

House of Organizations Procedural Rules of the Student Government Association of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County

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1 **Scope**

This document shall govern the procedural rules used by the Student Government Association House of Organizations of the University of Maryland Baltimore County (hereafter referred to as the SGA HoOrg). It shall be superseded only by the Constitution and Bylaws of the SGA and any applicable local, state, or federal law.

2 **Definitions**

Chair: in the case of the full House of Organizations, the Speaker of the House (a.k.a. the Chair of the committee of the whole). In the case of committees, the Chair of the committee. In cases where the usual Chair is not present or has temporarily passed the gavel to a successor, the term Chair shall refer to the successor.

House: The House of Organizations of the Student Government Association of the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Majority: Half of the members present minus any abstentions plus one.

Senate: the senate of the Student Government Association of the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Two-thirds of the entire body: Two-thirds of the entire membership with voting privileges. Abstentions are effectively negative votes in this case.

Two-thirds of the members present: Two-thirds of the members present, regardless of abstentions. Abstentions are effectively negative votes in this case.

Two-thirds vote (or simple two-thirds vote): a two-thirds vote of members casting votes either for or opposed. This is two-thirds of the members present minus any abstentions.

3 **Members and Officers**

3.1 **Membership Privileges**

Only Representatives shall have voting privileges in the HoOrg. Ex-officios members shall have the privilege of voice, but may not vote, shall not count towards quorum, and may not move motions. In addition to the ex-officios stated in the Constitution and Bylaws, the following individuals shall hold ex-officios membership in the HoOrg: Office of Student Life Event Advisors and the non-student member of the Student Involvement Center. Additionally, any student, faculty, or staff member of UMBC may hold floor only if recognized by the Chair or yielded the floor by a Representative.

3.2 **Appointed Officers**

The appointed officers shall include, but not be limited to, a Secretary, who shall perform the duties assigned by the Speaker and/or the HoOrg. The Speaker may create other appointed positions. The Speaker shall nominate appointees in legislation, approved by a majority vote of the HoOrg.

4 Attendance

4.1 Required

Attendance at House of Organizations meetings and committee meetings is mandatory for all house members. Three unexcused absences from House of Organizations meetings within the same school year shall result in expulsion from the House of Organizations. Two unexcused absences from *regular* committee meetings shall be equivalent to one unexcused absence from a House of Organizations meeting. This attendance policy shall be in effect for all *regular* announced House of Organizations meetings within the fall and spring semesters only.

4.2 Roll Call

A roll call shall be held at the beginning and at the end of each House of Organizations meeting. A house member must be present at both roll calls in order to be considered “present” for that meeting. Roll calls shall also be taken whenever a house member suggests the absence of quorum.

4.3 Excuses

A representative may be excused from either or both roll calls at the discretion of the Chair. The chair shall have in his or her power the ability to decide what qualifies as a valid excuse on an individual basis. Generally, excuses should be rather serious in nature and be granted only in cases where the house member has made reasonable effort to attend the meeting. These guidelines are suggested to help guide Chairs in making these decisions:

- Mid-Terms or Finals the next day
- Family emergency
- Medical emergency
- Religious holiday

4.4 Appeals

An appeal of an excuse or of a denial of an excuse to any representative may be made to the Joint Matters committee which may overturn said decision.

5 Meetings

5.1 Regular Meetings

Regular meetings shall be defined as meetings which are announced one week or more in advance and fall during the fall or spring semester. The House shall hold at least two *regular* meetings per month during the fall and spring semesters.

5.2 Special Meetings

Special meetings of the House of Organizations may be called by the President of the SGA, the Speaker of the House, or by petition of more than 50% of the representatives currently serving.

5.3 Notice

Notice must be provided to all representative one week or more in advance of *regular* meetings and 24 hours or more in advance of special meetings. Notice of the time, date, and place shall be served to the House in the following manners:

1. A flyer must be placed on the outer door of the SGA Office.
2. Notices must be placed in all SGA and Ex-officio member mailboxes, for special meetings only.

3. Each representative shall be telephoned at least once by staff of the SGA office for special meetings only. If the initial telephone attempt is unsuccessful, additional attempts should be made if time allows.
4. For Regular and Special Meetings notice shall also be given on the SGA House listproc.

Additional methods of notice are recommended but not required. Possible methods include electronic mailing lists, newsgroups and campus mail notices.

6 Committees

6.1 Meetings

Committees must have exactly one *regular* meeting per month, with the exception of the Finance Committee, which shall have at least one meeting per month, and no more than one *regular* meeting per week. Special meetings may be called in addition to the *regular* meetings. Committee meetings must be announced and advertised in the same way as House of Organizations meetings are. *Regular* and Special meetings are to be called by the Chair of the committee. The attendance policy is to be in force only during *regular* committee meetings.

6.2 Temporary Chairs

In the event that there is no chair for a committee, either through resignation or by virtue of an election, a temporary chair is to be appointed by the Assistant Speaker of the House. The sole task of this temporary chair shall be to call a meeting and to hold proceedings for the election of a permanent Chair.

