

ADOPTED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF SENATE

Summary Listing

N.B. This is not an exhaustive listing.

Meetings of Senate

1. Annual Schedule of Regular Meetings

The Annual Schedule is presented to Senate one year in advance, at the June meeting. The meetings are generally scheduled on the third Friday of each month, at 1:30 p.m.

2. Cancellation of Regularly Scheduled Meetings

The Chair of Senate is authorized to cancel previously scheduled meetings of Senate in the event of insufficient business.

3. Senate Meeting Times: Guidelines

Senate meetings are scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m. and will normally end by 4:30 p.m. unless extended by a majority vote of those present.

4. Enquiry Period in the Agenda

- (a) The Enquiry Period on the Senate Agenda is intended as a means by which members may ask questions about the progress of current Senate business and re-open matters previously dealt with by Senate, and raise questions on other matters. However, the Enquiry Period is not an opportunity for debate of an issue nor an opportunity to make presentations on issues.

If after an answer is received there are concerns or issues remaining that are within Senate's mandate, those issues will be referred by the Chair to the appropriate Senate standing committee for review. If after an answer to a question is received there are concerns or issues remaining that are not within Senate's mandate, the Chair will refer the matter to the appropriate Vice-President.

- (b) The length of the Enquiry Period is limited to 30 minutes unless extended by a majority vote of Senate.
- (c) In order to receive an answer to a question at a particular Senate meeting, members should submit questions in writing to the Secretary at least 48 hours in advance of the Senate meeting at which the question is to be raised. The Secretary will direct the question to the appropriate individual for preparation of a response. When possible, copies of the questions will be distributed at the meeting. Questions that are not provided in advance may be deferred to the subsequent meeting of Senate.
- (d) Questions should be brief and to the point. The question and any preamble needed to set the context should take no more than a minute or two to deliver. The Operations/Agenda Committee suggests that the Chair of Senate adhere to this time frame strictly.
- (e) At the Senate meeting, questions should be directed to the Chair who will call upon the appropriate individuals to answer. A member who has submitted a question is entitled to ask one supplementary question following the response.

- (f) Members who submit more than one question will be asked to indicate their order of precedence. If time remains after all members who have submitted questions have had one question answered, the Chair may proceed to additional questions on members' lists.

5. Procedures for Balloting/Nominations, Report of Votes Cast and Mail Balloting For Senate Committees and Subcommittees, etc.

The report of the Nominating Committee is circulated with Senate Agenda materials in advance of the meeting of Senate. The Chair of Senate, without calling on the Chair of the Nominating Committee and without reading out the nominations included in the written report, will call in turn for further nominations for each set of vacancies to be filled. (The Chair of the Nominating Committee will only speak in response to questions or elaborate on special points.)

After nominations for all vacancies have been completed,

- (a) those for which no election is necessary are acclaimed.
- (b) if elections for one or two sets of vacancies are required, the election is held immediately on the floor of the Senate.
- (c) if elections for more than two sets of vacancies are required, the Secretary of the Senate will prepare and circulate to eligible voters a comprehensive mail ballot, to be returned to the Secretary; and the results of elections could then be announced at or before the next Senate meeting.

The Secretary should report the number of votes cast for all nominees for a given committee under the following two circumstances:

- (a) the number of votes will be released, in confidence, ONLY to a nominee for the election in question, upon request within a reasonable time following the meeting (e.g., 1 week).
- (b) the only name that will appear in conjunction with the number of votes obtained will be that of the requester.

In the case of a tie vote in elections that take place at a Senate meeting, the tie shall be resolved by a mail ballot following the Senate meeting.

There is a special procedure dealing with the election to Senate Committees having regular and alternate members. This is applicable when nominations in addition to those presented by the Nominating Committee (or Operations/Agenda Committee when nominating members for the Senate Nominating Committee) are made from the floor of Senate and when both regular members and alternate members are to be determined by the election:

- (a) One or more additional nominations will require that all names presented (including those nominated as alternates by the Nominating Committee) will be candidates for regular and alternate membership.
- (b) A two-stage mail ballot election will be conducted by the Secretary of Senate following the Senate meeting:

1st stage: The full slate of nominees will be placed on the ballot as candidates for the requisite number of regular memberships.

2nd stage: Following the completion of the election of regular members, the names of all remaining candidates will be placed on the ballot to fill the requisite number of alternate memberships.

