



## **Running Effective Meetings, Parliamentary Procedure, and the SGA Constitution**

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### **I. What is Parliamentary Procedure?**

- A. Parliamentary procedure is the set of \_\_\_\_\_ we use to run meetings and \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Allows everyone's voice to be heard and make \_\_\_\_\_ without confusion!
- C. It gets things done in an \_\_\_\_\_ fashion.
- D. At the heart is \_\_\_\_\_ rule.

### **II. What is SGA?**

- A. Student governments (SGA) are the organizations on college campuses that \_\_\_\_\_ students, serve as their voice, and exists to enhance the educational experience for everyone that attends their college or university.
- B. SGA is not something to be \_\_\_\_\_ by, but to be \_\_\_\_\_ in.
- C. SGA is the first line of \_\_\_\_\_ against proposals and items that students would not want, and also the first line of \_\_\_\_\_ for things that they do!
- D. **Preamble of the Constitution** of Passaic County Community College SGA:  
\_\_\_\_\_ of Passaic County Community College, in order to provide an official and representative organization to receive student questions and suggestions, investigate student concerns and take appropriate action, provide the \_\_\_\_\_ through which student opinions may be expressed, encourage the development of responsible \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ in the overall policy and decision making processes of the college community, foster an awareness of the students' role in the academic community, \_\_\_\_\_ and scope of education at Passaic County Community College, and provide means for \_\_\_\_\_ participation in the organization of student affairs, do establish this Constitution for the Student Government Association at Passaic County Community College.

### III. The SGA Governing Documents

- A. The Constitution defines the \_\_\_\_\_ and principles of the organization. It provides a \_\_\_\_\_ and framework for the organization such as \_\_\_\_\_ of government, line of succession, and creation of the \_\_\_\_\_. PCCC SGA has two branches: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

The Executive Branch consists of a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. **Specific responsibilities can be found in Article V, Section 5 (pages 8-10) of the Constitution and Article IV (pages 5 and 6) of the Bylaws.**

The Legislative Branch consists of a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to serve as representatives from all PCCC campuses. **Specific responsibilities can be found in Article IV, Section 7 (page 7) of the Constitution and Article III (pages 4 and 5) of the Bylaws.**

- B. The Bylaws are the document that sets forth **additional**, policies, regulations, \_\_\_\_\_ and responsibilities, and duties of officers, the executive board, and the committees. **Committee information may be found in Article VII (pages 12-14) of the Constitution and Article VII (pages 8-13) of the Bylaws.**

- C. As the foundational documents of the SGA, the Constitution and Bylaws may never be \_\_\_\_\_, per Robert’s Rules of Order. Also, per Article XII (page 22) of the Constitution, the SGA PCCC Constitution \_\_\_\_\_ over PCCC over policy set by the President and/or Board of Trustees of the College.
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ Rules and/or Policies and Procedures defines procedures, operations, traditions, and decorum. Such as \_\_\_\_\_ code. \_\_\_\_\_ hours, \_\_\_\_\_ and other compensation, and \_\_\_\_\_ policies.
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ of Ethics for PCCC SGA can be found on page 16 of the Bylaws.
- F. Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised is typically defined as the resource for anything \_\_\_\_\_ in the governing documents.

**IV. Running Meetings** Detailed information on PCCC SGA meeting policies and guidelines can be found in Article VIII (pages 15-18) of the Constitution.

- A. Basic Agenda
1. **Call to order** – Start of the meeting
  2. **Quorum**– The number that must be present to hold a meeting *It is defined as 1/2 of the voting membership as it is counted with respect to the body that is meeting.*
  3. **Presentation of the Minutes** – Record of the previous meeting. The secretary reads (or passes out) a record of the last meeting, or it may have been distributed electronically or posted in a common place. Make any corrections or additions, then accept as presented or corrected. *(Minutes Template on pages 9 - 10)*
  4. **Officer Reports** – Officers report on their activities, concerns, needs, etc.
  5. **Committee Reports** – Committees report on their activities, concerns, needs, etc.

6. **Old Business** – Items left over from previous meetings
7. **New Business** – New items for consideration
8. **Announcements** – Information for the benefit of the organization
9. **Adjournment** – End of the meeting

B. Responsibilities of the Chair

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the meeting, effectively and fairly. The Chair is impartial in \_\_\_\_\_ and only votes to \_\_\_\_\_ a tie.
2. Set and /or follow the published \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Call on \_\_\_\_\_ to participate, make motions, and speak.
4. Restate \_\_\_\_\_ after they are made.
5. Rule on parliamentary \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ discussion and call for votes.
7. The chair for meetings of the Legislative Branch is the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ chairs Executive Branch meetings.

