

Committee Chair Guide

A Guide to Consistency and Efficiency

Prepared by the Chair Guide Ad Hoc Committee
Approved by the RC College Council on November 19, 2014

What is a committee?

A committee is a body of one or more persons elected or appointed by an assembly to consider, investigate or take action on certain matters. Within the context of parliamentary law a committee's structure and procedural practices are looser and less formal to allow for vibrant discussion and consideration of the topics at hand. Likewise, committee actions are almost always advisory in nature; they make recommendations to the governing body which then has the authority to act.

A standing committee must be constituted by name and formed by the governing body to which it reports. At the college, committees are formed by and operated under their respective Committee Operating Agreements (COA) under the authority of the College Council or Academic Senate. Committee Operating Agreements for committees at Reedley College are located on the Reedley College Council Blackboard site.

What is the role of the presiding officer, the chairperson?

Generally speaking it is the duty of the chairperson to prepare the agenda for committee meetings, organize the meeting times, distribute necessary materials, and conduct the meeting. A chairperson may want to take following into consideration when conducting meetings:

- a. Be mindful about allowing all who may wish to make comment on a topic the time to do so.
- b. Make sure comments and discussion remain pertinent to the topic at hand.
- c. Begin meetings on time.
- d. Conduct business in a timely manner.

What are Proper Procedures?

In a large organization or society the rules of order for conducting a meeting should be followed to allow for democratic decision making to take place. These rules are referred to as parliamentary procedure. There are many different books that outline these procedures but by far the most widely used and accepted is Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. These rules are very formal and usually take years to master.

The good news is that committees generally follow a relaxed version of parliamentary procedure. This more relaxed format allows for the vigorous discussion that is often necessary in a committee when ideas are being hashed out. Committees are usually smaller groups, which also allows for a more informal use of parliamentary procedure. The following is a list of modifications for Small Boards and Committees taken directly from Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 11th Edition:

- a. Members may raise a hand to be recognized and remain seated when speaking
- b. Motions need not be seconded

- c. No limit on the number a times one may speak on a subject
- d. Informal discussion is permitted even when no formal motion is pending
- e. The chairperson may speak on items for discussion and vote on all questions.

*Please note that this is probably how most committees meetings are being conducted anyway.

You won't need it until you need it!

A committee through its Committee Operating Agreement should formally recognize some form of parliamentary authority (Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised being the most widely used). A committee may be able to go along for many years without having to look at it, but as soon as a contentious topic is introduced and a disagreement arises, without some authoritative set of rules to turn to, chaos may ensue. Additionally, when the parliamentary authority does not cover certain rules that the committee needs, or calls for something contrary to what the committee wants to do, the committee has every right to institute such rules or allow for deviations from the parliamentary authority in the Committee Operating Agreement.

Example: Robert's Rules of Order does not allow for meetings or voting via email. A committee can specifically decide to institute rules allowing meetings and voting by email while using Robert's Rules of Order for all other issues of parliamentary procedure.

What formal procedures should be followed in a committee in order to maintain decorum and the democratic principles necessary for clear and fair decision making?

While most types of motions are permissible in a committee, the purpose of this guide is to give members just the basics for conducting a meeting. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is a thick book with intricate rules for almost every possible situation. 99.9% of the time our committees need to discuss an item, formally propose the action, and take a vote. As such these are the basics:

- a) Discussion – discussion should happen as a topic is introduced by the chairperson. As previously stated, discussion CAN occur before a motion is made (this is not permitted under strict rules of order for large assemblies). This discussion allows the group to formulate a workable proposal, or motion. While the chair should call for further discussion after the motion is made, very little is usually necessary.
- b) Making a Motion (taking action) – a motion needs to be made if a vote is to be taken. A motion is really a formal proposal to take action. Any member of a committee may make the motion. Although a second is not technically necessary in a committee, it would not be wrong to make sure at least one other person wants to move forward which is indicated by a second (besides, everyone loves to second motions). There is a proper way to word a motion; the proper wording is as follows:

"I move to/that ... " Please try not to say "I motion" or "I make a motion". It's just bad form.

As committees are usually recommending bodies only, it is advisable to make motions in the form of a recommendation. For example, if a committee wanted to recommend that a new science wing be constructed on campus, one might formulate the motion as:

"I move that the Facilities Committee go on record as being in favor of constructing of a new science wing."

