



**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT COUNCIL  
MODESTO A. MAIDIQUE CAMPUS**

# **SENATE RULES OF PROCEDURE**

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## **RULE I.** Composition of the Senate

### **Section 1.01** Officers of the Senate

#### (a) Speaker of the Senate

- (i) The Senate Speaker shall be the chief executive and administrative officer of the Senate.
- (ii) The Speaker shall chair all Senate meetings.
- (iii) The Senate Speaker shall preserve and enforce parliamentary law, the rules and procedures of the Senate, maintain the decorum of meetings, and shall serve as an arbiter of the Senate.
- (iv) The Senate Speaker shall issue subpoenas to Student Government Council Officers, Senators, and officers of Student Government Council-funded organizations on behalf of the Senate in cases of investigations and hearings.
- (v) The Speaker of the Senate or the Speaker's designee may administer oaths to Student Body Officers, Officials, Senators, and officers of Student Government-funded organizations in cases of investigations and hearings.
- (vi) The Speaker of the Senate shall have all other powers and duties listed in these Rules and Procedures.
- (vii) The Speaker shall preserve order and decorum in the Senate Chambers and, in the case of disturbance or disorderly conduct, may have members or guests of the Senate removed.

#### (b) Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate

- (i) The Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate shall serve as the Chair of the Senate whenever the elected Senate Speaker is absent from the chair, and shall be referred.
- (ii) The Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate shall assist the President of the Senate in fulfilling the duties of said office.
- (iii) The Pro-Temp shall assist the Speaker in his/her duties and shall assume the role of the Speaker in the event of the Speaker's absence or dismissal.



(c) Committee Chairpersons

- (i) Each committee of the Senate shall have a Chairperson, who shall be the administrative officer of the respective committee.
- (ii) The Chairpersons of each of the Standing Committees shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the Senate at a regular meeting of the new term prior to July 1.
- (iii) Each committee chairperson shall chair the respective committee's meetings and hearings.

(d) Committee Vice Chairpersons

- (i) Each committee of the Senate shall have a Vice Chairperson, who shall assist the Chairperson with the administrative duties of the respective committee.
- (ii) The Vice Chairpersons of each of the Standing Committees shall be elected by a simple majority vote of their committee on the first day of their meeting.

(e) Clerk of Council

- (i) The Clerk of Council shall serve as the recording office of the Senate.
- (ii) The Clerk is responsible for the recording, filing and archiving of the meeting agenda, minutes and legislation, conflict of interest disclosures, and absence excuses for the Senate.
- (iii) The Clerk shall be responsible for submitting approved legislation to the President.
  - 1) Once the President has signed or vetoed a piece of legislation, the Clerk shall notify the Speaker, who shall announce the action before the Senate on the next meeting.

(f) Senate Pages

- (i) The Senate Pages shall be responsible for assisting the Clerk of Council in the recording and distribution of minutes, legislation and other literature during meetings.
- (ii) Senate Pages shall also be responsible for fulfilling duties assigned by the Speaker of the Senate necessary for the conduction of Senate meetings.
- (iii) Senate Pages shall be selected from the Intern class and selected by the Speaker and Clerk of Council.
  - 1) Pages shall not be considered SGC officials for any purposes, other than those specified here.



(g) Senate Officers Selection Process.

- (i) During the first meeting of the Summer semester, the Vice President shall administer the oath to the new Student Senate. In cases of filled vacancies, the Senate Speaker shall administer the oath.
  - 1) The oath shall read as follows: *"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States, the constitution and the laws of the state of Florida, the Constitution and the laws of the Student Government Association of Florida International University, and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter, to the best of my ability"*
- (ii) Following inauguration and installation of the new Student Senate, in the Fall semester, the SGC Vice President shall convene and call to order the organizational meeting of the Senate for the purpose of electing the Senate Speaker. Upon election, the Senate Speaker shall immediately assume the chair and proceed with the election of the Senate Speaker Pro Tempore. The Senate Speaker Pro Tempore shall assume office immediately upon election.
- (iii) Nominations and selections for the Speaker, Speaker Pro Tempore and Committee Chairpersons shall be designated by the SGC-MMC Vice President and shall be no later than three Senate meetings into the Summer legislative session.
- (iv) The nominee must accept or decline the nomination, after which, the nominee shall be allowed to speak for two minutes, while all other nominees wait outside the Senate chambers.
- (v) After all nominees leave the chamber, the Senate shall be allowed to hold a discussion prior to the Senate vote.

