University of Minnesota Student Senate Handbook

2016-17

Approved by Student Senate Consultative Committee
September 8, 2016

Students may direct any questions concerning the Student Senate or its committees to Barbara Irish, senate associate, 612-301-1224, birish@umn.edu, University Senate Office, 427 Morrill Hall.

I. INTRODUCTION – University Senate Role and Structure

A. University Senate

The University Senate has general legislative authority over administrative matters concerning more than one campus or the University as a whole. While it does not have prescribed responsibilities, it may deal with any issue that affects the academic mission of the University or the general welfare of faculty, academic professionals, civil service employees, and students. Policies and other actions approved by the University Senate are forwarded to the president, and when appropriate, the Board of Regents, for consideration and action. Once policies are approved by administration for administrative policies, or the Board of Regents for Regental policies, the action becomes University policy. The University Senate also influences University policy through the passage of resolutions and statements that reflect the opinions of the faculty, academic professionals, civil service employees, and students. The president of the University serves as the chair of the University and Faculty Senates.

The University Senate subdivides into the **Faculty Senate** (faculty/academic professional representatives of the University Senate), **P&A Senate** (academic professional and administrator representatives, some of whom serve in the University Senate), **Civil Service Senate** (civil service representatives, some of whom serve in the University Senate), and the **Student Senate** (student representatives of the University Senate).

B. Campus Assemblies

Each campus has its own assembly which includes student representation. On the Twin Cities campus, the Twin Cities representatives to the University Senate form the membership of the Twin Cities Delegation. The president of the University serves as chair. The campus assemblies

address issues specific to their campus.

C. Makeup of the University Senate and Student Senate
University senators include faculty, academic professionals, civil service employees, and students elected by their respective colleges/units. All degree-seeking students shall be eligible to vote and to be elected to the Student Senate.

Eligible students elect from their ranks 50 Student Senate members, who shall be distributed among the colleges and campuses in proportion to the number of students in those units. Each college at Duluth and the Twin Cities, as well as Rochester, shall be guaranteed one student senator. Morris and Crookston will be guaranteed a minimum of two student senators.

D. Senate Meetings
In general, the University Senate, Faculty Senate, and Student Senate meet consecutively at least four Thursdays per academic year (see schedule). Special meetings of the University Senate, Faculty Senate, and Student Senate may be called by the appropriate consultative committee, the president, or upon written request of ten members of the senate in question.

E. University Senate Consultative Committees
The steering and executive committee of the University Senate is the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC), which consists of elected faculty, academic professional, civil service employees, and students from all five campuses. This committee sets the University Senate agenda and traditionally serves as an important forum for policy discussion and decision-making. This committee is comprised of members from the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC), P&A Consultative Committee (PACC), Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC), and the Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC). The chair of the FCC serves as the chair of the SCC.

The Student Senate Consultative Committee includes one representative of the Council of Graduate Students (COGS), one representative of the Crookston Student Association (CSA), one representative of the Minnesota Student Association (MSA), one representative of the Morris Campus Student Association (MCSA), one representative of Professional Student Government (PSG), one representative of the Rochester Student Association (RSA), one representative of the University of Minnesota Duluth Student Association (UMDSA), and the chair, vice chair, and at-large representative of the Student Senate.

F. Other University Senate Committees
The University Senate committees are the work-horses of the University Senate. All senators are encouraged to serve on one of the approximately 23 standing committees and numerous subcommittees. Appointments are made by the Committee on Committees (ConC). Most issues that come before the University Senate originate from a University Senate committee. The listing of committees, with short descriptions, can be found at:
http://www.umn.edu/usenate/conc/commdescription.html .

G. Student Senate Officers
The chair, vice chair, and at-large representative of the Student Senate shall be elected at a

special spring semester session of the Student Senate attended only by student senators elected for the following year. The outgoing chair shall preside over the election. Non-senators and outgoing student senators may not be candidates for these positions. The chair, vice chair, and at-large representative shall be constituents of different student governance organizations. In the event that no one is nominated for the vice chair or at-large representative positions from different student governance organizations, the position will be open to all qualified members of the Student Senate. However, no more than two of these three positions can be filled by candidates from the same campus. Terms of office shall be July 1 to June 30, and the person holding office is eligible for re-election.

