

**Procedures and Practices for AUC and Standing Committees 2023-24**  
**Adopted October 6, 2023**

The All-University Committee provides faculty and librarians at Fitchburg State University with a channel for participating in the decision-making process of the campus, as outlined in Article VII of the collective bargaining Agreement. To function well, the AUC and its standing committees rely on the active and collegial participation of faculty, staff, and librarians from all areas of the campus.

AUC meetings are conducted according to the parameters outlined in Article VII of the Agreement and, where the contract is silent, by *Robert's Rules of Order*. The rules contained in the current (12<sup>th</sup>) edition of *Robert's Rules* and explanations of how to apply them are available at <http://www.rulesonline.com/>. *Robert's Rules* provide guidance in terms of the appropriate conduct of debate related to proposals and questions.

**Committee Members** are voting members and are elected or appointed to the AUC. A **Proposer** is the representative for an individual proposal. **Guests** are other members of the campus or larger community who are in attendance.

1) *Establishing a Quorum*

A quorum will be defined as a majority of eligible members being present, or in the case of an even number of members, one more than half of the eligible voting members in attendance. If at any time during a meeting, enough members leave so that quorum is not met, no further formal action can be carried out by the committee. Informal discussions may continue, but the taking of minutes and voting are suspended, and the meeting will be adjourned.

2) *Meeting Times*

Meetings started at 3:30 PM are scheduled to run until 5:00 PM. The committee may continue to work past 5:00 PM (or other time set by the agenda) if no voting member raises the issue of time. To continue beyond 5:00 PM, a member would have to make a motion to continue the meeting until a specific time, and a 2/3 vote of MEMBERS PRESENT would be required to continue.

3) *Referral of Proposals*

Proposals are submitted to the AUC. AUC members vote to refer proposals to appropriate standing committees.

4) *Procedure for Voting*

A motion is made by a voting member, and it may be seconded by another voting member, in which case there is discussion period, and then the vote is taken. If a motion is not seconded, the proceedings continue with no action on the motion, as though the motion was never made.

Motions on proposals are made to "recommend a proposal for approval" or to "consider a proposal for recommendation of approval." (Note: AUC and standing committees do not approve or disapprove: they only recommend or not recommend proposals. This part of the item is not negotiable. Only the President approves or rejects proposals.)

Members may vote "yes" or "no," or they may abstain from voting. For a proposal to be recommended, it must receive a majority of "yes" votes from the number of voting members in attendance. (For example, if there are 19 members in attendance, the motion must get 10 "yes" votes to be recommended. In the case of an even

number of voting members present, e.g. 20, there must be 1 more than half of that number voting in the affirmative to pass the motion - for this example, 11.)

### 5) Amendments

Any voting member may make a motion to amend a proposal. If it is seconded, the amendment is discussed and voted upon. At any time during the discussion, the sponsor may agree to the amendment. If the sponsor agrees and there is general agreement amongst the committee members, then the amendment may be accepted by the Chair as a friendly amendment, and a vote is not necessary.

If the amendment is not accepted by the sponsor, they may choose to request that the proposal be tabled, so that the point of contention can be addressed before discussion by the committee continues. (Tabling requires a motion, second, discussion, and vote.) If the sponsor chooses to not request tabling, or there is no motion to table, then the motion for approval of the amendment is voted upon and either approved or not by the vote. Once action is made on an amendment, the motion to recommend the proposal continues.

No amendments that are adopted during any standing committee meeting are final. The proposal with the amendment is taken up by the next level committee, and the amendment may be revisited at any time. Only amendments that are accepted or made by AUC become incorporated into the final proposal.

When a committee is acting on a proposal that was previously acted upon by a lower committee, the motion is made to “recommend the proposal as previously amended for approval.” The committee may discuss the amendments as part of their discussions, but unless an amendment is formally reversed, the vote on the proposal includes that amendment made by the previous committee.

Amendments from one committee are present in the minutes of the meeting, but no actual changes are incorporated into the proposal until AUC takes final action on the proposal. Then approved amendments are included in a revised proposal that is sent to the President.

### 6) Rules of Engagement

At Fitchburg State University, the AUC shall recognize the practices and protocols of both Article VII of the Agreement and *Robert's Rules of Order* for the conduct of all governance committee meetings, noting the following specific details regarding the rules of engagement in debate:

- Committee members with questions or comments will be called upon first.
- Any written comments that any proposer, guest, or committee member wishes to share regarding an agenda item of the AUC or any of its standing committees must focus on the content of the proposal. Written comments must be submitted electronically solely to the committee Chair(s) at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Chairs will disseminate the comments to the committee 48 hours in advance of the meeting at which the proposal in question will be discussed. As they are provided ahead of time, anyone submitting comments may assume they have been read by committee members and need not read them in full. Written comments will not become part of the official record unless voted on by the committee.
- Comments at the committee meeting will be limited to a reasonable amount of time. Following *Robert's Rules* Art. VII. Debate.42: No member may speak a second time to a question until any other member who desires to speak to the question has had an opportunity to do so. Rebuttals or responses may be acknowledged at the Chair's discretion.

- Decorum in Debate: *Robert's Rules* Art. VIII. In debate, a committee member, proposer, or guest must confine comments to the question before the assembly, avoiding personalities and individual names. The meeting minutes should follow the same convention.
  - When debate appears to the Chair to be concluded, the Chair may ask if the committee is "ready for the question." Debate is not closed by the Chairperson's calling the question, as any committee member can reopen the debate, provided the committee member does so "with reasonable promptness" after the Chair calls the question. Nevertheless, if the majority of the committee wish to close the debate, they can do so by either re-calling the previous question, or allowing each member to speak once more on each question.
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These Procedures and Practices will be reviewed annually by the AUC with the invited input of the community.