7 Agenda and Minutes

All House and committee meetings shall have written agenda. These agenda shall be submitted to the House secretary and archived in the same manner as minutes and legislation.

7.1 Deadlines for Items

Agenda items and any bills represented on the agenda must be submitted to the Chair of the House 2 business days or more before the meeting. In turn, the Chair must prepare the agenda and make it publicly available (to include copies in house representatives' mailboxes, etc.) 1 business days or more before the meeting. All pieces of legislation must also be finished and sent out to all House members 2 business days or more before the meeting in order for the legislation to be put on the agenda without a Motion for Agenda Item.

7.2 Order

The order of the agenda shall be as the Speaker sees fit except that proceedings affecting the status of any member of the SGA (with the exception of in-house elections) shall precede any items of new business.

7.3 Motion for Agenda Item

If an item which would normally be required to appear on the agenda is not submitted to the Chair on time to appear on the agenda, it may only be heard in that meeting by passing a *Motion to hear an item not on the agenda*. This motion shall require a second to be heard and a two-thirds vote of the quorumed body to pass. The motion must also be written down and submitted to the Chair prior to discussion of the issue. Because debate on this motion should be limited to the urgency involved in hearing the item without notice and not on the merits of the item itself, debate on the *Motion to hear an item not on the agenda* is limited in the following ways and may not be extended (but can be closed by *Previous Question*):

1. The total debate on the motion shall be limited to ten (10) minutes.

2. The presenter of the bill shall have two and one half minutes in which to present his case for hearing it without notice.
3. Any subsequent speakers shall be limited to thirty seconds per speech.
4. No one may speak on the motion twice with the exception of the presenter of the motion.

If the *Motion to bear an item not on the agenda* passes, the item is treated as it would be had it been on the agenda and the minutes shall reflect that it was an “emergency” item.

8 Minutes

Minutes shall be recorded at each House and each committee meeting.

It shall be the responsibility of the House secretary (or a delegate thereof) to record minutes during House meetings and the responsibility of the Chair (or a delegate thereof) to record minutes at committee hearings.

8.1 Availability

Minutes shall be made available to the assembly at the midpoint between the meeting in which they were recorded and the next *regular* meeting. They shall be made publicly available no more than 2 business days following their passage.

8.2 Approval

Minutes from the previous meeting shall be approved unless contested by a majority vote by the end of the current meeting. Any changes or additions to the minutes must be approved by a majority vote. At the request of contesting representative (not a majority opinion), remarks in opposition to any section of the previous minutes shall be recorded into the minutes of the current meeting.

8.3 Archiving

Minutes shall be archived in the same manner as legislation and agenda following their approval.

9 Legislation

All legislation shall be written and submitted to the Chair. All legislation shall contain:

1. The name of the legislation
2. The sponsor (may be a committee)
3. A preamble briefly outlining the reasoning behind the legislation
4. One or more “resolved” clauses stating the action to be taken or policy to be adopted.
5. The vote margin required to pass if not majority.
6. The contingency for action if the requirements of the legislation are not met, if applicable.
7. A clearly defined location near the bottom of the page for the signature of the Chair, Speaker of the House of Organizations and/or the President (whichever apply).

9.1 Financial Bills

In addition to the information listed above financial bills must contain:

1. The purpose of the allocation.
2. An itemized budget when dealing with more than one item including exact dollar amounts.
3. The time by which funds must be spent
4. The individual in charge of the allocation
5. The source of the funds in the case of reallocations

9.2 Creation of Ad Hoc Committees

In addition to the information required for all legislation, legislation creating ad hoc committees must contain:

1. The name and purpose of the committee
2. The manner and operation of the committee
3. The duration of the committee (this cannot exceed the current session of the House)
4. The membership or a provision for selection of the membership of the committee
5. The chair of the committee or a provision for the selection of the chair of the committee
6. The task with which the committee is charged and a time frame for the completion of this task.
7. Time frames for reports to the House

9.3 Constitutional Amendments

In addition to the information required for all legislation, legislation creating amendments to the Constitution must contain the following notice:

This document contains a proposed Constitutional amendment. It must be passed by a vote of two-thirds of the entire membership and is not subject to executive veto. This document must also pass student referendum to be enacted.

9.4 Bylaw Amendments

In addition to the information required for all legislation, legislation creating amendments to the Bylaws must contain the following notice:

This document contains a proposed Bylaws amendment. It must be passed by a vote of two-thirds of the entire membership and is not subject to executive veto.

9.5 Standing Rules Amendments

In addition to the information required for all legislation, legislation creating amendments to the Standing Rules must contain the following notice:

This document contains a proposed Standing Rules amendment. It must be passed by a vote of two-thirds of members present and is not subject to veto.

10 Debate

It is in the interest of the House (being a deliberative) assembly to foster productive and persuasive speech by each member so long as it is done in an efficient manner.

