



ORDER OF OMEGA CHAPTER MEETINGS

Effective Meetings

Are your meetings long, dull, unproductive and unorganized? How your organization runs meetings can often determine its success. The nature of your organization determines the level of formality. Whether your group meetings are formal or informal, an effective leader strives for maximum participation and communication to maintain cohesiveness. Most of all, a meeting should allow a group to pull resources together for decision-making.

The following are some suggestions to assist you in making your next meeting productive, successful and fun:

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

- Develop an agenda with the assistance of your officers and advisor. This should be done at least one day in advance to allow time to obtain information, resources or materials.
- Planning an efficient agenda is the best way to ensure your meetings are thorough and expedient. It is strongly suggested that each member have the agenda and background material to refer to during the meeting. This will allow your members to feel more involved, up-to-date, as well as, prepared!

Below is a sample agenda:

1. Call to order
 2. Roll call (silent, oral or written)
 3. Correction or approval of the minutes
 4. Officer reports
 5. Standing committee reports
 6. Special committee reports
 7. Unfinished business
 8. New business
 9. Adjournment
- Select an appropriate time for your meeting. Set a time limit and stick to it! If your meetings are productive, predictable, and as short as possible, members will be more likely to attend. Choose a location which is appropriate for your group's size.
 - Check the seating arrangement before the meeting starts. Whenever possible, arrange your chairs in a semi-circle or circle to facilitate eye contact and maximum participation. A leader has better control when they he/she is centrally located.
 - Post a large agenda for the members. Use visual aids for interest (i.e. posters, diagrams.)

DURING THE MEETING

- Greet members and make them feel welcome. If possible, serve refreshments, which make your members feel special and welcome.
 - Start on time and finish in a timely manner.
 - Stick to your agenda.
 - Encourage group discussion to get all points of view and ideas. The results are better quality decisions, as well as, highly motivated members.
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- Encourage feedback. Ideas, involvement and commitment to your group improve when members see their impact in the decision-making process.
 - Keep your conversations moving toward a decision. Ask for only constructive and non-repetitive comments. Tactfully end discussions that are not going anywhere or are becoming unproductive.
 - Keep minutes for future reference in case a problem or question arises. Send a copy to your organization's advisor.
 - Be a role model by listening, showing interest, attentiveness and confidence in your members. Admit your mistakes.
 - Summarize agreements reached and end the meeting on a positive or unifying note.
 - Set the date, time and place for the next meeting.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Discuss with officers and your advisor any problems encountered during the meeting. Discuss methods for improvement.
- Try to hold members accountable for follow through on delegated responsibilities. See that all members understand and carry out responsibilities.
- Write up and distribute minutes within two days. Quick action reinforces the importance of meeting and reduces memory errors.
- Be sure to express your appreciation for the participation of any invited guests or speakers at your meeting.
- Place unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Conduct a periodic evaluation of the meetings. Weak areas should be analyzed and improved for more productive meetings.

We give credit to the University of Michigan Student Organization Development Center for the development of this information.

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Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary law has evolved as a set of procedures to protect the individual and the group in their exercise of the rights of free speech, free assembly and the freedom to unite in organizations for the achievement of a common aim. It is based on common sense and courtesy. It allows you to conduct your organization's business in an orderly and timely fashion. The following basic rules of procedure should be followed. For specific questions on the more technical aspects of parliamentary law refer to Robert's Rules of Order - Newly Revised.

FIVE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

1. Only one subject may be discussed at a given time.
 2. Each proposition presented for consideration is entitled to full and free debate.
 3. Every member has rights equal to every other member.
 4. The will of the majority must be carried out and the rights of the minority must be preserved.
 5. The personality and desires of each member should be merged into the larger unit of the organization.
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DEVELOPING AN AGENDA OR ORDER OF BUSINESS

It is customary for every group to adopt a standard order of business for meetings. When no rule has been adopted, the following is the order:

- Call to order
- Reading and approval of minutes
- Reports from officers and standing committees
- Reports from special committees
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Program
- Adjournment

MOTIONS

The proper way for an individual to propose the group take a certain action is by “making a motion.” The following is the process for handling a motion:

1. A member rises and addresses the presiding officer for recognition.
2. The member is recognized.
3. The member proposes a motion.
4. Another member must second the motion.
5. The presiding officer states the motion to the assembly.
6. The assembly can now discuss or debate the motion. Only one person at a time may speak. He/she must first be recognized by the presiding officer. Preference should be given to:
 - a. The person who proposed the motion.
 - b. A member who has not spoken yet to the motion.
 - c. A member who seldom speaks as opposed to one who frequently addresses the assembly.

