Parliamentary Procedure was designed to ensure two primary principles:

1. **PRINCIPLE #1: To ensure the rights of the minority.** Despite how unpopular it might be, the right of each individual member to speak and contribute to the group is preserved by the rules of procedure.

2. **PRINCIPLE #2: While still preserving the rights of the majority.** Which is to say, the procedure ensures that the majority's time is not wasted by one or two talkative people, to the exclusion of conducting business.

While it appears daunting, it really isn't. Here is a quick synopsis of Parliamentary Procedure. A skeleton outline is provided. If you want more information on any of the topics listed here, consult the Senate wiki: [http://tulanesenate.pbworks.com/w/page/27690977/FrontPage](http://tulanesenate.pbworks.com/w/page/27690977/FrontPage).

**A. Agendas and Changing the Rules**

The agenda is set by the leadership, in consultation with the membership, in advance of the meeting. Because most meetings have a limited time allotment, the order of the agenda matters. Changing the order of the agenda requires a special motion ("Suspend the Rules") that requires an overwhelming vote of support (2/3 majority).

**B. Quorums and Special Meetings**

The principle of the quorum is to ensure that a sufficient number of people from the body are in attendance at the meeting, such that when decisions are made, the decisions are representative of the opinion of the body. By Parliamentary Procedure, quorum is greater than one-half of the membership, unless specified by the organization's Constitution/By-laws. The Tulane University Senate Constitution calls of 60% of the membership as its Quorum.

**C. Motions**

There are four types of motions in Parliamentary Procedure: **Main motions, Subsidiary Motions, Privileged Motions** and **Incidental Motions**.

**D. Main Motions**

*Discussion on a matter begins with a motion.* A central tenet of Parliamentary Procedure is that **only one main motion can be considered at a time.**

1. Making a motion
2. Seconding a motion

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3. Modifying (Friendly Amendments) or Withdraw of a Motion

E. Debate

1. The Maker of the Motion Has the Floor to Begin Debate
2. Subsequent Debate
3. Amendments
4. Disposing of the Motion
5. Concluding Debate

F. Subsidiary Motions

It is easiest to understand the difference between "Main Motions" and Subsidiary Motions by seeing the "Main Motion" as the "noun" (i.e., the subject being discussed), and Subsidiary Motions as "verbs" or "adjectives" that modify the "noun." There are seven subsidiary motions, each of which modifies the Main Motion being discussed. Since it is impossible to address the "noun" (the Main Motion) until we know what it looks like its final form (i.e., would you buy a "car" without knowing any of the details about what it looked like?), Subsidiary Motions take precedence over the Main Motion when the Chair assigns priority to speakers.

1. Making a Subsidiary Motion

2. When more than one Subsidiary Motions has been made: It is possible that two or more Subsidiary Motions could be requested at the same time. For example, one member could move to Amend the main motion, and the next speak could move to Table the Motion. The question arises: which do we do first? Amend or Table? Parliamentary Procedure outlines an order of priority to deal with this situation: some Subsidiary Motions trump other Subsidiary Motions. The order of Priority is listed below:

a. Lay On the Table (or "Table the Motion"). The motion to Lay on the Table allows the body to dispose of a motion without proclaiming their opinion on the matter.

b. Previous Question. The motion to "Call the Question" or to "Call for the Previous Question" effectively ends debate.

c. Limit or Extend Debate. The motion to "Limit/Extend Debate" is allows changing standard Parliamentary Procedure rules governing the length of debate.

d. Postpone. The motion To Postpone is used when the body wants to continue discussion and/or decisions on an issue, but wants to do so at a later point in time.
e. **Refer to Committee.** The motion *To Refer to Committee* is to be used to refer the main motion to a committee.

f. **Amend.** The motion *To Amend* is self-explanatory; it should be made when a member wants to amend the motion as it was originally presented.

g. **Postpone indefinitely.** The motion *To Postpone indefinitely* has one purpose: to dispose of a motion that the body does not want to go on-record having ever considered. Because it is in order only after a motion has been made, and BEFORE the topic of the main motion has been presented, it becomes OUT OF ORDER AS SOON AS DEBATE HAS ENSUED. For this reason, it has the lowest rank.

G. **Privileged Motions**

Privileged Motions are those that require no subject for which to modify. To use the metaphor above, they do not modify the "noun" of a main motion. These motions are the reserved right of each member of the body, and collectively ensure that each member is protected in his or her right to participate in the body on equal footing as every other member, and ensure that each member has the right to ensure compliance with Parliamentary Procedure. Because they are privileged, unlike Subsidiary Motions, there is no priority ranking given to these motions: they are addressed in the order in which the motions are made.