- c) Voting – In almost all cases voting should take place by voice, or in the case of a close call, by raising of hands. In a committee the chairperson may vote. Also in almost all cases a simple majority is required to pass a motion; that means that more than half of the members casting a vote must vote yes to pass. Some examples may be:

7 yes, 5 no, motion passes

6 yes, 6 no, motion fails

3 yes, 4 no, motions fails

Proxy Voting (voting by an individual attending in the absence of a regular member): Generally speaking members are appointed to be on committees by name and therefore have the distinct right to membership, which includes voting. Unless specially allowed in the Committee Operating Agreement, voting is only allowed for those members officially appointed to the committee.

How are amendments handled in a committee?

One great advantage of committee work is that discussion can, often does and really should happen prior to any formal proposal (main motion). As previously mentioned this is not allowed under strict parliamentary rules for regular meetings of organizations (e. g. – clubs, boards, conventions, social societies). The informal discussion in the committee allows for the group to hash out the terms of the proposal before the main motion is made. Therefore, it may be a rare occurrence that a formal amendment needs to be proposed after the main motion is introduced. That being said, it is not out of order for a member to propose an amendment to the main motion before a vote is taken on the main motion. In the instance when a formal amendment is proposed (which is a subsidiary motion), regular rules of parliamentary procedure* should be used to first dispose of the amendment before deciding on the pending main motion.

* The regular rules of parliamentary procedure as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised are the most widely accepted. This guide is meant to be a basic explanation of the committee chairs responsibilities. In order to get a good understanding of handling more advanced procedures, committee chairs and members should read Robert's Rules and/or attend a committee chair training workshop where interactive demonstrations of procedures are be conducted.

What is Quorum and how does it affect the committee meeting?

Quorum is the minimum number of members of a society, in this case committee, that are required to be present at a meeting to conduct business. This number is determined by the committee in the Committee Operating Agreement. It can be any part of the total group and may even specify specific members. The most standard quorum is a majority of the members. A majority means that more than 50% of the members must be present to conduct business (not 51%; that's often different from "more than 50%").

Examples of quorum:

Membership is 12 – quorum is majority – 7 must be present.

Membership is 7 – quorum is majority – 4 must be present.

Membership is 12 – quorum is 2/3 – 9 must be present.

Membership is 16 – quorum is 2/3 – 11 must be present.

Membership is 12 – quorum is majority/must include at least 1 faculty – 7, including 1 faculty, must be present.

While discussions and announcements may take place, NO official business shall be conducted (no voting or decisions can be made) unless a quorum of members is present.

How is a record of what happened in the meeting kept (minutes)?

A record of what happens in a meeting is recorded by the chairperson or designee and reported at the next meeting in the form of minutes. There is NOT just one format for minutes but, minutes should be a concise record of pertinent information from each meeting of the committee; they need not be a transcription of every detail. If detailed notes are to be included in the official minutes, it is advisable that the Committee Operating Agreement addresses this issue.

What is the typical format for an agenda?

An agenda should outline the general topics for discussion of a given meeting. Items may be separated into any number of categories; an example of the sections suggested by Robert's Rules of Order is included in the addendum. Some organizations may use a format which requires first and second readings (or that items be on an agenda twice) before any action can be taken. In such a case the procedure for first and second reads should be noted in the Committee Operating Agreement or the organization's bylaws; the agenda should then include sections for each. An agenda should also contain general information like date and time of meetings.

How and when agendas are posted or presented to the group prior to a meeting can vary greatly. If this time period is not mandated by law agendas and meeting materials should be distributed early enough to give all members a chance to review them. This may mean a day or two in advance, or if many documents are to be reviewed, even earlier. If the chair expects the membership to be able to efficiently take action on items on the agenda, then the chair should be courteous enough to get those materials and agenda to the membership in a timely manner. It is well within the rights of the group to refuse to take action on an item they feel they have not had time to review and save it for the next meeting.

Can a committee conduct a meeting via email?

Actual committee meetings where real action is to take place (making a motion, voting, etc.) should take place in a face to face situation. A face to face meeting can include the use of electronic systems that allow for aural and/or visual communication between all members such as Polycom. *Unless specifically called for and described in a committee's operating agreement, no action should be taken via email.*

Although a committee cannot and should not conduct action items via email, they CAN do a great deal of work leading up to the actual meeting. This could include discussion and preparation of reports or presentations.

