

Common Parliamentary Procedures for the Urbana-Champaign Senate

Introduction of business:

By an individual senator or group of senators (Pre-filed Resolution listed on the Senate agenda):

“I move the adoption of resolution RS.20.00” (substitute the assigned resolution number). A second is required.

By a committee (an item listed on the Senate agenda):

“On behalf of the Xxx Committee, I move the adoption of XX.20.00” (substitute the committee name and the assigned business number). No second is required.

Business not on the Senate agenda (New Business):

“I move to admit the following item as New Business” (*briefly* describe the proposed business). A second is required. If this motion is approved by the Senate, the item is effectively added to the meeting agenda. One can then move to adopt the item. A second is required. Debate may then take place on the item, but, per the Open Meetings Act, no final vote can be taken at this meeting. However, motions such as amendments or referral to committee can be made and voted on. Unless postponed or referred to a committee, the item will be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.

To change a motion:

To edit the text of the motion:

“I move to amend the motion by changing xx to yy on line ##” (insert the desired text to be changed, and indicate the line number if the original text is numbered).

To substitute an entirely new text for the original:

“I move to substitute the following for the motion” (state the substitute motion).

It is most helpful if the text of the amendment is made available to the Clerk in writing or by email for display on the screen.

In either case, a second is required. Debate must then be confined to the wisdom of the amendment; general discussion of the main motion must await the outcome of the vote on the amendment.

There is no such thing as a “friendly amendment” which is automatically adopted if the maker of the original motion is agreeable. Use the motion to amend.

Disposition of business:

To refer to a committee:

“I move to refer this matter to the Xxx Committee” (substitute the committee name). One can add, “with instructions to” do whatever.

Or: “I move to refer this matter to a committee selected by the Senate Executive Committee”. Instructions can be added.

A second is required. Either of these motions can be amended as to the choice of committee and/or the instructions to the committee.

To postpone the matter:

“I move to postpone this matter indefinitely.” If adopted, this effectively defeats the original main motion. A second is required.

Or: “I move to postpone the matter” to a specific future meeting or for a specific period of time. A second is required.

To lay on the table:

The motion to lay on the table is *not* appropriate for this purpose. Use one of the motions to postpone.

To terminate discussion:

To terminate discussion of the current motion to amend or to refer to committee:

“I move to close debate on the current motion.”

To terminate discussion of the main motion as well as all pending subsidiary motions (such as to amend or to refer to committee):

“I move to close debate on the current motion and on the main motion.”

In either case, a second is required, and a 2/3 vote is necessary to close debate.

The motion to “call the previous question” is equivalent wording; it means exactly the same thing as the motion to “close debate.”

Basic Parliamentary Procedure for the Urbana-Champaign Senate

	To do this:	You say:	Need Second?	Precede-dence*	Can Amend?	Debate Allowed?	Decision by	Comments
Main Business	Introduce business that is listed on the agenda	"I move that..."	Yes	13	Yes	Yes	Majority	A motion made by a committee of at least two members does not need a second.
	Allow introduction of new business not listed on the agenda	"I move that...be added to the agenda."	Yes	13	Yes	Yes	Majority	Only discussion and comment are permitted on a matter so introduced; no final vote may be taken
	Change a motion	"I move that the motion be amended by..."	Yes	11	Yes	Yes	Majority	An amendment to an amendment cannot be further amended. Note: there is no such thing as a "friendly amendment." Any change to a motion must be offered as a motion to amend.
	Make a nomination	"I nominate..."	No	--	No	Yes	Majority	
	Amend Constitution or Bylaws	"I move to amend Constitution/Bylaws by..."	Yes	13	Yes	Yes	2/3 majority	Procedure governed by the Senate Constitution, Art. I, Section 4 (for the Constitution) and Section 3 (for the Bylaws).
Delaying or Blocking Action	Postpone indefinitely	"I move that we postpone this question indefinitely..."	Yes	12	No	Yes	Majority	
	Refer to a committee	"I move that we refer this to the committee on..."	Yes	10	Yes	Yes	Majority	The motion to refer can be amended regarding which committee, or instructions to the committee.
	Postpone to a definite time	"I move that this matter be postponed until..."	Yes	9	Yes	Yes	Majority	
	Lay on the table	"I move that this matter be laid on the table."	Yes	6	No	No	Majority	The motion to lay on the table is only in order if there is other urgent business. Instead, it is usually better to move to postpone, either indefinitely or to a definite time, or to refer to a committee.
	Recess the meeting	"I move to recess until..."	Yes	2	Yes	No	Majority	
Speeding Up Business	Adjourn the meeting	"I move that we adjourn."	Yes	1	No	No	Majority	Superseded by Standing Rule 1.
	Limit debate	"I move that discussion be limited to..."	Yes	8	Yes	No	2/3 majority	
	Close debate and vote	"I move to close debate."	Yes	7	No	No	2/3 majority	To move "the previous question" means exactly the same as to move "to close debate."
Inquiries, etc.	Take up a matter ahead of schedule/change order of agenda	"I move that we suspend the rules and consider..."	Yes	Main motion	No	No	2/3 majority	
	Call attention to a nuisance or emergency, reply to an affront	"Point of privilege"	No	3	No	No	The chair	
	Object to improper procedure	"Point of order"	No	4	No	No	The chair	
	Ask about a procedure	"Parliamentary inquiry"	No	5	No	No	The chair	
Other Motions	Ask for information	"Point of information"	No	5	No	No	The chair	
	Reverse a ruling by the chair	"I appeal the decision of the chair."	Yes	--	No	Yes	Majority	
	Reconsider a matter already voted on	"I move that we reconsider our action on..."	Yes	Main motion	No	Yes	Majority	Reconsideration may only be moved by someone who voted with the prevailing side, and is debatable if the original motion was debatable.
	Consider a matter that was previously tabled	"I move that we take from the table..."	Yes	Main motion	No	Yes	Majority	
	Withdraw a motion	"I request permission to withdraw my motion."	No	--	No	No	Majority	Usually, the maker of a motion is allowed to withdraw it by unanimous consent, but if anyone objects, there must be a vote.
	Request a written ballot	"I request a written ballot on this motion."	No	--	No	No	Majority	Standing rule 9 provides for a written ballot at the request of any senator, but only when separate student and faculty votes are to be taken.

* The "precedence" column comes into play when there are multiple motions on the floor. For example, there could be a main motion, and a motion to amend, and a motion to refer to committee. The smallest "precedence" number is the motion that gets voted on first; in this example, the numbers are 13 for the main motion, 11 for the amendment, and 10 for referral to committee. So referral gets voted on first; if it loses, then amendment; then the main motion. The main motion has the highest number, as it is always the last to be voted on.