1. **Call for the Orders of the Day.** The motion to "Call for the Orders of the Day" is used to contest that the body is proceeding in an order that deviates from the previously published agenda.

2. **Raise a Question of Personal Privilege.** The motion of "Point of Personal Privilege" asks the Chair to address a concern that is of a personal nature to the maker of the motion.

3. **Recess.** The motion of "Recess" is to request that the body recess for a fixed amount of time.

4. **Adjourn.** The motion to "Adjourn" is made to end the meeting. The motion can be made at any time.

5. **Fix the Time at Which To Adjourn.** The motion to "Fix the Time at Which to Adjourn" is not about fixing the time at which the meeting at hand will cease (adjourn). Rather, it is about setting the date/time of the next meeting at which point the body will re-convene after they do adjourn this meeting.

H. **Incidental Motions**
Incidental motions are those that require no subject for which to modify, that is, they occur incidentally throughout the meeting. To use the metaphor above, they do not modify the "noun" of a main motion. Because they are incidental, unlike Subsidiary Motions, there is no priority ranking given to these motions: they are addressed in the order in which the motions are made.

1. **Point of Order.** The motion of "Point of Order" is made to question any perceived deviation from Parliamentary Procedure.

2. **Parliamentary Inquiry.** The motion to "Suspend the Rules" is made to

3. **Point of Information.** The motion of “Point of Information” is designed to allow a member of the body to interject a single point of information that may help the body process a motion being considered.

4. **Object:** The motion to "Object" is used when a member makes a motion that is so offensive that even the utterance of the motion would greatly malign the body.

5. **Appeal.** The motion of "Appeal" is made to question the decision of the Chair.

6. **Suspend the Rules.** The motion to "Suspend the Rules" is made to re-arrange or modify the pre-posted agenda.

7. **Division of the Question:** The motion "To Divide" or "Division of the Question," is used to separate out the components of a complex motion.

8. **Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim:** The motion “To Consider by Paragraph or Seriatim” is used to divide the discussion, and consideration of any amendments, into segments (i.e., paragraphs).

9. **Division of the Assembly.** The motion of “Division of the Assembly” requests that the Chair collect the votes on a motion by a hand count, rather than a voice vote.

10. **Motions to Change the Manner of the Vote:** The motion to “Change the Manner of the Vote” is used to define how voting will be conducted on an individual motion.

11. **Move to Reconsider:** The motion to reconsider is used to reverse a previous action of the body.

12. **Motions relating to Nominations.** Motions relating to Nominations refer to those that will define the process by which members are nominated for positions.
13. **Request to Withdraw a Motion.** The motion to "Withdraw a Motion" is made to withdraw a motion from consideration.

14. **Request to Read Papers.** The motion to "Suspend the Rules" is made to allow a member to read papers while he/she has the floor.

15. **Request to be Excused from a Duty.** The motion to "Be Excused from Duty" is made to see permission to be excused from a duty defined by the body.

I. Voting

1. What is a "majority?"

The term "majority" refers to the number (or percentage) of members within a body required to represent the will and opinion of the body. Unless specified in the Constitution/By-laws, the "Majority" for most motions is defined by "50% +1" of those present and voting. In all cases, unless otherwise specified, abstentions do not count against denominator of "those present and voting." The following examples will help clarify this rule:

**SIMPLE MAJORITY SCENARIOS**

1. Scenario 1: 60 Senators are present at the Senate meeting, but only 50 vote (10 abstain). Twenty-six Senators vote for the measure, and 24 Senators vote against it. Since 50% of those voting is 25, 50%+1 would be 26, and the motion passes.

2. Scenario 2: 60 Senators are present, and all 60 vote. Thirty vote for the measure, and thirty vote against it. The motion receives 50% of the votes, but it is one short of the "50%+1" standard required for passage. The motion does not pass.

3. Scenario 3: 60 Senators are present, but only 47 vote (13 abstain). Twenty-four Senators vote for the measure, and 23 Senators vote against it. Since 50% of those voting is 23.5, and there are 24 in favor, this is more than 50% (regardless of not having a full "+1"). The motion passes.

**2/3 MAJORITY**

As noted in the front-page of the Parliamentary Procedure Section, some motions require a greater level of confidence in order to pass. As a general rule, these are measures that, if enacted, could significantly impinge upon the rights of the minority. Motions that require a 2/3 majority are below.

Importantly, the 2/3 Majority is just that... exactly two-thirds, and not "2/3 +1." So for example: if there are 60 Senators present, 30 vote in the affirmative, 15 vote in the negative (and 15 abstain), the result is 30 of the 45 Senators voting for the measure, which is 2/3. The motion passes.
"Suspending the Rules" (i.e., The Majority could use this to manipulate the rules of agenda, voting, etc.).