a. Duties of the Chair

The duties of the chair are (1) to be the official spokesperson of the Student Senate; (2) to set the Student Senate agenda, to be approved by the Student Senate Consultative Committee; (3) to serve as the chair of the Student Senate; (4) to serve as the chair of the Student Consultative Committee; (5) to serve a as a member of the Senate Consultative Committee; (6) to serve as the University's representative on the Student Advisory Council; and (7) to serve on central University advisory committees as needed, or to delegate student members for advisory committees.

b. Duties of the Vice Chair

The duties of the vice chair are (1) to serve as the vice chair of the Student Senate; (2) to serve as the liaison to the Civil Service Senate; (3) to serve as the liaison to the P&A Senate; (4) to assume the duties of the chair in the event of an absence or incapacity of the chair; (5) to assume responsibilities delegated by the chair; (6) to ensure that the Student Senate Handbook is updated and distributed; and (7) to serve as the vice chair of the Student Senate Consultative Committee.

c. Duties of the At-Large Representative

The duties of the at-large representative are (1) to represent members of the Student Senate and their interests on the Student Senate Consultative Committee; (2) to serve as the Student Senate Consultative Committee liaison to the Student Senate; and (3) to assume responsibilities delegated by the chair.

H. Clerk of the University Senate
A faculty member will serve as the clerk of the University Senate. The University Senate clerk and parliamentarian, also a faculty member, serve as officers of the University Senate. The clerk of the University Senate prepares the agendas for University Senate meetings.

I. Issues Appropriate to the University Senate or Student Senate
Most University Senate issues arise at the committee level and make their way to the floor of the University Senate only after extensive discussion within the appropriate committee(s) and the SCC. A wide variety of issues have been discussed in the Student Senate, from the approval of new student release questions to a resolution on course book reform. The SSCC and Student Senate address issues that are student-oriented, and reserve issues with broader impact on all

constituent groups to the full SCC and the University Senate. It is important that student perspectives are sought out on issues such as student affairs, educational policy, the biennial budget, libraries, etc. Student senators may bring issues to the SSCC, and if appropriate, to the Student Senate. For information on how to add agenda items to Student Senate meetings, please see Addendum C.

J. Results of University Senate and Student Senate Actions
Issues may be introduced to the University Senate or Student Senate for information, discussion, and/or action. Action items call for a formal vote and the vote becomes part of the permanent record of the body. The University Senate and the Student Senate have authority to amend bylaws or rules, but other actions approved by the University Senate or Student Senate are formally transmitted by the clerk of the University Senate to the president for consideration and action. Policies approved by the University or Student Senate do not become University policy until they are approved by the president and, when appropriate, the Board of Regents.

II. STUDENT SENATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Student Senate
Student senators must attend all Student Senate and University Senate meetings, and only two unexcused absence are allowed. In the event that a student senator is unable to attend, Student Senate bylaws dictate that they find an alternate from their college, and notify senate associate Barbara Irish of their absence.

It is imperative that senators come prepared to debate the issues at senate meetings. The links to agendas are emailed to all senators and are also posted on the University Senate web site (http://www.umn.edu/usenate) approximately 10 days prior to the meetings. Senators have a responsibility to their constituency to be knowledgeable on the issues, to come to the meetings prepared to discuss and vote on the issues, and to report those actions back to their college boards and colleagues.

Student senators must remember that their primary duty is to 'represent the student population of the entire University.' While working for the betterment of the University as a whole, it is important to bring the perspective of your constituency to the forefront and be prepared to share in the discussion.

B. Student Boards
It is important for student senators to report back to their student constituents, which is often done through their student college boards. Likewise, it is important to bring college board perspectives to the Student Senate and committee discussions.

C. University Senate Committees
Student senators are encouraged to serve on a University Senate committee. The committee topics range from the libraries, educational policy, information technology, to disabilities issues.

D. Student Constituencies
Members of the Student Senate are members of one of seven student government groups:

Crookston Student Association (CSA), Council of Graduate Students (COGS, Twin Cities graduate students), Professional Student Government (PSG, Twin Cities professional students), Minnesota Student Association (MSA, Twin Cities undergraduate students), Morris Campus Student Association (MCSA), Rochester Student Association (RSA), and UMD Student Association (UMDSA).

III. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A. What if I can't make it to a University Senate or Student Senate meeting? Who contacts the alternate?
If you are unable to attend a Student Senate or University Senate meeting, contact senate associate Barbara Irish, 612-301-1224, or birish@umn.edu. It is the senator's responsibility to find an alternate and pass on the appropriate materials and information to that person. Student senators may ask any student eligible to vote for senators in their collegiate unit to serve as an alternate. Barbara Irish should also be provided with the alternate's name.

NOTE: *Student senators forfeit membership by neglecting two meetings of the Student Senate or University Senate. "Neglect" for senate service means failing to attend a meeting (or providing an alternate), or failing to notify the University Senate Office of your impending absence.*

B. What if I can't make it to a committee meeting?
Contact the staff person who supports the committee of which you are a member to notify then of your impending absence. A student member of a committee of the University Senate forfeits membership by not attending two meetings of the committee. University Senate policy does not provide alternates or proxy voting at meetings of University Senate committees.

C. What is quorum? When is it required? Under which circumstances is a majority required?
The requirements for quorum are noted in the Student Senate or University Senate Constitution. A majority of the Student Senate's membership shall constitute a quorum (i.e. one-half, plus one, of all seated members). This number can change, based upon the number of current senators. A quorum is needed to conduct meetings and to take action.

D. What are discussion, action, and information items?
Discussion items are items that are up for debate, but are still in the formative stages. Oftentimes, committees will submit an item for discussion to gauge senate opinion and to gather broader input before it is brought for action at a subsequent meeting.

Items that are brought for action will face a formal vote. In some instances, the vote on an action item is postponed pending further consultation and review.

Information items usually involve resolutions that have been passed at the committee level and are presented to the senate without requiring any action be taken.

E. Who is eligible to run for Student Senate offices? Who can participate on committees?
Any student senator is eligible to run for chair, vice chair, or at-large representative of the

Student Senate with certain exceptions. (See section I. G, *Student Senate Officers*, for more details.) Students do not need to be a senator to serve on committees. Nominations for committees must be made to the Student Committee on Committees, and self-nominations are allowed. It is highly recommended that all senators serve on a University Senate committee.

F. How do I join a University Senate committee?
To apply to join a committee, fill out a committee application, which will ask for your preferences and information about yourself. The application is available on the web at: http://usenate.umn.edu/conc/commdescription.html. Any additional questions can be directed to senate associate Becky Hippert, (612) 626-8743, or conc@umn.edu.

IV. GENERAL ADVICE TO SENATORS

A. Advance Preparation
Be prepared. A thorough reading of the Student Senate and University Senate dockets and attached materials is essential for responsible discussion on the senate floor. Generally, materials are distributed with ample time to consult at least one senate constituent organization. A senator should expect to speak on the senate floor and be prepared to assist in the discussion of vital issues. When discussing a new or unfamiliar topic, senators should **not** assume that a responsible discussion can be carried out by a fraction of the overall senate population. Form your own opinions and be ready to vote.

B. Report to the Constituent Councils
Although most student assemblies do not require their senators to give regular reports, it is encouraged. Meetings provide an excellent opportunity to keep in contact with constituents and to become aware of important issues that could be discussed at future Student Senate meetings. It is advisable to maintain contact with the college board that you represent, and to report University Senate and Student Senate activities at their meetings.

C. Help with Student Senate agendas by contacting the Student Senate chair/SSCC chair with items of interest
The Student Senate Consultative Committee relies on the assistance of student senators in setting the agendas. Many different issues are discussed at the SSCC meetings, and relevant topics are brought to the attention of the Student Senate. In addition, collegiate assemblies generate significant issues that move on to the Student Senate for discussion, action, or information. Any materials associated with those topics should be sent to student senators well in advance of meetings to aide in preparation for discussion. Senators should contact the SSCC chair with agenda items at least one week prior to the meeting (see the SSCC roster at: http://www.umn.edu/usenate/committees/sscc.html).

D. External Communication
By following the many statewide and national organizations' newsletters and email lists, student senators are able to keep abreast of topics affecting their constituencies. Issues arising from these topics can be discussed at Student Senate meetings, SSCC meetings, committee meetings, student assemblies and/or college board meetings. Student senators are encouraged to send email

updates on Student Senate actions and discussions to their constituents, and to promote the Student Senate Facebook page.

