

SPECIAL MEETING RULES OF THE VSA

Adopted by the 28th VSA Council

Rule 1: Use of Special Meeting Rules

1. These special rules (the “Rules”) are written, reviewed and ratified by the VSA Council (the “Council”), as required by Article II, Section 9 of the VSA Bylaws (the “Bylaws”). They shall expire at the start of each new Council and must be either amended or readopted, as required by the Bylaws.
2. These Rules are to be used as the regular business meeting method of the Council.
3. These Rules may be further modified by vote of the majority of the Council upon simple motion made.
4. All committees, task forces, and bodies of Council shall use these Rules, unless they deem otherwise. These bodies may modify their adoption of the Rules at their discretion, without any notice or input from Council, provided that the rules they adopt are written in some form sufficient to memorialize them and approved by a simple majority of the voting members of the body.
5. These rules are subordinated in all instances to the VSA Constitution (the “Constitution”) and the Bylaws.

Rule 2: Chairperson

1. The Chairperson (the “Chair”) shall be selected according to the body’s governing documents. In the event the body has no governing documents or those documents are quiet on the issue of a Chair, the Chair shall be selected from the body by majority vote on simple motion made.

Rule 3: Meeting Agenda

1. The Chair will draft the agenda and provide it to all members no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting.
2. The agenda will state the start time for the meeting, the location of the meeting, the estimated time for each item, and the position of each person leading the presentation of each topic.
3. The Parliamentarian or a designee shall notify the body if it has reached the estimated time for deliberation on an item, as set forth in the agenda. If individuals are speaking at the time, they may finish their remarks. The Chair shall then entertain a motion to continue discussion, which may be raised by any member and passed by simple majority. In the event there is no successful motion to continue discussion, the Chair shall either entertain motions to table to a specific committee, or proceed to the next agenda item.

Rule 4: Consent Agenda

1. The Chair may choose to place those items they believe to be non-contentious on a consent agenda.
2. Items on the consent agenda will not be discussed individually, unless any body member requests that an item be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda as a separate item for discussion.
3. If no voting member objects to items in the consent agenda, they will be considered adopted as presented.

Rule 5: Motions

1. All matriculated students of Vassar College have the right to make a motion. There is no need for a second.
2. Any person making a motion shall provide an estimated time for deliberation, which shall be recognized and approved or amended by the Chair and adhered to as if an estimated time for an agenda item, as laid out by Rule 2.
3. The attached “VSA Council Motions Guide” is adopted and accepted as proper form for all motions described therein.

Rule 6: Speakers List

1. The Parliamentarian shall maintain a speakers list. Meeting participants shall be recognized and placed on the speakers list by raising their hand or placard, as appropriate.
2. A subordinated speakers list shall be generated for secondary motions. Secondary motions shall be, for the purposes of these Rules, any motion made in deviation of the agenda. Each agenda topic shall receive its own speakers list.
3. The Parliamentarian may only recognize a member twice on any speakers list, unless otherwise expressly instructed by the Chair.
4. If a participant has direct and relevant knowledge on a topic being discussed, which only this individual may contribute, the participant may respond directly to the point by interrupting, requesting leave of the current speaker to respond directly, and, upon receipt of permission, speaking for no more than one minute. In the event the speaker does not grant permission, the Chair may choose to recognize the request to respond directly if it is absolutely necessary to the value and truth of the debate. Direct responses shall not be considered one of the two opportunities of a participant to speak on a matter, as spelled out at Rule 5(3) above.
5. The Parliamentarian shall promptly recognize any at-large participant at the meeting, and shall effectively move the participant to the top of the speakers list.

Rule 7: Amendments

1. Only first and second degree amendments to motions shall be recognized by the Chair.

Rule 8: Consideration of Multiple Options

1. When considering any main motion, any member of the body may move to consider multiple options. Consideration of multiple options will allow a second competing motion on the same topic to be considered.
2. A motion to consider multiple options shall be considered a secondary incidental motion.
3. If the motion to entertain multiple options passes by simple majority, only then may a member make a competing motion.
4. For the purposes of these Rules, a competing motion shall be any motion which acts in contradiction to the main motion or could not be reasonably adopted along with the main motion. For example, if the main motion would be that the body attend meeting A during a specific time, a competing motion would be that the body attend meeting B at the same time.
5. If a competing motion is made, the Chair shall list all motions and assign them alphanumeric designations. Debate may continue on both motions.
6. When voting on competing motions, members shall have the option of voting for one of the options, voting no, or abstaining.
7. After the competing motion has been discarded, control of the floor shall be returned to the member who made the original motion.

Rule 9: Voting

1. Votes may be taken by a counted show of hands or a roll call vote, at the discretion of the Chair. Any member may call for a roll call vote.
2. The Chair, or a designee, shall record the vote.
3. A majority is needed for a main motion to pass.

Rule 10: Enforcement

1. These Rules shall be enforced by the Chair in all instances. In the event the Chair is in violation of any of the rules herein, any member of the meeting may enforce them against the Chair, as if that member were the Chair, as described in this Rule.
2. The Chair may enforce these Rules using any method available in the Constitution or Bylaws including, but not limited to, verbal warning, fine, censure, or dismissal from the meeting, as outlined in Article XII of the Bylaws.
3. Any rule contained herein may be temporarily overridden upon motion made and a two-thirds approval by the body.

Rule 11: Ending the Meeting

1. There will be open discussion at the end of the agenda, open to all VSA members.
2. Minutes for the meeting will be sent out within four days, barring unforeseen circumstances.