"Amending Something Previously Adopted" (i.e., The vote on the previously adopted motion was inclusive of all components; the minority may not have voted for it with the post-hoc amendments)

"Limiting or Extending Debate" (i.e., This limits debate, potentially excluding the minority voice if the majority has held the floor up until this motion)

"Closing Nominations" (i.e., The majority could nominate their candidates, and then close the nominations; thereby excluding the minority's nominations)

"Upholding an Objection" (i.e., This limits debate, as upholding the objection will preclude any discussion on the motion to which the objection was raised)

"Postponing a Question; Giving it Special Privilege in Time or Agenda" (i.e. The majority could position the motion at a time when the minority was not available to contest it)

"Previous Question" (i.e., This limits debate, potentially excluding the minority voice if the majority has held the floor up until this motion)

"Changing the By-laws/Constitution" (i.e., the Majority could use this to manipulate the rules of agenda, voting, etc.).

**Does the Chair Vote?**

Yes, according to the Tulane Senate Constitution, the Chair (The President) is an ex-officio voting member of the Senate. Parliamentary Procedure recognizes the special role of the Chair... namely, the need to appear impartial on all matters, even though he/she is empowered with a vote. As such, the Chair is not required to declare his/her vote unless the declaration is necessary to explain the result of the vote. For example,

1. Scenario 1: 60 Senators are present, but only 50 (not counting the Chair) vote. Twenty-five vote for the measure, and twenty-five vote against it. The motion receives 50% of the votes, but it is one short of the "50%+1" standard required for passage. The Chair is not obligated to declare whether he would have voted against the measure (making it 25 vs 26) or abstained (making it 25 vs 25). Either way, the motion does not pass.

2. Scenario 2: 60 Senators are present at the Senate meeting, but only 50 (not counting the Chair) vote. Twenty-six Senators vote for the measure, and 24 Senators vote against it. Since 50% of those voting is 25, 50%+1 would be 26, and the motion passes. The Chair is not obligated to declare whether he would have voted for the measure (making it 27 vs 24) or abstained (making it 25 vs 24). Either way, the motion passes.

3. Scenario 3: 60 Senators are present at the Senate meeting, but only 49 (not counting the Chair) vote. Twenty-five Senators vote for the measure, and 24 Senators vote against it. In this...
case, if the Chair votes against the measure, he is required to declare his vote.... since a vote against would bring the tally to 25 vs 25, which would be one short of the 50%+1 to pass.

2. Types of Voting

There are four types of voting, in order of greater confidence of the results:

1. Voice vote
2. Hand vote
3. Standing vote
4. Individual ballot (either by individual voice, or paper ballot)

1. Voice Votes and Escalating to an Uncounted Hand/Standing Vote. In most cases, the Voice Vote is used to conduct the body's business; especially for non-controversial topics. This saves time and improves the efficiency of the body. The Voice Vote can be used for issues that require a simple (50%+1) majority, or those that require a 2/3 Majority. The downside to the Voice Vote is the risk of misinterpreting the results. At the end of each Voice Vote, the Chair will say (according to the perceived results), "They Ayes (or Nays) appear to have it. The Ayes (or Nays) appear to have it.... The Ayes (or Nays) do have it. Thank you." If a member feels that the interpretation of the results inaccurate or inconclusive, he/she may rise with the motion "To Divide The Assembly." This requires no second, and there is no debate or vote on this motion. The Chair will be immediately compelled to go to a hand or standing vote. The Chair will again render an opinion.

2. Escalating to Counted Hand/Standing Vote
If the member still doubts the results, he/she can make the same motion "To Divide The Assembly With A Counted Vote." (or the member could have gone directly to this motion to being with). This motion does require a second; while there is no debate or amendments, it does require a Simple Majority to force the Chair to collect a counted vote.

3. Escalating to an Counted Vote by Ballot
Any member may, prior to the result of the vote being announced, rise to make a motion to "Order that the Vote be taken by Ballot." (see below). This requires a Second, it is in order any time from the conclusion of the debate until the Chair announces the result of the vote, it is not debatable (though it is amendable), and a simple majority must approve.

4. Ayes, Nays and Abstentions. When voting, there are only two votes that matter: For the Motion (Ayes), and Against the Motion (Nays). Abstentions (a refusal to vote) do not count towards the denominator of "those present and voting," and it make no sense to ask members who are abstaining (since if they abstained from the vote, they are likely to abstain from answering this question).

