Handbook for Senate Chairs

Acadia University

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Handbook for Senate Chairs

Background / Overview

Welcome to your new role as Senate Chair! This document was compiled to help new Chairs be aware of their duties, and of how things normally work on Acadia's Senate. It was initially compiled by Diane Holmberg in 2014, when stepping down as Chair, to reflect common Senate practices at that time. Note that the Constitution and Robert's Rules govern Senate, and must be followed. This document is intended to lay out more of the "unwritten rules" or traditions of how Senate tends to proceed. It is hoped that future Chairs will add to this document, making changes as Senate's approach to various issues changes, or else adding in notes on alternative approaches, where a future Chair might have a different, but equally valid, way of dealing with certain issues. Where issues are a matter of preference, future Chairs will be able to pick and choose the approaches that best suit their own personal styles.

Role of Senate Chair

The most important duties of the Chair are to make sure that meetings run smoothly, that everyone is clear on what the rules are at any given point, and that anyone who wishes to accomplish something at a Senate meeting is given fair and impartial advice as to how to accomplish his or her goals.

The Chair should remain impartial at all times. That means the Chair should not participate in debates by addressing the substance of the issue at hand (the Chair may make procedural suggestions, or provide background information that may help the matter move forward). If the Chair feels very strongly about a particular issue, and simply must participate in the debate, he or she may step out of the Chair and let the Deputy Chair take over for the remainder of the discussion around that motion. It is not recommended that this action be taken frequently, or else Senate may lose faith in the neutrality of the Chair.

Even outside of Senate meetings, it is best if the Chair refrains from participating in discussions of the substance of a matter to come before Senate. The Chair can and should give procedural advice to anyone who asks, freely and equally. However, if the Chair is known to favour a particular point of view, or is known to be giving procedural advice to those on one side of a debate but not another, again Senate will lose faith in the neutrality and impartiality of the Chair. If you want to actively shape the substance of educational policy at Acadia, the Senate Chair is not the position for you. However, if you wish to provide an appropriate supporting context in which others can effectively discuss and shape policy, it is an excellent choice.

The Chair may occasionally make motions at Senate, when such motions concern potential changes to the policies and procedures of Senate, or sometimes changes to Senate By-laws or the Constitution (e.g., "housekeeping" issues, to clean up errors or inconsistencies in various

documents). These motions are often made after consultation with Senate Executive, and may be made on behalf of the Senate Executive as a whole. For these motions, the Chair can step out of the chair and let the Deputy Chair take over. The Chair can present the motion and answer questions, but should be sure to fairly represent all points of view, if there are different points of view on a motion. The Chair would normally abstain from voting on these motions.

Voting as Senate Chair

By tradition, the Senate Chair at Acadia does not vote on any Senate motions, except when needed to break a tie. Again by tradition, the Chair should announce, for the record, at the beginning of each Senate year how he or she intends to vote to break ties. Some will always vote to defeat a motion (with the rationale that if any motion cannot muster majority support, it should be defeated). Others will normally vote to defeat a motion, but with the exception that they will vote in a way that will allow a motion to be worked on and potentially come back to Senate at a later date, in an improved form (e.g., normally vote to defeat main motions, so that they can be reworked and later resubmitted in a form that would gain majority approval; but, might vote in favour of a motion to refer to committee, as that is another mechanism through which a motion can be improved to gain majority support).

It should be noted that Robert's Rules (section 44, p. 405) states that Chairs are free to vote on any motion in which the vote is done by secret ballot, if they so desire. Robert's also indicates that the Chair may (but is not obliged to) vote in any instance in which his or her vote might change the outcome (e.g., either break a tie, or create a tie). Thus, Chairs are actually given more leeway in their voting than is traditionally exercised in Acadia's Senate. Future Chairs could vote more often than has been done in the past, but should likely still state their voting intentions at the beginning of the Senate year, so Senators are informed.

Duties of Senate Chair

Each month, in preparation for a Senate meeting, the Chair must:

- Prepare a draft agenda (in consultation with the Recording Secretary), for circulation to and approval by Senators
- Consult beforehand with individuals with items on the agenda, as needed, to make sure everyone is prepared for the meeting
- Chair the Senate meeting, in accordance with Robert's Rules
- Complete any follow-up activities required as a result of the Senate meeting
- Review and edit the minutes of each meeting
- Respond to any inquiries that arise regarding Senate business

There are also other committees on which one will serve in an ex officio capacity, as Senate Chair

- Senate Executive (you Chair this committee)
- Budget Advisory Committee
- Academic Resources Committee of the Board

There are additional annual duties in which you engage, as Senate Chair
- Conduct an orientation meeting for new Senators
- Call a meeting of those involved in elections, to make sure they are aware of their duties
- Call for annual reports from all Senate sub-committees
- Ensure all Senate sub-committees are aware of their duties
- Maintain an up-to-date copy of Senate's By-laws (and in general, make sure Senate information is accurate and up-to-date)

More detail is provided on each of these duties, below.

Preparing Monthly Agendas

- If you're just starting out as Chair, it might be worth glancing at the agendas for the previous year or two, to get a feel for agenda organization, and what sort of items to expect
- Keep a running list throughout the year of items that are due to appear on the agenda of a particular Senate meeting. So, if Senate asks a committee to consider an issue and report back in April, be sure to note that item on your running list as something due to appear in April. If someone said they were going to get you a particular report in January, but then say they're not ready, note down to check back with them in February to see if they're ready then
- If people send you agenda items throughout the month, be sure to make a note yourself, and / or make sure the items are sent to the Recording Secretary to be collected
- Approximately one week before the agenda must be circulated (so, two weeks before each Senate meeting), begin to work on the agenda for the next month. These deadlines creep up amazingly fast when the term gets going, so it is a good idea to put a reminder in your calendar regarding when you should start agenda prep
- Ask the Recording Secretary to send you whatever items she has gathered for the agenda. These may be carry-over items that Senate did not get to in the previous month, items people sent to the Secretary throughout the month, items she's thought of that should appear that month, etc.
- Check all sources that you can think of for possible agenda items
  - The Recording Secretary will likely catch any carry-over items from the previous month, but double-check that all were included

