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# WESTERN STUDENT ASSOCIATION

## OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

### SENATE RULES

2015-2016

#### Article I

##### Purpose of the Senate

###### Section 1: Purpose of the Senate

- 1) Fairly represent the student body of Western Michigan University;
- 2) Effectively and efficiently act in the collective interests of WMU students;
- 3) Advocate for student-centered policies;
- 4) Serve as a central student union.

#### Article II

##### Members and Officers of the Senate

###### Section 1: Senators

- 1) A Senator is defined in Constitutional Article II, Section One: „Composition of the Senate.“
  - a. One Senator for each five hundred students or a major fraction (in excess of one half) thereof, enrolled in each of the Colleges of Western Michigan University

shall be popularly elected to serve in the Senate with full voting rights. Each College shall receive at least one Senator.

- b. Because WSA acknowledges that as students, our academic achievement should remain our first priority, Senators will be expected to maintain a 2.0 GPA, which qualifies as “in good standing” by university standards. Grades will be checked by SALP (Student Activities and Leadership Programs) upon registration and at the beginning of each semester.
- c. One Senator shall be elected from within each Registered Student Organization properly registered within the Student Activities and Leadership Programs (SALP) office. Formal registration of RSO Senators expires the last day of classes Spring semester.
- d. All Senator applications must be submitted by 9 pm Tuesday prior to the next meeting in order for said Senator to have voting right at the next meeting, contingent upon approval by the Office of the Speaker.
- e. Senator candidates must be present for the first scheduled appearance before Senate for confirmation. Failure to appear will result in automatic ineligibility for Senatorship.
- f. New Senators, defined as never having been involved within the WSA Senate in the past, must meet with the Speaker within one month of their registration date, for orientation purposes. This can be in the form of a one-on-one meeting or Training Session of some sort.

## 2) Senator Responsibilities

- a. Attendance
  - i. Senators must indicate that they are present on the roll sheet when they arrive at meeting. Senators will be considered present if they attend at least 1 hour, which accounts for two-thirds of the allotted meeting time and provide a written explanation for a late arrival and/or early departure, which is subject to approval by the Office of the Speaker.
  - ii. Each Senator will be allotted two absences per legislative session for any

reason. Upon third absence, Senator's voting rights will be revoked.

1. Any Senator observing a third absence will be found in violation of Article II, Section 2 of the WSA Constitution and voting rights will be terminated. Disputes may be referred to the WSA Judicial Council.
2. To regain voting rights, a College Senator must re-submit an application for Senatorship to the Office of the Speaker, and be re-confirmed by the Senate.
3. An RSO Senator is allowed two absences without proxy; the third absence will result in removal of voting rights for the RSO until the Senator (or a replacement Senator from the RSO) attends two consecutive WSA meetings.
4. For the purposes of this section regarding both College and RSO Senators, a "*proxy*" shall be defined as a fellow member of the body which the Senator represents voting on said Senator's behalf as approved by either the Speaker or the Speaker Pro-Tempore of the Senate. Submissions for a proxy must be sent in writing to the Office of the Speaker two hours prior to the start of the Senate meeting.

### iii. Proxies

1. A proxy voter must complete a Proxy Tracking Form immediately after adjournment of the attended meeting. This document will be processed by the Office of the Speaker to ensure legitimacy of membership of the Registered Student Organization for which the proxy is voting.
2. While Senators are always encouraged to send a proxy if unable to attend a meeting, productivity as a Senator involves consistent attendance and knowledge of Senate business. For this reason, proxies will only replace absences for a total of two meetings. After a second meeting for which a proxy is sent in place of a Senator, absence with proxy will count as an unexcused absence.

3. In the instance of extended meetings during which a Senator is unable to stay for the duration of the meeting, a Senator may temporarily pass their voting rights to a present member of their organization or academic college that is not already voting on behalf of their own constituency.

b. Terms

- i. All Senator terms will expire at the last meeting of the spring semester.
- ii. Senator Registration, for both RSO and College Senators, will begin the first week of classes in the Fall Semester.
  1. The Registration process will be identical for both RSO and College Senators with the exception of allotted Senators per constituency.
    - a. College Senate seats available will be based on the Spring enrollment numbers from the previous year, and vacancies will be filled at the discretion of the Speaker.
  2. The Registration process will be decided upon by the Speaker of the Senate.

c. Committee Breakout

- i. All Senators will be placed on a minimum of one WSA standing committee, in congruence to the Senator's committee preferences, by the Speaker's Office upon registration. Senators are responsible for attending each Committee Breakout session held during regular Senate meetings and are encouraged to attend all Committee meetings held outside of the regularly scheduled meeting time. While missing no more than two in a semester. Poor attendance to committee meetings will be reported to the Speaker of the Senate and the removal from office procedures will be initiated as described in Article V of the Constitution.