The presiding officer should try to alternate between those favoring and those opposing the motion. Discussion must be confined to the question that is “before the house.”

7. The presiding officer takes the vote on the motion. Voting can be done by voice, show of hands or balloting.
8. The presiding officer announces the result.
9. The floor is now open and another motion can be proposed.

AMENDING A MOTION

The purpose of the motion TO AMEND is to modify a motion, which has already been presented in a way which will be more satisfactory to the members.

METHODS OF AMENDING

- Addition or insertion - To add something to the motion which it did not contain.
 - Elimination or By Striking Out - To eliminate something from a motion that was originally part of it.
 - Substitution - This method is a combination of the first two methods, since in amending by substitution something is stricken and something is inserted in its place. The substitution portion may consist of a word, a phrase, a clause, or an entirely new motion.
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The most important principle to understand in connection with any form of the motion TO AMEND is an amendment “MAY BE HOSTILE, BUT IT MUST BE GERMANE.”

‘**Hostile**’ means opposed to the spirit and aim of the motion to which it is applied.

‘**Germane**’ means having direct bearing upon the subject of the motion, that is, relevant or relating to it.

An amendment may be opposed to the actual intent of the original motion and, in fact, nullify it; but if it relates to the same subject matter, it is germane or relevant.

TYPES OF AMENDMENTS

- Amendment of the First Rank - an amendment to a motion.
- Amendment of the Second Rank - An amendment to the amendment. (The amendment to the amendment must modify and relate directly to the amendment and NOT to the main motion; otherwise it is OUT OF ORDER.)

NO AMENDMENTS BEYOND SECOND RANK

It is never in order to propose more than one amendment of each rank at a time. If you want to amend two separate, unrelated parts of a motion, this must be done by two amendments of the first rank. One must be voted upon before the other is proposed. It is possible to have a motion, one amendment to the motion (amendment of the first rank) and one amendment to the amendment (amendment of the second rank) before the assembly at once. Until the amendment of the second rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the second rank is in order. Likewise, until the amendment of the first rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the first rank can be proposed.

ORDER OF VOTING ON AMENDMENTS

Amendments are voted upon in inverse order; that is, the one of second rank is disposed of first.

- Discussion is held and the vote taken on the amendment to the amendment (amendment of the second rank.)
- Discussion is held and the vote is taken on the amendment to the motion (amendment of the first rank.)
- When the vote has been taken, discussion upon the original or main motion as amended is held; and when completed a vote is taken.

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Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance

To Do This:	You Say This:	Speaker?	Seconded?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote Required?
Adjourn the meeting	“I move that we...”	No	Yes	No	No	Majority Required
Recess the meeting	“I move that we recess until...”	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority Required
Complain about noise, room temperature, etc.	“Point of privilege.”	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote Required Decision of Chair
End debate	“I move the previous question.”	No	Yes	No	No	2/3 Vote Required
Postpone consideration of something	“I move we postpone this matter until...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority Required
Have something studied further	“I move we refer this matter to committee.”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority Required
Amend a motion	“I move that this motion be amended by..”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority Required
Introduce business	“I move that...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority Required
Object to procedure or to personal affront	“Point of Order.”	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote Required Decision of Chair
Request information	“Point of information.”	Yes, if urgent	No	No	No	No Vote Required

Ask for a vote by count to verify voice vote	“I call for a division of the house.”	No	No	No	No	No Vote Required Unless Objection Arises
Object to considering an undiplomatic or improper matter	“I object to the consideration of this question.”	No	No	No	No	2/3 Vote Required
Take up a matter previously tabled	“I move we take from the table...”	Yes	No	No	No	Majority Required
Reconsider something already disposed of	“I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to...”	Yes	Yes, If original motion is debatable	No	No	Majority Required
Consider something out of its scheduled order	“I move that we suspend the rules and consider...”	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 Vote Required
Vote on a ruling by the chair	“I appeal the Chair’s decision.”	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority Required

Minutes & Record Keeping

Being a secretary for your organization is not a job to take lightly. This responsibility should not be assigned/delegated to just anyone. Think about these responsibilities when you are considering who will fulfill this role:

- Is this person reliable; does he/she keep appointments?
- Is this person well organized; does he/she complete tasks in a timely way?
- Is this person on top of what is going on; is he/she able to appropriately weed out the trivial information and record the important facts for the record?