- o Likewise, the Recording Secretary will likely include any items that were sent along earlier in the month, but double-check (you may have forgotten to CC her on some)
- o Check your running list: is there anything on it that was scheduled to be presented this month?
- o Check the Senate Annual Cycle, located here: http://senate.acadiau.ca/tl_files/sites/senate/Senate%20Cycle/Senate%20Annual%20Cycle%20-%20updated%20November%202012.pdf for agenda items that come during certain months on an annual basis, e.g., VPA reports on budget, President's report, calendar dates, curriculum changes, elections, committee annual reports, etc.
- Note that most motions only require seven days' notice of motion, so circulating the motion, or at least its "purport" (i.e., general idea behind the motion, enough for people to decide if they need to attend the meeting or not) with the agenda is sufficient notice of motion. However, changes to the Constitution or By-laws require 30 days' notice of motion. That is usually served by having a Notice of Motion appear on one month's Senate agenda, and then the motion appears again on the next month's agenda, when it is actually discussed and voted on. However, verbal notice of motion at one month's Senate meeting can also serve as adequate notice of motion for a constitution / by-laws change to appear on the next month's agenda
- If you notice something that's really not clear in any agenda item that is submitted to you (e.g., is this item supposed to be a motion, or just a discussion item? Is it a motion for this month, or a notice of motion for next month? What part of it is actually intended to be the motion, vs. what part is just background material?), do feel free to ask for clarification from the person who submitted it, and suggest changes that might make things clearer. It is not your place to be making suggestions on the substance of motions, but if something is unclear to you in terms of its format or presentation, it will likely be very unclear to other Senators as well, and it will waste valuable time on the Senate floor trying to clarify the issues. Senators are not obliged to take your advice on presentation, formatting, or wording (they might insist on having the item stand as is), but it is certainly fine to offer it
- Decide on an order for the agenda items
  - o Approval of the agenda and approval of the minutes generally comes first, then announcements
  - o Next, lately we've had a section for Time-Sensitive Items, items that absolutely must be passed that month, or there will be major delays that will cause great difficulties for all concerned (e.g., approval of graduates, approval of calendar dates, approval of curriculum changes). You may wish to put the easy / quick / non-contentious items first within this section, with items requiring more discussion lower down

- In 2013-2014, we then had a section for Priority Items, items that Senate had identified as important priorities for that year, and on which they wanted to be informed of progress on a frequent basis. This category may or may not continue in future, as Senate wishes. For example, in 2014-2015, this section may consist of brief monthly reports on the progress of the Forward Planning Process, a major Senate initiative for the year
  - Next comes items carried over from the previous month. These would normally be in the same order they were the previous month, unless there's some compelling reason to change the order
  - Finally, New Business. You decide on an order that seems to make the most sense. Cluster items that seem to go together. It's sometimes good to put quick and easy items ahead of more difficult / more contentious items, so that not too many items get carried over to the next meeting. On the other hand, you may want to put more important / somewhat urgent items higher up, leaving items that can really be discussed any time lower down, because it doesn't matter if they end up being carried over
  - You can make an item a Special Order of the Day, if desired, to make sure Senate takes up a particular item at a particular time during the meeting. This technique is useful to make sure, for example, that guest speakers can speak at a predictable time, and are not kept waiting unduly long
  - Send the ordered agenda to the Recording Secretary, who will make sure it's nicely formatted, include any attachments needed, and distribute it. Make sure this is all done in time so that the Recording Secretary can circulate the agenda by the deadline, i.e., 7 days before the Senate meeting. It takes some time for formatting, so try to get everything from you to the Secretary by the 8th day before the Senate meeting, or sooner if possible

- Consult with individuals, as needed, to ensure everyone is ready for the Senate meeting
  - When preparing the agenda, check in with people who indicated they would or might have something for you for that meeting, to see if they will be ready. Your query sometimes serves as a reminder to those who have forgotten, so they can begin work on the item. Sometimes people will indicate they will not have a given item for that month after all, but will have it for the following month, etc. Note it on your running list and adjust the agenda accordingly. Make sure the Recording Secretary is CCed on all these e-mails, so she is in the loop as to what will and won't be coming forward
  - Either while working on the agenda, before it is circulated, or else in the week after it is circulated but before the Senate meeting, make sure that you and everyone else knows what their roles will be at the upcoming Senate meeting

- If there will be secret ballots for voting, make sure the Recording Secretary has those made up and brings them along, and make sure the scrutineers (usually the Registrar and the Deputy Chair) will be present and willing to serve
- If you will need the Deputy Chair to step in for any items, make sure he or she will be present, is willing to do so, and has been informed about the relevant items. Cc him or her on anything having to do with those items
- It's nice to know who will be making each motion / speaking to each report. E.g., for some Senate committees, the Chair is not necessarily a Senator. In these instances, if it's not obvious, check to see how they're handling it. Will another member of the committee who is a Senator be making the motion or speaking to the report on behalf of the Chair? Will the Chair be attending as a guest, to speak to the report? Remember that guests can't make motions, so sometimes another member of the committee will make the motion, but then the Chair attending as a guest will be the one to speak to the motion and answer questions
- Remember the Registrar is not a voting member of Senate, so if there are any motions the Registrar would normally make (e.g., calendar dates), be sure to get someone else (usually the VPA) to make the motion
- Most motions are very straightforward, but if there is a less-commonly-used procedural motion (e.g., division of the question, motion to substitute) that you have reason to believe will definitely or might likely come up, make sure the relevant people know what will be happening and how to handle it
- You might find it helpful to make up a "script" or set of notes for yourself for each meeting that indicates, for each item on the agenda, who will be making the motion / speaking to the report, etc. It can also include notes on anything you need to communicate to Senate (e.g., announcements, background on certain items for the benefit of new Senators, etc.), or notes to yourself on any less-usual procedural motions (e.g., division of the question, motion to limit debate, etc.) you have reason to expect might come up in connection with a particular item. If you do make up such notes, be sure to send a copy to the Recording Secretary, as she will likely find them useful

Chairing Senate Meetings

In general, meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order. Be sure you're familiar with those. If you're not, there are brief versions and guides that give a nice overview (the *Complete Idiot's Guide* is actually quite good). The Handbook for Senators, located here:

http://senate.acadiau.ca/senate-handbook.html gives a basic overview of the motions you're likely to actually use at Senate.