- (c) Results of both stages of the mail ballot election will be reported at or before the next meeting of Senate by the Secretary of Senate.

Ties which result from elections held by mail balloting shall be broken by the toss of a coin in the presence of two or more members of the Senate Secretariat.

6. Minutes: Form, Editing, Correcting and Retention

Minutes

1. Committee reports and other reports (Exhibits) distributed with the agenda for a meeting shall constitute a part of official Senate Minutes and the Minutes per se will include appropriate references to those reports.
2. The agenda and supporting documentation for meetings of the Senate may be published electronically by the Secretary 7 days prior to each Senate meeting. The Minutes of meetings of the Senate may be published electronically by the Secretary following their approval by the Senate.
3. The minimum requirements for Senate Minutes will be the name of the mover and seconder of a motion, the precise wording of the motion, and the outcome of the vote (passed, referred, deferred, defeated, etc.); and amendments will be treated in the same way, in accordance with accepted parliamentary procedure.
4. In general, reporting of discussion will be limited to point-form general statements relating to concerns, objections, or benefits of a proposal not otherwise cited in the agenda material (Exhibits). On a Senator's request, and with the Chair's permission, the text of a statement made in Senate shall be included in the Minutes if such inclusion appears desirable as a means of clarifying the intended interpretation of a motion.
5. Information items will be cited briefly by appropriate heading and reference to detail contained in the agenda material.
6. Resolutions or information presented at the Senate meeting but not otherwise detailed in the agenda materials will be described briefly in the Minutes, such that a person who did not attend the meeting can get a basic understanding of the issue discussed. Any written material distributed at the Senate meeting that relates to such resolutions or information will be maintained in the official Senate Minutes.

The Secretary of Senate is responsible for summarizing the deliberation of the Senate. Requests for alterations of edited reporting of Senate proceedings (Minutes) should be referred to the Secretary, who shall be required to review the requests in light of transcript evidence, and to report to Senate for adjudication.

Record Retention

1. The Official Minute Book shall be retained in a safe place in perpetuity, with appropriate copies (microfiche, CD, etc.) maintained off site.

2. As public documents, Senate Minutes will be available to any person for inspection in the office of the Secretary of Senate during normal office hours. These Minutes will include committee reports and other reports (Exhibits) distributed with the agenda and at the meeting.
3. Senate meetings will be tape recorded for use by the Secretariat. The tapes will be erased following the official approval of the minutes by Senate.

7. Calling the Question vs Motion to Limit Debate

Senate's consideration of several important items over the past few years has been brought to a vote with a motion "to close debate" (or "to move the question" or "to move the previous question" in older terminology). While in every case it was entirely legal to introduce and adopt the motion, the Senate Operations/Agenda Committee would observe that it is regarded as the most drastic action a deliberative body can take to stop or indeed to prevent debate; and that, given the obligation of a body to hear minority views, members should be aware that there are alternatives to a motion to close debate.

The Committee would draw Senate's attention to a similar motion that may often be more satisfactory, especially when a number of Senators have indicated to the Chair that they would like to speak. It is the motion "to limit debate." The mover states the limitation desired in the motion, for example:

"I move that debate be limited to those now on the Chair's speakers list."

"I move that debate be limited to 10 more minutes."

"I move to limit the time of each speaker to [x] minutes."

"I move to limit debate to a total time of 1 hour."

Unlike the motion "to close debate" -- which in Senate's experience has tended to come without warning, and which must be put to a vote immediately -- the motion "to limit debate" is itself amendable and debatable (but only as to the type and time of limits). If introduced fairly early, in the form of the last two examples above, it provides advance guidance both to the Chair and to Senators who intend to speak. Since the limitations can be changed or removed by a similar motion (generically called "to extend debate") at any time, Senate retains flexibility to control its debates.

One who moves "to limit [or extend] debate" may not interrupt another speaker; a second is required; and a 2/3 majority is required to carry.

The Operations/Agenda Committee asks that, when a motion to end debate is presented, the Chair of Senate remind Senate of the options available.

8. Observer Designates

Observers are permitted to send designates in their place to Senate meetings provided that:

- The Secretariat is informed in advance of the meeting who will be attending in an Observer's place
- The Observer is responsible for providing his/her designate with meeting documentation.

Revised: February 2008