

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Parliamentary procedures are rules in place so a meeting can run in an orderly fashion. A basic list of titles, points, motions, and other little tidbits to help our newer members understand what is going on during meetings:

**Chair:** The Chair runs the meeting. S/he keeps the time, recognizes points and motions, and is in charge of voting procedure. All questions, comments, and concerns must be addressed to the Chair.

**Speaking:** When the chair asks for speakers, when a member wishes to speak, he or she may raise their placard. When a particular speaker is recognized, the chair will ask him or her how he or she will be taking points. The speaker will then respond with either:

- “All at end” -- they will take all points at the end of their speech
- “Limited at the end” -- questions can be denied
- “Throughout” -- members may interrupt a speech to ask questions

Technically, the speaker may also yield the remainder of their time to another delegate, but doing so is a sign of weakness and must never be done by any self-respecting delegate.

**Points:** Points are usually questions asked of a speaker or the chair. (Several examples are below.)

**Inquiry:** To ask a question to the speaker, at the appropriate time, raise your placard and call out “Inquiry.” The Chair will attempt to be fair and recognize a variety of people throughout the meeting. If you don’t get called upon the first time, don’t give up – chances are s/he saw you and will call on you the shortly; but s/he can’t if you don’t raise your placard again.

**Information:** This is very important, especially if you have never debated before. If something happens that you are not sure about within the debate structure, raise your placard to a point of parliamentary inquiry when the chair is accepting points or motions.

**Decorum:** Usually used only by the Chair (or our advisors), decorum means that there is too much noise or disruptive behavior during a speaker’s time. Complete silence must be maintained unless a person is called on to speak. Passing notes is recommended as long as they are relevant to the debate and not distracting to others.

**Motions:** Requests that a delegate makes at the proper time (the chair asks for motions) that are voted on by the body (if seconded by another delegate). The majority usually decides the outcome. (Several examples are below.)

Suspend:	A motion to suspend the rules generally occurs when a speaker has made a particularly moving speech (inspiring or aggravating) and many delegates wish to ask questions. When the chair indicates the speaker's time has elapsed, any delegate may motion to suspend the rules for additional questions (e.g., three) or a set period of time (e.g. two minutes.)
Unmoderated Caucus:	An unmoderated caucus occurs when several delegates feel a need to informally converse on a certain topic without the constraints of parliamentary procedure.
Moderated Caucus:	A moderated caucus occurs when enough delegates feel that hearing quick opinions from an array of speakers would be more beneficial than long speeches with questions.
Voting:	A vote is required for many aspects of debate, so it is important to know the ins and outs of voting. Votes on motions (e.g., to caucus, to adjourn) must be responded to with "Aye" for yes or "Nay" for no. (Side note – yelling 'aye' or 'nay' loudly does not trick the chair into thinking more people are on your side.) On votes for legislation, one can also "abstain" or be neutral on the issue. There is no talking during voting procedures (except of course the above words!).
Amendments:	Changes to legislation. Anyone can propose a change to legislation. Propose changes must be in writing, and instead of saying "floor," you say "floor to amend." The sponsors are then asked if your proposal is "friendly." If it is deemed friendly, the legislation is automatically changed. If "unfriendly," you have one minute to explain your amendment, and a sponsor has one minute for a rebuttal. Then the group votes on whether to accept your amendment.
Consider:	To introduce a new piece of legislation at a meeting, you have to write it and then make a motion to consider. If the chair recognizes your motion, you will have an opportunity to make a speech and take questions about it.
Close Debate:	A motion to end the debate and move into voting procedures.
Adjourn:	Meetings end when this motion is made, seconded and the majority is in favor.
Aye/Nay:	Parliamentary-speak for "yes" and "no."
Abstain:	Taking no position on a substantive issue (e.g., voting legislation up or down). One cannot abstain on a procedural matter (e.g., motions).

## **LOGIC**

Logic is essential to debate. Being aware of fallacies in one's own arguments and in those of others is extremely helpful. It can be particularly devastating to expose a persuasive speech as being predicated upon a logical fallacy; just do so in as delicate a way as possible to avoid coming off as a jerk!

### **Ad Hominem**

The person presenting an argument is attacked instead of the argument itself. This takes many forms. For example, the person's character, nationality or religion may be attacked. Alternatively, it may be pointed out that a person stands to gain from a favorable outcome. Or, finally, a person may be attacked by association, or by the company he keeps.