By tradition, Senators at Acadia are referred to by title and last name (e.g., Dr. X, Ms. Y, President Z, the Registrar, the Chair). It's not just to sound impressive; its primary purpose is to help the Recording Secretary keep track of the speakers, for the minutes. For her benefit, whenever you call on a speaker, clearly state his/her name; that is especially important when you are asking people to make or second motions. You may find it helpful to make a map at the beginning of the first meeting of the year, showing who is sitting where and what their last names are. People mostly tend to sit in pretty much the same place each meeting, so a map at the first meeting will go surprisingly far in helping you to figure out names. The Recording Secretary will likely be able to help you figure out names of those you don't know. It might be helpful for you and others, at the first meeting, to ask everyone to introduce themselves by name and role on Senate.

Most votes at Senate are voice votes. Whenever in any doubt as to which side has it, ask for a show of hands and count (ask the Registrar to count as well, to double-check). Most votes require a majority of those voting (or sometimes a 2/3 majority; check Robert's for details). Abstentions are not normally asked for or recorded in Robert's Rules. Votes for honorary degrees and professors emeriti, and elections to committee when there are multiple candidates for a position, are normally held by secret ballot. Any other vote shall be held by secret ballot at the request of any one Senator (i.e., the Constitution says that if consent to hold a voice vote is not unanimous, then voting shall be by secret ballot). For votes by secret ballot, scrutineers (normally the Registrar and the Deputy Chair) will distribute, collect, and count ballots, and report the outcome to you. You can proceed with the next item while they are counting.

- Make sure you have quorum for each meeting
    - Figure out at the beginning of the year what quorum will be for that year. It is a majority of all voting members.
    - It's not quite clear from the Constitution whether quorum should be calculated based on currently filled positions, or on all theoretically fillable positions, or what
    - To make things simpler, in recent years we have not been recalculating each month, but have been recalculating whenever there are longer-term changes
    - So, for example, if a Senator resigned, and their position was going to be refilled very quickly, but there was a one-month gap when the position was not filled, we wouldn't bother recalculating quorum just for that specific month
    - But, if there were a voting position left vacant for multiple months or a year (e.g. University Librarian position), then that would be factored into calculations of quorum

- It's generally not an issue, as we usually very comfortably make quorum during the regular Senate year, but quorum can sometimes be hard to get in the May/June meetings. Also, if there's any contentious issue that might require a majority of all voting members to decide, it's best to re-check and make sure you know exactly what current quorum is
- The Recording Secretary is usually doing a count as people walk in, and can inform you if quorum has been reached, but be prepared to do a quick count yourself if needed. Remember, non-voting members (e.g., the Registrar, the VP Finance, VP Student Services) don't count towards quorum, even if present
- If you don't get quorum, you can still deal with items that don't involve votes (announcements, reports, discussion items), but can't proceed to anything that requires a vote until quorum is reached.
- Once quorum is reached and duly noted, you can proceed to any items that require a vote. Note that if quorum is lost at some later point, voting can still proceed, as long as no one formally draws the loss of quorum to the attention of the assembly. You can mention this rule to Senators if you wish, and then they can collectively decide how to proceed should quorum be lost later on. If there is an important vote, Senators may decide to unanimously feign ignorance, and not "notice" the loss of quorum when it occurs. On the other hand, any Senator has a right to call for a formal quorum check at any time, and if it is determined that quorum has been lost after such a formal check, then no voting can proceed, even if a large majority of Senators present wants to proceed to a vote

- Getting approval of agenda items
  - At the beginning of each Senate meeting, ask for someone to move the agenda, get a seconder, ask for any amendments or changes, then have a vote
  - Before getting the motion to approve the agenda, draw Senate's attention to any special items that were a discretionary call on your part, or that they may or may not agree with (e.g., Special Orders of the Day; instances where you changed the usual order, e.g. put New Business before carried-over items)
  - Note that you as Chair will have made your best call as to what the most appropriate order for agenda items was; however, Senate as a whole does have the final approval. If you were ever really torn between two different approaches to ordering the agenda, do feel free to mention these options to Senate before asking for the motion to approve the agenda. Tell them that if they prefer the other route, they can make that change as an amendment to the agenda (i.e., "I decided to put item X before item Y for this reason; however, there is this other reason why it might make sense to discuss item Y first. If anyone would prefer to discuss item Y first, feel free to make an amendment, and we can change the order if a majority of Senators agree").

- If you decide yourself before the meeting that you need to change the order of any agenda items from what was originally circulated (e.g., maybe you didn't realize an item was time-sensitive, but now need to move it into that section), note that change verbally before asking for someone to approve the agenda, and ask if there are any objections to making the change. If there are no objections, ask for a motion to approve the agenda "as revised". The same technique can be used to add items to the agenda (e.g., reports, discussion items) that do not require a vote, and therefore do not require seven days' notice of motion. You can view this technique as you making changes to the agenda while you as Chair still "own" it, before it is moved and seconded. Or, by asking if there are any objections, you are seeking unanimous consent to make the revisions to the agenda. If anyone does object, then you can ask someone to move the revisions as a regular amendment, after the motion to approve the agenda has been made and seconded, and have the amendment formally voted on; the unanimous consent approach just saves time if there are no objections
- If anyone indicates to you that they wish to withdraw an item that was on the circulated agenda, announce it before making the motion to approve the agenda. You do not need to seek Senate's approval here (the mover still "owns" the motion, and is free to withdraw it if he/she wishes, without seeking the consent of Senate)
- If someone wants to add a motion to the agenda (i.e., anything that requires a vote), after the agenda has already been circulated, see if it is crucial that the item get on this month's agenda. If not, ask them to wait until next month. If it is crucial it gets on this month's agenda, ask the Recording Secretary to circulate the motion via e-mail as soon as it is received, so Senators can have as much notice of motion as possible. Note in the e-mail that the item has not met notice of motion requirements, and that you will be seeking Senate's permission to waive notice of motion. Waiving notice of motion requires an absolute majority of all voting members in the organization (not just a majority of those present). The easiest way to check to see if that number has been met is to make the rules clear, and then ask if there are any objections to waiving notice of motion and adding the item to the agenda, before approval of the agenda is moved. If there are no objections, then you know you must have the approval of a majority of all voting members (because a majority of all voting members must be present to reach quorum). If there are any objections, have it moved as a regular amendment, ask for a show of hands for the vote, and count to make sure you reach the specific number needed
- In general, changes to the agenda made at the time the agenda is being approved require a majority vote. However, changes to the agenda made later in the meeting, after the agenda has already been approved, require a 2/3 majority vote