**Section 1.02 Rules**

- (a) The Senate shall abide by the Student Government Council - Modesto A. Maidique Campus governing documents in the following order of precedence:
  - (i) Constitution
  - (ii) Statutes
  - (iii) Senate Rules of Procedure
  - (iv) Robert's Rules of Order



## **RULE II. Meetings of the Senate**

### **Section 2.01 Meeting Time and Place**

- (a) The Senate shall convene every Monday during the Fall and Spring semesters at 4:00 p.m. in the Student Government chambers located in room GC 150.
- (b) For Emergency Meetings, the time and place shall be announced with forty-eight hours of anticipation.

### **Section 2.02 Duration**

- (a) All general meetings of the Senate shall last up to two (2) hours.
- (b) Emergency meetings' and Special Sessions' duration shall be specified in the notification.

### **Section 2.03 Emergency Meetings Procedure**

- (a) Both the Speaker and 2/3 of the Senate can call for an emergency session of Senate within forty-eight hours (48) of notification.
  - (i) Notification must take place either via email, or in person notification.

### **Section 2.04 Agenda**

- (a) The agenda for each Senate meeting shall be produced by the Clerk of Council and communicated to all the members of the Senate at least twenty four (24) hours prior to each Senate meeting.
  - (i) The agenda shall include all legislation submitted to the Speaker of the Senate, Clerk of Council and the Rules, Legislation and Judiciary Committee.
  - (ii) Failure to submit to any of the parties mentioned shall require a two-thirds Senate vote to include in the Agenda.
  - (iii) The Speaker shall reserve the power to deny a piece of legislation from being included in the agenda.
    - 1) This decision may be overturned with a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate.
- (b) Modifications to the agenda may be made with a simple majority vote of the Senate.

### **Section 2.05 Procedures**

- (a) Any legislation presented to the Senate for the purpose of a vote must first have two (2) Senators as sponsors in order to be brought before the Senate as new business.
- (b) Each piece of legislation in order to be passed through the Senate shall be required to be read a minimum of two (2) times with each reading occurring at separate meetings of the Senate at which there is quorum.



- (i) Readings shall be by title only, except when otherwise called for by simple majority of those present and voting, in which case, one of the bill's cosponsors shall read the bill in its entirety.
- (ii) The Senate may vote to override the second reading with a simple majority vote in order to proceed with legislation during the same meeting.

### **RULE III. Attendance in the Senate**

#### **Section 3.01 Quorum**

- (a) A quorum to conduct business is the simple majority of the total membership of the Senate.
- (b) Any Senator may raise a point of order regarding the presence of a quorum, at which point the Speaker of the Senate shall instruct the Clerk of Council to call the roll.

#### **Section 3.02 Absences**

- (a) To be counted as present, Student Government Council members must be present for a majority of the meeting.
  - (i) Senators who are tardy and/or leave early, and stay for less than the majority of the meeting shall be considered absent, regardless of whether they presented an excuse. Should a senator have submitted an excuse for late arrival or early departure, then the absence shall be considered excused; otherwise the absence is considered unexcused.
  - (ii) Senators may attend Senate meetings virtually only during the summer semester in the case that they have an excused absence.
  - (iii) The Clerk of Council shall be responsible for recording the time of arrival for tardy senators, and time of departure for those who leave early.
- (b) Senators shall not be allowed more than two (2) unexcused absences from Senate meetings per Fall and per Spring Semester (Summer semester excluded)
  - (i) For an absence to be considered excused, the senator shall notify the Senate Speaker and Clerk of Council no later than 30 minutes before the meeting.
  - (ii) Upon the second unexcused absence, the senator shall be notified by the Internal Affairs Committee or Committee Chair.
  - (iii) The notification shall inform the Senator that they are at risk of being reviewed for impeachment, upon the second unexcused absence the Senator shall have their voting rights and floor privileges suspended and placed on priority review for impeachment.
  - (iv) The Senator may have the choices of resignation or to defend their case before the Senate during the impeachment trial.



