Clarifications of Procedures of the Senate of the University of Illinois Springfield
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When deciding how the UIS Senate operates, there is a clear hierarchy. We follow the procedures of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised unless a procedure has been "expressly modified" in the UIS Senate bylaws. In turn, the bylaws are the implementation of the UIS Senate Constitution. Therefore, we follow Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised unless it conflicts with the UIS Senate bylaws. In case of a conflict, the bylaws are followed. If the bylaws conflict with the UIS Senate Constitution, the Constitution is followed. The relevant portions of the UIS documents can be read at the end of this report.

I. Motion to Consider

In practice, UIS Senators make a "motion to consider" for each item that concerns a resolution. I believe that we can streamline and simplify this practice without any negative consequences. I cannot find "motion to consider" in Robert's Rules of Order, and Google only finds one body that uses the motion to consider: the US Senate. Here is the US Senate's explanation of the motion to consider:


**motion to proceed to consider** - A motion, usually offered by the majority leader to bring a bill or other measure up for consideration. The usual way of bringing a measure to the floor when unanimous consent to do so cannot be obtained. For legislative business, the motion is debatable under most circumstances, and therefore may be subject to filibuster.

Robert's Rules of Order and both chambers of the US Congress use unanimous consent to save time on routine actions. I believe that we do not need to spend the time to make, second, vote, and record¹ a motion to consider, and that we can eliminate this practice without reducing Senators' ability to control the agenda.

Strictly speaking, when the Senate approves the agenda at the beginning of a meeting, the body has agreed to move through the items on the agenda. Thus when the Chair introduces a resolution s/he is implementing what the body had already decided to do.

To maintain some continuity in the Campus Senate's practice, and to remind Senators that they can object to and/or discuss taking up a resolution, I propose that the Chair say, "By unanimous consent the Senate will now consider Resolution …" Senators will have at least two opportunities to give their input on whether the body should consider a resolution on the agenda: when the body decides whether to accept the agenda, and as the Chair introduces each resolution. All a Senator needs to do is to speak up or signal a desire for the floor immediately after the Chair uses the phrase "By unanimous consent…"

¹ The person taking the minutes has to record all of this information.
II. Second Readings

There is a belief that the UIS Senate cannot vote on a resolution when it first appears during a meeting of the UIS Senate, and that every resolution must have a first and second reading before it can be voted on (or the body must decide to suspend its rules in order to vote without a second reading). Second readings are not required in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, and readings are not mentioned in the Constitution of the Senate of The University of Illinois at Springfield. Only the UIS Campus Senate Bylaws mention first and second readings. Here is the only mention of "readings":

Proposals for changes in the bylaws shall follow the procedures specified in Article VIII. Proposals for changes in Senate Rules (Policy) shall be presented for first reading at the meeting prior to a regularly scheduled meeting when the matter may be placed on the action agenda. Resolutions may be included on the action agenda without a first reading.

Thus second readings are not required for ordinary resolutions that do not affect the UIS Senate's bylaws or rules.

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) believes that the current practice of first and second readings even for ordinary resolutions has many virtues because it gives Senators time to gather information, and deliberate within and between meetings. Therefore the SEC plans to continue the practice of first and second readings for most resolutions. However, on the rare occasions when resolutions are simple and there is broad consensus toward them, we would like to place them directly on the agenda as action items.

Documentation

Here are the portions of the Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, the UIS Campus Senate Bylaws, and the Constitution of the Senate of The University of Illinois at Springfield that pertain to the clarifications discussed in this memo.


Bylaws:
Article V (Meetings)
1. The parliamentary manual for the Senate will be Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, except where its procedure is expressly modified in these Bylaws.

…

9. Proposals for changes in the bylaws shall follow the procedures specified in Article VIII. Proposals for changes in Senate Rules (Policy) shall be presented for first reading at the meeting prior to a regularly scheduled meeting when the matter may be placed on the action agenda. Resolutions may be included on the action agenda without a first reading.

Constitution of the Senate of The University of Illinois at Springfield:
Section 4. Meetings
All meetings within the Campus Senate Governance System shall be open, in accordance with the statutes of the State of Illinois. The Senate shall establish and publish its meeting schedule.

Section 5. Bylaws
For the purpose of implementing the provisions of this Constitution and to provide for the internal organization of the Senate, the Senate shall enact such bylaws, as it deems necessary and proper, not inconsistent with this Constitution. Bylaws of the Senate shall be adopted, amended, or repealed only upon two-thirds vote of the senators present and voting at a Senate meeting, provided due notice of such proposed action has been given. Unless otherwise provided therein, bylaws or amendments thereto shall be effective immediately upon adoption. (Until they are revised, the Bylaws of the former Sangamon State University Faculty Senate shall serve as the Bylaws of the Campus Senate.)