V. **How do you get your say?**

A. You make motions and serve on and/or participate in committees! A motion is a proposal that the \_\_\_\_\_

take a stand or take action on some issue. Members can:

1. Present motions (make a proposal): “I move”
2. Second motions (express support for discussion of another
3. member’s motion): “Second”
4. Debate motions (give opinions on the motion): “I think...”
5. Vote on motions (make a decision): “Aye/Nay/Abstain” (To abstain is to refrain from voting on a particular issue)

B. There are four general types of motions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ **Motions** introduce subjects to the assembly for its consideration. They cannot be made when another motion is before the assembly. They yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions. For example, “*I move that we purchase...*”

2. \_\_\_\_\_ **Motions** change or affect how the main motion is handled. (They are voted on before the main motion.) For example, “I move to amend the motion by changing...” This is where amendments to the motion come into play! **Friendly** amendments are not proper motions (*See page 9 for more on “Friendly amendments”*). *Includes: motions to...postpone indefinitely; amend; postpone to a time and/or date certain; the previous question; table (See page 8 for “Addendum on Tabling”)*
  3. **Privileged Motions** are most urgent. They concern special or important matters not related to pending business. For example, “I move we adjourn...” *Includes: call for the orders of the day (request to return to the published agenda); raise a question of privilege; recess; adjourn; fix a time to adjourn*
  4. **Incidental Motions** are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions. They must be considered before the other motion. For example, “I move to suspend the rules for the purpose of...” *(Documents such as the constitution and by-laws may not be suspended) Includes: point of order; point of information; point of parliamentary inquiry; suspension of the rules; request to withdraw or modify a motion (See pages 8-9 for more in section entitled “What’s the Point?”)*
- C. Some questions relating to motions:
1. **Do I need a second?** Usually, \_\_\_\_\_. A second indicates that another member would like to consider your motion. It prevents spending time on a question which interests only one person.
  2. **“Can we discuss it?”** Parliamentary procedure guards the right to free and full \_\_\_\_\_ on most motions. However, some subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions are not debatable.
  3. **“Can it be amended or changed?”** Amendments must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion. Once an amendment to a

motion is made and seconded, all discussion must relate only to the amendment itself. The amendment must be \_\_\_\_\_ on before returning to debate or a vote on the main motion. If approved, it becomes part of the main motion. If defeated, then you return to debate on the original motion as made, with any previous amendments included.

**To propose an amendment, be recognized by the chair and then state your amendment:** *“I move to amend the motion or proposal to change/add/remove/replace/correct...”*

4. **“What vote is needed?”** Most require only a \_\_\_\_\_ vote, but motions concerning the rights of the assembly or its members need a 2/3 vote to be adopted.

D. How do I present my motion?

1. **Obtain the \_\_\_\_\_.** Be recognized by the chair.
2. **Make your motion.**
  - a) Speak clearly and concisely.
  - b) State your motion\_\_\_\_\_. Say, “I move that we do...” instead of “I move that we do not...”
  - c) You may\_\_\_\_\_ discuss the content or topic of your motion until it has been made and seconded.
  - d) Avoid personalities and stay on the merits of the subject.

**Your Turn – Write a motion:**

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3. **Expand on your motion.**

- a) \_\_\_\_\_ is allowed to speak first.

- b) Direct all comments to the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c) Keep to the time limit for speaking.
  - d) You may speak again \_\_\_\_\_ all other speakers are finished.
  - e) You may speak a \_\_\_\_\_ time by a motion to suspend the rules with a 2/3 vote. *(Does not apply to committee meetings unless the SGA documents or committee rules state a limitation on the number of times someone may speak.)*
4. **Taking a vote.** There are four common ways to take a vote:
- a) By reaching a \_\_\_\_\_ limit to end debate
  - b) By \_\_\_\_\_ consent
  - c) By seeing no \_\_\_\_\_ discussion, the Chair calls for a vote
  - d) By ending \_\_\_\_\_:  
“I move to \_\_\_\_\_” or “\_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_” requires a second, there is no debate on the motion, and takes a 2/3 majority for approval. Then an immediate vote is taken, with no further amendments or debate.
  - e) After the vote, the chair announces the results.

