AS Governance Rules of Operation

This document guides how voting bodies operate outside of meetings.

Specific Rules: The governing bodies of the ASWWU must adhere to the Open Public Meetings Act, RCW 42.30.

Scheduling meetings

1. **At the beginning of each quarter the voting body's secretary determines members' availability.**
   The secretary and the chair collaborate to determine the best time for regular meetings. Alternatively, the chair may decide to stick with the fall quarter meeting times throughout the whole year.

2. **The secretary makes publicly available the schedule of meetings.**
   For the governing bodies, the secretary ensures that the public disclosure adheres to the Open Public Meetings Act, RCW 42.30.

Making the agenda

1. **The secretary collects agenda requests.**
   Members of the voting body submit their agenda items to the secretary.

2. **The secretary confirms the agenda with the chair.**
   The chair has the final say on the agenda.

3. **The secretary makes publicly available the meeting agenda.**
   For the governing bodies, the secretary ensures that the public disclosure adheres to the Open Public Meetings Act, RCW 42.30.

Preparing for the meeting

1. **Members review the meeting documents.**
   Review of previous meeting minutes, the agenda, and agenda documents. Members form opinions and questions on agenda items where applicable.

2. **The secretary invites the appropriate guests.**

Acting on agenda items

1. **The voting body will address an agenda item in at least two meetings before action.**
   The item will be introduced in the first meeting. The item will be voted on in a later meeting. The item may be brought to the body as many times as necessary. An

exception to this process is allowed for time-sensitive items. This exception should rarely be exercised.

Keeping records

1. **Item sponsors keep track of document changes between meetings.**
   Edits are clearly noted.

2. **Approved documents are finalized and made publicly available.**
   The item sponsor and the voting body's advisor work together to prepare the document(s) for public release.

3. **The secretary keeps meeting minutes and makes them publicly available.**

Example below- NOTE: definitions are consistent across all AS/VU Policies, see Master Definition List

Voting Body – The governing bodies or chartered committees of the ASWWU.

Return to Policy

Policy Information:

GUD-AS-GOV-03
AS Governance Rules of Operation

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AS Parliamentary Procedure [PRO-AS-GOV-02]
AS Student Government Handbook, Meeting Agenda Guidelines
AS Student Government Handbook, Parliamentary Procedure Quick Reference Guide

Meeting Agenda Guidelines

Introduction

The agenda is controlled by the Chair (Senate President or Board President), who sets the agenda, controls time allocations, and is otherwise generally responsible for moving the business of the government forward. Different presidents may decide to exercise more or less control over this process, but the power of the presidency includes control over the agenda. The agenda is usually ordered as follows:

1. **Consent Items**
2. **Revisions to the Agenda**
3. **Public Forum**
4. **Action Items – Guests**
5. **Information Items – Guests**
6. **Personnel Items**
7. **Action Items – [Board or Senate]**
8. **Information Items – [Board or Senate]**
9. **Officer Reports**
10. **Other Business**

Consent Items

This area is primarily for items that do not need deliberation, such as Committee Appointments, certification of election results, confirming WSA participation and travel, and other similar matters.

- If more information is needed, the item should be tabled.
- If discussion is needed, the item can be added to the agenda with the revisions.

Approval of the Minutes

Minutes should be reviewed prior to the start of the meeting. Spelling and grammatical mistakes should be noted and forwarded to the SGA, but these should not prevent the minutes from being approved. Minutes should not be approved if they contain substantial errors or omissions, and these should be made known during the Approval of Minutes section at the meeting.

Revisions to the Agenda

This area is primarily used for the following. The chair rules on these revisions:

- Removal of agenda items,
- Rearranging of items already listed on the agenda,
- Requests for changing the assigned time limits on the agenda,
- Urgent or time sensitive issues that arise after the agenda deadline.

Items should be added to the agenda on short notice very rarely because the spirit of having open, transparent public meetings is that the public and their representatives should have adequate time to review agenda items and necessary documents before being expected to act on them. Regularly adding agenda items on short notice or at the meeting violates basic democratic values.

Public Forum

This area reserves time for the public to speak about anything. Outside of this area, the chair may still recognize members of the public. Individual speakers should be limited to 3 minutes each, and this section should not exceed 15 minutes.

- At times, the public may be sufficiently worked up about an issue that 15 minutes may not be enough time to allow everyone to speak. In this scenario, the decision must be made to either table public comments to the next meeting (and the agenda for which should reflect a plan for more time for public comment), or to allow the meeting to continue by tabling the rest of the agenda.

Information Items

Information items are primarily used for information-sharing or discussion of potential future final action.

