Guidelines for Senate Standing Committee Meetings (Spring 2018)

(Adapted from *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised in Brief,* 2011)

Organizing and Commencing the Meeting

- The Chair schedules a meeting by giving all their certified members reasonable notice of said meeting (with time, date, place), and pre-circulates all items that will be discussed and voted on at the meeting, including the agenda, minutes to the previous meeting, and documents related to the business of the committee, such as proposed policy, resolutions, etc.
- The Chair calls the meeting to order when **quorum** is attained.
  - Quorum is more than half of all certified members (as dictated by the Charter of Governance or certified by the Committee on Committees), which includes ex-officio members, again, as specified by the Charter.
    - For example, if the Budget and Finance Committee has been certified with 11 members, then meetings can only come to order with 6 members present, and remains in order while that minimum is maintained.
- The first order of business should be the **Acceptance of the Agenda**
  - The agenda is prepared by the Chair and pre-circulated with the notice of the meeting.
  - The <u>order of items</u> on an agenda are, in order: Call to Order, Acceptance of the Agenda, Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes, Chair's Remarks, whatever business the committee will handle that day, Old Business, New Business, Adjournment.
  - Committee members may make a motion to amend the agenda, once recognized by the Chair. After discussion, the committee votes on the amendment, with a simple majority of the voting members needed to accept it. Thereafter, the amended agenda is put to the vote, and a majority of the votes cast in the affirmative is required to approve the agenda.
  - The Chair has the authority to rule someone out of order if they deviate from the accepted agenda thereafter.
- **Minutes of the previous meeting must be approved** by the committee, including any amendments or corrections, as per the rules above for accepting/amending the agenda.
  - Approved minutes must be sent electronically to the Hostos Senate Executive Committee and the Committee on Committees.
- **Minutes must be taken at each meeting**. Minutes should include:
  - Date, time and place of the meeting, all those in attendance and absent.
  - Motions (actions) introduced should be recorded in full, as per the original wording of the member introducing the motion or amendment.
  - Voting results should be recorded in full (noting how many Yes, No, and Abstained votes).
  - Names of specific persons introducing a motion should <u>not</u> be identified, nor <u>the details of the ensuing discussion</u> (who said what, etc.).
    - For example: "A motion was made to amend resolution X by adding 'by all means necessary' to the final line."

Deliberations during the Meeting

- The Chair is empowered to run the meeting.

- The Chair must recognize people in the order in which they raise their hand.
- During debate on an issue, the Chair should keep comments relevant to the issue at hand, and rule comments out of order when they deviate.
- The Chair must ensure that all sides of an issue are heard, and that the debate maintains decorum (that issues are debated, not people or their motivations).
- During debate,
    - The Chair will ensure that a member, once recognized, is not interrupted when they have the floor.
    - During debate in a committee (<u>except</u> the Executive Committee and Committee on Committees, which are technically boards) there is no limit on how often someone speaks and the length of that speech, though the Chair ensures that comments are relevant to the issue being debated and should not be repetitive once the member's point has been clearly understood.[1]
- Amendments to a motion can be proposed by a member, then discussed, and then adopted by a majority of those voting in the affirmative.
- Once a motion is clear to everyone, with all amendments, the committee can move to a vote.
- Approval of a proposal, policy, resolution, etc., that is, **anything whose effect will extend beyond the meeting itself**, requires the **quorum minimum**, not simply the majority of those voting in the affirmative.
    - For example, if the Budget and Finance Committee with its 11 certified members are voting to adopt a resolution, a minimum number of 6 Yes votes are required, even if only 6 people are in attendance.

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[1] In the Executive Committee and Committee on Committees, all motions require that someone second them, there is a limit of speaking twice on an issue for 10 minutes each, and a member can make a motion to end debate (which is non-debatable, and needs to be seconded, and approved by 2/3rd of the voters to take effect.