- (v) Senators that come in to a Senate meeting more than fifteen (15) minutes without providing prior notification or documented proof for being tardy to the Speaker and Internal Affairs chair by the end of that day (11:59 P.M.) will have their attendance for that meeting marked as an unexcused absence.
- (vi) If a Senator leaves a Senate meeting prior to 5:01 P.M., if it is a full time meeting or the majority time of a meeting that ends sooner will be considered absent.
- (vii) Senators that have a class that begins at 5 P.M. or later during Senate meetings and have documented proof that the class is the only one offered and will affect the Senator's graduation will be excused from being counted absent for leaving early.
  - (1) Documented proof will include a written statement from the Professor, Dean and Academic Advisor.
  - (2) Senators that fall under this exemption will be required to make up the time missed during the Senate meeting in the form of one (1) additional office hour in the same week of the Senate meeting.
- (viii) Failure to enforce this requirement within one (1) week of the third unexcused absence shall constitute a violation of this statute and will amount to a nonfeasance of duties of the Internal Affairs Committee.

#### **RULE IV. Floor Rules**

##### **Section 4.01 Rules of Order**

- (a) Every Senate meeting shall run in accordance to Robert's Rules of Order, and to be supervised by the Judiciary Parliamentarian. The Judiciary Parliamentarian may be the Chief Justice or an Associate Justice as appointed by the Chief Justice.
- (b) The Speaker shall reserve the right to deny excessive clearly dilatory motions.
- (c) The Senate shall be able to appeal any decision of the Speaker with a majority vote.

##### **Section 4.02 Floor Privileges**

- (a) Only senators who are able to vote shall be able to speak on the floor upon recognition of the Speaker of the Senate.
- (b) Speaking privileges may be granted to those without them with permission from the Speaker of Senate.
  - (i) Speaking privileges may be granted as well by a simple majority vote of the



Senate.

- (c) The following officials shall be allowed to speak before the Senate as is necessary, subject to recognition by the Speaker of Senate or the Senate with a simple majority vote, and shall have a total of five minutes each to yield to other speakers, so long as the presentation remains germane to the presentation of the yielding official.
  - (i) The President, Vice President, and Comptroller of the Student Body
  - (ii) The President-elect, Vice President-elect of the Student Body
  - (iii) Any officer of the Student Government Council and its Governing Councils
  - (iv) Any Justice of the Supreme Court of the Student Body
  - (v) Any University Administrative Officer or Dean

#### **Section 4.03** Obtaining the Floor

- (a) A Senator who wishes to deliver or speak on any matter of the Senate shall raise their hand, name placard, or rise and address the Speaker of the Senate by title and/or name.
- (b) When more than one (1) Senator wishes to speak, the Speaker of the Senate shall rule on the order in which they speak.
- (c) The Speaker of Senate must recognize any individual by title and/or name before they can speak in the Senate Floor.
- (d) When a Senator is recognized, the Senator shall remain seated or rise to address the Senate.

#### **Section 4.04** Dressing Standard

- (a) While in the chamber, members of the Senate must not wear any apparel that demonstrates any exterior affiliation, including greek associations, political parties, and other universities including but not limited to t-shirts, stickers, pins, and buttons.
- (b) Senators are expected to wear business professional attire, business casual attire, or SGA uniform while in the chambers.
- (c) Members of the Senate determined to be in violation of these standards shall be dismissed at the discretion of the Speaker of the Senate or with a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Senate and marked absent in the roll.

#### **Section 4.05** Behavioral Standard

- (a) Senators are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and decorous manner.
- (b) Senators are expected to refrain from using profanity or making indecent statements.
- (c) Senators are expected to refrain from making direct or indirect attacks on any official



of the SGC, presenting organizations, representatives, guest speakers, or members of attending public during any meeting of the Senate.

