ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER- THE BASICS

What are Robert’s Rules?- After presiding over a rambunctious church meeting in San Francisco in 1863, U.S. Brigadier General Henry Martyn Robert drafted the first set of “Robert’s Rules” to help guide meetings. Today, it is used as a standard for facilitating discussions and guiding group decision making. For purposes of Hartnell, we strive to ensure basic standards will be followed in all councils.

Before a council meeting begins, make sure the following has occurred:

- Quorum has been established- Quorum simply means that a majority of the council members are present (either face-to-face or online). Majority if 50% +1 of the membership.
- The meeting facilitator has been established- This individual will transition the meeting from section to section of the agenda.

Basics of meeting decorum:

- A tri-chair will call the meeting to order and read the Four Pillars of Guided Pathways charge.
- The agenda is followed as presented (unless there is a motion to amend).
- Council members do not speak unless recognized by a tri-chair. This ensures members are not talking over one another.
- All council members have the right to participate in discussion if they wish before anyone speaks a second time on a matter.
- Council members do not interrupt other council members.
- A tri-chair will move to adjourn to finalize a meeting

Motions: All council members may use a motion to guide the discussion and move an agenda forward. A motion is simply the topic under discussion. A motion must always be seconded by another council member in order to be considered, and must receive a majority vote to pass.

- Common action items for all councils include:
  - Move to approve the day’s agenda
  - Move to approve the minutes from the last meeting
  - Move to approve slated action items (information items typically do not need a motion)
  - Move to adjourn

- For agenda action items, a tri-chair will welcome a motion to approve said item. There should be a motion, and a second requested by the tri-chair. Once there is a second, the tri-chair will invite discussion.

- During this time, there may be different motions council members want to make.
o Don’t like the wording? You can make a motion to amend the text. This
will need a second.
o Don’t think the action item is ready for a decision? You can make a motion
to table the item (to a specified date or indefinitely). This will need a
second.
o Don’t think the discussion has stayed on topic? You can simply say, “Call
for order”. It is then the responsibility of the tri-chair to get things back on
track.
o You believe enough discussion has occurred on a topic? You can simply
say, “Call the question”. This is a call to end discussion and debate. If 2/3
of the membership agrees, the vote is taken.
o If you were on the winning side of an issue previous in the meeting, but
new information later in the meeting has changed your mind, you can
make a motion to reconsider. If the majority agrees, it goes back on the
floor for consideration.
o If you want to change an action voted on at a previous meeting, you can
move to rescind. A 2/3 vote is needed.
o If an action item has obvious support or is considered a minor issue, a
member can call for “unanimous consent”. This needs a second. If there
are no objections, the item passes immediately.

- If a motion is on the table, it must be voted on at some point. It cannot stay
  unresolved. Per the council charter, all items requiring a vote must
  o Pass with 2/3 of quorum
  o Have at least one affirmative vote from each constituency group
    (administrator, faculty, staff)

Robert’s Rules help ensure the following:

- More efficient meetings- They keep things streamlined and focused.
- More equitable meetings- They help ensure that everyone that wants a voice has
  one.
- More enjoyable meetings- Membership time is important. An organized meeting
tells members they are appreciated and valued.