

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

**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.

## **Article 1. MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

### **1.1 Membership Privileges**

Only Senators shall have voting privileges in the Senate. Ex-officio members shall have the privilege of voice, but may not vote and shall not count towards a quorum. As specified in the SGA Bylaws, the UMBC President, UMBC Vice President for Student Affairs, UMBC Director of Student Life, SGA President, SGA Executive Vice President, SGA Vice President for Student Organizations, SGA Treasurer, and SGA Advisor(s) shall be ex-officio members of the Senate as well as one representative from each of the following organizations: Resident Student Association, Commuter Relations Board, Student Events Board, and the Retriever Weekly. In addition, up to three first-year students will serve as First-Year Ambassadors to the Senate. These ambassadors are to be appointed by the Speaker of the Senate and confirmed by the body. Additionally, any student, faculty, or staff member of UMBC may hold the 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.

## **Article 2. ATTENDANCE**

### **2.1. Required**

Attendance at Senate meetings, and Shared Governance Committee meetings, is mandatory for all Senators. Two unexcused absences from regular Senate meetings within the same year shall result in expulsion from the Senate. Unexcused absence from the first regular Senate meeting of each semester shall result in immediate expulsion from the Senate. Senators must attend weekly office hours. The required number of office hours is recommended by the Speaker and approved by 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 their term for excused absence and disseminating it to all members of the Senate. The Senate may overturn

decisions of the Speaker regarding attendance by a two-thirds vote of members present.

### **Article 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 Senate e-mail list.
2. Written notice must be given to all SGA and Ex-officio members, for special meetings only.
3. Senate must make every effort to publish notice of meetings through various campus wide mediums such as; 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, no formal voting may take place, and no discussion shall be recorded in the minutes. All members of the Senate have the right to be present for Executive Session.

### **Article 4. CHAIR OF THE SENATE MEETINGS**

#### **4.1. Chair of the 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 Assistant Speaker of the Senate shall fulfill the duties as Chair.

#### **4.2. 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 may contest such a decision, which is debatable but non-amendable, before it takes effect. When the Chair's decision 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.

#### **4.3. Manner of Presiding and Yielding of the Chair**

The Chair shall preside over 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 their discretion in speaking on issues provided they maintain 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 of 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 their confirmation, elections, impeachment, or removal. When yielding the chair, the Chair shall join the body as a regular Senator.

## **Article 5. UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

### **5.1. University Committees**

The Senate shall be responsible for its delegation on all university committees outlined in UMBC Plan of Organization. The Assistant Speaker shall assign committees during the first two weeks of the fall semester. Senators elected thereafter via in-house process shall receive committee and team assignments within one meeting of their election.

## **Article 6. AGENDA**

### **6.1. Setting the Agenda**

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

## **Article 7. MINUTES**

### **7.1. Creation and Distribution**

Minutes shall be recorded at each Senate meeting by the Secretary (or designee). Minutes shall be made available to the Senate at the midpoint between the meeting in which they were recorded and the next regular meeting. The Speaker shall ask for any changes/contests to the minutes at the next meeting. Minutes and any amendments must be approved by a majority vote.

## **Article 8. LEGISLATION**

### **8.1. Submission and Approval**

All legislation shall be written and submitted to the Speaker, 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 a majority of the entire membership in attendance.

### **8.2. 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.

## **Article 9. ARCHIVING**

**9.1. Archival Process**

The Speaker of the Senate (or designee) 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 consideration

**Article 10. ORDER****10.1. Speaking Recognition**

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.

**10.2. Rules on Motion**

All motions require a second, may be discussed, are amendable, and pass by a simple majority vote, unless specified 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 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 Speaker shall decide the order of considering the motions, subject to contest from the body, except that motions contesting a Speaker's decision or requiring the Speaker to yield the chair shall hold precedence.

**10.3. Motions Permitted**

Voting members may move the following motions. Motions permitted in the Senate shall include, but not be limited to:

- Contest the Speaker's decision
- Refer, amend (may be made before or after a motion to approve), or approve legislation
- Amend (alter) pending motion, the agenda, the minutes, 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 Speaker to temporarily yield the chair, or permanently remove an officer
- Suspend the rules (do something not permitted by rule)
- Removal an individual from assembly

- Take a recess
- Adjourn

**10.4. Moving the Motion**

Following the moving of a motion and a proper second, the Speaker shall immediately state the motion to the assembly. If the motion may be discussed, the Speaker shall immediately ask, “Is there any discussion?” and the body shall discuss the motion. If the motion may not be discussed, the Speaker shall immediately put the motion to a vote.

**10.5. Discussion 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. Other motions may be moved anytime during discussion.

Discussion shall continue until all members who wish 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.

**10.6. Voting**

The body shall have three voting options: for, oppose, and abstain. Abstentions, used at the individual Senator’s discretion, should only be used in the rare case of a direct conflict of interest and must be announced before voting begins. Votes become final when the Speaker announces the vote.

**10.6.1 -- Unanimous (General) Consent**

If the motion has not been discussed, the Speaker may (at their discretion) ask, “Is there unanimous consent in passing the motion?” Unless there is a request for discussion or voting by another method, the motion passes.

**10.6.2. -- Hands-up**

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

**10.6.3. -- Roll Call**

Constitutional amendments, Bylaw amendments, financial bills, 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. For a roll call vote, the Speaker shall state the motion and then either the Secretary (or designee), at the Speaker’s discretion, shall read the roll of the Senate, and each Senator shall state their vote when their name is called. Each Senator’s vote shall be recorded in the minutes. Senators absent at the time of the vote shall be recorded as “absent.”

**10.6.4. -- Secret Ballot**

Secret Ballot voting is not permitted except for confirmations, impeachment proceedings, and the election of the Speaker and Assistant Speaker. Motions for secret ballot pass by majority vote.

**10.6.5. -- Vote of the Speaker**

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

**10.6.6. -- 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.

**Article 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 two-thirds vote via the hand-up method, unless changed to secret ballot or roll-call voting by passing a motion. Only the Speaker may nominate candidates, whose qualifications shall be verified by the Senate. 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 Speaker'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.
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 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.

**Article 12. RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENTS**

**12.1. Ratification and Amendment Approval**

As specified in the SGA Constitution, ratification of this document, and amendments thereto, shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the entire membership of 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 two-thirds vote of the Senate.