

## **Rules of order of meetings of the faculty of the Department of Geology of the University of Georgia**

adopted 26 January 26 2009, last revised 14 February 2022

**Preamble** Recognizing that Robert's Rules of Order and similar parliamentary procedures are unwieldy and unsuitable to small groups, but that some organization of business at faculty meetings is necessary to ensure fair process, the following rules of order have been crafted as a small set of rules to allow civil, fair, and efficient function in meetings of the Department of Geology of the University of Georgia.

**1. Announcements** Announcements that are not expected to lead to discussion or action will not be made and instead are to be disseminated by mechanisms such as e-mail prior to the meeting.

**2. General procedures for making decisions** Decisions are made by one of three mechanisms:

**A.** For matters considered by the Head to be of minor consequence, the Head, or a faculty member suggested by the Head, may propose a course of action, and/or lead a discussion regarding a course of action. After the exact wording of the final form of this proposal is recorded by the Scribe and projected for all members to read, the Head may then ask “Does anyone see any problems, or would anyone object, if we proceed as suggested?” If, after sufficient time to allow a response (at least ten seconds, as counted by the Parliamentarian), no one responds with a suggestion, asks for clarification, makes a motion as an alternative to the proposal, or otherwise responds, the proposal is accepted. Any aforementioned alternate motion is evaluated like any other motion by the procedures outlined in Items 3 to 10. If discussion proceeds but leads to no new proposed course of action and to no alternate motion, a faculty member may move to end discussion according to Item 9, and a vote in favor of that motion to end discussion per Item 9 will be taken as acceptance of the original proposal made by the Head or by his or her designate.

**B.** (as amended April 27, 2011) **For decisions of policy and other matters in which there are multiple clearly defined options**, decisions are made by one of the three voting methods listed below, depending on the goal of the decision.

**B1.** When the goal is to determine **one preferred option only**, each voting member will vote for their preferred option. If the result is a vote for one option by a majority, then voting is over. In all other cases, the option (or options in the case of a tie) receiving the lowest number of votes is (are) discarded, and a new vote is taken

for one preferred option. If necessary, this step is repeated until a majority vote in favor of one single option is achieved.

**B2.** When the goal is to determine a **preferred subset of options** (for example a set of 3 out of a total of 5), each voting member will vote in favor of the required number of unranked choices (the subset) (step 1). If the majority is for the same subset, then voting is over. In all other cases, the option (or options if there is a tie) receiving the most votes is (are) set aside (step 2), and a new vote is made to rank the remaining options by the method outlined in 2B3 (step 3). The subset list is then achieved by combining, up to the requisite number, the option(s) from step 2 to those ranking highest in step 3.

**B3.** (as further amended February 17, 2014 and April 12, 2019) When the goal is to determine the **ranking of a set of options**, each voting member will vote for their top ranked option. If this results in a majority of votes for one option, then this option is considered to rank #1, and it is removed from the list of options, so that a new vote can be taken for top ranking from the remaining options. If this results in a majority of votes for one option, then this option is considered to rank #2 and it is removed from the list. Voting proceeds in this manner until all the options are ranked.

In cases where a vote does not result in a majority for one option, then any option or options receiving zero votes and the option (or options in the case of a tie) receiving the lowest non-zero number of votes is (are) removed temporarily from the list, and a new vote is taken for top ranking from the remaining options. If necessary, this step is repeated until there is a clear majority in favor of one option. Once this is achieved, the preferred option is removed from the list (and given a ranking of whatever value is appropriate for this stage of the voting), the temporarily removed options are returned to the list, and voting continues for the next top ranked item. Voting proceeds until all options are ranked.

If all options that receive votes receive the same number of votes, a short period of discussion will follow in which the faculty discuss the options, and this will be followed by a vote of those options. If the same distribution of votes remains after this second vote, and after this discussion-and-revote procedure is repeated two more times, the department head shall eliminate one of the options and thereby allow the procedure to move to a next vote.

