



# MOTION REGARDING ADOPTION OF THE STANDING RULES FOR THE 2019-2020 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 2019-09-10

Submitted for: September 10, 2019

**WHEREAS**, Robert's Rules of Order provides a general framework for formal, efficient group meetings by balancing the rights of members while facilitating democratic debate and decision-making;

**WHEREAS**, Standing Rules are mechanisms by which Robert's Rules can be fine-tuned for any given group, such as the Students' Society of McGill University ("the Society") Legislative Council;

**BE IT RESOLVED, THAT** the Society's Legislative Council adopt the Standing Rules in Appendix A to maximize the efficiency of council meetings.

Moved By:

Bryan Buraga, *President*

Seconded by:

Adin Chan, *Arts Representative*



# STANDING RULES FOR THE 2019-2020 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

1. Scope
  - 1.1. The following rules may be suspended by a three-quarters ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) majority vote at any time in accordance with 6.4 of the Internal Regulations of Governance.
2. Decorum
  - 2.1. All members of the Legislative Council must carry themselves with decorum to demonstrate the respect they hold for their office.
  - 2.2. All members must strive for punctuality.
    - 2.2.1. Consistent tardiness will merit warning, and may or may not result in suspension as per the Accountability Committee and/or the Speaker's discretion in accordance with 3.4 of the Internal Regulations of Governance.
  - 2.3. Two (2) unexcused absences, even if they are not consecutive, will result in immediate suspension in accordance with 3.4 of the Internal Regulations of Governance.
  - 2.4. Notwithstanding the Internal Regulations of Governance, a given Councillor may only send a proxy under the following conditions:
    - 2.4.1. The proxy holds an elected position within the same Faculty Association or non-faculty constituency (i.e., Athletics, Clubs, First Year Council, Residences, Senate Caucus, and Services) as the Councillor.
    - 2.4.2. The Councillor has sent written or electronic notice to the Speaker with the name, constituency, and elected position of the proxy at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of the meeting.
    - 2.4.3. Each Councillor may only send a proxy a maximum of two (2) times in the given academic year.
  - 2.5. Absences will be excused on a case-by-case basis by the Accountability Committee for the following non-exhaustive set of reasons:



- 2.5.1. Physical illness, mental health issues, family/friend emergency, and an assessment that conflicts with the time of Council meetings.
      - 2.5.2. If an absent Councillor arranges a proxy to take their place, the said absence will be excused so long as the proxy maximum has not been surpassed.
    - 2.6. All members must refrain from speaking when they do not have the floor.
    - 2.7. The following may be ruled as out of order by the Speaker at their discretion, subject to a successful Point of Order by Councillors:
      - 2.7.1. Disrespectful or discourteous language and behaviour.
      - 2.7.2. Comments that make reference to personalities or motivations.
      - 2.7.3. Statements that contravene the Charte des droits et libertés de la personne (Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms), and/or the spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
      - 2.7.4. Disruption or hindrance of the ability of the meeting to continue in good order, including but not limited to, speaking out of turn, engaging in side conversations, knocking on desks, clapping, snapping, and other behaviour deemed by the Speaker to be disruptive.
      - 2.7.5. Misgendering of Councillors, whether intentional or not.
        - 2.7.5.1. Councillors must address each other formally, usually in the form “Councillor [Last Name]”, and avoid referring to one another using third person pronouns to promote a cordial environment.
        - 2.7.5.2. Should any Councillor notice the misgendering of another Councillor, they may call this to the attention of the Speaker on a Point of Personal Privilege.
        - 2.7.5.3. Should a Councillor be misgendered but does not feel comfortable raising a Point of Personal Privilege themselves during the meeting, they may contact the Speaker who will raise it during the next meeting of Legislative Council.
    - 2.8. The Speaker is vested with the authority to remove any individual from the meeting for repeated or extraordinary violations of the Standing Rules or Internal Regulations of Governance and may seek assistance to carry out this order when required.
    - 2.9. When Guest Speakers are present, all laptops, excluding those of the dais, must be closed in respect to the Guest Speaker.
  3. Reports
    - 3.1. All Executives must submit a report detailing their activities related to the Society since the last Monday in which the previous report was submitted.



