

Some Principles of Senate Parliamentary Practice

Academic Senate, Santa Rosa Junior College, April 19, 2019

1. The president chairs the meeting. As chair, the president
 - A. Acknowledges all speakers; this includes senators, guests, presenters and the public; anyone desirous to speak must indicate (usually by raising a hand) their desire, and wait for the chair's explicit acknowledgement.
 - B. The president as chair does not vote and does not participate in the debate unless .
 1. In the case of a tie vote, the president/chair decides the matter.
 2. If the president wishes to debate, they must relinquish the chair and give the gavel to the vice president who assumes the chair; as long as the vice president acts as chair, they don't debate or vote; the president, until they reassume the chair, may vote.
 3. It is the vice president's choice when to return the gavel to the president.
2. The president may announce a time limit for each speaker, but only in advance of the agenda item. Depending on the situation, the president may announce a per-speaker time limit of between 2 and 10 minutes. (Robert's Rules specifies a per speaker limit of ten minutes).
3. Speakers will be acknowledged to speak, in the order the president is aware of their desire to the best of the president's ability with the assistance of the executive committee. Speakers who have not spoken on the agenda item yet will be given priority over those who have already spoken.
4. In the event that a pro and con mic or side is used, the president will alternate pro, then con, until there is no one at one of the mics/sides regardless of how many are desirous to speak at the other one.
5. At the president's discretion, if a speaker who has just spoken, or another senator or expert witness in the chamber has a factual correction of information of the current speaker, that speaker may be acknowledged out of turn. A speaker may not, without the president's acknowledgement, rebut or correct a previous speaker.
6. At the president's discretion, a speaker may be required to yield the floor if they are only repeating what has already been said, or are off topic.
7. Senators will, in general, be given priority over guests, expert witnesses, and members of the public. If an attendee who is not a senator has important information or expert testimony, at the president's discretion they may be acknowledged out of turn.
8. Agenda items for action or discussion are intended to be primarily for conversation, debate, questions and answers. Prepared presentations to the senate must provide the senate with documents, including Power Point presentation, at least one week in advance of meeting, and spend no more than 30% of the allotted time presenting information.