If, in a vote among  $n$  options, one receives a larger but non-majority number of votes and all of the  $n-1$  other options receive some smaller but identical non-zero number of votes (as in a 6-5-5 or 6-2-2-2-2-2 vote), an *ad hoc* ballot of all voters for their preference between the  $n-1$  tied options will be taken, and the option(s) with the

fewest votes from that *ad hoc* balloting will be eliminated to allow the procedure to move to a next vote. If a tie among the same  $n-1$  options remains after this second vote (as when the 6-5-5 vote above leads to a 8-8 *ad hoc* vote), the Department Head shall eliminate one of the tied options and thereby allow the procedure to move to a next vote.

**C. For decisions of policy and other matters in which there are not multiple clearly definable options**, decisions are made by voting on motions according to the procedures outlined in Items 3 to 10.

**3. Making a motion** So long as a motion is not already under discussion (see Item 7), any faculty member can make a motion. A motion should be phrased as clearly and concisely as possible, and when possible is best written before the meeting and submitted to the Head and Scribe.

If any other faculty member seconds the motion, the exact wording of the motion will be recorded and projected, and then discussion of that motion will proceed according to the procedures described in Items 4 to 10. If there is no second, discussion of that motion ends.

A motion to adjourn or to recess requires no discussion or ending of discussion, and consideration moves immediately to the procedure for voting described in Item 10.

**4. Withdrawing a motion** The faculty member who has made a motion can withdraw his or her motion, perhaps in favor of a second motion, thereby making unnecessary the procedure of tabling covered in Item 7.

**5. Amending a motion** During the discussion of a motion, any faculty member can move to amend that motion. Two courses of action may follow:

**A.** If the member who made the motion says “I welcome that amendment” and no other faculty member objects to the amendment to the motion, the motion is amended. Otherwise, the procedure in Part B of this item is followed.

**B.** If the motion to amend is seconded by another faculty member, discussion of the amendment proceeds, subject to the procedure outlined in Items 4 to 10. If passed, the amendment becomes part of or alters the original motion, to which discussion returns. If the unwelcomed motion to amend is not seconded, discussion returns to the original motion.

**6. Tabling a motion** If, during discussion of a motion, some faculty member feels that further discussion and voting should be delayed, a faculty member can move to table (to set aside for the time being, and thus to “put down on the table”) that motion. If seconded, the motion to table must be voted upon with a minimum of further discussion. Consideration of that motion can be resumed later in the meeting or at a later meeting if a faculty member moves to resume discussion of the original motion, if that motion to take up the original motion is seconded, and if a vote yields a majority in favor of resuming discussion of the original motion.

**7. Multiple motions** If a motion has been made and is being discussed, a second (alternate) motion cannot be made until the original motion has been voted upon, has been withdrawn, or has been tabled. In this regard, a faculty member can “move to table the original motion only for so long as is required to discuss and vote on an alternate motion.” The original motion tabled by this mechanism will be taken up after consideration and dispensation of the second motion, with no requirement of a motion or vote to take that original motion up from the table.

## **8. Modes of discussion**

**A.** Discussion will proceed with the Head recognizing successively those who wish to speak, unless the procedure in Part B is used.

**B.** During discussion of an important issue, a faculty member may request that each faculty member give a short synopsis of his or her view on that issue, or more colloquially ask for a “Round Robin” discussion. If this call is seconded, each faculty member either (i) may speak for at most two minutes to summarize his or her thinking, (ii) may ask to wait until later in the succession of speakers, if more remain, or (iii) may decline to speak. During this process, other faculty members will not respond, and the procedure to end discussion described in Item 9 will not be enacted. The end of this process will return discussion to the mode described in Part A of this item.

## **9. Ending discussion**

**A.** If a motion is made and seconded, the Head calls for discussion. If there is no discussion, the Head moves on to the procedures for voting outlined in Item 10. If there is discussion, it proceeds until ended by the procedure outlined in Part B of this item.

