

Senate Constitution and Rules of Procedure

As described in the Bylaws of St. Thomas University, to the Senate "is entrusted the internal academic regulations of the University, subject to the approval of the Board." Thus, Senate shall have the duty and the power to control, regulate and determine the academic character of the University according to the mission of the University. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Senate shall not act contrary to the Collective Agreements between the University and the Faculty Association of St. Thomas University. Nor shall Senate act contrary to the Bylaws of the University.

- I. Without restricting the generality of the foregoing, Senate shall have the duty and the power to:
 1. establish its own Constitution and Rules of Procedure, which it may amend within its own authority. Amendments to the Senate Constitution and Rules of Procedure may only be enacted by a two-thirds majority of Senate members. Notices to amend the Senate Constitution and Rules of Procedure must be placed on the agenda at least one meeting prior to the meeting at which the matter is to be considered.
 2. regulate the curriculum, the programmes of study and the courses of study of the University;
 3. establish the academic and other qualifications required of applicants for admission as students to the University or to any of its programmes of study;
 4. approve candidates for degrees in course, diplomas, certificates and honorary degrees;
 5. review and make recommendations on those financial matters of the University which pertain to the academic affairs of the University;
 6. approve the establishment or discontinuance of any programme of study, department, course of instruction, chair, fellowship, scholarship, bursary, or prize;
 7. regulate the awarding of fellowships, scholarships, bursaries, and prizes;
 8. control the academic content of the University calendar and provide for its preparation and publication;
 9. deal with matters referred to the Senate by departments as affecting these departments;
 10. appoint representatives of Senate (See Appendix B "Senate Representation");
 11. deal with matters referred to the Senate by the Board of Governors and make recommendations to the Board of Governors promoting the interests of the University;

12. fix the academic terms of affiliation with other universities, colleges or other institutions of learning;

13. make or amend any University rule or regulation concerning the academic affairs of the University, providing the rule or regulation so made or amended is consistent with the provisions of the Act incorporating St. Thomas University

- II. Senate shall provide orientation materials and other such education as required for all new members of Senate.

Meetings

- 1) Regular meetings of Senate shall be held monthly during the academic year, and as necessary at other times;
- 2) Regular meetings may be cancelled when there is insufficient business; the Chair shall determine when there is insufficient business;
- 3) The secretary shall publish the annual schedule of regular meetings;
- 4) Meetings shall not exceed three hours unless extended by a motion duly put and passed before expiry of the three hours;
- 5) The secretary shall circulate an advance call for agenda items two weeks prior to the date of each meeting;
- 6) The agenda and supporting documents shall be circulated one week in advance of the scheduled meeting;
- 7) Business normally will be limited to those items that appear on the circulated agenda and that have supporting documentation circulated with the agenda and to those motions notice of which has been given at a previous meeting;
- 8) Senate meetings are open to all members of the University community;
- 9) Provision is hereby made for meetings or parts of meetings to be held in camera for due cause;
- 10) Observers are not to speak or participate in discussions in Senate except when invited by the Chair.

Special Meetings

- 1) The Chair may call special meetings of the Senate;
- 2) The Chair is required to call a special meeting of Senate within one week of a request signed by ten members of Senate;
- 3) Special meetings scheduled with less than one week's notice require a quorum of 50% of Senate members in order to proceed.

Order of Business

The order of business shall usually follow this sequence:

1. approval of agenda
2. announcements
3. minutes of the preceding meeting
4. business arising from the minutes
5. pending business
6. reports
7. new business
8. President's report
9. question period

Secretary and Records

- 1) The minutes and all other Senate records shall be maintained by, and held in the custody of, the Secretary;
- 2) The Secretary shall maintain a current record of Senate decisions in a policy handbook;
- 3) The Secretary shall circulate the Senate minutes to all members of Senate within two weeks of the meeting.

Rules of Order and Procedure

Except where otherwise specified, Senate's rules of order are Bourinot's *Rules of Order*. In matters of dispute not covered by these rules, the Chair's decision will prevail unless overturned by a motion properly put and passed. (A brief summary of the main provisions concerning procedure for the Senate is set out in Appendix D.)