- Getting Approval of the Minutes
  - Ask for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous month's meeting, get a seconder, ask if there are any errors, omissions, or changes to be made, then take a vote
  - The changes to the minutes are most often very minor (e.g., correcting a typo, or the spelling of a name). In such instances, it is usually easiest to ask if there are any objections to making that change, and if there are none, proceed, asking for people to vote on approving the minutes "as revised". If there are more substantive or potentially controversial amendments to the minutes, treat them like any regular amendment (seconder, discussion, vote on the amendment, etc.)

- Announcements (Yours)
  - The Recording Secretary will send you a list of all regrets for the meeting. (If you receive any that are not CCed to the Recording Secretary, forward them to her, so they can be included in this list). Announce the names of those who sent regrets for the whole meeting, or who said they would be arriving late or leaving early, etc.
  - If it's the beginning or end of a year/term, welcome any incoming, or thank any outgoing, Senators. The Recording Secretary can help you pull together those lists
  - Announce any guests. Any Senator may have guests attend, if he or she wishes. They should inform you ahead of time if a guest will be attending, and for what purpose. Usually the guests will be speaking to a particular item or report, or sometimes they are incoming or potential Senators who want to get a feel for what's involved in a Senate meeting. Ask if there are any objections to having the guest attend and take part in discussion; note that the guest may not make motions, second motions, or vote. If there are no objections, welcome the guest.
  - Note that it is not actually made clear anywhere in the Senate Constitution whether Senate is an open body (e.g., anyone is free to attend any meeting, as an observer) or a closed body (e.g., guests may attend only at Senate's express invitation and are otherwise barred). Past practice seems to be somewhere in between (i.e., people attend, but only as invited guests of any Senator; permission is asked of Senate for guests' attendance, but is basically always granted). Note that Robert's says (p. 96) that a deliberative body is normally entitled to determine whether nonmembers may attend or be excluded from its meetings; therefore, if there is ever any issue (e.g., someone wants to sit in without an invitation from a Senator; there is an objection to an invited guest attending), it is probably best to put the matter to a vote and let the majority will of Senate decide. If it becomes an ongoing issue, the general rules should probably be discussed, voted on, and minuted at Senate, or perhaps it could be an item added to the Constitution the next time it is amended

- o Report on any meetings you have attended on Senate's behalf since the last Senate meeting (i.e., Senate Executive, Budget Advisory Committee, Academic Resources Committee)
  - o Go through any other announcements you might have
  - o Note that announcements had been getting too long, so Senate passed a motion in November 2012 that announcements should normally be kept to 10 minutes per speaker. If you know for sure that you will be going over the 10 minutes (that can happen at the September meeting, when you are going over general policies and procedures, and having Senators introduce themselves), ask Senate's leave to exceed the 10 minute limit, and explain why. Otherwise, try hard to keep it under 10 minutes; speak fast and skip questions if needed to make it in the time limit
  - o If you're under 10 minutes, ask if there are any questions or comments before proceeding to the next speaker.

- Announcements (Others)
  - o By tradition, the President and then the VPA are asked every meeting if they have any announcements for Senate, and they usually do
  - o They will make their announcements; time them. If they hit the 10-minute mark (they get 10 minutes each), make winding-up motions at them
  - o If they take the full 10 minutes, announce that is 10 minutes, so unless there are any objections, you will proceed to the next speaker. If they take less than the full 10 minutes, ask if there are any questions. At the November 2012 meeting of Senate, it was agreed that questions did not necessarily have to be germane to the announcements made. It is acceptable for Senators to ask about some other issue that is on their mind, even if it was not part of the announcements. Allow a question and answer period, until the 10 minutes are up
  - o If someone wishes to go beyond the 10 minutes, use your discretion. If it is clearly just a quick question, no one seems to mind, and the agenda is not particularly lengthy, you could allow it, briefly. On the other hand, if there are other circumstances (e.g., there's a lengthy agenda, and it seems like most Senators would prefer to proceed, but someone really wants to get more questions in), put it to a vote. The vote in November 2012 made it a standing rule that announcements would normally be kept to 10 minutes per speaker, but that can be over-ridden any time by a motion to extend debate. The motion to allow announcements / questions to continue (for X more minutes, or X more questions, or whatever) would be made, seconded, and voted on. It can be amended, but not debated. As a motion to extend debate, it would require a 2/3 majority to pass
  - o If one of the people making announcements does not use up the full 10 minutes, that time could be used for additional questions to be addressed to another person. So, for example, if the President uses his full 10 minutes, but the VPA only uses 5

of his 10 minutes, then someone who had another question of the President could ask it through the VPA, and count it towards the VPA's time

- o When the President and VPA are done, ask if there are any other announcements. Any Senator may make an announcement at any meeting, and may have up to 10 minutes combined for announcements, questions, and answers

- Regular Senate Voting / Discussion Procedures
  - o After Announcements, you will start to work your way through the agenda
  - o Reports, information, or discussion items do not require any formal motion. Simply ask the relevant person to speak to the report if something written was provided (they can briefly summarize the main points), or else they may just give a verbal report if there was no written report. The speaker may have up to 10 minutes to give their report, and it counts as one of their speaking turns. You then ask if there are any questions, comments, etc., and discussion proceeds.
  - o Senate used to make formal motions to receive reports, but it got confusing. Robert's advises against using motions to receive reports. People are often unclear about the distinction between "receiving" a report (yes, we got it, your duty to report has been discharged) versus "approving" a report (we accept and approve of everything said in this report). Also, if you are in the midst of a motion to receive, it is more difficult / confusing to make other motions that may be useful (to refer to a standing committee, to strike an ad hoc committee, etc.). Obviously, if a report was on the agenda, and it is noted in the minutes that it was discussed, then it was received by Senate
  - o Technically, you should still be following the rules noted below for motions, for keeping track of speaking turns, etc. during discussion items or information items. Generally, though, it is acceptable to be a little less formal during these items. The purpose is often to brainstorm, or to share information. Use your discretion. It may be reasonable to allow a little more back-and-forth discussion, or to allow people to slightly exceed their usual two speaking turns, if the discussion is proving fruitful, as long as the discussion is moving along productively and everyone is getting a fair chance to have their say
  - o Especially for discussion items, try to leave the discussion with a sense of what the next steps will be. Sometimes a committee is looking for input from Senate. You can ask the committee members if they have received sufficient information. It is often helpful if the committee members summarize what they heard as the main points from the discussion, or state what their next steps will be, given what they have heard. Sometimes a general discussion will result in a specific call for action by someone other than the person/group who brought forward the initial item. The Registrar might be asked to collate certain information and report back to Senate; a standing Senate committee might be tasked with developing a particular policy and presenting it to Senate for approval; an ad hoc committee might be struck to come up with

