



The Student Government Association (SGA) Standing Rules of Order
Amended: April 25, 2012

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I. SCOPE AND PRECEDENCE

The Standing Rules of Order shall be governed by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Maryland Student Government Association. Any rule contained herein shall be deemed null and void in either whole or part, as deemed by the judiciary, should it conflict with either of these documents.

The Modus Operandi of the Maryland Student Government Association shall be as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order, most recent revised edition (RRO). The Presiding Officer and the Legislature shall be guided by rules of parliamentary practice for legislative organizations as set forth in RRO except where they conflict with the rules contained in the Standing Rules of Order, the Constitution, or Bylaws of the Maryland Student Government Association which shall supersede any rules contained in RRO.

The Scope and Precedence of the Standing Rules of Order as well as any rule which comes directly from the Constitution or Bylaws as well as any rule which specifically states as part of the rule that it is not suspend-able shall not be suspend-able by any motion to suspend a rule and may only be amended through an amendment to the Standing Rules of Order, Constitution, or Bylaws. Any motion to suspend such rules shall be deemed dilatory by the Presiding Officer.

II. ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS

Section 1. The Presiding Officer

Subsection A. Identification

The Speaker serves as the presiding officer, or Chair, of the Legislature. In the absence of the speaker, the Speaker Pro Tempore serves as the presiding officer, and in the absence of the Speaker and the Speaker Pro Tempore, the Legislature shall select a temporary replacement.

Subsection B. Order and Decorum

1. The Presiding Officer shall preserve order and decorum during sessions of the Legislature.

2. If a member violates any of these rules, the Presiding Officer shall call the member to order, and any member of the Legislature may request the Presiding Officer to do so. The Presiding Officer may take any reasonable action necessary to compel the member to observe the call for order. All questions of order shall be determined by the Presiding Officer without debate.
3. The Presiding Officer shall have general supervision over the Chamber and its adjacent areas while the Legislature is in session.

Subsection C. Prerogatives

1. The Presiding Officer may speak on points of order in preference to other members and shall decide all points of order. The decision of the Presiding Officer is final unless, upon appeal, it is reversed by a two-thirds vote of the members present.
2. The Presiding Officer may vote whenever his/her vote will affect the result.

Section 2. Staff and Other Officers

Subsection A.

1. The Speaker shall serve as the Chief Clerk of the Legislature.
2. The Legislative Coordinator, appointed by the Speaker and confirmed by the Legislature, shall advise in all questions regarding parliamentary procedure. He or she may advise the Speaker, but not directly address the Legislature.
3. The Chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee appointed by the Speaker and confirmation by the Legislature, shall rule in all questions of the SGA governing document. He or she may advise the Speaker, but not directly address the Legislature.
4. The Presiding Officer may appoint other staff as necessary, but their authority shall not supersede that of the Presiding Officer.

Section 3. Daily Business

Subsection A. Order of Business

1. The order of business for a standard business meeting shall be as follows:
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Student Concerns and General Announcements
 - c. Roll Call
 - d. Approval of Minutes
 - e. Executive Reports
 - f. Committee Reports
 - g. Speaker's Time
 - h. First Reading Calendar
 - i. Second Reading Calendar
 - j. Follow Up
 - k. Comments for the Good of the Council
 - l. Adjournment
2. The order of business may be changed at any time by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present.

Subsection B. Call to Order

The Presiding Officer shall take the chair every day at precisely the hour to which the Legislature is scheduled to convene and immediately commence with the proceedings of the meeting.

Subsection C. Business of the Day

The Speaker shall distribute electronically to the Legislature by the beginning of each day's session all business, properly arranged and classified, pending before the Legislature at that session.

III. ATTENDANCE AND QUORUM

Section 1. Quorum

Subsection A.

1. Quorum shall be set at 50 percent plus one of the members enrolled as representatives with the SGA at the time quorum is called.
2. After first attaining the floor, any member may suggest the absence of quorum. The Presiding Officer shall then order a call of the Legislature to ascertain if a quorum is present. Any members who are absent from the Chamber, but not absent from the session in general shall report to the Chamber.
3. The Presiding Officer shall entertain no motion for a quorum, which he or she deems to be dilatory.

Section 2. Leave of Attendance for Committees

Subsection A.

Without leave of the Presiding Officer, no committee shall hold a session during a session of the Legislature, the only exception being the Finance Committee, members of which shall be excused to attend deliberation should it coincide with a session of the Legislature.