- ii. Absences from Committee meetings may be excused by the Office of the Speaker or that specific committee chair, though absence from Committee Breakout should only occur in instances when a Senator is missing an entire meeting or is leaving early from a meeting. Excused absences will not count towards the above-mentioned consequence.

## **Section 2: Senate Leadership**

- 1) As outlined in the Constitution of the Western Student Association, the Speaker of the Senate will be charged with the following duties, to be overseen by the Judicial Council:
  - a. *Call and preside over Senate meetings.*
  - b. *Organize the proceedings and agenda of the Senate meetings*
  - c. *Maintain a minimum of five Senators on each Standing Committee, except the Allocations Committee, which must be maintained in accordance with the Bylaws.*
  - d. *Report committee assignments in writing to respective Senators and Committee Chairs.*
  - e. *Fill all vacancies of the Legislative Branch with majority approval of the Senate, with the exception of the Standing Committee Chairs.*
  - f. *Enforce the Bylaws of the Senate.*
  - g. *Accept all resignations.*
  - h. *Serve concurrently the offices of Speaker of the Senate and RSO Senator for WSA, superseding all previously maintained positions.*
  - i. *Act as the spokesperson of the Senate.*
  - j. *Initiate removal from office proceedings against Senators due to poor meeting attendance.*
- 2) As outlined in the Constitution of the Western Student Association, the Speaker Pro-Tempore will be charged with the following duties, to be overseen by the Judicial Council:
  - a. *Serve as Acting Speaker of the Senate upon request of the Speaker,*
  - b. *Serve as Speaker of the Senate upon vacancy of that office,*

- c. *Assist the Speaker of the Senate in their duties,*
- d. *Record the minutes of all Senate meetings and submit them for inclusion in a future meeting agenda,*
- e. *Record attendance and votes at all Senate meetings,*
- f. *Give notification of unscheduled Senate meetings,*
- g. *Serve as a Senator throughout their tenure in office,*
- h. *Maintain records of Senate meeting minutes, membership, rules, declarations, resolutions, bylaws, legislations, and all other pertinent non-financial information.*

## **Article III**

### **Legislative Sessions**

#### **Section 1: Purpose of Legislative Sessions**

- 1) Main motions can only be decided once per legislative session.
- 2) Bylaws may only be revised once per legislative session.

#### **Section 2: Division of Legislative Sessions**

- 1) *Spring Session* will begin upon Inauguration of a new President until the start of Summer Recess.
- 2) *Fall Session* will begin with fall classes and end with Winter Recess.
- 3) *Winter Session* will begin with Spring classes and end with Inauguration of a new President.

## **Article IV**

### **Meeting Procedure**

#### **Section 1: Types of Legislation**

- 1) A *resolution* is defined as a main motion to set policy or declare Senate opinion.

- 2) A *declaration* is defined as a resolution passed with self-executing rule to override a veto. A declaration must be passed with a 2/3 vote.
- 3) A *rule* is defined as an operational limit passed by 2/3 vote effective until revoked or overridden by 2/3 vote.

## **Section 2: Submitting Legislation**

- 1) Any Senator may write a resolution on any topic at any time. Senators are highly encouraged to seek out a committee chair to sponsor/co-author their resolution.
  - a. If passed and none of the authors are committee chairs, the author(s) of the resolution will be assigned to a committee chair for execution of the resolution at the discretion of the Speaker of the Senate.
- 2) All resolutions must be submitted, in writing, to the WSA office in the Bernhard Center no later than 6:00 pm Monday in order to be included for the Agenda for the next Senate meeting. Resolutions submitted by the deadline will be printed in agenda on a “read only” basis, to be on the docket for the following week’s Senate meeting.
  - a. Any resolutions listed as read only may be “called up” for immediate consideration when a valid motion to do so is made during new business. Any Senator wishing to make such a motion must consult with the Speaker prior to initial call to order.
  - b. The Speaker, in consultation with the authoring Senator or body, may move for immediate consideration at his or her discretion.
- 3) A submitted resolution will be reviewed by the Speaker, and/or a standing committee or select in order to deem it within the guidelines of the WSA constitution and understandable for review by the Senate. The resolution may also be presented to the Executive Cabinet in order that they are made aware of pending and forthcoming business on the Senate floor. The Speaker reserves the right to add or deny any item from the proposed agenda.
  - a. If referred to a committee or multiple committees, each committee to which the resolution has been referred shall issue a committee report. The mandated format of such a report shall be furnished by the Speaker.
- 4) Upon completion of the committee action, the Speaker will review their findings, and any amendments. If the Speaker finds the resolution is not debatable or is unconstitutional due to the resolution’s content and/or style then the resolution will be returned to the

original drafter so that it can be revised. Resolutions handed back for revision may not be submitted until the next week, however, they will be given precedence over any resolution submitted after the revised resolution's original submission date.