- 3.2. All Councillors representing a constituency and Committees must submit a report detailing their activities related to their constituency to-date and those planned for the remainder of the semester on a rotating basis following a schedule determined by the Speaker.
- 3.3. All reports must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM ET five (5) days immediately preceding Council generally the Sunday, with the exception of the Funding Committee and Club Committee.
- 3.4. Late reports shall be equivalent to half of one absence for the purposes of determining suspension in accordance with 3.4 of the Internal Regulations of Governance, unless excused by the Accountability Committee per 2.5 of the Standing Rules.
- 3.5. Failure to submit a report shall be equivalent to one absence for the purposes of determining suspension in accordance with 2.3 of the Standing Rules, unless excused by the Accountability Committee per 2.5 of the Standing Rules.
4. Speaking
  - 4.1. The Speaker reserves the right to interject or interrupt at any time when responding to a Point of Information, Point of Parliamentary Inquiry, to enforce Robert's Rules, the Standing Rules, and/or the Internal Regulations of Governance, or to maintain order.
    - 4.1.1. The Speaker may extend this right to the Parliamentarian at their discretion.
  - 4.2. To speak, members must raise their placards to alert the Speaker.
  - 4.3. When another member has the floor, no other placard may be raised in order to be respectful of the member speaking, except where allowed by Robert's Rules.
    - 4.3.1. When rising with an interrupting point or motion as defined by Robert's Rules, members must raise their placards and hold them high while waiting to be recognized.
  - 4.4. When granted speaking rights, members must address the Speaker and use a microphone should one be available.
  - 4.5. The following time limits for speaking will be enforced by the Speaker. A simple majority can extend all time limits:
    - 4.5.1. A default speaking time of one (1) minute.
    - 4.5.2. A default speaking time for Councillor reports of three (3) minutes.
    - 4.5.3. A default speaking time for Executive and Committee reports of five (5) minutes.



- 4.6. The default speaking times for Councillor, Executive and Committee reports will be immediately followed by a question period of five (5) minutes.
- 4.7. Unless a member requests otherwise, their placard should include their pronouns, in both English and French. Members may request their pronouns be added, removed, or changed at any time.
- 4.8. Guest Speakers and members of the gallery should be asked to introduce themselves by the Speaker with their Constituency/Faculty/Position, Name, and Gender Pronoun.
- 4.9. The official Minutes should use the correct pronouns as provided from 4.7 and 4.8 above, or gender-neutral pronouns if unspecified.
5. Presentations and Generative Discussion
  - 5.1. To help facilitate the generation of ideas, process of consultation, and collection of feedback, members of the Legislative Council may submit generative discussion items to the Steering Committee within the same deadlines as for Main Motions set out in 6.2 of these Standing Rules.
    - 5.1.1. A report or other relevant background information should be submitted to the Parliamentarian to provide members of the Legislative Council with sufficient context by the submission deadline for Main Motions.
    - 5.1.2. Generative Discussion items may not be raised from the floor.
  - 5.2. Generative Discussion items shall be structured debate moderated by the Speaker but shall not have a motion or resolution flowing from them.
  - 5.3. Each Generative Discussion item shall have a maximum of ten (10) minutes on the floor, subject to a motion to extend this time.
  - 5.4. There shall be a maximum of three (3) Generative Discussion and Guest Presentation items on each agenda of the Legislative Council.
    - 5.4.1. The Steering Committee is vested with the authority to select which Generative Discussion items and Guest Presentations are inscribed on each agenda.
6. Main Motions
  - 6.1. Main motions require one (1) Mover and one (1) Seconder to be presented before the Legislative Council, with the following stipulations:
    - 6.1.1. The Mover and Seconder may not both be members of the Executive.
    - 6.1.2. The foregoing rules shall not apply for motions that must be moved only by the Executive (e.g., the budget).