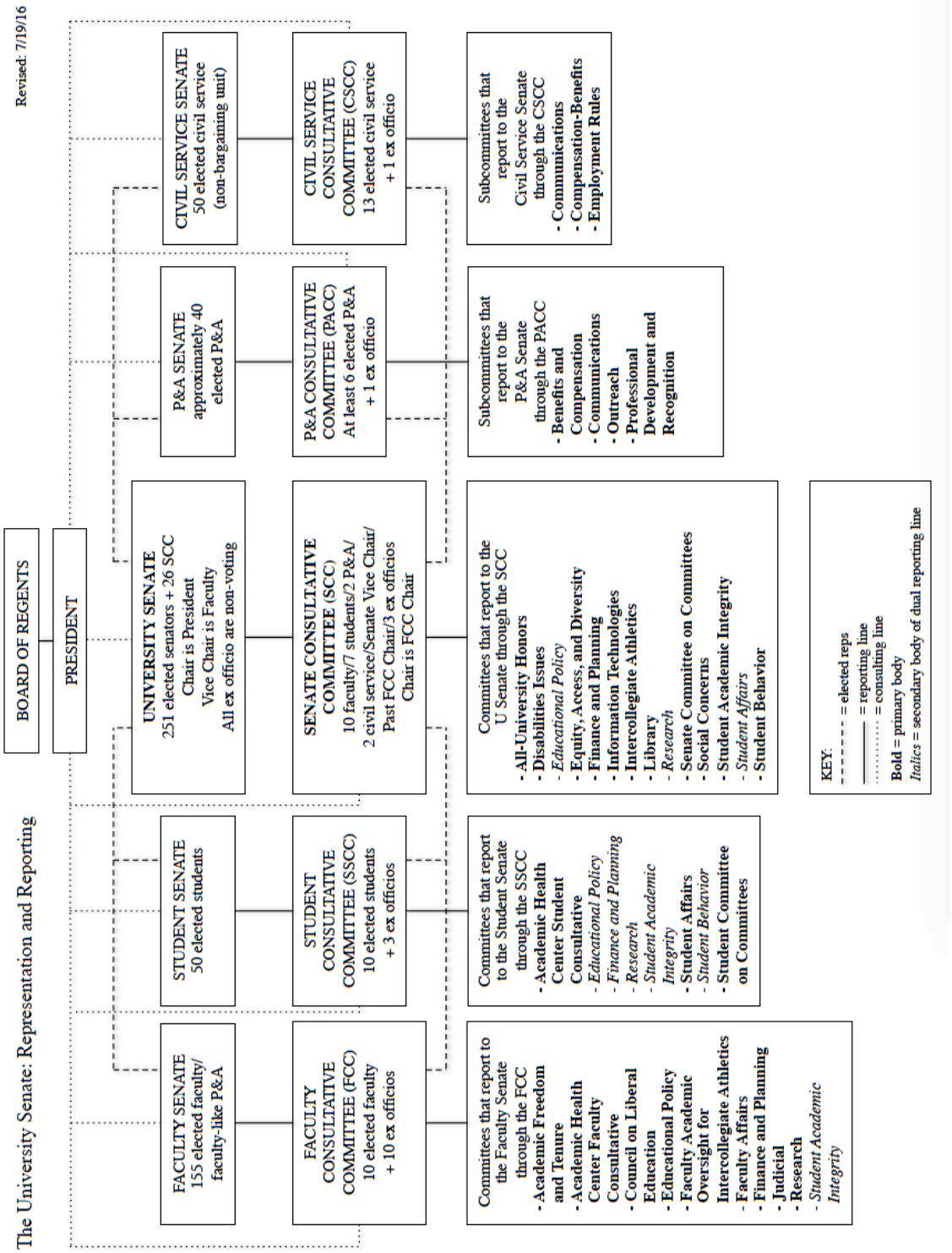
E. **University Senate Website**
For information about the Student Senate, please visit:
http://www.umn.edu/ssenate

Included on the webpage are Student and University Senate meeting schedules; agendas; committee information; reports, policies, and resolutions; the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Rules, and other pertinent information. This site can serve as a primary source of information pertaining to current and past Student Senate discussions and actions. Every senator should acquaint themselves with this site and visit it often.

