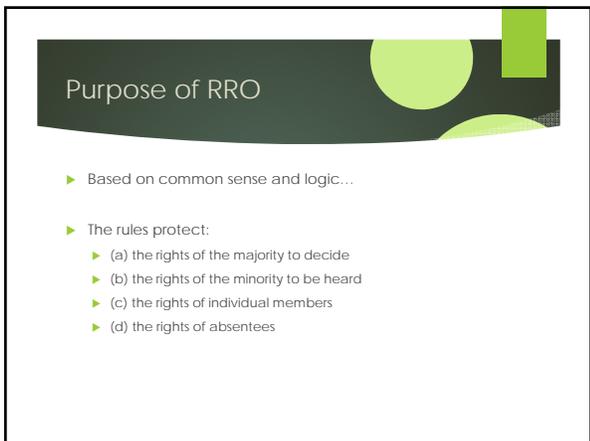
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## Purpose of RRO

- ▶ Based on common sense and logic...
- ▶ The rules protect:
  - ▶ (a) the rights of the majority to decide
  - ▶ (b) the rights of the minority to be heard
  - ▶ (c) the rights of individual members
  - ▶ (d) the rights of absentees

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The Ten Basic Rules

1. The Rights of the Organization Supersede the Rights of the Individual Members
2. All members are equal and their rights are equal
3. A quorum must be present to do business

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The Ten Basic Rules

4. The majority rules
  - ▶ All questions at any legally convened meeting shall be decided by simple majority of the votes cast, unless stipulated otherwise in the Constitution.
5. Silence means consent
  - ▶ Those members that do NOT vote AGREE to go along with the decision of the majority by their silence.
6. Two-thirds vote rule
  - ▶ A 2/3rds vote is necessary whenever limiting or taking away the rights of members or changing a previous decision.

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The Ten Basic Rules

7. One question at a time and one speaker at a time.
  - ▶ \*Motions must be related to matters under consideration\*
8. Once a member has been 'recognized' this individual has been granted 'the floor' and may not be interrupted by another member
  - ▶ Motions must receive full debate
9. The meeting chair may not put a motion to vote as long as members wish to debate it
  - ▶ The debate can only be cut short by a 2/3rds vote

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## The Ten Basic Rules

- 9. Once a decision made, an identical motion must not be brought forward at the same meeting
  - ▶ Such a motion shall be ruled out of order by the meeting chair
- 10. Personal remarks in a debate are ALWAYS out of order
  - ▶ Debate Motions not Motives
  - ▶ Debate must be directed to Principles and not Personalities

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## Running a Meeting Effectively

**CHAIR CHARACTERISTICS**

- In control of the floor
- Impartial
- Composed
- Precise: restates motions before votes
- Focused: stays on track with discussions
- Temperate: uses the gavel sparingly

**ON TIME AND STAYS ON TIME**

**ORGANIZED AND PREPARED**

**PREPARED: KNOWS THE RULES AND BYLAWS**

**A PARLIAMENTARIAN: KEEPS THE GROUP WORKING TOGETHER**

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## Keeping Minutes

- ▶ Minutes are the written record of the meeting
- ▶ Minutes are the permanent and legal record of the meeting
- ▶ They should be written as concisely as possible
- ▶ Secretary's duty



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## Keeping Minutes

- ▶ Approval of Minutes
- ▶ At each meeting, review minutes from prior meeting
- ▶ Allow for corrections
- ▶ Reminder to members of previous decisions and discussions



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## Motions

- ▶ A motion is a formal proposal for consideration and action.
  - ▶ Only one motion can be made at a time.
  - ▶ No main motion can be made while the body is already considering a prior motion.
- ▶ Motion procedure:
  - ▶ Motion is made ("I move that...")
  - ▶ Motion is seconded
  - ▶ Motion is debated/discussed
  - ▶ Motion is voted on

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## 8 Steps in Processing a Motion

1. When nothing else is pending, a member will address the Chair or raise their hand.
  - ▶ Say "Speaker\_\_\_\_."
2. Chair recognizes the member by stating their name or otherwise acknowledging them.
  - ▶ Chair says: "Senator\_\_\_\_."