Exception: As previously stated, a committee can institute special rules within their Committee Operating Agreement that contradict regular rules of order.

What are the responsibilities of committee members?

In addition to attending the scheduled meetings, committee members are responsible for timely and thorough review of materials pertinent to the work of the committee. Members should review material prior to the meeting(s) so that committee may conduct business efficiently. Members should be prepared to offer meaningful input to the group. Additionally members may be tasked with work beyond reviewing material, as necessary, by the committee chair.

What are the rules of etiquette and other best practices for members of a committee?

Committee members should be mindful of their role in the function of the group. Participation and communication are essential to the success of the committee. Committees thrive on the collective input of its members. General professional etiquette should be practiced. Members should strive to be on time and be prepared by reading materials ahead of time.

What's the bottom line?

What it all comes down to is fairness and democratic principles. A committee should be working together to make sure that all persons who wish to speak have the chance. When the committee is going to make a decision, the action to be taken should be clear and repeated before a vote. When voting everyone gets one vote and majority rules.

Addendum A: Guide to motions

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)*

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21 Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20 Take break	I move to recess for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19 Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18 Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17 Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16 Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15 Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14 Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13 Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12 Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11 Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10 Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Addendum B: Example Minutes without notes (per Robert's Rules of Order):

**Minutes of the
RC International Students Club
October 28, 2009**

On Wednesday, October 28, 2009 at 2:30pm, a meeting of the RC International Students Club was called to order by President, Jenaro Jimenez. 17 members, 2 guests and advisor Jim Mulligan were present.

Secretary, Oscar Delgado, read the minutes of the last meeting.

It was moved by Santos Arroyo and seconded to approve the minutes as read.

Treasurer, Nixon Cantarero, reported that the current club balance is \$0.00.

President, Jenaro Jimenez announced the agenda and asked for additions to the announcement section.

The following announcements were made:

a) XX

It was moved by Noe Diaz and seconded to ...

Discussion followed. After a voice vote the motion was adopted.

It was moved by Noe Diaz and seconded to ...

Discussion followed. After a voice vote the motion was adopted.

It was moved by Noe Diaz and seconded to ...

Discussion followed. After a voice vote the motion was adopted.

President, Jenaro Jimenez called for any last minute announcements to be made and reminded members to have agenda items submitted to the Secretary at least one week prior to the next regular meeting.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2009.

Respectfully Submitted,

Oscar Delgado, Secretary

Addendum C: Example Minutes with Notes (as may be required by the Committee COA):

**Reedley College, Madera and Oakhurst Centers
DRAFT College Council Minutes
October 1, 2014 at 3:00 p.m.
PCR/AV1 101D**

Present	Donna Berry, Christina Buzo, Stephanie Curry, Sandra Fuentes, Mary Helen Garcia, Ryan LaSalle (for Rick Garza), Marie Byrd-Harris, Charles Marshall (for Stephen Kodur), Corinna Lemos, Kristen Mattox, Maria Ortiz
Absent	Sandra Caldwell, Nick Deftereos, Caitlyne Herrera, Lisa McAndrews, Brett Nelson
Guests	Case Bos, George Villagrana, Claudia Habib
Roll	Quorum confirmed mid-meeting
Review Agenda	A review of MOR in Motion was added as item 7 to section IV of the agenda.
Minutes	<p>A typo was noted and corrected on page 2 of the September 17, 2014 minutes.</p> <p>At the start of the meeting, quorum was not met and approval of the minutes was postponed.</p>
	Presentation, Information, Discussion Topics & Potential Single Action Items
Faculty Representative for Program Review	MOFA will be appointing an alternate to College Council who will attend meetings.
Program Review Handbook Update	<p>Academic Senate requested that this be a two-read item as there are substantive changes that constituents need to review.</p> <p>Stephanie Curry presented the major changes to the Program Review Cycle 4 Handbook. They are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Oral presentations will only be requested of “programs whose reports are late or delinquent or whose report content is of concern to the Committee. Programs will be asked to address the lateness or delinquency of their report and their plans for completion. Programs who have raised concerns over the content of their report will answer the Committee’s concerns and present an action plan for improvement of the report.” Late is defined as not submitting “their report by the required draft submission date (end of 2nd week of the third semester. If a program fails to present during their oral presentation time and/or submit a final program review report, the report will be considered delinquent...”

