

Meetings, Motions, & Manipulations: Deliberative Process at its Best (or Worst)



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Congratulations

on your election/appointment to your
faculty leadership role!



Now what?

Which of the following are IMPORTANT processes for all senate meetings?

- A. Agendas
- B. Minutes
- C. Adequate collegial consultation
- D. Posting the above in accordance with the Brown act
- E. All of the above

Agendas – Hidden or Otherwise

- Brief – item time limits?
 - 10 + 1 issues only
 - Don't reinvent the wheel!
- Consider a standard template
 - Public comment
 - Approve agenda, minutes, calendar
 - Discussion items
 - Action items
 - Reports (committees/liaisons)
 - Emerging issues (next meeting Brown Act)



Hours, Minutes and Seconds

- Minutes should emulate agenda
- Clearly list action and follow up items
 - Identify who, what, when, where
- Minutes are not depositions – summarize
- Can be modified anytime by anyone
 - Requires two-thirds vote usually

Is the Brown Act:

- A. mandatory for everyone everywhere?
- B. voluntary and well organized committee behavior?
- C. a federal code for organizations?
- D. California law assuring public access to procedures and decisions of public institutions?
- E. a suggestion for fair communication with the public?

The Ralph M. Brown - Open Meeting Act



§54950

“The people of this State do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created.”

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What group meetings must comply with the Brown Act?

- A. Board of Trustee Meetings
- B. Academic/Student Senate meetings
- C. Subcommittees of the Board of Trustees
- D. Senate Subcommittees and Curriculum committee meetings
- E. All of the above

Rights of the Public

- Reasonable access to & awareness of all proceedings.
 - Posting 72 hours in advance
 - Prohibits electronic or written communication/ decision-making
 - Prohibits serial meetings
- Limited exceptions - closed sessions

To B. or not to B.

- There are no Brown Act police
 - It takes a legal challenge to enforce
- Practice transparency and minimize risk
 - Meetings that exist to influence Board process are under the act.
 - Meetings that exist to implement Board policy are not under the act.
 - Meetings that do both????

How do I run a meeting?

- What are Roberts Rules?
- Why were they created?
- The story of General Henry M. Robert



Roberts versus the Empire

- General Robert's Rules of Order
 - what worked
 - the U.S. Congress
 - the British Parliament
- His first rule is: *If you can get the job done without this rule book than put it away until you need it.*

Are Robert's rules

- A. mandatory?
- B. voluntary?
- C. only a California anomaly?
- D. part of the Education code?
- E. simply a kooky British social system?

Why should you use Robert's Rules?

- A. They provide a form of protection.
- B. Rules result in better meetings with better input.
- C. Consistent meeting formats create a fair playing field for everyone in attendance.
- D. They are effective at enabling all sides to speak during angst-ridden, emotion-driven debate leading to better results.
- E. All of the above.

Parliamentary versus Law

- For most organizations orderly process is voluntarily protected by parliamentary procedures.
- Any organization empowered to act on behalf of the People will have mandatory process elements.

Code versus Practice

- Legal Code and Parliamentary Procedures protect our rights
 - For the People to participate (Code)
 - For the Body to move forward
 - For the majority to rule
 - For the minority to have voice
 - For the individual to engage or not without undue harassment
 - For the absentee member

Parliamentary meetings revolve around what?

- A. The president
- B. The voting process
- C. The motion
- D. Discussion
- E. All of the above



Mighty Motion

- Central to parliamentary process
- All action revolves around the main motion
 - Resolution is just a fancy main motion
- Main motion can be acted upon in a myriad of ways

Mighty Motion – The Beat Goes On

- Chair presides with impartiality
 - Avoid making motions
- Standard rules can be modified
 - E.g. define a quorum differently
- The rules are not the goal they are the means

Super-Duper Majority

- If it gives rights it takes 50% + 1
- If it takes away rights it takes 66%
- Motion to adopt by acclamation requires consensus
- Consensus = all are unwilling to object

Which motions are not debatable?

- A. Main motion, adjourn, table, previous question
- B. Appeal, adjourn, table, previous question
- C. Approval of minutes, table, appeal, suspension of the rules
- D. Subsidiary, incidental, privileged, principal
- E. All motions are debatable

Move to Declare Oops

- Common parliamentary faux pas
 - Call the question (previous question)
 - Move to table (to kill motion)
 - Chair doesn't vote except to tie break
 - Second readings (not required in RONR)
 - Process challenge
 - Consensus counts
 - Call for a second

From Motions to Meetings

- Like debate without action, an endless sequence of motions makes NOT for an effective meeting.
- A meeting without a plan is at best a social event.
 - Be timely, be informed, be brief

Wheeler's Parliamentary Rule

- Effective collegial consultation means:
 - Your hands get dirty
 - Your pencil is worn out
 - You're tired but you can taste progress
 - The unexpected happened
- If the results are as expected it is possible you could have put it in writing instead.

Move to Adjourn

Questions?

Thank you!

Resources

- Practical Leadership: Turbo charging meetings through advance preparation: Phil Smith, April 2013
- <http://asccc.org/content/practical-leadership-turbocharging-meetings-through-advance-preparation>
- Pocket Guide to the Brown Act
- <http://www.thefirstamendment.org/Brown-Act-Brochure-DEC-03.pdf>
- Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised 11th Edition
- http://www.orgsites.com/ca/riversideparliamentary/_pgg1.php3