

The Decision-making Process lasts happens over at least two weeks. At each meeting, we will have Information Items on our agenda. We will discuss these items, and unless the group objects, they will automatically become Action Items at the following meeting. This is the process for Action Items:

1. Discussion: we will discuss the issue again.
2. *Motion: a member of the body will make a motion. To do this, they should say “I move to...” followed by their recommendation. For example, if the Senate decided, after discussion, that they wanted to forward a memo to the Board of Directors stating that all food packaging should be compostable, the Senator making the motion might say: “I move to approve the memo to the Board of Directors stating that the Student Senate supports compostable food packaging in campus dining facilities.” Motions should always be positive statements – if you object to the motion, you wouldn’t want to say “I move to not approve the memo to the Board of Directors stating that the Student Senate supports compostable food packaging in campus dining facilities.” Instead, you would vote “no” on a positive motion. The Senator making the motion can withdraw it any time before the second is made.
3. Second: in order for a motion to be voted on, it must receive a second. This just means that after the motion is stated, another Senator (not the Senator making the motion) must say “second.” This shows that there is additional support for the motion. If no one supports the motion as stated, it is appropriate to withhold a second. In the case that there is no second, the motion does not go to vote.
4. Additional discussion: after the second, the Chair will ask if there is any more discussion. This is a chance for Senators to clarify anything about the stated motion and give additional input.
5. Amendments: amendments can be made any time after the motion is introduced. An amendment can alter the wording or meaning of the motion, and/or include additional information in the motion. For example, a Senator (not the original motion maker) might say “I’d like to offer a friendly amendment – that the wording should be ‘I move to approve the memo to the Board of Directors stating that the Student Senate supports compostable food packaging in campus dining facilities with the stipulation that pop cans be exempt.’” The original motion maker can accept the amendment as friendly, or deny it. If it is denied, the Senator making the amendment can make a motion for it to be considered, in which case it must pass with a simple majority of the Senate to be included.
6. Vote: any Senator, including the Chair, has the power to “call the question.” This simply means that discussion will end and that the body will vote. The Chair will say: “all those in favor of approving the motion as stated, please say ay.” All those in favor of the motion will say “ay.” The Chair will then say “all those opposed, please say nay.” All those opposed to the motion will say “nay.” The Chair will then ask for abstentions. An abstention is made when the Senator was not at the previous meeting, and does not feel adequately prepared to vote. If a Senator is abstaining, they should say “ay” when the Chair calls for abstentions. If the motion passes, the memo will be forwarded. If the motion fails, it will not.

**There are other motions besides this one. The members of the body can move for almost anything, including a five-minute recess or tabling an item indefinitely. These motions are less common,*