		<p>2. The following items will be added to the non-instructional and hybrid templates:</p> <p>A. "Describe how your program provides equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method."</p> <p>B. "As applicable, describe the ways in which your program assures the security, maintenance, and reliability of services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement. Describe how your program evaluates these services to ensure their effectiveness."</p>
Minutes		<p>Once quorum was confirmed, Stephanie Curry moved to approve the minutes of September 20, 2014 as amended. Sandra Fuentes seconded. Motion carried.</p>
SSSP & SEP Funds and Positions		<p>Donna Berry reported that in the past, the SSSP funds were referred to as Matriculations Funds. We are funded from the state based on new and continuing credit students as well as our basic skills numbers. The district used the same numbers from 2013-2014 to determine allocation amongst the colleges & sites. Reedley College's allocation is inclusive of Clovis Community College Center's (CCCC). In the past, the Reedley campus and Madera Center share was 72%. With the new numbers it will likely be 64%. The numbers will be substantiated before they are finalized. SEP funds will be allocated based on FTES, Pell Grant recipients, and poverty rates. These are considered on-going funds so we can fund positions.</p> <p>Claudia Habib reported that there have been several changes to what is required in the reports in the last two weeks. The state would like us to ask for anything and everything the college might need. Constituents will have to quickly come together to discuss which positions and activities we'll need. The target for SSSP funds is first year students – orientation, assessment, counseling/advising, and follow-up. For SEP, the target is disproportionately represented students. We're looking at increases in the areas of outreach. We may request a College Relations Director who could help assist with K16 and Dual Enrollment efforts. The director would support all three locations. Other ideas that have been discussed are an assessment coordinator, a college relations specialist for Madera, six additional counselors, educational advisors, office assistants, and faculty for tutoring including a full-time coordinator in Madera. It was clarified that the funds cannot be used for construction, furniture, or computers. We need positions that can aid in scaling up services right away. Clovis will be using part of their allocation to hire cover 100% of a Institutional Researcher. We will need to do the same. Everything is very data driven. There are also grant positions that may need to be institutionalized. There was concern raised over the hiring of Educational Advisors. It is important to consider their job descriptions and not work them as counselors. Faculty training is another option for the funds. It was also suggested that we find a way to pay adjunct to be available to students outside of their classes. The positions are not prioritized at this point but should be. It was asked whether these positions will go through the faculty prioritization process. It</p>

		was clarified that grant funded positions haven't in the past. There is a justification written for each position.
Strategic Plan Implementation		Linda Carvalho Cooley reviewed the Strategic Plan Progress Report, the Year-End Summary, and the 2014-2015 SMART analysis form. The complete Strategic Plan Report is over 70 pages for 2013-2014. It has been summarized into the Progress Report. It lists each objective as met with a 70% response from programs/committees on objectives with content the committee can use to direct further responses or as in-progress.
Vision 2025		A rough draft of the Vision 2025 was reviewed. It is a visionary plan, not strategic. There was concern regarding the term "elite" for a community college. "Premier" or "inclusive" was suggested. There's not a lot of mention regarding instruction. It is implied in several but not explicit. Clarity might be needed for "expansive programs that can be completed at the same location." Members should email Emilie with suggestions.
Accreditation		The Accreditation Mid-Term Report has been approved by both senates. It will be on the agenda for a second read at the October 7, 2014 Board of Trustees meeting.
MOR in Motion		A draft of the October MOR in Motion was provided. Members were asked to provide suggestions. Information about ASG, SSP and SEP Plans, the alarm system, facilities, and Oakhurst were ideas.
Adjournment		Corinna Lemos moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:29 p.m. Mary Helen Garcia seconded.

Addendum D: Example Agenda

Associate Student Government Agenda
Regular Meeting – Business Session
February 27, 2013
12:00PM Senate Chambers, STC 104

- I. Call to Order – Presiding Officer**
 - a. Flag Salute
 - b. Adoption of the agenda
- II. Reading and Approval of the Minutes**
- III. Reports of Officers and Standing Committees**
 - a. Treasurer’s Report
 - b.
- IV. Reports of Special Committees**
 - a.
- V. Special Orders**
 - a.
- VI. Unfinished Business**
 - a.
- VII. New Business**
 - a.
- VIII. Communication to the Senate**
 - a. Members of the student body, college employees and the public may address the senate. Remarks will be limited to three minutes per person.
- IX. Adjournment**