recommended next steps for further discussion at Senate. In these instances, it is generally best to ask for a formal motion to refer to committee, that will lay out exactly who is to complete a certain task, what the task is, and when they should report back to Senate on their progress

- o Especially for sensitive items or ones still in the very early stages of discussion, it might make sense to move into "committee of the whole" for discussion items. There are no limits to the number of turns an individual speaker may take, and the discussion is only very lightly minuted. No votes are taken in committee of the whole; it is designed to discuss openly, brainstorming about an issue; once a plan of action has been determined, someone can move to "rise from committee of the whole" and motions can be made. You can likely accomplish the same goals yourself, though, by simply being slightly more lenient with the speaking rules during discussion items

- o When formal motions are to be made, ask the person moving it to make the motion. According to Robert's, you or the mover is supposed to read the motion out in full. However, some motions are very long, and it would take up a great deal of Senate's time to read them out in full. As everyone has the agenda in front of them, it is generally considered acceptable to refer to the circulated motion (e.g., the motion might be that "the curriculum changes for the Faculty of Arts be approved as circulated"). Short motions can and should be read out in full

- o Movers are often not clear on what exactly they should be doing / saying. If you just ask them to make their motion, they will usually come back to you, asking if they should read the motion out in full, or if not, what should they say. It generally makes things go much more smoothly if you put the appropriate words in their mouths ☺. So, for example, you could ask "Dr. X, would you like to move that the curriculum changes for the Faculty of Arts be approved as circulated?" The mover will then say "Yes, I would", or "I so move". You then ask for a seconder. Then ask the mover if he/she would like to speak to the motion. The mover will generally do so, and may have up to 10 minutes to speak, if desired. That counts as one of the mover's two speaking turns

- o After the mover has finished speaking, ask if there are any questions, comments, amendments, or discussion. Be sure to make it clear, if it's not obvious, what exactly is the motion (versus background material), and whether / on which part amendments are in order

- o Some motions are very long and complicated, and really consist of many sub-motions. For example, curriculum changes, or complex amendments to the Constitution or the By-laws, are really made up of a very large number of individual changes, each one of which people might approve or disapprove of separately. It is usually easiest to move the entire large set as a whole (or, for curriculum changes, by

Faculty), but that makes it complicated if people agree with most of it but disagree with certain portions

- o A good approach is to ask if Senators have any objections to considering a set of changes (e.g., curriculum changes for the Faculty of Arts) as a single motion. Remind Senators (especially the first time you do this in a Senate season, when new Senators won't be aware of their options) that they also have the options of asking for "consideration by paragraph", or "division of the question". Look these up in Robert's. Note Senators can ask to move these options at any point, but it's less confusing if you do them from the beginning, if someone wishes. In "consideration by paragraph", you would work your way through a lengthy document paragraph by paragraph (or page by page, or whatever), asking if there are any amendments on each part. That's a good approach to take if somebody has a series of small amendments scattered throughout the document; it keeps people from getting lost. "Division of the question" is useful if most of the motion is non-controversial, but people do have objections to one part. Any division that breaks the original motion up into easily described and non-overlapping pieces is acceptable. For example, people may ask that the motion to approve the curriculum changes from the Faculty of Arts be broken up into two separate motions: "approving the curriculum changes from the Faculty of Arts, with the exception of the new program in X proposed by Department Y"; and "approving the new program in X, proposed by Department Y." That way, those who favoured everything but the addition of this new program could vote in favour of most changes, but vote against this particular program (or refer that issue back to committee for further work, or propose extensive amendments, or whatever)
- o Once discussion on any main motion begins, keep a speaker's list, keeping track of who has spoken to the motion, and how many times
- o Each person may normally speak a maximum of two times, 10 minutes per turn, to any given motion
- o Anyone who has not yet spoken gets priority on the speaker's list over anyone who has already spoken once. If it's getting complicated, keep names in one column for first-time speakers, and make another column for second-time speakers. Work your way down the first column; when you temporarily run out of speakers in the first column, go over to the second column and work your way down that list until somebody else gets added to the first list, etc.
- o So people don't have to keep their hands up too long, once you have their name down on the speaker's list, catch their eye and nod so they know you have them down, and they can lower their hand
- o People are only allowed to speak twice to each motion, after that, they may not contribute to the discussion any more, unless there is a motion to extend debate to allow people more turns. Of course, they can still make amendments or other secondary motions, or ask questions