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### 8 Steps in Processing a Motion

- Member will state their motion.
  - Say "I move that \_\_\_\_."
- Another member seconds the motion.
  - Other member raises their hand and says "Second."

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### 8 Steps in Processing a Motion

- Chair will re-state the motion and open discussion.
  - Chair says: "It is moved that \_\_\_\_."
  - "Is there any discussion?"
- Members now have the right to be recognized and debate the motion. During discussion, subsidiary motions (amend, refer, etc..) may be introduced.

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### 8 Steps in Processing a Motion

- The Chair will now re-state the question put the question to a vote.
  - "The question is on the adoption of \_\_\_\_."
  - "All in favor say 'Aye', all opposed say 'Nay'."
- The Chair will announce the results and transition to the next order of business.
  - "The motion is carried [lost]: We will [Will not]..."
  - "The next order of business is..."

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### Types of Motions

1. Main Motion
  - ▶ Brings new business before the body.
2. Subsidiary Motion
  - ▶ Changes how a motion is handled.
3. Privileged Motion
  - ▶ Concerns matters of high importance that are unrelated to the pending business.
4. Incidental Motion
  - ▶ Provides a means of questioning procedure.

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### Frequently Used Motions.

1. Amend
  - ▶ Used to insert or strike out words.
  - ▶ Clarifies or improves the original motion.
  - ▶ Must be germane to the original motion.
2. Call for the Orders of the Day
  - ▶ Demands a return to the order of business.
3. Commit or Refer
  - ▶ Refers a question to committee.

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### Frequently Used Motions.

4. Lay on the Table
  - ▶ Temporarily suspends further action on a question.
5. Limit/Extend Debate
  - ▶ Modifies rules of debate to allow for more/less time.
6. Postpone Indefinitely
  - ▶ Rejects a main motion without bringing it to a vote.
  - ▶ Allows bodies to reject motions without taking an official position.

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## Frequently Used Motions

7. Reconsider
  - ▶ Can re-open debate on a closed question.
  - ▶ Motion can only be made in the same meeting by a member of the prevailing side who has changed their mind.
  - ▶ Can also be used to reconsider a question if it is discovered an illegal action has been taken.
8. Suspension
  - ▶ Allows the lawful violation of certain rules.
  - ▶ Must be clearly specified.

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## Asking Questions

1. Parliamentary Inquiry
  - ▶ A question to the chair, to clarify some aspect of parliamentary rules or procedure.
2. Point of Information
  - ▶ A question pertaining to the matter at hand.
  - ▶ Directed to the chair, or to another member through the chair.

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## Voting

- ▶ There are 3 voting responses:
  - ▶ In Favor: You approve of adoption of the question
  - ▶ Not in Favor: You disapprove of the adoption of the question.
  - ▶ Abstention: You withdraw from the vote.
    - ▶ Abstention is only in order if there is a distinct conflict of interest, or if the member is not well enough informed (through prior absence or some other extenuating circumstance) to make an educated decision.

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## Types of Votes

- ▶ Vocal Vote
  - ▶ Ayes or Nays. If the majority is unclear, a hand vote is necessary.
- ▶ Hand Vote
  - ▶ The extension of the hand to indicate approval/disapproval.
- ▶ Roll Call Vote
  - ▶ The Secretary proceeds through the roll call list and records each member's vote individually.
- ▶ Unanimous Consent
  - ▶ An automatic approval of a question, pending no objections.
  - ▶ If even one member objects, the chair must state the question and proceed through normal voting processes.

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## Questions?

References:

- ▶ Robert's Rules of Order, 11th edition Newly Revised. Published 2012, De Capo Press.
- ▶ Pollack, A. & Scalice, N. Parliamentary Procedure Workshop, FAU Student Government. 2009.

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