

Robert's Rules of Order: A Synopsis

1. Robert's is a guide to orderly debate. It isn't the intent of Robert's to restrict or inhibit the will of the assembly, but simply to give guidance and order so that the will is more justly determined.
2. Role of the parliamentarian is consultative and advisory. Role is to advise officers and members on matters of parliamentary procedure. Parliamentary law gives to the chair alone the power to rule on questions of order or to answer parliamentary inquiries.
3. President should have a list of committees and members to refer to.
4. President may present facts without leaving the chair. Leaving the chair to express an opinion may evade the President's responsibility to be fair and impartial while presiding.
5. Acclamation does not mean unanimous (definition is: an overwhelming affirmative vote by cheers, shouts, or applause rather than by ballot)
6. No member should be allowed to speak twice on the same question UNTIL all others have had an opportunity to speak.
7. Each member has the right to speak twice on the same question.
8. Discussion must be about the motion being considered.
9. The president may ask – are you ready to vote? Robert's suggests using general consent for noncontroversial issues rather than voting on each issue.
10. When voting – first vote on amendments to the motion.
11. Calling the question – should be done after issues have been presented
12. Motion to table – no discussion; if not removed from table by the end of next meeting issue ceases to exist
13. Motion to postpone indefinitely – to dispose of an issue without bringing to a vote – basically kills the motion
14. Motion to postpone to a certain time – delays action on an item; the item automatically comes up as unfinished business at the specified time (i.e. first item on the agenda)
15. Point of order – is a violation of the rules. The member explains the point (if necessary). If the ruling of the president is unacceptable the ruling may be submitted to a vote. The appeal to the Senate needs an immediate second; requires a simple majority.
16. Question of privilege – must be dealt with immediately...rare
17. Motion to reconsider – can be made ONLY by someone on the winning side. Determining the winning side might be tricky. If the petitioner voted for the motion and it carried they were on the winning side. If the petitioner voted against the motion and it lost they were on the winning side. **Must be made on the same day as the original motion.**
18. To repeal or rescind a previously passed motion requires a 2/3s majority; a motion to suppress the motion must be made promptly before debate. No reason to suppress is needed; no second is needed; debate is not allowed; 2/3s majority required.
19. Purpose of the minutes is to report what was done; not what was said, except in the case of recording the wording of motions.

20. When a member makes a main motion, it belongs to the maker of the motion until it is put before the assembly. At UCM we consider a motion put before the assembly when the President announces discussion of the motion. The member who offers the motion can modify or withdraw the motion without the consent of the assembly.