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- The speaker's lists starts fresh every time there is an amendment or a secondary motion. Keep those lists to the side, then return to the main motion speaker's list wherever you left off, once the amendment or secondary motion has been dealt with
- Very often in discussion or information items, but frequently in motions, too, people want to ask clarifying questions of the person presenting / making the motion, to get the proper background or context. Technically, in Robert's, if they do that, answering even the first question uses up the mover's one remaining speaking turn – so they can only ever answer one question, and even that is at the expense of allowing themselves to speak in favour of their own motion again. That struck Senators as very restrictive and frustrating when it was tried. What I (DH) have been doing is treating clarifying questions as if they were "points of information" directed to the Chair. Any Senator may ask such a question at any time, and it will not count as one of their two speaking turns, but instead as a point of information, an acceptable secondary motion. The mover, or whoever is most qualified to answer the question, can then answer the question, on behalf of the Chair, and that also does not count as one of their speaking turns.
- Sometimes Senators will make a brief statement and then look to the mover as if they expect a response. Clarify whether it was intended to be a statement or a question. If it was intended as a question, the mover may respond. If it was simply intended as a statement, then go on to the next person on the speaker's list; the mover is not allowed to respond except to direct questions (though the mover may of course get on the speaker's list and use his or her one remaining speaking turn to respond, if desired). The mover does not have the automatic right to rebut every statement that is made by other Senators. Again, though, use your discretion. If it seems like a back and forth discussion between the mover and other Senators is being very helpful / beneficial in moving the issue forward, you might give it a bit more lee-way (or perhaps suggest Senate might want to move into committee of the whole to discuss the issue before voting; that way it's Senate's call to dispense with keeping track of speaking turns, not yours)
- Discussion on any motion simply continues until the speaker's list is exhausted. Note that if every Senator were present and took his/her full opportunity to speak two times, ten minutes each, then it would take 18 hours to get through a single motion. Senate is a large body, and if only a small fraction of Senators speak to each item, it takes time. You will likely get MANY complaints behind the scenes that Senate discussions go on too long. You will likely need to remind Senators frequently (perhaps in the first session of the year, and certainly during Senate Orientation), that you are duty-bound to continue the discussion until every speaker who wishes to speak has had two opportunities to do so, on every motion. That is absolutely appropriate – Senate does not want a Chair unilaterally cutting off discussion when there are still people who wish to speak and have a right to do so. However, also

remind Senators frequently that THEY have many options for curtailing discussion on a given item, or moving discussion along to the next item on the agenda, should they wish to do so. They may call the question, make a motion to limit debate, postpone definitely, table a motion, refer to committee, etc. The Senate Handbook, located here: http://senate.acadiau.ca/senate-handbook.html explains all of these options to them

- A few other notes:
  - When doing elections, nominations from the floor are in order. By tradition, you call for such nominations three times before declaring the candidates elected / voting by secret ballot.
  - At convocation time, we recently modified the enabling motion to leave the sub-committee of Senate empowered to grant degrees, if necessary, until the next convocation. That will allow them to grant degrees to students who absolutely need the diploma between formal convocations (i.e., a letter from the Registrar saying they have met all degree requirements will not do)
  - If you're looking for a model of how any sort of usual Senate business (e.g., conferring degrees, curriculum changes, nominations, elections) is conducted, you can look up minutes from previous years to see an example
- Otherwise, you'll have to figure out the actual chairing of meetings as you go along. When in doubt, feel free to consult – there are generally others in the room who are familiar with Robert's Rules who can help you out if you're unsure of how to proceed, and you can always pause briefly to look up the rules if you have to

Follow-up to Senate Meetings

Be sure to jot down notes during any Senate meeting if something arises that will require action on your part. Most often, it will be a case of a particular committee or group or individual having been asked to do something by Senate. If the person being asked to do something was not on Senate, you will have to pass on the request, on behalf of Senate. It is often a good idea to issue a formal request even if there was representation present at Senate (e.g., a committee is being asked to do something – some members of the committee are on Senate and some are not). That way you can be sure that everyone is getting the same information, and it also seems to give the request more weight if it is coming directly from Senate, through the Senate Chair, rather than being passed on verbally by another committee member.

You will often have to remind people multiple times that they agreed to do something / report something to Senate. They will say they are working on it and will get it to you next month, then they will forget about it completely until you remind them again when it's time for the next month's agenda. When Senate requests a certain action, really try to get them to indicate a date by which they want the report back. Such a Senate-imposed deadline does seem to motivate

people. The prospect of reporting to the entire Senate that they have not done what they said they were going to do seems to hold much more weight than the prospect of reporting their inaction to the Senate Chair alone. Administrators (e.g., the VPA, the Registrar) are some of the worst offenders, so get deadlines for them, too!

Responding to Inquiries

You will have to field many inquiries as Senate Chair. Most often, these are from Senators who want to make a motion / achieve a certain goal at Senate, and want input as to how best to accomplish that goal. There are some "Tips for Making Effective Motions" in the Senate Handbook that give some general advice.

Non-Senators will also often get in touch wondering who they should talk to about a particular academic issue. Pointing them to the Chair of the relevant Senate Sub-committee, if it's active and functional, is generally the best place to start.

Reviewing and Editing Senate Minutes

The Recording Secretary will send you a draft version of the minutes of each meeting. Go through these, looking both for any typos / grammar / punctuation issues, and also any content issues (places where you don't think the summary accurately captures a person's point, to the best of your memory). Mark it up using Track Changes in Word, noting any changes to be made, and using comments if you have any queries. Sometimes you may suspect something is not accurate but aren't sure; the Recording Secretary can go back to the recording of the meeting and review if something needs to be checked. You can also ask her to double-check with the speaker if need be. The Recording Secretary routinely asks the President to review the summary of his announcements, as these often contain information on government initiatives that are full of acronyms, and are difficult to summarize accurately.

It takes quite a bit of time to go through the minutes, and the Recording Secretary needs time to check and format these properly after your review, so try to review these as soon as you can after receiving them.

Committees You Serve on as Senate Chair

- Senate Executive
  - At the last meeting of the Executive in a given year, decide, in consultation with other Executive members, how many Executive meetings should be held for the upcoming year, and when. It has varied under different Chairs. Some only held one or two Executive meetings a year, some held meetings every month. Lately it has been three or four meetings a year. The Recording Secretary can be asked to consult with the secretaries for the President and VPA to find suitable meeting times, as the President and VPA are often booked up many months in advance. Once some times are found

that work for them, the Recording Secretary can send out invitations to other Executive Committee members. It is a large and busy group, so it is best to book in all meeting times for the upcoming year as soon as possible after the last Executive meeting of the year

- o The Executive is to approve dates for Senate meetings whenever the second Monday of the month falls on a holiday. That is always true of Thanksgiving in October; traditionally the Executive has gone with the next day (the Tuesday) for that meeting, so those convocating in October can be approved quickly. It is sometimes true of the November meeting, if Remembrance Day is observed on a Monday. The Executive has traditionally gone with the following Monday (i.e., the next week) for that meeting, as we know people have the usual Senate timeslot free. Lately, Senate Exec has also been setting a date and time for a June meeting. A June meeting has been needed every year for the last number of years; it is better to set it in advance so it is in people's calendars and can be cancelled it if it is not needed, than try to set it at the last minute. That meeting has recently been on a Wednesday afternoon in June. These dates for the next year can be set at the last Executive meeting of each year, and announced at Senate in September