ADDENDUM A: ACRONYMS

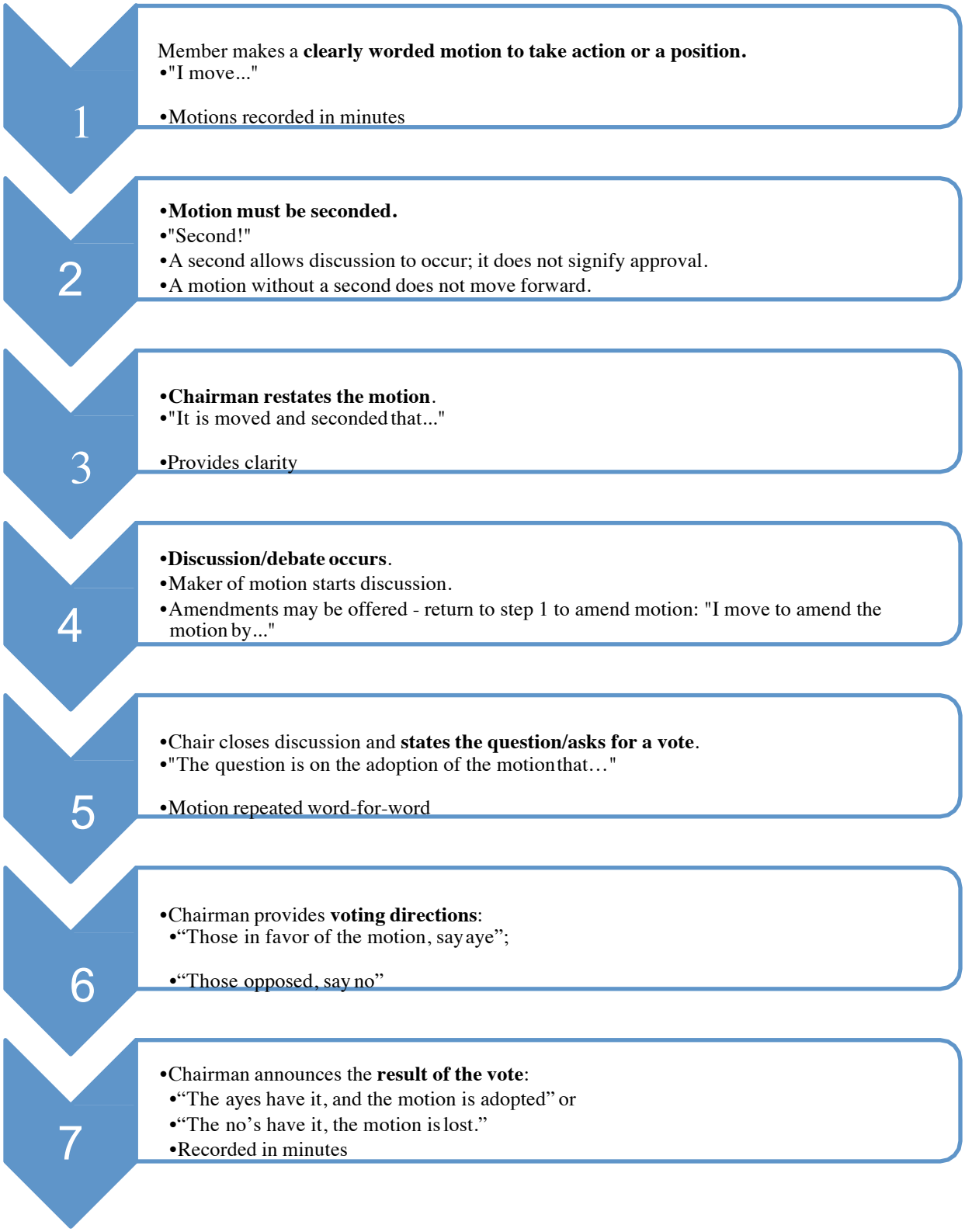
AHC: *Academic Health Center*
AHC FCC: *Academic Health Center Faculty Consultative Committee*
AHC SCC: *Academic Health Center Student Consultative Committee*
AF&T: *Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee*
CLE: *Council on Liberal Education*
COGS: *Council of Graduate Students*
C on C: *Senate Committee on Committees, including the Student Committee on Committees*
CSA: *Crookston Student Association*
CSCC: *Civil Service Consultative Committee*
CCSB: *Student Behavior Committee*
EAD: *Equity, Access, and Diversity Committee*
FAOIAC *Faculty Academic Oversight for Intercollegiate Athletics Committee*
FCC: *Faculty Consultative Committee*
IAC: *Intercollegiate Athletics Committee*
MCSA: *Morris Campus Student Association*
MSA: *Minnesota Student Association*
MSLC: *Minnesota Student Legislative Coalition*
PACC: *P&A Consultative Committee*
PSG: *Professional Student Government*
RSA: *Rochester Student Association*
SAIC: *Student Academic Integrity Committee*
SCC: *Senate Consultative Committee*
SCEP: *Senate Committee on Educational Policy*
SCFA: *Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs*
SCFP: *Senate Committee on Finance and Planning*
SCIT: *Senate Committee on Information Technology*
SCSA: *Senate Committee on Student Affairs*
SRC: *Senate Research Committee*
SSCC: *Student Senate Consultative Committee*
UMDSA: *Duluth Student Association*