- (d) Senators are expected to address any SGC official, presenting organizations, representatives, guest speakers, or members of the attending public with courtesy and respect.
- (e) Senators are expected to attend meetings of the Senate and or Committee meetings not under the influence of any substance that impairs them visually, auditorily, and/or orally to any degree.
- (f) Senators are expected to actively participate or pay attention to the business of the Senate.
- (g) Members of the Senate determined to be in violation of these standards shall be dismissed at the discretion of the Speaker of the Senate or with a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Senate and marked absent in the roll.

#### **Section 4.06 Readings**

- (a) Senators may call for the reading of any section of the Student Government Association Constitution and Statutes, Rules of Procedures of the Student Senate, or Robert's Rules of Order as it pertains to any motion, parliamentary inquiry, or point of order being heard.
  - (i) Should a senator object to the reading, the question of entertaining the reading shall be put to a vote without debate, requiring a majority for the reading to be entertained.
  - (ii) The Judicial Parliamentarian of the Senate, or, in their absence, the Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate shall perform all readings to the Senate.

#### **Section 4.07 Prohibitions**

- (a) Senators shall not consume food or beverages in the SGC chambers while a meeting is in session.
- (b) Senators and officials in Senate meetings shall not use electronic devices for non-official purposes while the senate is in session.
- (c) Senators shall not wear or brandish apparel that substantially disrupts the business of any Senate or Committee meeting.

### **RULE V. Debate Rules**

#### **Section 5.01 Times and Limitations of Debate**

- (a) Pursuant to Article 3, Section 3.05, Subsection (c), Sub-subsection (iii), Paragraph (1) -





The Senate shall adopt a special rule which would not limit the number of times that Senators can speak during a particular debate.

**Section 5.02** Legislation

- (a) Any bill, appropriation, or resolution shall be debated pursuant to the rules of this section.
- (b) Readings shall be by title only, except when otherwise called for by simple majority of those present and voting, in which case, one of the bill's cosponsors shall read the bill in its entirety.
- (c) The authors and sponsors of the legislation shall present the legislation through opening statements or a presentation to the Senate limited to five (5) minutes.
  - (i) Opening statements or presentations are to only present the contents and effect of the bill.
  - (ii) Opening statements or presentations are not to present on the merits or defense of the legislation.
  - (iii) Any author or sponsor may yield any amount of their allotted time to person(s) without speaking privileges upon recognition by the Speaker of the Senate and approval of simple majority vote of the Senate.
- (d) A period of non-debatable technical questioning shall be held of the legislation's authors and sponsors limited to five (5) minutes.
  - (i) Speaking privileges shall be granted to those without them for the term of the non-debatable technical questioning.
  - (ii) A non-debatable technical question shall be any question that can be answered with "yes," "no," or a known fact.
  - (iii) The legislation's authors and sponsors may not be compelled to answer a question.
  - (iv) The question period may be extended by a majority vote.
  - (v) If there are no questions to be asked, the Senate shall move into debate.
- (e) A period of pro/con debate shall be held.
  - (i) Rounds of pro debate and con debate, in alternation by the Speaker of the Senate, with each round limited to four (4) minutes, two (2) of which shall be afforded to each of the pros and two (2) to each of the cons.
  - (ii) Any Senator may yield their time to a specific Senator or to those of like-mind.
  - (iii) The authors or sponsors of the legislation shall be afforded the floor first to debate.
  - (iv) After three (3) rounds, the Speaker of the Senate may inquire if further debate is needed of the Senate.