10.1 Order

10.1.1 Debatable Motions

Following a debatable motion and a proper second, the Chair shall immediately read the motion to the assembly, say "without objection", and pause for five seconds. Unless there is an objection, he shall strike the gavel and the motion shall pass. If there is an objection, the House shall move immediately into debate on the motion. The author of the motion shall be given the opportunity to speak first in order to present the reasoning behind the motion.

Debate shall then proceed in pro-con format, with each speaker being recognized by the Chair, until *Previous Question* is called or until any time limit set for the debate expires.

10.1.2 Non-debatable Motions

Following a non-debatable motion and a proper second (where required), the Chair shall immediately read the motion to the assembly. A hands-up vote will then be taken unless some other form of vote is called for by a member of the assembly and passed by a majority. A hands-up vote shall always be taken to decide the issue of the method of the voting.

10.1.3 Special Motions and Exceptions

Constitutional or bylaw amendments shall always be voted upon by a roll-call vote, and must be sponsored by the Policy Rules committee. In the case of a veto-override or a constitutional or bylaw amendments the initial “without objection” method of obtaining unanimous consent shall be skipped.

10.2 Limits

Unless provided otherwise, there shall be no limit on the number of times any given representative shall speak on an issue save that no member may speak again until after all other representatives on his side of the issue (pro or con) wishing to speak have done so.

10.3 Speaking by Chair

In a House meeting, in order to provide impartiality, the Chair may not speak on any issue unless he/she first passes the gavel to his/her successor for the remainder of the discussion and voting period on that issue. He/she may then join the body for the position to which he/she was elected. This provision does not apply to committee meetings.

10.4 Amendments

Amendments may be offered by any member with voting rights whenever an amendable motion is on the floor. Immediately after an amendment has been verbally moved by its author and seconded, it must be written down and submitted to the chair who shall read the amendment as written and then immediately call for unanimous consent by saying “without objection” and pausing for five seconds. If there are no objections, the amendment shall pass and the debate on the newly amended motion shall resume were it left off. If there is an objection, debate shall ensue as it would for a normal motion.

10.5 Voting

10.5.1 Unanimous Consent

Voting shall take place by unanimous consent only in the time period immediately following the initial reading of the motion by the Chair.

10.5.2 Division (hands-up)

Unless otherwise ordered, voting shall take place by a hands up vote. The Chair shall say “All those in favor...” [pause] “All opposed...” [pause]. House representatives in favor should signify by raising their hand. Votes should be counted by the Chair and the Secretary of the House (in the case of House meetings). If there is a discrepancy, the vote shall be taken again.

10.5.3 Roll Call

In some instances it is desirable to vote by roll call. A roll call vote can be moved by three house representatives. One representative would move for roll-call vote, then the Chair would call “all in favor of roll-call vote.” If three or more representatives raise their hand, the ensuing vote shall be taken by Roll Call. In such a case, the Chair shall state the motion, in amended form if applicable, and then either the Secretary or the Chair (at the Chair’s discretion) shall read the roll of the House, allowing each house member to respond “for”, “opposed”, or “abstaining.” Representatives who are absent at the time shall be recorded as such (this has no bearing on the attendance policy but does establish presence or lack of quorum).

10.5.4 Secret Ballot

Since the SGA has a strict policy of being open to the public Secret Ballot voting is always out of order with the exception of the in-house election of new representatives, impeachment proceedings, or the election of an officer such as the Speaker or the Chair of a committee. In these limited cases Secret Ballot voting is permitted in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and the in-house election procedure.

10.5.5 Vote of the Chair

In a hands up vote the Chair shall not vote unless his vote would affect the outcome of the vote. In a roll-call vote the name of the Chair shall be called last. In a call for unanimous consent the Chair may object, but if he does so he must immediately pass the gavel to his successor for the remainder of the discussion and voting period on that issue.

10.5.6 Proxy Voting

Due to the deliberative nature of House meetings, and due to the possibility of the swaying of one's opinions during a debate, proxy voting is neither permitted nor accepted.

11 Archiving

It shall be the policy of the SGA to make all legislation, agenda, and approved minutes public record. In accordance with this policy legislation, agenda, and minutes shall be archived by the House Secretary. A complete copy shall be kept in the House of Organizations office. In addition, copies of all documentation for the current session shall be kept on file at the front desk of the SGA office. Copies in the SGA office shall be made available:

- One week after signing or override of veto for legislation subject to veto
- One week after passage for legislation not subject to veto, including Constitutional, Bylaw, and Procedural amendments
- One week after the meeting for agenda
- One week after approval for minutes

Any amendments passed after the original passage of a piece of legislation, or amendments to the Constitution/Bylaws shall be attached to the original document in the archives and shall be distributed along with the original document.

12 Ratification & Amendment

These Procedural Rules must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the members of the House of Organizations. Any amendments to these rules once adopted must pass by a two-thirds vote of the members present by the House. Any one of these rules may be suspended by a simple two-thirds vote of the House. These actions are not subject to a presidential veto.