Introduction to Robert’s Rules of Order
Who is Robert and why are we using his rules??
Why are agenda’s important?
Motions
“Are there any points or motions on the floor?”

“I motion to discuss what kind of pizza we should order for the AGM.”

C: “Is there a second?”

2: *Raises hand to second motion*

C: Chair re-states motion, and discussion starts.
Members enter into a debate.

Person who made the original motion has the right of the floor first.

After that, Chair chooses people who’s hands are up.

Debate closes when no members seeks further discussion.

:Puts the motion to a vote
:Announces the results of the vote.
Motions - Amend

• “modify the wording of a pending motion before the pending motion itself is acted upon”
• Can only have two layers (no amendment to an amendment or an amendment)
• Must be germane
• “friendly” if unanimous consent
Motions – Postpone Indefinitely

• “is a motion that the assembly decline to take a position on the main question”
• Disposes of a badly chosen main motion
• Can’t be amended
Motions – Call to Question

• Ends debate and brings about a vote
• Can’t be debated or amended
• Needs a 2/3 vote to pass
Motions – Division of a Motion

- **Splits** the main motion into a set of smaller motions
- Opposite of omnibus
- Non-debatable, but amendable
Motions – Division of the House

• Each member votes by saying for or against in order
• Each vote goes on official minutes
• Happens if requested by any member
Motions – Appeal Decision of the Chair

• Used to reverse a ruling by the Speaker
• Debatable but non-amendable
• Requires only majority vote

John Legend @johnlegend • 18h
Impeach the speaker

550 27K 62K
Motions – Reconsider

- Reopens debate on a motion that has already been voted upon
- Can only be brought forward by someone previously on the winning side
- Can only be brought forward at the same meeting
Motions – Adjourn

• Ends the meeting
• Needs simple majority
Points
Points

Point of Order
- Used to correct breach of rules
- Ruled upon by Speaker
- Can be brought forward at any time

Point of Personal Privilege
- Used to register a complaint of a personal nature
- Can also be used to register a complaint of privilege of the assembly as a whole
Points

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry

• Just asking a question about procedure.
• Can use it before a point of order.

Request for Information

• Used to request information from a member
• Not to be used as a form of informal debate (e.g. “is the councilor aware…”)

Voting Procedures

• Typically done by show of hands
  • Exception for nominations or call for division
• Member can change their vote until results are announced
• Good idea to abstain on matters of personal interest
  • May request to have abstention noted
When not to use Robert’s Rules

- When your organization chooses to use other decision making models
- When you are a really small group – consensus is typically better.
- Informal setting – perhaps with a meeting with lots of outside guests.
Resources:

• On the Students’ Union website, under the Governance tab, Discover Governance has a lot of resources you can look to.

• Alternatively, you can literally Google “Robert’s Rules Cheat Sheet”, and get thousands of really great resources.
Questions?
Consensus-Based Decision Making

Student Governance Officer: Akanksha Bhatnagar
Why is it important to pick a decision-making model?
What makes a good decision?
So, what is Consensus?

- A **group decision making** model
- **Goal:** for whole group to come to an informed agreement
- **Secondary Goal:** group cohesion, unity, communication, trust
So, what is Consensus?

- **Collaborative** – all contribute
- **Inclusive** – as many as possible contribute
- **Egalitarian** – equal participation from all
- **Participatory** – engages everyone in decision
- **Cooperative** – put aside personal preference
Why use Consensus?
Drawbacks?

- Time consuming
- Not as efficient
- Dominated by a few vocal persons
- Difficult for larger groups
- Groupthink – encourages a coalescence of opinion around presumed group norms
- Difficult if there is little-to no group unity
When would you not use consensus?

- **Emergency plans**
- When the decision(s) you have to make have a **strict time factor**
- When the group needs to be **refocused**
- When the group has **insufficient information**
Consensus – In Action
1. The background information is provided for the agenda idea.
2. A proposal about the agenda is put forward.
3. Facilitator calls for discussion of the proposal.
4. People discuss their thoughts, ideas, feelings etc., and if need be an amended proposal is put through
5. This process can be repeated as many times as need be.
6. To test for consensus, the facilitator asks the following questions:
   a. Are there any blocks?
   b. Are there any stand asides?
   c. Do we have consensus?
6a) Blocks?
A block means a decision can’t go through because someone feels so strongly against it. This is a signal to restart consensus.

6b) Stand Asides?
A stand aside means there is a conflicting reason that someone cannot vote.

6c) Consensus!
Consensus —
Summary Chart
Consensus Decision-Making Flowchart

1. Introduce issue
2. Define question
3. Discussion
4. Make proposal(s)
5. Discuss proposal(s)
6. Amend or change proposal
7. Test for consensus
   - Ask who agrees with the proposal
   - Ask who does not agree
   - What are the major objections?
   - Are there any blocks?
8. Major objections or blocks
   - Consider options:
     1. Objectors stand aside. They allow group to go ahead but are not involved in the decision and its consequences. (Agree to disagree.)
     2. Return to discussion to develop new proposals.
     3. Leave it for another time/have a break for reflection.
     5. Send to reconciliation committee. Use mediation tools, an outside mediator.
     6. Resort to other ways of deciding such as random choice, or voting.
9. All agree.
10. Consensus
11. Implement decision

Gather and share all relevant information.

What are the key questions? Is this the right time/place/group? Take one question at a time.

Voice first thoughts, reactions, ideas.

Try to incorporate all viewpoints.

Look at good points and drawbacks.

Take into account any concerns. The proposal often changes completely at this stage.

A major objection is a fundamental disagreement with the core of the proposal, not just a general dislike.

Seeds for Change

www.seedsforchange.org.uk  hello@seedsforchange.org.uk
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Resources:

- Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG), located in HUB!
- Seedsforchange.org.uk/consensus
- Discover Governance (SUB 6-24)
Questions about...

Robert’s Rules? Consensus?