IV. LEGISLATION

Section 1. Sponsorship

Subsection A.

1. Legislation may be sponsored by any member of the Legislature.
2. Legislation only requires one sponsor to be considered by the Legislature; however, any Legislation may be co-sponsored by other members of the Legislature.
3. If Legislation has multiple sponsors, the chief sponsor shall be first listed.
4. Except by amendment, no additional sponsors or co-sponsors may be added after Legislation is filed with the Speaker.

Section 2. Introduction and Numbering

Subsection B.

1. Legislation shall be prepared for introduction in the format prescribed by the Standing Rules of Order.
2. A member desiring to introduce Legislation shall file the documents required with the Speaker by the date prescribed by the Speaker.
3. The Speaker shall deem any legislation "emergency" which is submitted after the announced deadline for submission of Legislations. Legislation that is submitted as "emergency" shall be on a topic which has become pertinent after the deadline or will be moot prior to the next meeting of the Legislature.
4. The Speaker may refuse to accept for introduction any Legislation not drawn in conformity with these requirements.
5. Legislation shall be numbered in order as they are received by the Speaker beginning with "F" during the fall semester or "S" during the spring semester, followed by the date of the Legislation's introduction in order of year, month, and day, followed by A, B, C, etc to designate the order in which the Legislations were received.
6. Legislation shall be classified as either an "Act" or a "Resolution."
 - a. A Resolution shall be a declarative statement, announcing a position or stance of the SGA.
 - b. An Act shall be any Legislation that calls for a formal action of the SGA and its members, including, but not limited to the allocation of monies, or a change in the governing documents.

Section 3. Three Week Reading Calendar

Subsection A.

Every piece of Legislation, in order to pass the Legislature, shall be read two different times during at least two different sessions of the Legislature unless two-thirds of the Members of the Legislature shall otherwise determine by yeas and nays.

Subsection B. First Reading

1. Legislation is introduced when it is read for the first time or when it is appropriately received by the Speaker prior to the legislation deadline.
2. Upon introduction, Legislation shall be referred by the Speaker to its appropriate legislative committee.
 - a. If the Speaker assigns Legislation to multiple committees, the Speaker shall designate one committee as the primary committee.
3. A suspension of the Rules is required in order to consider Legislation without referring it to a committee.

Subsection C. Second Reading

1. Upon the report of a legislative committee, Legislation is considered on its second reading. At this time, the Presiding Officer will call for the chair of the legislative committee or a member of the committee to present a brief summary of the Legislation and any amendments adopted by the legislative committee.
 - a. If the bill has been referred to multiple committees, all committees shall be given time to present their individual reports, however, the Legislature may only formally consider the report of the primary committee.
2. A committee report may be “favorable,” “favorable with amendments,” or “unfavorable.”
3. Debate on the adoption of a committee report is limited to ten minutes equally divided in open debate.
4. Upon approval of a favorable legislative committee report by the legislature, the Presiding Officer may
 - a. Table the Legislation to the third reading calendar the following week
 - b. Entertain a motion to table with a second and a one-fourth vote of the legislature
 - c. Move the legislation to a vote for approval
5. To be eligible for legislative approval or debate, the sponsor(s) of the bill must first present a written action plan to the legislature.
 - a. The sponsor(s) of the legislation will have consulted the appropriate committee prior to presenting the action plan.
 - b. Any amendments to the action plan require a majority vote.
 - c. The action plan will be approved simultaneously with the actual legislation.
6. Consideration of Legislation is limited to one hour in length not including any recess of the Legislature, equally divided in open debate.
7. Any amendments to the Legislation first submitted shall require a majority vote.
8. During time equally divided in open debate, the chair shall recognize a Member wishing to serve as the manager of time for those wishing to speak in the affirmative and those wishing to speak in the negative.
9. No Member may address the Legislature, without leave of the Legislature, for more than ten consecutive minutes.
10. No Member may speak twice, except to answer an inquiry, unless all members wishing to speak on the same side of a question have done so.
11. Any Legislation having not been considered on second reading during the meeting in which it was scheduled to be considered shall be held over and may be considered until the adjournment of the next meeting of the Legislature.
12. Any Legislation, having achieved final passage on the Second Reading Calendar, will be dated and signed by the Presiding Officer, and presented to the President for his approval.
13. No legislation having received an unfavorable committee report, said report having been approved by the Legislature, shall be assigned to the third reading calendar.
14. The motion to overturn a committee report, whether favorable or unfavorable, shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Legislature.

