

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

The Senate Procedural Rules was initially ratified by the Student Government Association of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County on May, 15, 2004. The document below is current as of that date.

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Scope

The Senate Procedural Rules of Student Government Association (SGA) of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County shall govern the processes and rules of the SGA Senate, and shall supersede all legislation. All other SGA Guiding Documents shall hold precedence over this document with respect to the Senate.

1 Members and Officers

1.1 Membership Privileges

Only Senators shall have voting privileges in the Senate. 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 Senate: Presidents and Vice Presidents of the Faculty Senate, Professional Staff Senate, Non-Exempt Excluded Staff Senate, and Graduate Student Association. Additionally, any student, faculty, or staff member of UMBC may hold floor only if recognized by the Chair or yielded the floor by a Senator.

1.2 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 Senate. The Speaker may create other appointed positions. The Speaker shall nominate appointees in legislation, approved by a majority vote of the Senate.

2 Attendance

2.1 Required

Attendance at Senate meetings, committee meetings, and office hours is mandatory for all Senators. Two unexcused absences from *regular* Senate meetings within the same semester shall result in expulsion from the Senate. Two unexcused absences from office hours or committee meetings shall be equivalent to one unexcused absence from a Senate meeting. Unexcused absence from the first *regular* Senate meeting of the fall semester shall result in immediate expulsion from the Senate.

2.2 Taking Attendance

A roll call shall be taken at the beginning and the end of each Senate meeting, and recorded in the minutes. A Senator must be present at the meeting's beginning and end to be considered "present" for that meeting. The Chair shall be responsible for keeping track of whether enough Senators are present when voting on legislation.

2.3 Excuses

The Speaker of the Senate shall be responsible for creating an attendance policy at the beginning of his/her term for excused absence. The Senate may overturn decisions of the Speaker regarding attendance by a two-thirds vote of members present.

3 Meetings

3.1 Regular Meetings

Regular meetings shall be defined as meetings that are announced one week or more in advance and occur during the fall or spring semester. The Senate shall hold *regular* meetings on a weekly basis during the fall and spring semesters.

3.2 Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Senate may be called by the President of the SGA, the Speaker of the Senate, a vote of majority of members present at a Senate meeting, or by petition of more than 50% of the Senators currently serving. Forty-eight hours notice shall be required for special meetings.

3.3 Notice

Notice of the time, date, and place of meetings must be provided to all Senators as follows:

1. For *regular* and special meetings notice shall also be given on the SGA listproc.
2. Written notice must be given to all SGA and Ex-officio members, for special meetings only.
3. Additional methods of notice are recommended but not required. Possible methods include electronic mailing lists, newsgroups, and campus mail notices.

3.4 Executive Session

Since the SGA has a strict policy of being open to the public, closed Executive Sessions during Senate meetings are always out of order with the exception of confirmations, in-house elections, and impeachment trials. During Executive Sessions, all voting members, ex-officios, and appointed Senate officers must be permitted present.

4 Committees

4.1 Joint and University Committees

The Senate shall be responsible for its delegation on all joint committees outlined in the *SGA Bylaws*, and for its delegation on all university committees outlined in UMBC Plan of Organizations

4.2 Internal Working Groups

The Senate may create internal working groups. The purpose of these groups is to work together to cooperative to address specific issues/tasks. Groups may be formally created by the Speaker, the Assistant Speaker, or legislation. The Assistant Speaker shall create guidelines for these teams with respect to the periodicity of meetings, taking of minutes, and reporting to the Senate.

4.3 Assignment

The Assistant Speaker shall assign committee during the first two weeks of the fall semester. Senators elected thereafter via in-house process shall receive committee and team assignment within one meeting of their election. Each internal team shall determine the time of the first meeting within one week of assignment and shall notify the Assistant Speaker of such time.

4.4 Meetings

Committee meetings shall be called by the team's chair or a majority of team members. The team's chair shall be responsible for running meetings, which may run more informally than Senate meetings. Decision of the chair regarding meeting process may be overturn by a majority vote.

4.5 Chairs

Each working group shall choose a chair at their first meeting of the academic year, and whenever vacancies occur. The Assistant Speaker shall ensure that all teams have a chair throughout the academic year.

5 Agenda

All Senate meetings shall have written agenda. The Speaker shall create guidelines regarding the deadline for agenda items at the beginning of his/her term. Agenda and the legislation on it shall be distributed to the Senate at least forty-eight hours before meetings. The Chair shall have discretion over the order of agenda. Agenda may be amended during a Senate meeting by a majority vote.

6 Minutes

Minutes shall be recorded at each Senate meeting by the Senate Secretary (or a delegate thereof). Minutes shall be made available to the assembly at the midpoint between the meeting in which they were recorded and the next *regular* meeting. The Chair shall ask for any changes/contests to the minutes at the next meeting. Minutes shall be approved unless contested by a majority vote by the end of the next meeting. Any changes to the minutes must be approved by a majority vote.