5. Recusal and Conflicts of Interest. Recusal from voting is the personal responsibility of each member when the matter at hand has personal implications for that member. This should not
be confused with implications to the member's constituencies or non-personal interests. It is natural for the member to advocate for his constituency or non-personal interests, and he/she is entitled to this vote. For example, a motion of "Dr. Wiese should be given $5,000" would be a motion that Dr. Wiese would be obliged to recuse himself, for he has personal interest in the outcome. On the other hand, "The Tulane Medical School should be given $5,000," is not an issue that would require the doctor's recusal, since he represents the medical school as his constituency.

6. The Overwhelmingly Positive Vote. When asking for a vote, and the result is overwhelmingly positive to the Affirmative, the Chair should refrain from asking for those opposed. With no positive effect to come from it, this singles out individual members as being opposed to the outcome when it was clearly the will of the body.

7. Disclosure of Voting. If paper ballot is used to vote, no member can be required to disclose his or her vote, unless outlined by procedure in the Constitution/Bylaws.

8. Changing a Vote. A member may change his/her vote anytime, up until the Chair has announced the outcome of the vote. If, after that time, the member still wishes to change his/her vote, he/she can do so only by unanimous consent of the body.

9. Proxy votes. Votes may be transferred from a sitting member of the body to a substitute member (either another member or a delegate on his/her behalf) only if the Constitution/Bylaws authorize him/her to do so.

10. The Vote of the Chair. The Chair does vote, if authorized by the Constitution/Bylaws of the body, but he/she is not required to reveal his/her vote unless it changes the outcome of the vote. Parliamentary Procedure recognizes the special role of the Chair... namely, the need to appear impartial on all matters, even though he/she is empowered with a vote. As such, the Chair is not required to declare his/her vote unless the declaration is necessary to explain the result of the vote. For example,

a. Scenario 1: 60 Senators are present, but only 50 (not counting the Chair) vote. Twenty-five vote for the measure, and twenty-five vote against it. The motion receives 50% of the votes, but it is one short of the "50%+1" standard required for passage. The Chair is not obligated to declare whether he would have voted against the measure (making it 25 vs 26) or abstained (making it 25 vs 25). Either way, the motion does not pass.

b. Scenario 2: 60 Senators are present at the Senate meeting, but only 50 (not counting the Chair) vote. Twenty-six Senators vote for the measure, and 24 Senators vote against it. Since 50% of those voting is 25, 50%+1 would be 26, and the motion passes. The Chair is not obligated to declare whether he would have voted for the measure (making it 27 vs 24) or abstained (making it 25 vs 24). Either way, the motion passes.

d. Scenario 3: 60 Senators are present at the Senate meeting, but only 49 (not counting the Chair) vote. Twenty-five Senators vote for the measure, and 24 Senators vote against it. In this
case, if the Chair votes against the measure, he is required to declare his vote.... since a vote against would bring the tally to 25 vs 25, which would be one short of the 50%+1 to pass.

Classifications: To Order that the Vote be Taken by Ballot
1. The member making the motion may not interrupt the speaker who has the floor; the member must be recognized by the Chair and given the floor to make the motion.
2. The motion requires a Second
3. The motion it is NOT debatable.
4. The motion is amendable
5. A simple majority (50% +1) is required
6. This motion CAN BE reconsidered with a "Motion to Reconsider"

J. Committees

All committees, standing or ad-hoc, are under the direction of the body. No decision can be made by a committee of the body, unless authorized by that body to do so. The powers delegated to a committee can be revoked by the body at any time.

There are two types of Committees: Standing and Ad-Hoc.

As a rule, Standing Committees are defined within the organization's Bylaws/Constitution, and exist from Session to Session (i.e., year to year) with a defined purpose. The Bylaws may direct the committee to make reports to the body.

Ad-hoc Committees are those designed for a limited purpose for a defined period of time. Once that limited purpose/goal is fulfilled, the ad-hoc committee is dissolved.

The body is under no obligation to approve a committee's report, and a vote on a committee report is thus not required. The body may, however, reject the committee's report and ask that the committee return to the body with a revised report. As a general rule, any committee that has been assigned a task by the body is responsible for returning to the body to report upon that assignment; these reports are generally approved by a formal vote of the body, but the body is not obligated to do so unless specified in its Constitution.

A committee may make a motion before the body, if so authorized by the body's Constitution/Bylaws. In most cases, membership (in part or in full) of each committee is comprised of members of the body; in which case, the committee has the authority by virtue of these members to make motions related to its function/duties.

In such a case where a committee makes a motion before the body, no Second is required; as by virtue of having more than one person on the committee, the Second is understood.