Subsection D. Third Reading

1. Representatives may provide follow up on previous legislation, projects, service initiatives, or any other legislative issues.

2. For every piece of approved legislation, follow up must be provided within four (4) legislative meetings.
 - a. The follow up will specifically include how the action plan has been completed.
3. The Presiding Officer will entertain any questions regarding the status of the legislation and/or the action plan.

Section 4. Amendments

Subsection A.

1. Consideration of any amendment to a bill is limited to twenty minutes equally divided in open debate.
2. Time used in the debate of an amendment or any other question other than the Main Motion shall not count against the time limits on a piece of Legislation unless otherwise specified in these Rules.
3. No amendment on a subject different from that under consideration may be offered.
4. An amendment to a piece of Legislation, adopted by a legislative committee or the Legislature remains a part of the Legislation unless the Legislature specifically reverses or modifies the action.
5. No Legislation may be amended in its passage through the Legislature in the nature of a complete substitute or by any other amendment or series of amendments with the effect of changing the predominance of the original purpose of the Legislation.
6. Amendments to Legislation, whether included with the report of the Legislature or offered from the floor shall be clearly and specifically written. The amendment shall be delivered to the desk prior to its introduction.

Section 5. Veto

Subsection A.

1. The President has the right to veto any Legislation at his/her discretion. The decision to veto must be announced by the President to the Legislature within nine (9) school days, or the Legislation is automatically enacted. When Legislation has been vetoed by the President and is returned to the Legislature:
 - a. The message containing the President's objections shall be read aloud either by the chair, or if the President so desires, it shall be read aloud by the President who shall have no rights to speak or debate except to read verbatim from the written objection. The President shall have no right to ask or answer questions of the Legislature at this time.
 - b. At the next session of the Legislature, the Legislature then shall proceed to reconsider the Legislation, and the presiding officer shall put the question: "Shall the Legislation pass notwithstanding the objections of the President?"
 - c. The vote of the Legislature shall be determined by roll call of the yeas and nays.
 - d. The affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of all the Members is necessary to pass the Legislation over the President's veto.
 - e. The question of reconsideration under this rule is debatable for no more than thirty minutes equally divided in open debate, and is not amendable, nor is the Legislation to which it applies.

V. DEBATE

Section 1. Procedure in Debate

Subsection A.

1. Every Member desiring to present a petition or other matter, to make a report or a motion, to question another member who has the floor, or to speak on any matter, shall clearly raise his or her hand, address the presiding officer, and proceed further only when or recognized by the presiding officer. If two or more members seek recognition at the same time, the presiding officer shall determine which is entitled to the floor. With the consent of the presiding officer, any Member may address the Legislature from the front of the chamber.
2. No member may:
 - a. While the presiding officer is putting a question or addressing the Legislature, walk across the chamber or converse privately; or,

- b. Hold private conversation in a manner to interrupt debate.
3. No Member may speak during debate except upon the subject under debate.
4. A Member during debate may not make personal references about other Members and shall refer to them by some respectful designation other than their proper names.
5. The term "equally divided in open debate" refers to the period for discussion in which Members are recognized by the presiding officer or via their floor leader to speak on a motion.

VI. MOTIONS

Section 1. Majority Vote

Subsection A.

Except as otherwise specifically provided in these Rules, each question shall be determined by a majority vote of the votes cast by persons entitled to vote, excluding blanks and abstentions, provided that there is a quorum present.

Section 2. Motions in Writing

Subsection A.

If requested by the presiding officer, a motion shall be submitted in writing to the Clerk before it is debated.

Section 3. Division of a Question

Subsection A.

If a motion contains more than one substantive proposition, the presiding officer or any Member supported by at least five others may call for a division of the question into separate propositions.

Section 4. Withdrawal

Subsection A.

After a motion is stated by the presiding officer or read by the Clerk, it is in the possession of the Legislature; however, it may be withdrawn by its sponsor at any time before the question is put thereon.

Section 5. Precedence of Motions

Subsection A.