Quorum

The quorum for meetings of the Senate shall be 50% of the membership.

Summary of Rules and Procedures

The summaries that follow are constructed from quotations and paraphrases of Bourinot's *Rules of Order* (Third Revised Edition).

1. Motions (B36 and 37)

Once a motion has been moved and seconded, the Chair then restates the motion and by so doing puts the question to the meeting and opens the debate. When properly before the meeting a motion may be withdrawn by its mover and seconder only with assent of the meeting as a whole.

In the course of debate the motion may be amended in various ways, or action may be taken to delay or defer its effect, but it must remain before the meeting until it is finally disposed of in one way or another.

When a vote has been taken and the motion declared either carried or lost, that decision becomes formally the decision of the body in question and is so recorded. A question once decided cannot be brought up again at the same meeting.

If it should become necessary to rescind a motion that has been passed, notice of intention can be given at one meeting and a motion for rescindment be introduced and dealt with at a subsequent meeting. To be adopted, a motion to rescind requires a two-thirds majority, minus abstentions.

2. Amendments (B38)

An amendment may change a word or words in a motion, add words to it, or delete words from it. It must not merely negate a motion, since this result can be obtained by voting against it. The amending motion must be seconded.

An amending motion must be strictly relevant to the main motion and must be made while the main motion is under consideration. It must not alter in a material way the principle embodied in the main motion but should merely vary its terms in one or more particulars. Just as an amendment may be moved to a main motion, so an amendment may be moved to an amendment. The conditions applicable in the case of an original amendment are equally applicable to a secondary, or subamendment: it may propose a variation in the terms of the original amendment but it must not materially alter the underlying intent of either the original amendment or the main motion. Usually only two amendments to a question, namely an amendment and a subamendment, will be allowed at the same time.

Motions and amendment are to be considered in reverse order, from subamendment through amendment to the main motion.

3) Notice of Motion (B39)

A senator who wishes to move the rescindment of a Senate decision, or an amendment to Senate's bylaws, must give notice of that motion under new business. In so doing, she or he must state the text of the motion, and indicate at which future meeting of Senate it is to be considered. Notice of motion requires no seconder, and is not debatable.

4) Special Motions (B40)

a) Motion to adjourn before business is complete must be seconded, but is not debatable;

b) Motion to proceed to the next item of business must be seconded and is not debatable. If the motion is carried, the item cannot be reintroduced at the same meeting;

c) Motion to call the question must be seconded and may be debated, but not amended;

d) Motion to table must be seconded and is debatable;

e) Motion to refer to, or back to, a committee, must be seconded and may be amended and debated, but only with respect to the reference, and not to the main subject at issue. It cannot be superseded by a motion to proceed or table.

5) Putting the Question (B42 and 43)

Questions are normally decided by voice vote. If the chair is uncertain of the result, she or he may ask for a show of hands.

Prior to the putting of the question, the senators may specify that the vote should be by show of hands or by secret ballot. A motion to proceed by show of hands or secret ballot must be seconded and is debatable.

Unless otherwise specified, motions are carried by a majority of those voting. In the case of a tie, the motion fails.

Because a member should hear the full arguments, there shall be no provision for absentee voting by mail or by proxy.

6) Point of Order (B44)

A senator may raise a point of order at any time. The chair shall rule on the validity of the point, and his or her ruling is not debatable; but that ruling may be overturned by a duly seconded motion. The motion to overrule the chair is debatable.

A chair who does not wish to rule on a point of order to procedure may ask Senate to decide by calling for an appropriate motion.

7) Privilege (B45)

Questions of privilege may be raised in the course of debate, but not so as to interrupt a speaker who has the floor. Such questions usually have to do with the rights or interests of the assembly as a whole or of a member personality... The chair must decide if the question is properly one of privilege ... and if he or she decides in the affirmative, the matter must be dealt with forthwith and be disposed of before debate on the main issue is resumed.