

GA Meeting Basics

-or-

Ending on Time:

Because Grad Students Love Free Beer

GA Meeting Basics

- Meetings are conducted using Robert's Rules of Order.
- Basic Concept: “the motion” – needed to call to order, approve things, amend things, hold a vote, extend time, end the meeting, etc.
 - To make a motion: obtain the floor, and say “I move to...”
 - Note that if you obtain the floor during debate, to make a motion is must be made immediately.

GA Meeting Basics

- Robert's Rules also rely on the rules of the body. This determines some procedures.
 - Some GA rules: resolution referrals, vote needed to pass a motion,

Typical GA Agenda (1)

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes
- Announcements
- Resolution referrals
 - Each motion must be introduced and sent to committee before it can be debated and voted on on the floor.
 - Exception: Fast Tracking (3/4 vote)

Typical GA Agenda (2)

- Officer Reports
- Resolution Discussion and Vote
 - The agenda has a set time for discussion. When this time is up, the “question is called” unless a motion to extend time has been made.
 - Discussion can also be ended via a motion to call the question. This motion is then voted on, prior to a vote on the resolution.
 - Motions to amend are voted on in recursive order.
 - Remember: Any motion when you obtain the floor must come first.

Example Discussion Process

- Resolution: Adopt standing policy & directed action that beer shall available after meetings.
- Motion to amend the resolution: “for free at Kips”
 - Motion to amend the amendment: “at Henry’s”
 - This generates some heated debate. Apparently grad students are very particular about their bars.
 - Move to call the question: VOTE occurs on whether to end debate on the amendment to the amendment.
 - If the motion to call the question passes, then a vote on the amendment itself occurs.
 - If this motion to amend the amendment passes, the motion is amended.
 - Motion to call the question on the amendment to the resolution & vote
 - Vote on the amendment to the resolution
- Motion to call the question on the resolution & vote (let’s say it fails.)
- Motion to extend time & vote (let’s say it passes.)
- End of time: question is called. Vote occurs.

What do Resolutions Do?

- Standing Policy: Official policies or positions of the GA (50% + 1 votes cast)
- Directed Action: Actions to take by the GA, officers, or committees. Can technically be anything consistent with charter and bylaws. (50% + 1 votes cast)
- Amendments to Charter, Bylaws, or Budget (2/3 + 1 votes cast, plus 50% of all delegates for charter amendments)
- Funding Procedures Approval: Approve objective guidelines for funding (2/3 + 1)

Questions?

Why is it worth it to understand these rules?

- Faster meetings -> Beer!
- Better Deliberation -> Better Resolutions

Remember, this is just a very quick & dirty overview. There's a lot more.