



Spring Refresher | January 15, 2026

Dave Kelly | America's Student Leadership Trainersm

I. 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. SGA is about putting _____ above _____. If you're asking what's _____ for me, you're asking the _____ question.
- E. **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.

II. Parliamentary Procedure

A. Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised is typically defined as the resource for
anything _____ in the governing documents.

B. What Does Parliamentary Procedure Teach Us?

1. _____
2. _____
3. Appropriate _____
4. Solving _____ in a way other than _____
5. _____
6. _____ skills
7. _____ resolution
8. _____
9. Taking _____ graciously

C. Listening

1. Listening is not _____ for your turn to _____.
2. What people _____ is important to them and needs to be
important to you.
3. Improve your listening skills by _____ on what you are
hearing and being _____ in what they are saying.

D. Civil Discourse

Two controversial statements: _____

1. Requires _____ of the other participants
2. Does not diminish the other's _____ worth nor questions their good _____
3. Avoids _____, direct _____, or excessive _____
4. Requires _____ and an appreciation of the other participant's _____
5. Keep _____ in check and _____!

III. 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.
 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.

IV. Conflict Resolution

A. Sources of Conflict

B. 5 Concepts for Conflict Resolution and Difficult Conversations

1. If you have a conflict with someone and you do not take it _____ that _____, then it can't be _____.
2. Deal with conflict _____-on-_____: _____ in public, _____ in private.
3. Use the three _____ system: _____, _____, _____.
4. Learn to _____ the _____ from the _____.
5. Confront the _____ with a _____.

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)

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 23rd, for example where Wednesday is actually the 23rd), the Chair could request that the body allow the change by unanimous consent.