

The Responsibilities of a Senator

- **READ** the policies linked in the Senate agenda, and the Senate minutes in advance of Senate meetings.
- **TALK** with your constituents about their thoughts.
- **ATTEND and PARTICIPATE** at Senate meetings.

1st Readings: A Time for Questions

- **ASK** questions about the policy and its rationale
- **USE** that information to prepare for the next meeting

2nd Readings: A Time for Action

- **DEBATE** and have your voice be heard! We use a progressive stack by item.
- **MOTION** on any changes to the item, or on what happens next with the item.
- **VOTE!!** Vote in favor (A) or against (B) the item at hand. Not sure? Abstain (C).

Keeping Track of Changes:

- ✓ Amendments are color coded until voted on.
- ✓ Additions are IN ALL CAPS
- ✓ Deletions are underlined

Have a question about the rules?

- ❖ Say “Point of information”

Think the rules are slipping into “Here Be Dragons” territory?

(Usually used by parliamentarians and officers)

- ❖ Say “Point of Order”

Wait – what just happened?!????

If we’re going too quickly, let us know and the Senate can slow down in the moment to give everyone a chance to ask questions about what’s going on as we go.

The Items at Hand (just a handful of them)

- **Main motion:** usually a policy, but it can be a resolution, commendation, or any other Senate action.
- **Amend:** We do this the most. Motioning to amend is revising the policy to add, remove, or revise text.
- **Amendment to the amendment:** revises an amendment already proposed and not yet voted on.
- **Friendly amendment:** **NO SUCH THING**. We wish there were, but..
- **Amendment to the amendment to the amendment:** Doesn’t exist.
- **Other motions:** see below and see Roberts Rules.

The Motions (just a handful of them)

Say “*I move to*”:

- **Make an amendment:** Please have your revised text ready to share with the secretary when you motion!
- **Waive a first reading:** Only to be used in urgent situations. This takes us straight into a 2nd reading, with no time to go away and think about the policy. Waiving a first reading requires a ¾ majority.
- **Substitute motion:** Please don’t. If we really have to, we’ll walk through each step very carefully as a group.
- **Reconsider:** Usually happens when we move too quickly. This is an opportunity to reconsider an action we recently took and potentially undo it.
- **Call the question:** This stops all debate and goes straight to a vote through the main motion. Because debate is a right of all Senators, it takes a 2/3 majority to pass.
- **Refer to committee:** Kicks the item (or a request) back to committee, usually with feedback as to why we’re sending it back.
- **Adjourn:** Ends the meeting. Please only do this at the actual end of the meeting.

The WHY

Our Senate runs using Robert's Rules of Order (12th edition). This is a set of rules that state what parliamentary procedures we follow, the order of procedures and requests, and how to handle things when they don't quite go according to plan.

Do we have to use Robert's Rules?

Nope!

Wait – WUT??

We can always amend the Senate constitution to change the rules we choose to govern ourselves under. Most Senates use Robert's Rules, but change is always possible.

So it would take a bit of work.

Yep! And we would also need to decide what new rules we would use in their place. If that's what the Senate wants to do, then we go from there!

Why do we need rules?

Because things rarely go according to plan. And even when they do, we want to balance the rights of the many with the rights of the few. ALL Senators, under Robert's Rules, have the right to debate and have their voice heard; the right to make motions about what we do next; and the right to vote. (Among others: these are the Big Three). HOW we implement these – and how we deal with things when they're not so matter-of-fact – are where Robert's Rules comes in.

What if we want more (or less) additional rules?

We can create [Miscellaneous Rules](#)! These are rules that sit on top of Robert's Rules for just our Senate body. These can be created, revised, and deleted, just like policies in the Faculty Handbook.

For more information about Robert's Rules:

<https://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/roberts-rules>

The HOW

The Speakers' List

This is used to keep track of who has already spoken in debate. We use a progressive stack: people who have not yet spoken are bumped up the list, to ensure EVERYONE'S voices have a chance to be heard.

1st Readings: *Time for Questions*

This is the first time a policy is coming to the Senate floor. This is an opportunity for all Senators to review the policy ahead of the meeting, and come with any and all questions we have about the policy, and about the rationale for the changes being made. Committee chairs and members are often present that day to help answer these questions for us. We don't vote or debate 1st Reading items: we get clarification to help us decide how we might wish to vote, debate, or amend the policy at the next meeting.

First Readings must be placed on the Senate floor for discussion by the body. The Chair will say, "do I have a motion to place this policy on the floor?" This requires a motion and a second to move forward. Say "So moved" or "Second!" to confirm at least 2 Senators want to move forward.

2nd Readings: *Time for Amendments, Debate, and Voting*

Questions have been answered, constituents have been consulted, and plans have been made. At the policy's second reading, we now debate in favor of the policy (or motions), debate against the policy (or motions), make motions to change the policy or change what happens next with the policy, and vote on the policy.

Motions: *Acting as a Senate*

In addition to debates, amendments, and voting, there are other motions that will crop up from time to time. Each of these motions is meant to direct what the next action will be for the policy. Will we revise it? Amend. Will we wait to talk about it until the next meeting? Table. Will we move quickly on an urgent campus matter? Waive First Reading. The motions themselves include rules about debate, about changing what action we're asking for in the moment, and about what vote total is necessary to approve ("pass") that motion for action.