At the request of contesting Senators (not a majority opinion), remarks in opposition to any section of the previous minutes shall be recorded into the minutes of the current meeting.

7 Legislation

All legislation shall be written and submitted to the Chair, and be formatted as outlined in the *SGA Bylaws*. All Senate legislation shall require sponsorship by a Senator, except presidential confirmations, which shall be sponsored by the President. The body may not vote on legislation without majority of entire membership in attendance, though the rest of the meeting may be held with fewer members present.

7.1 Financial Bills

In addition to the information required for all legislation, all bills allocating money must detail the purpose, amount, source, and individual(s) in charge of the allocated funds.

8 Archiving

The Senate Secretary shall be responsible for archiving all Senate materials as follows:

- Minutes shall be archived within two business days of approval
- Agenda and handouts from meetings shall be archived with the minutes from that meeting
- All legislation considered on the floor of the Senate, even those not voted on or failed, shall be archived within two business days of passage or failure

9 Chair of Senate Meetings

The Speaker of the Senate shall be responsible for chairing the meetings of the SGA Senate. If the Speaker yields the chair in accordance with proper parliamentary procedure, or is unable to attend a Senate meeting, the order of succession for chair of the Senate shall be as follows:

- Assistant Speaker of the Senate
- Chair, Joint Matters Committee (must be a duly elected Senator)
- Chairs of Internal Teams (order shall be determined by the Assistant Speaker)

In the unlikely event that the order of succession breaks down, the last sitting chair shall appoint a temporary chair or a chair will be appointed by the SGA President and approved by the Senate.

9.1 Decisions of the Chair

The Chair shall have the power to make decisions about process/manner of the Senate meeting (not legislation or elections). A single member (no second is required) may contest such a decision, which is debatable but non-amendable, before it takes effect. When the Chair's decision allows puts into effect a motion normally requiring a two-thirds vote for approval, a two-thirds vote of the Senate shall uphold the Chair's decision. In all other cases, a simple majority vote of the Senate shall uphold the Chair's decision. This provision does not apply to motions brought forth by other Senators.

9.2 Manner of Presiding and Yielding of the Chair

The Chair shall preside the meeting in an orderly, objective and fair manner giving opportunity to all Senators to present their views provided they maintain decorum. Furthermore the Chair shall use his/her discretion in speaking on issues provided he/she maintains objectivity and fairness in the manner of the meeting. If the body feels that the Chair is not upholding objectivity and fairness during debate, the Senate may require the Chair to temporarily yield the chair to a successor by a majority members present vote for the remainder of the debate on the issue. Additionally, the Chair shall yield the chair to a successor any time the item of discussion is his/her confirmation, elections, impeachment, or removal. When yielding the chair, the Chair shall join the body as a regular Senator.

10 Order

Any member having the privilege to voice may, at any time, request recognition to comment on the process, ask a question of procedure, comment on an issue, ask for information on an issue, make a report or announcement. Additionally, voting members may move the following motions. Motions permitted in the Senate shall include, but not be limited to, to:

- Contest a chair's decision
- Refer, amend (may be made before or after a motion to approve), or approve legislation
- Amend (alter) pending motion, the agenda, or voting method
- Hear or rehear an item or motion
- Close, set or extend limits on, or reopen discussion
- Divide a question, separately voting on different parts of the motion or legislation (parts voted down shall be considered struck out)
- Reconsider a motion previously voted on (motion is considered as if it's heard for the first time)
- Require the Chair to temporarily yield the chair, or permanently remove an officer
- Suspend the rules (do something not permitted by rule)
- Removal an individual from assembly (only allowed for indecorum)
- Take a recess
- Adjourn

10.1 Rules on Motions

All motions require a second, may be discussed, are amendable, and pass by a simple majority vote, unless in this or any other SGA Guiding Document. Other exceptions and rules for motions include:

- Motions that effectively close, set or extend limits on, or reopen discussion may not be discussed and require a simple two-thirds vote. Motions closing discussion on a pending motion shall specify whether the body moves into an immediate vote, or moves to another motion or item.
- Motions that have the effect of suspending rules or removing an individual from assembly shall require a two-thirds vote.
- Motions to reconsider legislation may only be made in the meeting of the reconsidered vote. Motions to reconsider any other motion must be made before the motion takes effect.
- Amendments are amendable, but it is impermissible to amend an amendment of an amendment. The motion to amend shall require a majority vote no matter the item being amended.
- When multiple motions are pending, the Chair shall decide the order of considering the motions, subject to contest from the body, except that motions contesting a Chair's decision or requiring the Chair to yield the chair shall hold precedence.

10.2 Moving the Motion

Following the moving of a motion and a proper second (if required), the Chair shall immediately state the motion to the assembly. If the motion may be discussed, the Chair shall immediately ask, "Is there any discussion?" and the body shall discuss the motion. If the motion may not be discussed, the Chair shall immediately put the motion to a vote.