Information Items – Guest

Guest items appear on the agenda first because, typically, it takes longer for the governing body to make a decision when hearing from guests. It is common to ask guests to return for more meetings in order to provide the governing body with adequate information to make decisions. This should be done as many times as necessary before moving the item from information to action.

Note: Personnel policy information and the creation of new jobs and job descriptions, will be presented in this area by relevant guests, not under the Personnel Items agenda area.

Information Items – [Board or Senate]

This area is for items created by a member of the governing body, and usually there are no guests involved.

Action Items

Agenda items ready for final action (a vote) go here.

- Almost all action items should first be seen as information items.
- Agenda items should not move from Information to Action simply by default.

Action Items appear before Information Items for two reasons:

- If a meeting runs long, it is important to act on items that need to be finalized before opening new items for consideration.
- Items in this area should have been brought as Information Items as many times as necessary for the governing body to make an informed decision. Once an item moves to an Action Item, there shouldn't be much left to discuss – members should be ready to make a yes/no/abstain decision.

Action Items – Guest

Action items originating from a guest and sponsored by a member.

Action Items – [Board or Senate]

This area is for items created by a member of the governing body, and usually there are no guests involved.

Personnel Items

Items in this area are subject to immediate action. This area is for hiring, termination, or suspension of personnel, and is not normally conducted in an open session. Discussion and debate, presentation of documents (such as resumes, grievances, etc.), and witness testimony related to hiring, termination, or

suspension is typically conducted in an Executive Session (closed to the public), with only the final vote conducted or reported in the public session.

Officer Reports

This area is for officers to report on the following:

- Significant issues they are working on,
- Significant committee information not known to others or the public,
- Projects they are working on,
- "Jobs well done" or "kudos."

These reports should be limited to 3 minutes maximum, and should not take up more than 10 minutes in the Executive Board and 15 minutes in the Senate. There is no requirement that all officers must make reports at every meeting.

Other Business

This area is for items that do not fit in other categories and/or do not require ongoing deliberation. These items are typically "FYI"-type items, or reminders from the Advisor, or brief notes about upcoming events/projects that are not directly related to student government.

AS Parliamentary Procedures

This procedure describes how governing body and committee meetings are run.
Specific Rules: Some meetings must adhere to the Open Public Meetings Act,
RCW 42.30.

I.   General Principles

Rather than referencing standing rules of order (e.g., Robert's Rules, Reed's Rules) when questions or ambiguities arise out of these procedures, the Chair should make a fair ruling with consideration to these general principles:

1.   **One person speaks at a time.**

2.   **The chair of a voting body will recognize or call upon members who wish to speak.**

3.   **Voting bodies will consider one item at a time.**

4.   **The will of the majority shall determine the voting body's action.**

5.   **The rights of the minority are preserved.**

6.   **The public (students) are informed of actions taken or considered by a voting body.**

II.   Holding a meeting

1.   **A date, time, place, and agenda are set for a meeting.**
     Voting bodies will often regularly schedule meetings: weekly, bi-weekly, etc.

2.   **The chair calls the meeting to order.**
     This marks the start of this meeting's proceedings.

3.   **The chair moves the voting body through the agenda, sponsors present their agenda items, members may make motions.**
     Each agenda item is subject to action by the voting body. A member of the voting body may move to take some action on the item (e.g., "[Last Name] moves to approve [item]).

4.   **The chair adjourns the meeting.**
     The marks the end of the meeting's proceedings.

III.   Presenting an agenda Item

1.   **The chair asks the sponsor to present their item.**
     The chair may cede a set amount of time to the sponsor: this amount may be stipulated in the agenda.

2. **The sponsor presents their item.**
The sponsor may present their item in whatever manner they wish, within reason. Typically, sponsors go through an associated document or presentation. This initial presentation should only take up a portion of the allotted time.

3. **The sponsor opens the discussion.**
Members will seek recognition to participate in the discussion. The chair will recognize members. The chair may elect to have sponsors recognize members, temporarily delegating facilitation.

4. **Discussion ends.**
Discussion ends when the allotted time expires, at the chair's discretion when conversation slows or stops, or when a relevant, substantive motion passes. Discussion is paused while motions are passed.

5. **Discussion continues.**
Discussion may continue if a motion to add time to the discussion passes: the new time remaining in the discussion will be the balance of the current allotment plus the time added.

IV. Passing a motion

1. **A member of the voting body is recognized by the chair and makes a motion.**
An example of a motion would be: "I move to table the parliamentary procedure discussion."

2. **A second is made by another member.**
E.g., "[last name] seconds the motion" or "[last name] seconds." If no second is made, the motion dies.

3. **The chair affirms or contests that the motion is in order.**
Affirmation may take the explicit form "the motion is in order" or is implied when the chair moves to the next step.