- (v) Debate may be limited or extended by a simple vote so long as each side is afforded an equal amount of time.
- (vi) At the Speaker of the Senate's discretion, if a Senator's speech is antagonistic to the side whose time they are using, the Senator shall be ruled out of order and any time used be returned to the clock.
- (vii) Should during the course of debate, another question period be needed, the Senate may move with a simple majority vote, in which the period shall last for five (5) minutes, then return to debate
- (viii) If there is no opposition, debate may be motioned to close with a simple majority vote.
- (ix) If there are no more Senators wishing to speak on concurrent rounds of pros and cons, debate may be motioned to close with a simple majority vote.
- (f) Amendments filed to the Speaker of the Senate and the Clerk of Council pursuant to Rule IX, Section 9.03, shall be considered by the Senate.
  - (i) The author of the amendment shall offer opening statements or a presentation to the Senate limited to two (2) minutes.
  - (ii) A period of non-debatable technical questioning shall be held of the maker of the amendment as per the rules of the above Subsection (d)
  - (iii) A period of pro/con debate shall be held.
    - i. Rounds of pro debate and con debate, in alternation by the Speaker of the Senate, with each round limited to two (2) minutes, one (1) of which shall be afforded to each of the pros and one (1) to each of the cons.
    - ii. Any Senator may yield their time to a specific Senator or to those of like-mind.
    - iii. The authors of the amendment shall be afforded the floor first to debate.
    - iv. After two (2) rounds, the Speaker of the Senate may inquire if further debate is needed of the Senate.
    - v. Debate may be limited or extended by a simple majority vote so long as each side is afforded an equal amount of time.
    - vi. At the Speaker of the Senate's discretion, if a Senator's speech is antagonistic to the side whose time they are using, the Senator shall be ruled out of order and any time used be returned to the clock.



- vii. Should during the course of debate, another question period be needed, the Senate may move with a simple majority vote, in which the period shall last for two (2) minutes, then return to debate.
  - viii. If there is no opposition, debate may be motioned to close with a simple majority vote.
  - ix. If there are no more Senators wishing to speak on concurrent rounds of pros and cons, debate may be motioned to close with a simple majority vote.
- (iv) The authors and sponsors of the bill shall be afforded two (2) minutes of final privilege.
  - (v) The Speaker of the Senate shall put the legislation up to vote by the Senate.

## **RULE VI. Voting**

### **Section 6.01 Procedure**

- (a) All votes requiring a simple majority shall be by vote of acclamation with unanimous consent of the Senate.
- (b) All votes requiring two-thirds (2/3) of the Senate body shall be done by roll-call vote.
- (c) Before the calling of a roll call vote, the Speaker of the Senate shall ask if any Senator wishes to add their vote or change their vote.
- (d) The Speaker of the Senate shall announce the vote totals, result of the vote, and the effect of the vote.

### **Section 6.02 Abstentions**

- (a) Senators may not abstain from vote unless their vote would constitute a conflict of interest.
  - i. A conflict of interest exists whenever a Senator stands to gain an individual benefit from the matter being considered.
- (b) Senators who abstain from a roll call vote shall be considered present for the vote but shall not be counted in determining the outcome of the vote.
- (c) Senators who abstain from a roll call vote shall state their reason for abstention to be recorded in the minutes.

## **RULE VII. Confirmation Procedure**

### **Section 7.01 Procedure**



- (a) Once the Speaker of the Senate has been notified of a nomination by the President, the confirmation of the nominee shall be placed in the Agenda of the following meeting.
- (b) At the confirmation meeting, the nominee shall have two (2) minutes to address the Senate, if the nominee chooses to address the Senate. If the nominee chooses to yield their address, then a questioning period will take place.
- (c) After the initial presentation, the Senate will ask the nominee questions relevant to the position and qualifications of the nominee. When the Senate questions a nominee, there shall be a required five (5) minute questioning period, which may be extended. If there are no questions the questioning period may be motioned to be closed by two Senators and a simple majority vote.
- (d) Once questioning is over, the nominee shall exit the chambers, and shall not reenter until voting is over and the results have been announced by the Clerk of Council.



## **RULE VIII. Committees**

### **Section 8.01 Standing Committees**

- (a) The Standing Committees of the Senate shall be:
  - (i) Finance Committee
  - (ii) Rules, Legislation and Judiciary Committee
  - (iii) Operational Review Committee
  - (iv) Internal Affairs Committee
  - (v) Student Advocacy Committee
- (b) The description, role and functions of each committee are outlined in the SGC-MMC Statutes.

### **Section 8.02 Committee Rules**

- (a) Committee meetings and hearings shall be open and accessible to the public.
  - (i) The date, time and place of the meetings and/or hearings shall be established by each committee chair.
  - (ii) The date, time and place of the meeting and/or hearings shall be announced with at least forty-eight (48) hours of anticipation.
- (b) Committee meetings and hearings shall be run in accordance to Robert's Rules of Order.
- (c) Each Committee shall consider legislation as deemed by Article V of the SGC-MMC Statutes.

