**Robert’s Rules of Order**

According to Title II, Subtitle II, Chapter IV, §406 of the Code of Student Governance of George Mason University, “The Student Senate shall conduct its meetings in accordance with parliamentary procedure as specified in Robert’s Rules of Order.” ***Robert’s Rules of Order*** is the standard for facilitating discussions and group decision-making. However, we recognize that the rules are extensive and can be difficult to understand. Here is a “cheat sheet” breaking down the basic components and motions of ***Robert’s Rules***. While this document is helpful, it certainly does not cover everything and we still expect Senators to do their own research into understanding the rules.

**Motions:**

There are four different types of motions in Robert’s Rules. These motions include:

1. Main Motions
   1. A *main* *motion* introduces a new subject for discussion and debate.
2. Subsidiary Motions
   1. A *subsidiary motion* applies directly to a pending main motion and helps the Senate/Committee arrive at a final decision.
3. Privileged Motions
   1. A *privileged motion* deals with anything relating to the comfort of the assembly or situations that are so important that they need to interrupt pending business (at the discretion of the chair).
4. Incidental Motions
   1. An *incidental motion* deals with procedures and helps the process of other motions.

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| **Common Examples of Each Motion** | | | | | | |
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| 1. **Main Motions** | | | | | | |
| **Motion** | **Example of What You Would Say** | **May You Interrupt Speaker?** | **Does the Motion Need to be Seconded?** | **Is the Motion Debatable** | **Is the Motion Amendable** | **Vote Needed** |
| **Introduce Business** | “I move that…” | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Simple Majority |

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| 1. **Subsidiary Motions** | | | | | | |
| **Motion** | **Example of What You Would Say** | **May You Interrupt Speaker?** | **Does the Motion Need to be Seconded?** | **Is the Motion Debatable?** | **Is the Motion Amendable?** | **Vote Needed** |
| **The Previous Question** | “I move to the previous question.” | No | Yes | No | No | 2/3 |
| **Limit/Extend Debate** | “I move that discussion and debate be limited to two minutes per speaker.” | No | Yes | No | Yes | 2/3 |
| **Postpone Definitely** | “I move that we postpone this bill for two weeks.” | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Simple Majority |
| **Refer to Committee** | “I move that we refer this resolution back to the University Life Committee.” | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Simple Majority |
| **Amend** | “I move to amend this bill by adding/striking…” | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Simple Majority |
| **Postpone Indefinitely** | “I move that we postpone this resolution indefinitely.” | No | Yes | Yes | No | Simple Majority |

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| 1. **Privileged Motions** | | | | | | |
| **Motion** | **Example of What You Would Say** | **May You Interrupt Speaker?** | **Does the Motion Need to be Seconded?** | **Is the Motion Debatable?** | **Is the Motion Amendable?** | **Vote Needed** |
| **Adjourn** | “I move that we adjourn.” | No | Yes | No | No | Simple Majority |
| **Recess** | “I move that we recess for five minutes.” | No | Yes | No | Yes | Simple Majority |
| **Raise a Question of Privilege\*** | “Point of Personal Privilege…” | Yes | No | No | No | Up to Discretion of Chair |

\*A question of privilege is only to be used to deal with something that affects the comfort of the group or a single member (e.g., noise, room temperature, sun in face, etc.). It can also be used in situations that are so important that they need to interrupt pending business. In both cases however, it is up to the discretion of the chair whether or not they should allow the question to be addressed.

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| 1. **Incidental Motions** | | | | | | |
| **Motion** | **Example of What You Would Say** | **May You Interrupt Speaker?** | **Does the Motion Need to be Seconded?** | **Is the Motion Debatable?** | **Is the Motion Amendable?** | **Vote Needed** |
| **Enforce the Rules\*** | “Point of Order…” | Yes | No | No | No | Up to Discretion of Chair |
| **Appeal the Ruling of the Chair** | “I appeal the ruling of the chair.” | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Simple Majority |
| **Suspend the Rules** | “I move to suspend the rules and…” | No | Yes | No | No | 2/3 |
| **Question about Parliamentary Procedure\*** | “Point of Inquiry…” | Yes | No | No | No | No Vote Needed |
| **Request for Information\*** | “Point of Information…” | Yes | No | No | No | No Vote Needed |

\*For all “Point of …” motions, you must wait to be recognized by the chair, in which they will say “state your point” if they choose to recognize your motion. If you are not recognized, you cannot make your point.

**Other Robert’s Rules Tips:**

1. You *must* wait to be recognized by the chair before you speak. To do this, stick your hand out until the Speaker writes your name down. They will call on you when it is your turn. There is a reason this rule exists. Without it, Senate would be chaos.
2. We commonly make the mistake of saying “I motion to…” when making a motion. The correct way to make a motion is to start with “I move to…”. Otherwise, you are not making a proper motion.
3. All questions are to be directed to the chair.
4. A tie vote is a lost vote.
5. A motion to recess is *not* an interrupting motion. You may attempt to use a point of personal privilege to make this motion, but the chair can choose to not recognize your point.