As you can see, the role of a secretary is more than “just taking minutes.” The secretary is responsible for complete, objective record-keeping; he/she is, in effect, the historian. What the secretary records will be referred to by current members as a reminder of finished and unfinished business, what actions were taken, and what needs follow-up. It will also be kept for future members to read to gain an understanding of where the organization has been and why.

Many organizations make it the secretary’s responsibility to notify the membership about upcoming meetings - time, date, location - as well as any important items to be discussed. It is critical that the secretary attend all meetings. If your organization has a structure which includes committees - be they *ad hoc* or standing - there always needs to be a secretary present to accurately record what has transpired. It is not necessary to take down everything unless members request their remarks be entered for the record. It is necessary, however, to take complete notes. Motions and resolutions do need to be taken verbatim and should be read back during the meeting to make sure they have been accurately recorded. (More information on minute taking is included below.)

It is the secretary’s responsibility to signal the chair and ask questions regarding the subject being discussed for purposes of clarification. A secretary should not wait until the meeting has been adjourned to clear up any confusion; individuals can lose their perspective, issues can become less important and one’s memory can alter what actually occurred.

Immediately after the meeting, the secretary must review his/her notes while everything is fresh for the following information:

- Type of meeting (executive, standing committee, etc.)
- Date, time and place
- Time of call to order
- Approval and/or amendments to previous meeting’s minutes
- Record of reports from standing and special committees
- General matters
- Record of proposals, resolutions, motions, seconding and final disposition, a summary of the discussion, record of vote.
- Time of adjournment
- Nomination of submission and transcriber’s name.

Once the minutes have been transcribed into draft form, they should be submitted to the chair for review and/or correction. Once returned, they need to be prepared in a formal format- preferably agreed upon beforehand for final approval at the next meeting. These minutes should be sent out to all members within a few days of the meeting. This allows members time to read the minutes for accuracy before the next meeting and while the previous meeting is still fresh in their minds.

Use a standard format when preparing minutes. Some helpful hints on format and final preparation are as follows:

- Capitalize and center the heading designating the meeting
- Indent paragraphs five spaces
- List names of those in attendance and those absent
- When recording sums of money write them first in words and then put the figures in ()
- Number each page at center bottom

MINUTE TAKING

It is often helpful for the secretary to prepare himself/herself before each meeting. He/She should read the minutes of previous meetings, paying attention to style and format and reviewing the agenda and any attached documents. If the organization has agreed upon a standard format for minutes, he/she can use a standardized form and fill in preliminary rough draft information before the meeting so that the discussion may be added as it occurs.

The secretary should be present at all meetings. If he/she is unable to attend, a substitute, preferably with the characteristics defined earlier, should be appointed. If a substitute is taking minutes, the following hints will make the job easier:

- Identify yourself before speaking
- Speak slowly
- Present motions in writing to the secretary (This is a good practice even when the regular secretary is present)
- Raise hands high during vote counting
- Summarize discussions

There are several ways to take minutes and each organization needs to choose the most appropriate method for them. Minutes can be recorded in writing or on tape. If you choose to tape the minutes, you can record the entire proceedings and listen to them later, pulling out the pertinent information following the guidelines related earlier. Taping an entire meeting is an extreme form of minute taking and can be very time consuming; it is akin to sitting through the same meeting twice!

A second, more practical option is to record a *summary* of debates, agreements and disagreements with a sufficient explanation of the character of each.

The third method is to tape *action* minutes whereby the very essence of decisions reached and responsibilities assigned is recorded. In any of these cases, make note of the following:

- The names of people proposing any action, stating an opinion or making a motion
- Any motions, resolutions, amendments, decisions or conclusions (Take down word-for-word)
- Who seconded the motion
- Whether or not a motion was withdrawn and what assignments were made and to whom

It is often helpful for both minute taking and for those attending the meeting to have either the chair or the secretary summarize decisions reached. The summarizer should be most careful in clarifying points of greatest controversy.

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