Student Government Association at The University of Texas at Tyler: Parliamentary House Rules

Robert's Rules of Order
- The standard for facilitating discussions and group decision-making. These are the basic elements, modified to suit SGA meetings:

1. Obtaining Recognition
- SGA members may motion, move, second, or contribute to a motion, by obtaining recognition from the Chair.
- Raise your hand when no one else has the floor.
- Wait until the chair recognizes you.

2. Making a Motion ("I move that…")
- A verbal queue used to: start a discussion, suggest, or propose an action item.
- A second motion must then be made to move the motion forward. After being recognized by the Chair, state: "I second the motion."
- Motions can only be proposed, seconded, moved, and voted on during official meetings.

3. Voting on a Motion
- Each member is entitled to their vote. Official votes may not be contested, pressured, disregarded, argued, or criticized in any way.
- Before a vote is taken, the Chair calls the question by saying:
  - "All those in favor say "Aye."
  - "All those opposed say "Nay."
  - "Any abstentions?"
- If you are in favor of the motion as is, raise your hand in a vote for it. (Aye)
- If you are not in favor of the motion, raise your hand in a vote against it. (Nay)
- If you have no opinion on the motion or would prefer that your vote not be an endorsement, for or against the motion, raise your hand in a vote to abstain from it. (N/A)
- See SGA Quick Reference Guide for voting specifics and quorum requirements.
- The motion is passed if it achieved the necessary votes in favor. The motion fails otherwise.
- A majority vote is more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.
- A tie vote is a lost vote since it is not a majority. In this instance, the Chair may let the motion die or pass the motion.
- A motion, a second, as well as an official vote is needed to decide the outcome of all motions.

4. Opening up Discussion ("I move to discuss…")
- This motion is used to open up discussion on a topic.
- Discussion shall have a default time limit of no more than (10) minutes.
  - If the discussion requires more than (10) minutes, the assembly may vote to add more time.
  - The allotted addition of time may be proposed by any member but shall ultimately be decided by the chair.
- The member who made the motion is entitled to speak first. Every member has the right to speak in debate.
- Refer to each member as their official title when addressing them.
- The Chair should try to gauge members who are "for" the motion and those who are "against" the motion.
- The discussion should be related to the pending motion. If you believe that certain dialogue is not relevant to the matter at hand, a point of order may be raised.

5. Ending a Discussion ("I move to end this discussion")
- This motion is used to end a discussion for reasons that include, but are not limited to time purposes, lack of relevance, no progress being made, not enough information, etc.
- A vote is held immediately (no further discussion is allowed).

6. Proposing an Action Item ("I move that we take action in this way…")
- An action item is a motion that contains a specific purpose or action within the motion itself.
- If you think that further discussion is unnecessary, move to propose an action item.
- Discussion automatically ends with the approval of an action item, unless otherwise stated by the chair.
- If you want advice or information to help you make your decision, or you believe someone else has the power to act in a way that exceeds your own, move to refer the motion to an appropriate resource, that includes but is not limited to: the Advisor, the Executive Board, a Committee Chair, Administration, etc.

7. Tabling a Motion ("I move to table this motion until next meeting")
- When a motion is tabled, the matter is put aside and will be revisited at the next meeting.
- If you want time to think the motion over, move to table the motion.
- If you believe that pending question(s) should be delayed so more urgent business can be considered, move to table the motion.

8. Terminating an Action Item ("I move to terminate this motion")
- This motion is used to terminate an action item currently being discussed.

9. Amending an Action Item ("I move to amend this motion")
- This motion is used to make modifications to an action item currently under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered.
- If you approve of the general idea of the motion but want to change it, move to amend the motion.
- Friendly Amendment
  - If the person who made the original motion agrees with the suggested changes, the amended motion may be voted on without a separate vote to approve the amendment.

10. Adjourning a Meeting ("I move to adjourn this meeting")
- This motion is used to end the meeting and may only be used once there are no more items left to discuss on the agenda.

11. Other Important Motions
- If more than one motion is proposed, the motions must be addressed through an order of priority. For example, if a motion to table the discussion is proposed, it must be voted on before a motion to amend an action item can be decided.
- If you think that the assembly should consider a matter already voted upon, move that it be reconsidered.
- If you do not agree with a decision rendered, after being recognized by the Chair, move to appeal the decision to the assembly.
- If a motion has several parts, and you wish to vote differently on these parts, move to divide the motion.

12. General Assembly Guests and Speakers
- To participate, General Assembly guests must be recognized by the General Assembly either by direct question or Open Forum.
- Speaker's Podium is an opportunity for SGA to gather information, therefore questions for speakers shall come from SGA members.
- Guest may send questions or comments to their Senators or participate in Open Forum.
- Before Speaker's Podium, the Chief of Staff or Chair should explain these rules, Open Forum, and how to contact SGA and Senators to send questions.

13. Telecommuting
- If a General Assembly meeting cannot be held on campus due to public health crisis, national emergency, or other events so decided by the University President, VP-Student Success, or SGA Advisor, then it shall be held via teleconference software, if available.
- A teleconference meeting is defined when all members in attendance are in the use of teleconferencing software.
- All rules for motions, items, and actions will remain the same as outlined in these Parliamentary House Rules.
- SGA members are expected to dress professionally. The following options are acceptable: Official SGA Polo shirt, business casual, professional polo shirt, blouse, or UT-Tyler branded t-shirt. Bottoms are mandatory.
- Camera use is highly encouraged to ensure participation and validate identities for attendance and security purposes.
- The Chief of Staff is responsible for moderating the meeting through host controls and maintaining order in this manner.
- All SGA members and Student Body guests are expected to act in a professional and appropriate manner. The SGA Advisor and Chief of Staff reserve the right to remove any individual causing a disruption to the proceedings of the meeting.