1. When a question is before the Legislature, no motion may be received except for one of those set forth in paragraph (b) of this Rule and then only if the motion is of higher precedence than the original question.
2. The following motions have precedence in the order listed:
 - a. To adjourn to a time certain
 - b. To suspend a rule
 - c. To recess
 - d. To reconsider a previous action
 - e. To vote on the previous question
 - f. To lay on the table or postpone indefinitely
 - g. To postpone to a certain day or time
 - h. To commit
 - i. To recommit
 - j. To amend.
3. No motion may be received after a vote upon any question before the Legislature has been called for by the presiding officer.

Section 6. Motions

Subsection A. Motion to Adjourn

1. A motion to adjourn:
 - a. Shall state the hour and day to which it is proposed the assembly adjourn
 - b. Is not debatable
 - c. Can neither be amended nor reconsidered
2. Must, in the opinion of the presiding officer, respect the calendar agreed upon by the Legislature and the Speaker.

Subsection B. Motion to Reconsider

1. A motion to reconsider the vote of a question once decided is in order if the document or matter to which it relates is in the possession of the Legislature. A document is in the possession of the Legislature until such time as it is delivered to the President.
2. No motion for reconsideration is in order unless made during the same meeting in which the original question was decided, or the following meeting.
3. A motion to reconsider any vote is in order only if made by a member who voted in the prevailing side of the original question.
4. A motion to reconsider is debatable only if the question to which the motion debates is debatable, in which case the debate may extend to the original question.
5. If a motion to reconsider is adopted, the original question is immediately before the Legislature.
6. A vote on a question to reconsider may not be reconsidered

Subsection C. Motion to Vote Upon the Previous Question

1. A motion to vote upon the previous question:
 - a. May be made on any debatable motion.
 - b. Is not debatable.
 - c. Requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present.
 - d. Is only in order after the affirmative and negative floor leaders have each consumed at least 5 minutes of time (where applicable).
 - e. Immediately brings the Legislature to a vote on the question before it, precluding any additional debate should the motion be adopted.
 - f. May be made only by a member holding the floor.

Subsection D. Motion to Postpone Indefinitely

A motion to Postpone indefinitely is debatable for a period of ten minutes equally divided in open debate. Any motion that is postponed indefinitely may not be taken up again during that meeting.

Subsection E. Motion to Postpone to a Certain Day or Time (Special Order)

A Motion to postpone to a certain day or time may be amended but may not be reconsidered. It is debatable for a period of four minutes equally divided in open debate.

Subsection F. Motion to Suspend a Rule

1. A motion to suspend a Rule:
 - a. Must be offered separately for each proposition.
 - b. Is debatable for a period of four minutes equally divided in open debate.
 - c. Does not permit discussion of the main question.
 - d. Requires the concurrence of at least two-thirds of the members present in order to be adopted.
 - e. Cannot be reconsidered.

Subsection G. Motion to Extend or Limit Debate

A motion to suspend or limit debate is in order and requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

VII. VOTING

Section 1. Explanation of Vote

Subsection A.

The vote of a Member on Legislation or other question may be explained by that Member rising for that purpose for not more than one minute.

Section 2. Yeas and Nays

Subsection A.

The vote on any question, except as otherwise provided for within these Rules, shall be decided upon by yeas and nays. Upon the request of any Member who indicates his or her support by rising from their seat with a "call for division," voting by standing division shall be conducted.

Subsection B.

Division by roll call vote shall be conducted by the specific request of any Member. The motion must be duly seconded and shall be conducted upon receiving 5 votes from the Legislature.

Section 3. Procedure for Voting

Subsection A.

1. A question of Division may be called immediately following the announcement of the results of a voice vote, and before the timely rap of the gavel by the presiding officer.
2. A recorded vote shall then be taken on a form that is provided by the Clerk. After sufficient time has been allowed, the presiding officer shall close the voting.
3. After the vote has been reported, a Member may not change his or her vote.

Section 4. Records

Subsection A.

1. The Speaker shall maintain an accurate record of the Legislature's proceedings including the title of every piece of Legislation introduced and every question or motion put before the Legislature, including the vote and outcome.
2. All Members shall submit voting records at the end of each Legislative meeting with an accurate record of their yeas and nays on each Legislation or Main Motion heard at the meeting. The Speaker Pro Tempore shall be responsible for maintaining these records.

VIII. LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

Section 1. Referral to Committee

Subsection A.

Upon receiving Legislation, the Speaker shall refer it to a committee. This referral shall be at the discretion of the Speaker.

Section 2. Consideration of Legislation in Committee

Subsection A.