10.3 Discussion on the Motion

It is in the interest of the Senate (being a deliberative assembly) to foster productive and persuasive speech by each member so long as it is done in an efficient manner. The author of the motion shall be given the opportunity to speak first in order to present the reasoning behind the motion. Other motions may be moved anytime during discussion. Discussion shall continue until all members have wishing to speak have spoken, until motion closes discussion, or until any time limit for the discussion expires. Immediately following the close of discussion, the Senate shall move into a vote on motion unless otherwise moved. During debate, filibusters are not permitted (speeches should be concise, usually two minutes per speech).

10.4 Voting

The body shall have three voting options: for, opposed, and abstain. Abstentions, used at the individual Senator's discretion, should only be used in the rare case of a direct conflict of interest. Votes become final when the Chair announces the vote.

10.4.1 Unanimous (General) Consent

If the motion has not been discussed, the Chair may (at his/her discretion) ask, "Is there unanimous consent to passing the motion?" Unless there is a request for discussion or voting by another method, the motion passes.

10.4.2 Hands-up

Unless otherwise designated, voting shall take place by hands up vote. A single member may request a hands-up vote when the Chair asks for unanimous consent. The Chair shall state each voting option, giving members 5 seconds to signify their vote. The Secretary and Chair shall count the vote.

10.4.3 Roll Call

Constitutional amendments, Bylaw amendments, and veto-overrides shall always be voted upon by a roll-call vote. Additionally, a roll call vote shall be held on the request of two Senators. Roll calls shall be out of order for confirmations, in-house elections, and impeachment proceedings. For a roll call vote, the Chair shall state the motion and then either the secretary or the Chair (at the Chair's discretion) shall read the roll of the Senate, and each Senator shall state their vote when their name is called. Senators absent at the time of the vote shall be recorded as "absent" (this has no bearing on the attendance policy but does establish presence or lack of quorum).

10.4.4 Secret Ballot

Since the SGA has a strict policy of being open to the public Secret Ballot voting is not permitted except for in-house elections of new Senators, impeachment proceedings, confirmations, and the election of the Speaker and Assistant Speaker. Motions for secret ballot pass by majority vote.

10.4.5 Vote of the Chair

The Chair is not required to vote during Senate meetings, except when his/her vote would affect the outcome of the vote. However, the Chair, when a Senator, shall have the discretion to vote if he/she wishes. The Chair shall always vote last, with his/her name called last in a roll-call vote. During secret ballot voting, the Chair shall complete a ballot just as any other Senator. The Chair may never vote twice, even to break a tie.

10.4.6 Proxy Voting

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

11 Elections and Removal

11.1 Speaker and Assistant Speaker Elections

The Senate shall hold elections for the Speaker and Assistant Speaker at the first regular meeting of the fall semester, or whenever a vacancy occurs. The Speaker and Assistant Speaker shall be elected by plurality on a secret ballot. The Chair shall take nominations from the floor, with all nominees required to accept their nomination to remain on the ballot.

11.2 In-House Elections

For in-house elections held to fill vacant Senator positions, candidates shall be elected by a simple two-thirds vote via the hand-up method, unless changed to secret ballot by passing a motion. Only the Chair may nominate candidates, whose qualifications shall be verified by the Speaker. Persons elected Senator via In-House Elections shall not be administered the oath of office until after all legislation is considered and dispensed with. However, In-House Elections may be held before the consideration of legislation at the Chair's discretion, depending on volume of business.

11.3 Manner of Internal Elections

Internal elections, both for officers and in-house election, shall be held as follows:

1. The floor shall be open for nominations. Nominations may be reopened at any time via a motion passed by a majority vote.
2. The Chair shall then open the floor to a period of candidate introductions, questions/answers, and discussion. This period may be closed in the same manner as debate.
3. The body shall then immediately move to a vote. Write-in votes are not permissible, however Senators may abstain.
4. In the case of a tie (for officer or run-off election) or more persons elected than positions available (for in-house elections), a secret ballot run-off shall be held by a plurality vote to break the tie or fill the number of positions available, respectively.
5. The Chair shall then administer the oath of office to the newly elected officer or Senator immediately upon announcing the vote, unless otherwise provided for.

11.4 Removal of Speaker, Assistant Speaker, and Appointed Officers

The Senate may, at any time, remove its Speaker, Assistant Speaker, or any appointed Senate officer by a two-thirds vote of members present during a meeting. The Speaker and Assistant Speaker shall automatically resign their respective title if they cease to serve as a Senator. However, if one is removed as Speaker or Assistant Speaker, they retain their position as Senator. Additionally, the Speaker may, at any time, remove appointed Senate officers without the Senate's consent.

12 Ratification and Amendments

Ratification of this document, and amendments thereto, shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the entire membership in the Senate. Actions to ratify or amend this document are not subject to veto. Any one item of the *Senate Procedural Rules* may be suspended for any period of time not to exceed an academic year by a simple two-thirds vote of the Senate.