- 6.2. Members must submit main motions to the Parliamentarian by 11:59 PM ET seven (7) days preceding Council, generally on the Thursday prior.
    - 6.2.1. The recommendations of the Steering Committee will be sent to the Mover and Seconder within 48 hours of the above deadline. Movers will then have until 11:59 PM ET five (5) days prior to the meeting of the Legislative Council to submit the final version of the motion to the Parliamentarian.
      - 6.2.1.1. At this point, the motions can no longer be amended before Council, including the withdrawal of Movers and Seconders.
    - 6.2.2. During Council, after the Mover and Seconder have had the opportunity to motivate their motion for a maximum of two (2) minutes, a question period of a maximum of five (5) minutes shall precede debate.
  - 6.3. The Mover of a Notice of Motion shall be allowed a maximum of two (2) minutes to introduce their motion and provide context.
    - 6.3.1. There shall be no question period or debate following an introduction of a Notice of Motion.
  - 6.4. Any motion submitted after the deadline enumerated in 6.2 of these Standing Rules shall automatically be considered a Notice of Motion.
  - 6.5. In the case of urgent business, the requirements set out by 6.2 and 6.3 of these Standing Rules may be waived by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Legislative Council in accordance with 11.2 of the Internal Regulations of Governance.
  - 6.6. Prior to the start of Old Business, the Speaker shall request a motion for a five (5) minute recess to allow Councillors to vote on all motions inscribed on the agenda using the prescribed electronic means with two options: Approve or Debate.
    - 6.6.1. Should any motion not receive unanimous consent on the “Approve” side, the motion shall be subject to the regular course of question period, debate, and vote as set out in the Internal Regulations of Governance and these Standing Rules.
    - 6.6.2. A motion receiving unanimous consent shall be approved without question period, debate, or a formal vote and shall be listed as a consent motion in the public voting record and in the minutes.
    - 6.6.3. The individual votes of Councillors on consent items will not be shared publicly. The regular voting record for formally questioned, debated, and voted on motions will continue to be published.
7. Subsidiary, Incidental, and Privileged Motions



- 7.1. The following list simplifies the order of precedence for all motions from highest to lowest in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. Motions with a smaller number (i.e., closer to 7) have precedence over those with a larger number (i.e., closer to 8):
  - 7.1.1. Incidental Motions (when in order)
    - 7.1.1.1. Incidental motions are to be considered in temporal order as they have no defined order of precedence within themselves.
    - 7.1.1.2. Appeal the decision of the chair, consideration by paragraph or seriatim, division of a question, division of the assembly, motions relating to nominations, motions relating to methods of voting and the polls, objection to the consideration of a question, request to be excused from a duty, suspend the rules, point of parliamentary inquiry, request of information, point of order, and request for permission to withdraw or modify a motion.
  - 7.1.2. Privileged Motions
    - 7.1.2.1. Vacate the Chair
    - 7.1.2.2. Fix time to adjourn (if another question is pending)
    - 7.1.2.3. Adjourn
    - 7.1.2.4. Recess (if another question is pending)
    - 7.1.2.5. Raise a question of privilege
    - 7.1.2.6. Call for orders of the day
  - 7.1.3. Subsidiary Motions
    - 7.1.3.1. Lay on the Table
    - 7.1.3.2. Previous Question/Calling the Question
    - 7.1.3.3. Limit or extend limits of debate
    - 7.1.3.4. Postpone to a certain time
    - 7.1.3.5. Commit or refer
    - 7.1.3.6. Amend
    - 7.1.3.7. Postpone indefinitely
  - 7.1.4. Main Motion
8. Amendments
  - 8.1. All amendments must be submitted to the Speaker and Parliamentarian in writing.
  - 8.2. Amendments that correct language, spelling, grammar, singularity or plurality, or sentence structure without altering the intention of the motion do not require an amendment and shall be corrected by the Steering Committee automatically.
  - 8.3. After a motion has been motivated by its Mover and Seconder but before the question period begins, friendly amendments may be made only if the Mover and Seconder unanimously accept them. They will be included without debate or a vote.



- 8.4. After inclusion of friendly amendments (if any), a question period shall follow.
- 8.5. Upon the exhaustion of the question period, the motion becomes the property of the floor and debate may begin.
- 8.6. Subsequent friendly amendments may be made once the motion is property of the floor only if no other member objects.
- 8.7. In the case of objection by a member, the proposed amendment will follow the general amendment process.
- 8.8. Once an amendment has been proposed, it must be seconded before debate on the amendment may begin.
- 8.9. At the exhaustion of the debate period or with no further debate, a vote on the amendment will be called requiring a simple majority.
9. Voting
  - 9.1. For all Main Motions and subsidiary motions of substance as determined by the Speaker, an electronically recorded vote will be considered the default voting method. At their discretion, the Speaker will waive this requirement and inform the Legislative Council when they are doing so.
  - 9.2. After entering voting procedure, Councillors have a right to motion for any other voting method (as per Robert's Rules). This will follow debate and a majority vote.