### **Section 8.03 Assignments**

- (a) Committee membership shall be determined by the Speaker of the Senate in accordance to the written preference and schedule of each Senator.
  - (i) Assignments shall be made no later than two (2) weeks after the beginning of the Fall semester, or no later than two (2) weeks after a Senator begins to serve in office.
  - (ii) Should a Senator object to his assignment, he or she must present a written request for a reassignment to the Speaker. Student Senate.
    - 1) The request must specify the reason for the objection.
    - 2) Upon consideration of the request, the Speaker shall decide whether to reassign the Senator.



- 3) Any decision by the Speaker on this regard can be appealed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate.
- (iii) The Speaker of the Senate is an *ex officio* member of all Standing Committees.

## **RULE IX. Legislation**

### **Section 9.01 Definition of Legislation**

- (a) Legislation is defined as all appropriations, council bills and resolutions presented for consideration by the Senate and its committees.
  - (i) All legislation shall include the agenda item, the date of submission, the committee if comes out of if applicable and the sponsoring Senators.
- (b) Council bills are pieces of legislation aimed at establishing new laws, amending the Rules of Procedure, Statutes or Constitution and approving the budget.
  - (i) Council bills shall be divided in sections, and shall include a formal title, a short title, the amendments, and may include an enactment time section.
- (c) Resolutions are pieces of legislation with the purpose of stating an opinion, thought or position of the Student Government, as well as for stating commitments, orders and recognitions.
- (d) Appropriations are pieces of legislation that allocate an amount of the Finance Committee's budget for a certain purpose.

### **Section 9.02 Submission of Legislation**

- (a) All legislation being brought before the Senate must be submitted to the Clerk of Council, Speaker of the Senate, the chair of the Rules, Legislation and Judiciary Committee and the chair of the Internal Affairs Committee by 5:00pm the Thursday prior to the Senate meeting during which the piece will be presented.
  - (i) Legislation may be submitted preferably through email to each of the officials listed above.
  - (ii) Alternatively, the legislation may be submitted in hard copy, in person, or left in the official's mail box, timestamped on the back of the last page.
  - (iii) When receiving the legislation, the Clerk of Council will assign an identifier to the piece.
    - 1) All legislation will be given an identifier, commencing with S.R. and to be followed by the year and the legislation number (YY#) starting at one (1). When a new Senate body is elected, the legislation number will reset to one (1).



- (b) All legislation must be submitted in the proper template and layout.
  - (i) The Rules, Legislation and Judiciary Committee shall prepare and maintain the layouts and templates for all legislation and make them accessible to all Senators.

### **Section 9.03** Written Amendments

- (a) Written amendments to legislation may be submitted for consideration during the Senate meeting before the piece of legislation is voted on.
- (b) Written amendments shall be submitted to the Speaker, Clerk and Internal Affairs committee Chair.

### **Section 9.04** Vetoed Legislation

- (a) Whenever the executive has vetoed any legislation and returned it to the Senate, that legislation shall be added to the agenda under Vetoed Legislation and shall be debated.
- (b) The executive who vetoed the bill shall have three (3) minutes to explain the reasoning behind the veto to the Senate.
  - (i) Alternatively, the Speaker shall read a statement from the executive who vetoed the bill not to exceed three minutes.
- (c) Afterwards, the bill's sponsors shall present the bill and respond to the executive veto.

## **RULE X.** Records and Archives

### **Section 10.01** Records and Archives.

- (a) All acts of legislation, defined as all appropriations, council bills and resolutions presented for consideration by the Senate and its committees shall be archived by the Clerk of Council.
- (b) A copy of all acts of legislation, passed or failed, shall be kept in paper and digital copy in the SGA offices and website accessible to all SGC officials and the student body.

## **RULE XI.**Suspension and Amendment of the Rules

### **Section 11.01** Suspension of the Rules

- (a) The Rules of Procedure of the Senate may be suspended temporarily by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate body.
  - (i) A temporary suspension may only last for one Senate meeting period at maximum.

### **Section 11.02** Amendment of the Rules



- (a) The Senate Rules of Procedure may be amended by the standing Senate body by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.