ADDENDUM B: SENATE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



ADDENDUM C: ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER IN BRIEF

How to introduce new business: The Main Motion Process



What do I say?

To Do This	Motion	You Say This	Debate Allowed?	Vote Required
Introduce Business	Main	"I move that…"	Yes	Majority
Second a Motion	Second	"Second!"	No	No
Change the Wording or add Clarity of a Motion	Amend	"I move to amend the motion by…" (adding words; striking out words; substitute words)	Yes	Majority
Send to Committee	Commit/ Refer	"I move the motion be referred to …"	Yes	Majority
Postpone Action until a Specific Time	Postpone	"I move the motion be postponed until…" (provide a specific time on the agenda or next meeting date)	Yes	Majority
Postpone Action until an Unspecified Time (a motion will be required to discuss in the future)	Lay on the Table	"I move to lay the motion on the table."	No	Majority
Limit Debate	Limit Debate	"I move that the debate on this motion be limited to (one) speech of (two) minutes for each member."	No	Two-thirds
End Debate or Request a Vote	Previous Question	"I move the previous question."	No	Two-thirds
Take Intermission	Recess	"I move to recess for (time)."	No	Majority
Close Meeting	Adjourn	"I move to adjourn."	No	Majority

Why use Robert's Rules of Order?

- Allows for democratic speech and action
- Preserves order
- Rights of the organization supersede the rights of individuals
- Facilitates group decisions

Meeting Agendas

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Reports (from officers, committees, task forces)
3. Unfinished Business
4. New Business – items brought forward by motion procedure

Motion

- A motion is a formal proposal by a member that the group take a certain action or position.
- A main motion is required to begin the decision making process.
- A motion occurs prior to discussion.

Ground Rules for Debating

- Remarks must be germane (relevant and appropriate to the discussion); stay on subject.

Subsidiary Motions

Assist in treating or disposing of a main motion

- **Postpone Indefinitely** = a way to dispose of an embarrassing motion before it can be brought to vote
- **Amend** = a way to clarify or modify wording
  - Amendments should say exactly where in the main motion the change is to be made, and precisely what words to use.
  - Amendments must be germane
  - Follow the motion process for an amendment, then follow procedure to vote on the newly revised main motion.
  - Rather than amend an amendment; ask group to strike down the pending amendment vote then offer a different version.
- **Commit/Refer** = when additional time or information is needed, the item may be sent to a committee or task force (either an existing or newly created)
  - Before voting on a main motion, you may feel the main motion may require additional study and/or redrafting.
  - Motion to commit or refer should specifically state the committee and deadline
  - A special committee may be formed through the motion to commit (motion should include committee make-up and deadline)
  - Motion is debatable, but only about the matters of the referral and not on the main motion
- **Postpone to a Certain Time** = to move to a later time on the agenda or to the next meeting
  - A time is specified when motion will be addressed
  - Preferred over laying on the table
- **Limit or Extend Debate** = when circumstances call for shorter or longer speech
- **Previous Question** = to close debate and bring to an immediate vote

- **Lay on the Table** = lay motion aside temporarily without setting a time for its consideration
    - Taken up again, via motion process, when the majority decides
    - Often misused term for postpone to a certain time

Motions that Bring a Question Before the Assembly Again

1. **Take from the Table** = resume consideration of a main motion
2. **Rescind, Repeal or Annul** = cancel something that has been previously adopted
3. **Amend Something Previous Adopted** = proposal to modify wording or text previously adopted
4. **Discharge a Committee** = if a question has been referred or a task assigned to a committee that has not made a final report the committee may be discharged to allow the Board to take action or to drop the motion
5. **Reconsider** = within the same meeting a motion has been voted on the question may come before the assembly again as if it had not been voted on.