- o In the first Executive meeting of the year, establish goals for the upcoming year, as all Senate committees are being asked to do. The Senate Executive is a nice representative body that tends to function quite effectively, but does not really have much to do in the way of concrete tasks. There is talk of it perhaps being asked to serve a monitoring function for Senate, to make sure that Senate and its sub-committees are working effectively in establishing and reviewing the academic policies of the institution, and to come forward with recommendations for changes or improvements if there are areas that are not working well. That is the purpose it has been serving in recent years, when the Chair (DH) has been asking the Senate Executive for feedback on what's working at Senate and what isn't. Ideas for possible changes and improvements are then discussed at Senate Executive, before bringing them forward to Senate as a whole

- o As well as helping to sort out procedural issues at Senate, Senate Executive can potentially also be used to identify content areas on which Senate could focus. For example, in 2013-14, Senate Executive identified four priority areas, where they felt that Senate needed to focus its attention throughout the year (e.g., establishing a Strategic Research Plan, reorganizing Senate sub-committees, curricular reform, timetable reform). These areas were then brought to Senate for approval, committees were assigned to investigate each issue, and a regular reporting mechanism was established. This exact model may not be repeated in future years, but in general the idea that Senate should be thoughtful about what issues in the academic sector require attention, rather than only responding to issues that arise from below, is one that should probably be carried forward.

- o Senate Executive can also serve as a good sounding board for other groups to get feedback on an issue before bringing it to Senate as a whole. For example, the By-laws Committee asked to run their initial ideas for Senate sub-committee reorganization past Senate Executive for feedback and input, before bringing the plans to Senate as a whole
- o Senate Executive can also serve as a good place to identify possible problems or issues with a particular initiative that is "in the pipeline", before it goes to Senate as a whole. For example, the concept of transitioning to numerical grades has been discussed for quite some time at Senate Executive, where a number of potential questions or concerns have been identified. These can hopefully be sorted out before the issue is brought to Senate as a whole
- o In general, think of Senate Executive as a microcosm of Senate as a whole. It is a good place to do the sort of higher-level thinking and open group discussion that is sometimes harder to do in a larger group. Do avoid perceptions that Senate Executive is trying to do a "power grab", or usurp the role of Senate, or dictate what Senate should do – that has been a perception in the past, likely unjustly, but even such perceptions are best avoided
- o If it were ever needed, the Executive could make decisions on behalf of Senate that need to be made before the next Senate meeting. That has never been necessary in recent years, though (except for one case where a student needed to graduate, and we now have the enabling motion to take care of that issue)
- o Note that any decisions made by the Executive should be reported at the next Senate meeting for confirmation or modification. So, report on all activities of the Executive during your announcements at the next meeting, and any ideas the Executive has about things that Senate should do should be presented to Senate for discussion and approval in the form of motions, which may be amended as Senate desires

- Budget Advisory Committee

   - o This committee meets several times a year to discuss budget issues. The Senate Chair is on this committee as an ex officio member. The VPA Finance and the Treasurer report on the draft budget, and any changes made to it since the last meeting. The committee is asked for reactions to budgeting decisions being made, or sometimes asked for input and opinions if there are decisions being made as to which of several areas to cut. Committee members can ask questions, and if committee members want more detailed information in certain areas, the data is provided at a later meeting. It's really a mechanism for keeping various sectors of the university informed about budget decisions that are being made at higher levels; this committee does not actually make any consequential decisions about the budget.

- o Ask questions that seem relevant to the academic sector, or that Senators encourage you to ask.
- o Report back to Senate in your announcements regarding the major points you have learned. Check if it's ever unclear what you're allowed to report, but generally anything in the meetings is fine to report to your constituents (i.e., fine to share with Senate), though some items may need to be lightly minuted, because Senate minutes go on a public web-page.

- Academic Resources Committee

  - o The ARC is a Board committee on which the Senate Chair sits as an ex officio member. It has never met regularly, or done much. In theory, it was designed to help facilitate two-way communication between Senate and the Board regarding academic needs and priorities, and the resources needed to properly support those needs. In practice, its exact purpose was never very clear. It has been chaired by Board members who do not live in town and are very busy, so basically it doesn't meet and doesn't do very much
  - o Instead, the Academic Planning Committee of the Board has been trying to make sure it has up-to-date financial information, and has been arguing that any academic planning has to take available resources into account

Orientation Meeting

According to the Constitution, the Senate Chair (or, if delegated by the Chair, the Deputy Chair) is supposed to hold an annual orientation meeting to familiarize Senators with their duties and responsibilities. This meeting has usually been held in October, with the idea that it may be helpful for new Senators to attend one Senate meeting first, to get a feel for it, so they will know what to ask at the orientation meeting. New Senators in particular should be invited and encouraged to attend the orientation session, but any Senators are welcome. It's probably a good idea to direct them to the Senate Handbook (http://senate.acadiau.ca/senate-handbook.html) and ask them to read it over before the meeting, as it will likely answer most questions. You could then give a brief presentation, make it a question and answer session, or whatever seems most useful. The previous Chair will probably share his/her materials with you, in case they're helpful.

Meeting on Nominations and Election Procedures

According to the Constitution, the Senate Chair (or, if delegated by the Chair, the Deputy Chair) is supposed to hold an annual meeting for everyone involved in nominations and elections processes "to ensure open, timely, and efficient nomination and election procedures." This provision was added to the Constitution in 2010. It's not quite clear if there was a problem that instigated this provision, and no one seems to know if any such meeting ever took place. There

are MANY people involved in the nomination and election process for Senate committees – to be honest, many more than seem useful. It may be useful, in the context of reforming Senate sub-committees, to discuss possible procedures for simplifying the nomination and election process. Meanwhile, it is a LOT of people to try to get together, particularly if it is not quite clear if there are problems that need solving. The Recording Secretary alerts the appropriate people when a position becomes vacant, and we get names back to fill those positions. We have not heard any complaints about the nomination or election procedures that provide those names, so assume things are fine, but honestly don't know for sure.