A contesting my take the form "the motion is not in order…" the chair should always explain why the motion is not in order and give the proposing member the opportunity to correct or withdraw the motion.

A motion is in order if it applies to the agenda item under consideration or if it's procedural in nature.

4. **The chair opens discussion on the motion.**
For example, "the motion is in order, do we have any discussion?"

If there's no comments, the chair closes the discussion and holds a vote.

5. **The chair holds a vote.**
The number of votes needed for a motion to pass can vary: the chair will let the voting body know the threshold (e.g., simple majority (50%+1), supermajority (60%+1), 3/4ths)

There are few ways to vote:

A vote by acclamation or a vote by unanimous consent is one where no member objects. This is often done by the chair asking, "are there any objections [to this motion]?"

A voice vote is one where each side (yes, no, abstention) says their vote aloud in series. The chair would ask "those in favor say 'aye'… those against say 'nay'… those abstaining say 'aye'…" and then estimate the results by ear.

A vote by show of hands is one where each side raises their hand in series. The chair might say ask "those in favor raise your hands… those against raise your hands … those abstaining raise your hands…" and count the hands for each side.

The ASWWU tends to combine the voice vote and show of hands. This is the middle ground between accuracy and efficiency.

A vote by electronic means is one where each member types out their vote into the meeting chat or otherwise casts their vote electronically.

A roll-call vote is one where the chair goes through the list of all members of the voting body and asks each of them how they vote (yes, no, abstention). This form of voting is time-intensive and is usually only used for contentious votes or transparency.

6. **All present members of the voting body vote; the chair and secretary record the votes.**
   If the vote is not unanimous, the chair and secretary should record the names of the voting members who voted yes or no, or who abstained.

7. **The chair announces the result of the vote.**
   This usually takes the form of "this motion passes unanimously" or "this motion passes 12-1-0." The vote counts are usually written out in the order of yes-no-abstentions. The chair should give opportunity for those dissenting to explain their vote.

V. Amending a motion

Note: A motion to amend should not be itself amended. While not usually out of order, amending an amendment is inefficient. Usually, the first amendment should first be defeated and then another amendment moved and seconded.

1. **A member of the voting body moves to amend a motion.**
   A motion to amend is like any other motion and follows the procedure in Section III.

2. **The voting body considers the motion to amend.**

3. **The voting body returns to considering the original motion, with or without the amendments depending on passage of the amendment.**
   In some cases the motion to amend may be worded as a competing motion (i.e., the original motion is "motion to approve policy A" and the motion to amend is "motion to approve policy A with X amendments"). In these cases, at the discretion of the chair, an affirmative vote on the motion to amend may be taken as an affirmative vote on the original motion.

VI.   Overruling the Chair

1. **When a voting member objects to a procedural ruling of the chair, they may move to overrule the chair.**
   A motion to overrule the chair is like any other motion and follows the procedure in Section III.

Global definitions: these definitions are consistent across all AS/VU Policies, see Master Definition List

Voting Body – The governing bodies or committees of the ASWWU.

Procedure-specific definitions

Member – A voting member of the voting body.

Sponsor – The sponsoring member of the voting body.

Chair – The person with the authority to preside over the meeting of the voting body (e.g., Chair or Vice-chair).

Agenda – The list of topics planned for discussion and/or action during a meeting.

Return to Policy

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AS Parliamentary Procedure

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AS Governance Rules of Operation [GUD-AS-GOV-03]
AS Student Government Handbook, Meeting Agenda Guidelines
AS Student Government Handbook, Parliamentary Procedure Quick Reference Guide

Parliamentary Procedure Quick Reference Guide

Non-comprehensive table of motions

Useful definitions:

1. procedural motions: affect the progression of the meeting.
   require (50%+1) vote of the **present** voting members.
2. substantive motions: affect things outside of the meeting.
   require (50%+1) vote of the **seated** voting members, or more where stipulated.
3. point motions: interrupt speaker.
   require neither a second nor a vote.

Motions are made in the form: "[last name] moves to [do something]"

Points are made in the form: "point of [kind of point]"

Motion	Type	When it can be made	Why it's made
to approve [document]	substantive	upon recognition	to take final action
to appoint [appointee] to [committee]	substantive	consent items, upon recognition	
to vote on [motion]/to end debate	procedural	during discussion, upon recognition	to stop talking and start final action
to amend	procedural	when there's a motion on the table (made and seconded), upon recognition	to change the effect of a motion
to table [item]	procedural	upon recognition	not enough time or information
to overrule the chair	procedural	interrupt	disagree with rule of the chair
point of privilege	point	interrupt	out of some personal need (less noise, heat, etc.)
point of order	point	interrupt	intentional and disruptive deviation from parliamentary procedure

This is from the WIP student gov handbook