### **Section 3: Resolution Debate Procedures**

- 1) All procedures and debate shall be mediated by the Speaker of the Senate.
- 2) The procedures on any main motion before the Senate shall be held in accordance with the following timings:
  - a. A reading of the main motion; may be waived by majority vote
  - b. 3 minute presentation by author(s); extendable by unanimous consent/request without objection, or by proper motion for the previous question requiring 2/3 vote
  - c. Non-timed session of question and answer of the author(s)
  - d. Non-timed debate
  - e. At the end of debate, a vote shall immediately follow unless another acceptable motion is made.

### **Section 4: Voting Procedures: Consent and Roll Call**

- 1) Consent shall only be called if there is no dissenting and assenting discussion. Consent cannot be called when the motion being made involves money or finances of any sort.
- 2) Roll Call votes may only be called if there is both assenting and dissenting discussion during the debate.
  - a. The Speaker reserves the right to refuse a roll call vote due to time constraints or lack of necessity based on the maker of the motion's justification for requesting the roll call.



## **Section 5: Guest Speakers and Morning Business**

- 1) Any Senator, faculty, guest speaker, etc. wishing to address the Senate floor must inform the Speaker in writing of his/her intent no later than 6 p.m. the Monday prior to Wednesday's meeting unless the nature of the oration is due to urgent circumstances that arrive after Monday's deadline.
- 2) The first fifteen minutes of the agenda shall be considered "Morning Business." During Morning Business, no main motion as listed on the agenda may be considered.
  - a. The first section of Morning Business will be reserved for one-minute speeches. The Speaker will first entertain requests for one-minute speeches, including Senators wishing to introduce new legislation.
    - i. One-minute speeches, including the introduction of new legislation will be timed by the Speaker. Speeches must be relevant and non-derogatory. They should pertain to the Senator's views as to the operation or activities of the WSA, pending WSA legislation, WMU campus life, the Kalamazoo community, etc. Senators shall not promote any event or organization during one-minute speeches. Senators giving speeches on the Senate floor shall refer to other Senators or individuals in the third person. If the Speaker deems any oration not in agreement with this provision as noted in the "Speaking Request Form," (s)he shall order the Senator giving the speech to immediately suspend, pending revocation of speaking rights for the remainder of the administrative year as submitted to the WSA Judicial Council.

## **Section 6: Positional Reports**

- 1) As Senators are vital officers of the Senate, they will be afforded positional reports along with those members of the Executive Cabinet.
- 2) Due to time constraints and a large volume of interested Senators, Senators will be allotted thirty seconds for reports to be known as "Thirty-Second Shout-Outs."

- 3) Thirty-second speeches, will be timed by the Speaker. Speeches must be relevant and non-derogatory. During positional reports, Senators may inform the Senate of events and/or deadlines occurring the week of the meeting during which the report is given.
- 4) While the opinions of all students are valued and welcome, positional reports are a privilege given only to registered Senators.

### **Section 7: Agenda Structure**

- 1) Positional Reports
- 2) Approval of Agenda
- 3) Approval of Minutes
- 4) Guest Speakers
- 5) Unfinished Business
- 6) Committee Breakout
  - a. which shall be deemed as elastic at the discretion of the Speaker
- 7) New Business
- 8) Announcements
- 9) Adjournment

## **Article V: Meeting Decorum**

### **Section 1: Meeting Decorum**

- 1) The Senate shall remain professional at all times.
  - a. In accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, speakers must direct all comments to the "Chair", and should only refer tastefully to the previous comments of fellow Senators in the third person.
  - b. Passionate debate is encouraged, but expected to remain respectful and courteous in its content.

- i. Removal from meeting in order to promote a productive, safe space for discussion may be a consequence of disrespectful and courteous debate.
    - c. In order to be respectful to other Senators' time and to maintain professionalism within the Senate floor, use of electronics is limited to that which directly pertains to WSA.
      - i. Wearing headphones on the Senate floor is strictly prohibited at all times.
      - ii. Recreational web browsing and social media is prohibited while business is being conducted.
      - iii. All electronics, regardless of reason for usage, are strictly prohibited during visits from guest speakers.
- 2) Violation of decorum may result in the following consequences according to level of disruption
  - a. suspension of speaking rights by the Speaker
  - b. removal from meeting
  - c. initiation of charges of speaking revocation or removal proceedings before the Judicial Council.
- 3) In all instances not covered herein, the Speaker, with consultation from the Rules, Bylaws and Administration Committee, is free to interpret Robert's Rules Newly Revised in a manner most conducive to operations.
  - a. While WSA practices standard Robert's Rules of Order, the Speaker has sole discretion as to flexibility within application of this format and is expected to exercise this power only under ethical circumstances that contribute to the overall productivity of the Senate.