

## ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER- THE BASICS

**What are Robert's Rules?-** After presiding over a rambunctious church meeting in San Francisco in 1863, U.S. Brigadier General Henry Martyn Robert drafted the first set of "Robert's Rules" to help guide meetings. Today, it is used as a standard for facilitating discussions and guiding group decision making. For purposes of Hartnell, we strive to ensure basic standards will be followed in all councils.

**Before a council meeting begins, make sure the following has occurred:**

- Quorum has been established- Quorum simply means that a majority of the council members are present (either face-to-face or online). Majority is 50% +1 of the membership.
- The meeting facilitator has been established- This individual will transition the meeting from section to section of the agenda.

**Basics of meeting decorum:**

- A tri-chair will call the meeting to order and read the Four Pillars of Guided Pathways charge.
- The agenda is followed as presented (unless there is a motion to amend).
- Council members do not speak unless recognized by a tri-chair. This ensures members are not talking over one another.
- All council members have the right to participate in discussion if they wish before anyone speaks a second time on a matter.
- Council members do not interrupt other council members.
- A tri-chair will move to adjourn to finalize a meeting

**Motions:** All council members may use a motion to guide the discussion and move an agenda forward. A motion is simply the topic under discussion. A motion must always be seconded by another council member in order to be considered, and must receive a majority vote to pass.

- Common action items for all councils include:
  - Move to approve the day's agenda
  - Move to approve the minutes from the last meeting
  - Move to approve slated action items (information items typically do not need a motion)
  - Move to adjourn
- For agenda action items, a tri-chair will welcome a motion to approve said item. There should be a motion, and a second requested by the tri-chair. Once there is a second, the tri-chair will invite discussion.
- During this time, there may be different motions council members want to make.

- Don't like the wording? You can make a motion to amend the text. This will need a second.
  - Don't think the action item is ready for a decision? You can make a motion to table the item (to a specified date or indefinitely). This will need a second.
  - Don't think the discussion has stayed on topic? You can simply say, "Call for order". It is then the responsibility of the tri-chair to get things back on track.
  - You believe enough discussion has occurred on a topic? You can simply say, "Call the question". This is a call to end discussion and debate. If 2/3 of the membership agrees, the vote is taken.
  - If you were on the winning side of an issue previous in the meeting, but new information later in the meeting has changed your mind, you can make a motion to reconsider. If the majority agrees, it goes back on the floor for consideration.
  - If you want to change an action voted on at a previous meeting, you can move to rescind. A 2/3 vote is needed.
  - If an action item has obvious support or is considered a minor issue, a member can call for "unanimous consent". This needs a second. If there are no objections, the item passes immediately.
- If a motion is on the table, it must be voted on at some point. It cannot stay unresolved. Per the council charter, all items requiring a vote must
    - Pass with 2/3 of quorum
    - Have at least one affirmative vote from each constituency group (administrator, faculty, staff)

Robert's Rules help ensure the following:

- More efficient meetings- They keep things streamlined and focused.
- More equitable meetings- They help ensure that everyone that wants a voice has one.
- More enjoyable meetings- Membership time is important. An organized meeting tells members they are appreciated and valued.