Diane Holmberg sent out e-mail messages in 2013 and 2014 to all the people involved in the nomination and election process, said there was supposed to be this meeting, and asked for anyone who had any problems or concerns with how things were currently going to respond, and a meeting could be organized if there were problems or issues. Not a single person responded (at all) either year, which suggests either that things are just fine, or that people don't read their e-mails ☺. Future chairs could organize a meeting and have a face-to-face discussion if desired, but again, it's not quite clear there's any pressing need to do so.

Call for Annual Reports

- Senate Committees are supposed to make an annual report to Senate, usually at the May meeting
- Early in April, issue your call for annual reports via e-mail to the chairs of the various committees. It's likely easiest to do up a spreadsheet with the committee name, chair name, and e-mail address, and do a mail merge with a form letter
- Remind them that their report is due for the May meeting, giving them the deadline for agenda items and telling them to submit their reports to the Recording Secretary, ccing you
- If the Chair is not a Senator, ask who will be speaking to the report
- You can point them to the minutes of previous years if they want a model of what their report should look like
- We decided in 2014 that Senate committees should set goals at the beginning of the year, then report on what goals they reached, so remind them to report on what goals they achieved over the course of the year, and what their plans are to continue to make progress if they did not reach their goals
- Starting in 2014, committees are to identify a Transition Chair who will be responsible for calling an initial meeting of the committee in September, where a Chair will be elected and goals for the upcoming year will be identified. Ask them to include the name of the Transition Chair in their annual report
- Note that the Scholarships Prizes and Awards Committee usually reports in the Fall, once take-up rates on scholarships is known. The Admissions and Academic Standing

Committee (Appeals) also usually reports in the Fall, once the outcome of appeals is known (though sometimes they have a report for June)

- If there is no known Chair for the committee, you can try e-mailing all committee members, asking them who is the Chair. If they don't know because they haven't met all year, you can ask them to meet, select a Chair, write a report to Senate explaining why they haven't met, and elect a Transition Chair so they can meet the next year. They may or may not listen to you. If they don't, you can just note to Senate that the committee has no report to make, because they did not meet all year. There are some Senate committees that have not met in years (hopefully that will change with committee reform)
- If any ad hoc committees have been formed through the year, ask them to report as well. In their report, they should include a recommendation as to whether they should continue to exist in their current form for another year, whether they should be disbanded because their work is complete, or whether they should be turned into a standing committee. Be cautious with creating new standing committees – that's how we ended up with 20+ committees, many of which don't do very much!

Ensure Senate Sub-Committees are Aware of their Duties

- In 2014, Senate enacted some changes to the Constitution to try to get Senate sub-committees functioning more effectively. Committees are asked to hold a minimum of two face-to-face meetings each year
- The first meeting would be held early in their cycle, normally in September. It will be the duty of the Transition Chair to call this meeting. The Transition Chair is also responsible for making sure the committee has any materials or information from the previous year's committee that would help them in their work. That might include a summary of the previous year's goals and progress towards those goals, any areas that were identified as logical next steps, relevant background materials, etc. The annual report from the previous year's committee would be a good starting point
- Unless a Chair is identified in the by-laws, the committee will also elect a Chair for the upcoming year. The Chair may or may not be the same person as the Transition Chair
- The committee should review its mandate, and decide on its goals for the upcoming year, in order to most effectively meet its mandate. What, if anything, should the committee be working on?
- The committee should set dates for its meetings in the upcoming year. It should decide whether subsequent meetings will be held face-to-face, or if not, via what modalities (e.g., conference or Skype calls; e-mail discussions, etc.) it will meet. It should set a minimum of one more face-to-face meeting near the end of the year (e.g., April) to review progress towards its goals and prepare an annual report for Senate

- The committee will prepare a brief (approximately one page) report for the October meeting of Senate, identifying its goals, briefly outlining its plans for meeting those goals, and identifying its Chair
- The committee should decide who will be presenting the report on its goals to Senate
- As Senate Chair, you should contact the Transition Chairs in late August or early September, reminding them of their responsibility to call the first meeting of the committee, and asking them to e-mail you once the meeting has been held, identifying the Chair of the committee, and who will be presenting the committee's goals to Senate. Set a deadline for the Transition Chairs to report to you (e.g., end of September), and remind them when that deadline is getting close
- Before the October meeting, issue a call to all Chairs to send you their one-page report on the committee's goals, and make sure someone will be present to speak to the report and answer Senate questions
- Some committees won't make the October deadline, so chase them down for November. If they're not co-operative, ask for a representative to come and explain to Senate why the committee is unable to meet and fulfill its committee responsibilities
- At the end of the year (maybe with the annual report e-mail?), remind committees that they are supposed to be archiving their materials with the University Archives. They don't need to archive anything that is sent to Senate (e.g., annual reports), as that will already be archived with the general Senate materials, but they should archive any internal items like minutes of their meetings, etc. Nothing fancy needed; just send a folder with the material over to the Archives
- These procedures are going to be difficult while we still have lots of committees, many of which are non-functional, but the idea is to encourage them to become more functional. Also, it should be easier and smoother once we have a smaller number of well-functioning committees

Maintain an Up-to-Date Copy of Senate Materials

- The By-laws committee is supposed to review the Senate Constitution and By-laws every few years, and make recommendations for changes, but I don't know when that was last done
- If changes need to be made to the Constitution or By-laws, run them by the By-laws Committee if they haven't already seen them, get them approved by Senate (remember, By-laws changes need 30 days' Notice of Motion and a 2/3 majority), then you do the actual updating of the document. The Recording Secretary will have the latest version, and will post the revised version to the webpage once you've updated it
- The Recording Secretary will keep the list of membership on Senate and Senate Committees updated, but will sometimes consult you if anything isn't clear

- Update this Handbook, the Handbook for Senators, and the Senate Cycle document, as required, and ask the Recording Secretary to post the latest version
- Senate policies are posted on the website. If any new ones are created, add them. If in doubt as to whether it should count as a policy or not, use your best judgment, or check with Senate
- The Recording Secretary will look after updating the agendas and the minutes

Good luck!