**B.** During discussion of a topic, a faculty member may say “I move to end discussion and call the question” or, more colloquially, “Call the question”. If this

motion to end discussion is seconded by another faculty member, discussion of the original topic ceases. A motion to end discussion cannot be discussed, except for faculty members who choose to say “I would like to continue discussion”. Regardless whether any member indicates a desire to continue discussion, the Head will call for a vote on continuing or ending discussion. In this vote, the Head will first call for votes in favor of continuing discussion and then for votes in favor of ending discussion. If the vote to end discussion yields a two-thirds majority in favor of ending discussion, the Head then calls for a vote on the original topic according to the procedures described in Item 10. If the vote to end discussion fails to yield a two-thirds majority in favor of ending discussion, discussion of the original topic continues.

The Head can and should ask for a motion to end discussion and call the question if discussion lapses, and can himself or herself make a motion to end discussion and call the question should his or her request for a motion elicit no response and no further discussion.

This procedure can also be used to end discussion of a topic on which no motion has been made. In this case, a motion is made “to end discussion of the present topic”.

**10. Voting on motions** When discussion of a motion has ended, the motion is read aloud or displayed in its final form. Then a vote on the motion is taken. Voting may be by voice, show of hands, or written ballot. Any faculty member may with regard to any issue request voting by written and thus secret ballot. After a voice vote, any faculty member may request a vote by show of hands or a vote by ballot to more clearly determine if the motion passed or failed (more colloquially, that faculty member may call for “division”). Approval of a motion will require a simple majority (i.e., any number of votes in favor that is more than 0.50 times the number of the votes cast) unless the motion stipulates a different requirement for approval.

**11. Committee Reports** Committee reports will be submitted in writing to the Head and Scribe before the meeting and, after presentation at the meeting, will be treated as motions needing no second and as motions ready for discussion and approval by a vote according to the procedures outlined in Items 5B to 10.

**12. Parliamentarian** One person other than the Head will be designated by a vote of the faculty as the Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian will come to each meeting with a copy of these rules and will be prepared to determine whether business is being handled in accordance with, or in violation of, these rules. If the Parliamentarian cannot attend a meeting, he or she may appoint a replacement for that meeting. All decisions of the Parliamentarian will be final and not subject to appeal. The

Parliamentarian can be removed from office at any time by a majority vote of the faculty, who will immediately vote to appoint a new Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian will enjoy the same rights to participate in a meeting and to vote as those of any other faculty member present. The Parliamentarian will not serve as Scribe.

**13. Minutes of meetings** Minutes of meetings will record, at the least, the exact wording of all proposals approved by the procedure outlined in Item 2A, all decisions of choice reached by the procedure outlined in Item 2B, and the exact wording of all motions, as amended, considered using the procedure outlined in Items 2C to 11, and the final votes on those motions.

**14. Points of order** Any person who suspects during a meeting that these rules of order are not being followed when they should be followed is empowered to say so, or more colloquially to call out “point of order”, and thereby to suspend business until determination is made by the Parliamentarian whether these rules of order are being followed or being violated. The Parliamentarian will have the power to point out whether these rules of order are being followed or being violated, regardless whether another person has called for a point of order.

After an issue is decided via Items 2A, 2B, or 2C of these rules, claims that these rules were violated will not be grounds for reconsidering the decision regarding such an issue.

**15. Adherence to these rules** Ignorance of these rules by any member or members will not be accepted as grounds for failure to follow these rules.

**16. Scope of these rules** These rules will apply at all scheduled meetings of the faculty, but they will not apply at retreats unless an agreement is made that they will apply at any specific retreat. These rules will not be taken to overrule any provisions of the Department’s bylaws.

**17. Dissemination of these rules** For so long as the Department's bylaws are made available on the Department's website, these rules will likewise be made available on the Department’s website in a location likewise accessible.

**18. Amendment of these rules** These rules may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the faculty members of the Department of Geology of the University of Georgia who are defined as eligible to vote under the bylaws of the Department. The Parliamentarian will be responsible for assuring that the amendments are incorporated in the rules disseminated under the terms of Item 17.