

## Faculty Meetings: Process

Faculty meetings at W&J are governed by Robert's Rules of Order. The Rules exist to provide opportunities for participatory discourse. Any effort to override fair discussion is out of order. That said, there are mechanisms to move the meeting along when the assembly considers the conversation to have run its course.

Robert's Rules permits some flexibility in implementation. It is generally expected that any organization will select, develop, and implement its own version of Robert's Rules within the parameters set out by the Rules themselves. If you have experienced Robert's Rules at different institutions, the odds are good that each implementation was different. At W&J, we have traditionally implemented a simplified form. And, while we might occasionally need to break open the rulebook, the vast majority of the things we might want to do can be found in the following list (please check the notes at the end for additional details):

| I Want to...                           | ...Do This                                     | Debate? | Vote     |
|--|--|---------|----------|
| Set aside the Motion temporarily       | "I move to table the Question"                 | N       | Majority |
| End the current Debate                 | "I move to close debate (Call the Question)"   | N       | 2/3      |
| Limit or extend debate                 | "I move that debate be limited/extended to..." | N       | 2/3      |
| Postpone the Motion to a specific time | "I move to postpone the motion to ..."         | Y       | Majority |
| Refer to Motion to a Committee         | "I move to refer the motion to [committee]."   | Y       | Majority |
| Modify the wording of a Motion         | "I move to amend the motion by ..."            | Y       | Majority |
| Make a Motion                          | "I move..."                                    | Y       | Majority |

Notes: Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.  
 Except for a motion brought by a governance committee, all these actions require the motion to be seconded.  
 There is no friendly/hostile amendment. If you want to change the wording of a motion, make a motion of your own. If it is a simple typo, an amendment is not necessary.  
 Any modification to regular discussion requires a 2/3 vote.  
 You must be recognized by the Chair to perform any of the above actions.

So how does all this work? These points illustrate how to conduct business at the faculty meetings at W&J:

**A. Make a Motion:** This is an introduction of new business at the meeting. According to W&J's governance document, motions must be brought to the faculty by the appropriate governance committee - advisory committees, task forces, and subcommittees do not bring motions to the floor. A motion by a committee does not

require a second, but a motion by an individual does. Following discussion, a vote is taken. A majority is required for passage. A tie is a lost vote, as it is not a majority.

- B. **Move to Amend:** Use this process to change the wording of a motion under consideration. The new language should be displayed so that all can view it. A vote is taken on the amendment, and a majority is needed. If accepted, discussion continues on the amended motion followed by a vote on the amended motion.
- C. **Refer to Committee:** This approach is taken when considerable change to the motion is required. If a simple amendment is not likely to rectify the motion, it should be referred back to the committee for revision and brought back to the faculty at a later meeting.
- D. **Delay a Motion:** You have three options for delaying a motion:
  - 1) You can *Postpone* it for a later time in the meeting. To do so, your motion should specify when the matter will be brought back into the agenda. This requires a simple majority vote.
  - 2) You can also *Table* the motion. This sets the motion aside without specificity, and it can be discussed later in the meeting, or as old business at the next meeting. This requires a simple majority vote.
  - 3) You can *Postpone Indefinitely* which is, in effect, an effort to kill a motion. This requires a simple majority vote. If it passes, the motion cannot be brought back for discussion at the current meeting; in essence a new motion needs to be brought again at a later time.
- E. **Call the Question:** Upon recognition of the Chair, you can *Call the Question*. This is a motion to close debate, and it requires a second. When moved and seconded, debate must pause and a vote is taken. This requires a 2/3 majority. If passed, debate is at an end and an immediate vote must be taken on the motion on the floor.

These regular processes cover the majority of our business in W&J faculty meetings. You might on occasion encounter a few incidental motions:

| I Want to...   | ...Do This                       | 2nd? | Interrupt | Vote |
|----------------|----------------------------------|------|-----------|------|
| Enforce Rules  | "Point of Order"                 | N    | Yes       | None |
| Suspend Rules  | "I move to suspend the rules..." | Y    | No        | 2/3  |
| Demand a Count | "I call for a show of hands"     | N    | Yes       | None |

These motions must be dealt with immediately. A motion to enforce the rules may be brought about when there is an error in process, or if the discourse is not germane to the motion on the floor. In the case of a motion to suspend the rules, a vote must be taken with a 2/3 majority for passage. Before moving to suspend the rules, you must be given the floor by the Chair of the meeting.