### **Additional Information for Participating in Meetings**

**Abstention Votes:** The phrase “abstention votes” is an oxymoron, an abstention being a refusal to vote. To abstain means to refrain from voting, and, as a consequence, there can be no such thing as an “abstention vote.” In the usual situation, where either a majority vote or a two-thirds vote is required, abstentions have absolutely no effect on the outcome of the vote since what is required is either a majority or two thirds of the votes cast. On the other hand, if the vote required is a majority or two thirds of the members *present*, or a majority or two thirds of the entire membership, an abstention will have the same effect as a “no” vote. Even in such a case, however, an abstention is not a vote and is not counted as a vote. (Source: [www.RobertsRules.com](http://www.RobertsRules.com))

### **Addendum on Tabling:**

- 1) A motion to “lay on the table” is used when the body must deal with something

*more urgent. Once that matter had been handled, the original motion is brought back from the table with a motion to “Take from the Table” which requires a second. This motion is debatable, although it is not amendable. It cannot be subsequently reconsidered.*

- 2) *A motion to “postpone to a certain time” is used to delay action to a date certain and/or to refer the motion to person, committee, or body for research, etc.*
- 3) *A motion to “postpone indefinitely” has the effect of disposing of a motion without a direct vote.*
- 4) *For a motion with several amendments, should the body wish to delay action on the item, the best approach is for the maker of the motion to withdraw their motion. The body must vote to allow this, it takes a majority vote.*

### **“What’s the Point?”**

Points are specific actions that seek clarification, information, or a ruling on the behavior or actions of a member of the assembly. Points that students may encounter:

- 1) **Order:** If a member of the body feels that the rules of procedure or the assembly’s governing documents have not been properly applied and/or followed, they may request a ruling by the chair by calling for a “Point of Order” *even to the point of interrupting someone who is speaking.*
- 2) **Inquiry:** A question directed to the chair of the meeting on a matter of parliamentary law or rules of the organization. It is the chair’s responsibility to respond to an inquiry for the purpose of helping the member understand appropriate motions or actions they may be able to take on the matter at hand. While a “point of inquiry” *is allowed to interrupt a speaker*, the Chair may choose to allow the speaker to finish their debate if the subject of the inquiry is not of an urgent nature.
- 3) **Information:** A request by a member of the body to the Chair or through the Chair to another member for information or clarification related to the business or motion at hand, but not of a parliamentary nature. *May interrupt the speaker.*
- 4) **Privilege:** Relate either to the Assembly or an individual member. For the

Assembly it could relate to its organization or existence, comfort or disturbance of the members (heat, cold, noise, etc.), conduct of the officers, members, employees, or visitors, or a motion to go into Executive Session. For an individual, it could relate to items such as their record of attendance in the minutes, questions of character, or their need to depart from the meeting itself. *Should not interrupt the speaker* but can request their privilege without being recognized by the Chair. The Chair would then call on the member to hear the privilege request.

### **Friendly Amendments**

Friendly amendments are not proper motions. Once a motion is made, it belongs to the whole body. Therefore, for a substantive change, the proper amending process should be followed. If the requested change is corrective in nature, such as a day and date for an event not matching up (Tuesday, the 23<sup>rd</sup>, for example where Wednesday is actually the 23<sup>rd</sup>), the Chair could request that the body allow the change by unanimous consent.

### **Template for Meeting Minutes**

**Minutes for the** \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of club or organization)  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at \_\_\_\_\_ [Time]

### **Attendance**

[List all members in attendance first, then the advisor, then any guests and visitors]  
[At end, note:] A quorum of the number of members required to conduct business was /was not present (select one)

### **Reading of the Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were presented by \_\_\_\_\_.  
Changes/corrections are [list name of person making correction]

Motion to adopt the minutes as presented/corrected:

Seconded:

Vote: Aye \_\_\_\_\_ Nay \_\_\_\_\_ Abstain \_\_\_\_\_

[or indicate if approved by voice vote]

### **Officer Reports**

[Indicate which officers/advisors reported and a brief summary of what they reported on]

### **Committee Reports**

[Indicate which committees reported and a brief summary of what they reported on]

### **Old Business**

[Present by topic and any action taken. A summary of discussion could be included, however, this is not to be a transcript of what was said or a recitation of who spoke for and/or against a topic]

[Use this format for recording motions] Motion: It was moved by \_\_\_\_\_ that [state motion here]. It was seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ . Discussion.

[Record any amendments to the motion and any calls for the Previous Question, with makers and seconders]

Vote: Aye \_\_\_\_\_ Nay \_\_\_\_\_ Abstain  
\_\_\_\_\_ [or indicate if approved by voice vote]

### **New Business**

[Use same format as Old Business]

### **Announcements**

[List any announcements made]

### **Adjournment**

[Indicate if adjourned by the Chair or if a motion was made, seconded, and voted on. Show who made motion and second]

The meeting was adjourned at \_\_\_\_\_ [Time]

### **Notes**

Insert any other meeting categories or agenda items as appropriate for your club/organization in the order in which they happened during the meeting. The minutes are to be a summary and record of what happened, not a transcript. Use highlights when summarizing discussion or reports and attach copies of any written reports or exhibits]

This template is also available at <https://bit.ly/2XQZo68>