

**Motions 101:** This document was developed by the 2011-12 Sacramento State Faculty Senate Parliamentarian and modified by the 2012-13 Faculty Senate Chair. Its purpose is to assist members in understanding the guidelines for motions in Senate meetings and thereby to broaden participation by the body in the debates and other Senate procedures.

**I. Motion Precedence: Typically the matters of precedence that apply to our Faculty Senate are as follows:**

- A. Top Priority: Motion to Adjourn**
  - 1. Non-Debatable
  - 2. Simple majority
- B. Second Priority: The member may interrupt the speaker and receives immediate recognition**
  - 1. Point of Order—Questions/statements about process
  - 2. Point of Information/Clarification regarding the matter
  - 3. Point of Personal Privilege—This is a motion used to let the Chair and the speaker know that something is bothering you (the speaker is too loud, too quiet, too fast, too slow or unclear).
- C. Third Priority (See list below)**
  - 1. Motions requiring Simple Majority
  - 2. Motions requiring a 2/3 Majority

**II. Actions Requiring Simple Majority (all of the following require a “second” and are debatable with the exception of “table” and “adjourn”)**

- A. Add an item to the agenda (at the end)
- B. Insert an item (specify placement)
- C. Divide (This motion is used to separate a *Main Motion or Amendment* into parts to be voted on individually. It may only be used if each part can stand as a separate question.)
- D. Consider ad seriatim to amend a long motion paragraph by paragraph. The vote is taken on the *whole motion* after consideration of each paragraph separately.
- E. Amend (amend a main motion or amend an amendment to a main motion only)
- F. Substitute Motion It is considered a primary amendment and members may not make it when *another primary amendment is pending*. Through debating both the original and substitute, the membership decides which motion is the main motion.
- G. Refer (This motion sends the *Main Motion* to a smaller group --a committee--for further examination and/or refinement before the body votes on it and specifies the committee, the report back date, and so on.)
- H. Postpone:
  - 1. Indefinitely-which kills the main motion/ends debate on the main motion
  - 2. Definitely –until the next session **or other specified time**
- I. Table (non-debatable) This motion puts aside a *Main Motion until a later*, unspecified time. It places in the care of the secretary the pending question and everything adhering to it. The question “laid on the table” remains there until taken off or until the end of the next regular session. This motion should not be used to kill a motion without debating it. The motion to *Take from the Table* is used when the assembly wants to continue considering the motion.
- J. Adjourn (non-debatable)

**III. Requiring a 2/3 Majority (All require a second, are non-debatable, and proceed directly to a vote)**

- A. Re-Order Agenda
- B. Suspend the rules
- C. Challenge/Appeal the ruling of the Chair (regarding parliamentary procedure)
- D. Close Debate (non debatable) and proceeds directly to a vote

**IV. Ending Debate and Proceeding to a Vote:** Simply shouting out, “call the question!” does not automatically stop debate and bring about a vote. Technically, it is “out of order” and the Chair may either ignore the call or point out to the body that there are still people on the list and inquire if there is any objection to proceeding to a vote---if so, debate continues and if not, the body proceeds to a vote.

- A. When the “Speaker’s List” is exhausted, Chair signals to proceed to a vote
- B. When a member on the “Speaker’s List” says “ move to close debate (non debatable), the body votes (2/3rds) to close debate and depending on the ruling, proceeds either to vote or (in the case of a “nay” vote) resumes the debate following the “Speaker’s List ”