1. The Chair shall call the Legislation for consideration according to the calendar published by the Chair.
2. Legislation shall be considered by the committee and declared favorable, favorable as amended or unfavorable:
 - a. Favorable: The committee advises passage of the Legislation.
 - b. Favorable as Amended: the committee advises passage of the Legislation as amended.
 - c. Unfavorable: The committee does not advise passage of Legislation.

3. The procedure for consideration shall generally follow these guidelines:
 - a. The Sponsor of the legislation may testify for a period of up to five minutes. Non-Members shall be afforded the right to testify on behalf of any legislation at the request of the sponsor.
 - b. Upon conclusion of the sponsor's statement, members of the Committee may then proceed to mark-up the legislation. Members may engage in debate, ask questions of the sponsor, or propose amendments upon recognition of the Chair.
 - c. With the consent of the Committee, by majority vote, the Chair may institute further procedures for consideration, so long as they do not deviate from standard parliamentary practice.
 - d. At the expiration of the time allotted for consideration of a piece of legislation, the Chair shall then move directly into a vote on each remaining question.
 - e. The Chair shall decide on all interpretations of these rules and points of order but shall be subject to appeal. A two-thirds vote of the committee members present overrules the chair's decision.
4. Quorum for a Committee shall be one more than half of the Members of the Committee. The Committee may consider legislation without a quorum, however they may not vote until a quorum is achieved.
5. Votes submitted by e-mail shall be considered, at the discretion of the Chair.
6. Amendments proposed in committee must be sponsored by a member of said Committee.
7. Members, observers, and sponsors may be present for all proceedings of any committee, provided that order is maintained during the Committee session.

Section 3. Committee Reports

Subsection A.

1. The Chair of each committee shall prepare a report of the Legislation considered according to the standards outlined in the Committee Chair's Handbook.
2. The committee report shall be presented to the Legislature as according to Title IV, Section 3, Subsection B.

IX. APPELLATE INTERPRETATION

Section 1. Appeal from the Decision of the Chair

Subsection A.

1. A decision of the Chair may be appealed by any Member who is supported by at least three other Members who indicate their support by standing at his or her seat.
2. An appeal must be made immediately, before consideration of any other matter.
3. During the determination of an appeal, the presiding officer shall relinquish the chair and shall take a place on the floor of the Chamber.
4. An appeal is debatable if the decision appealed was made from a question which was itself debatable. Debate is restricted to the decision of the Chair and may not extend to the main question.
 - a. Debate on an appeal shall not exceed ten minutes equally divided in open debate and no member may speak for more than two minutes. Prior to either side using their time, the Legislative Coordinator shall be allowed to make a statement relating to the interpretation of the Rule in question.
5. A member who has the floor at the time of a ruling by the Chair from which an appeal is taken shall relinquish the floor pending disposition of the appeal.
6. The question presented by an appeal may not be amended, and the decision of the appeal may not be reconsidered.
7. A majority vote of those Members present provided there is a quorum shall overturn the ruling of the Chair.

X. AMENDING THE RULES

Rules shall be adopted by a majority vote. Thereafter, these shall be considered standing and as such any amendment to the, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption and shall be presented as a simple legislation at a meeting of the Legislature.

Section 1. Non-Suspend-able Provisions

Subsection A.

This section and its contents are not suspend-able.

1. Dilatory motion
 - a. The presiding officer shall entertain no motion that is intended to cause a delay, or where the purpose is to obstruct or thwart the will of the Legislature as clearly indicated by the existing parliamentary situation.
2. Question of Privilege
 - a. A member may rise and have precedence on all other matters except when a vote is being taken or a question is being put in order to respond to an offense of personal conduct, reputation, or rights.
3. Reading of Papers
 - a. Members may read from papers during debate provided that appropriate citation is made by the member if sources other than the original words of the Member are used.
4. Censure
 - a. A Member may be censured by the Legislature for violating these Rules or for otherwise bringing harm or disrespect to the Maryland Student Government Association or any Member thereof by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present provided a quorum is in attendance.
 - b. The motion to censure is debatable for a period of eight minutes equally divided in open debate, may not be amended or reconsidered, and may not be offered when any other question is before the Legislature.
 - c. A Member, having been censured, shall lose the right to speak or offer motions on the floor of the Legislature for one legislative hour.
5. Procedural Votes
 - a. No member may abstain from voting during a question of procedure.
6. Legislation Held Over
 - a. Legislation shall not be held over from one legislative year to another.