

Presiding Officer Script

Please read this page before picking up the gavel!

1. Thank you for giving up a session of debate to serve as Presiding Officer. In this role, you will be responsible for keeping the session moving, recognizing speakers fairly, and guiding the chamber through any parliamentary issues that may arise. **You CAN do it!**
2. This is a script, not a manual. It will help you know what to say and (usually) when to say it, but it can't tell you how to do everything. It is based on the *FGCCFL Student Congress Manual* (revision 24.11); for matters not addressed by this script, you'll want a copy of the manual, which you can download from fgccfl.net/congress.
3. Review the script before you preside. You should, at the very least, skim the headings so you know where to look.
4. **DON'T PANIC.** Always remember that if you run into trouble, you can ask the Parliamentarian for advice. If the Parliamentarian is stumped, they can text the Tab Room and get an answer. Better to ask for help than to bluff.
5. This script is written for FGCCFL tournaments. Most of it will work in Student Congress elsewhere, though there may be some slight differences in speaker priority, questioning periods, and voting procedures.
6. There's more than one right way to preside. If you deviate from the script but are still following the rules, you should be fine. (And that goes for the other POs in your chamber.)

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR PRESIDING!
GOOD LUCK! DO WELL!

BEFORE STARTING THE SESSION

(Ensure that the Parliamentarian and Scorers know your name and code. Write it on the board if requested.)

(If this is not the first session, check the seating chart and/or recency lists for accuracy and to determine how many speeches have been given on the day so far. Record your PO service on the seating chart as the first two speeches of the session.)

STARTING THE SESSION

(Stand any time you are speaking.)

(Gavel once or twice.) Will this session of Student Congress please come to order?
(Pause.)

I'd like to thank the chamber for electing me Presiding Officer. I will endeavor to preside fairly and efficiently, and I look forward to a productive session.

I will recognize speakers in accordance with CFL rules, and I will follow CFL gaveling procedures: once **(gavel once)** at two minutes and twice **(gavel twice)** at two and a half minutes. At three minutes, I will allow you to finish your sentence before gaveling you down; there is no grace period or warning tap.

Session 1

(Call for an authorship speech on the first B/R.)

Sessions 2-4, if the previous session ended with a passage vote

(Call for an authorship or sponsorship speech on the next B/R.)

Sessions 2-4, if legislation was being debated

The chair will entertain a motion to take **(title of B/R under consideration)** from the table.

AUTHORSHIP SPEECH

It is now in order to consider the first/next item of legislation, **(title)**. Is the author present?

No author is present

As the author is not present, all those wishing to sponsor the legislation, please rise. **(Select a sponsor in accordance with the speaker recognition rules. Record the speech on your seating chart.)**

No one wants to sponsor the legislation

Due to a lack of sponsors, the Chair will entertain a motion to table the legislation until a sponsor can be found. **(Someone will move to table; call for a second and a vote.)**

The PO is the author

As the Chair is the author... **(You can either call for a sponsor as if no author is present OR entertain a motion to table the legislation until the next session. You MAY NOT vacate the chair to give your authorship speech.)**

An author/sponsor is present

The Chair recognizes **(author or sponsor's name)** for a three minute authorship/sponsorship speech. **(Time the speech and gavel appropriately.)**

After the authorship speech

The time of that speech was **(time of speech)**. It is now in order for a two minute questioning period. All those wishing to question the author/sponsor, please rise.

After the author's questioning period

(Due to a lack of questioners,) The questioning period has now ended. The author/sponsor may take her/his seat.

It is now in order for a three-minute negative speech. All those wishing to speak negatively, please rise. **(Select a first negative in accordance with the speaker recognition rules. Record the speech on your seating chart and mark the speaker off the recency list, if necessary.)**

The Chair recognizes **(first negative's name)** for a three minute negative speech. **(Time the speech and gavel appropriately.)**

If no one wishes to give a first negative speech

The Chair frowns on a one-sided debate; however, due to the lack of negative speeches... **(Continue with an affirmative speech.)**

After the first negative speech

The time of that speech was **(time of speech)**. As this was the first negative speech, it is now in order for a two minute questioning period. All those wishing to question the speaker, please rise.

After the author's questioning period

(Gavel once.) [Due to a lack of questioners,] The questioning period has now ended. The speaker may take her/his seat. **(Continue with an affirmative speech.)**

AFFIRMATIVE/NEGATIVE SPEECHES AND QUESTIONING

It is now in order for an affirmative/negative speech. All those wishing to speak affirmatively/negatively, please rise. **(Select a speaker in accordance with the speaker recognition rules. Record the speech on your seating chart.)**

The Chair recognizes **(speaker's name)** for a three minute affirmative/negative speech. **(Time the speech and gavel appropriately.)**

After the speech

The time of that speech was **(time of speech)**. It is now in order for a one minute questioning period. All those wishing to question the speaker, please rise.

After the questioning period

(Gavel once.) [Due to a lack of questioners,] The questioning period has now ended. The speaker may take her/his seat. **(Continue with a speech on the other side.)**

IF NO ONE WANTS TO SPEAK

(The Chair frowns on a one-sided debate; however,) due to the lack of affirmative/negative speakers, it is now in order... **(Switch sides and try again to find a speaker.)**

If no one wants to speak on either side

As there are no speakers, is the chamber ready for the question? **(Pause to entertain any motions or speakers seeking recognition. If none, continue with a passage vote on the legislation.)**

RECOGNIZING SPEAKERS

First priority goes to those who have not yet spoken. Among legislators who have not yet spoken, select the one whose name is closest to the TOP of the preset recency list.

Second priority goes to those who have spoken less. Among legislators who have spoken, select the one who has given the fewest speeches on the day.

Third priority goes to those who have spoken less recently. Among legislators who are tied for number of speeches, select the one whose last speech came earliest.

RULES FOR DIRECT QUESTIONING

Direct questioning allows a questioner to ask an unlimited number of questions in a 30 second span. Time the questioning period and the individual questioners separately. Note that the last questioner may be cut short because the total questioning period, including the time for recognizing questioners, is 1 or 2 minutes.

There is a separate recency for questioning, kept the same way as speaker recognition. You will record each time a legislator is recognized for questioning just as you would for speaking. The differences are that PO does NOT count for questioning recency and that the preset recency list is consulted from the BOTTOM UP, rather than the top down.

PASSAGE VOTE ON LEGISLATION

It is now in order to vote on the legislation, **(read the title)**. This question requires a simple majority.

Those in favor of the legislation, please rise. **(Count the number of legislators standing; these are your ayes.)** Thank you; please be seated.

Those opposed, please rise. **(Count the number of legislators standing; these are your noes.)** Thank you; please be seated.

Those abstaining, please rise. **(Count the abstentions.)** Thank you; please be seated.

If there are more ayes than noes

By a vote of **(number of ayes)** in favor and **(number of noes)** opposed, with **(number of abstentions)** abstaining, the legislation is adopted.

If there are fewer ayes than noes, or if there is a tie and you would vote “no”

By a vote of **(number of ayes)** in favor and **(number of noes)** opposed, with **(number of abstentions)** abstaining, the legislation is defeated.

If there is a tie and you would vote “aye”

The vote is tied, **(number of ayes)** to **(number of noes)**, with **(number of abstentions)** abstaining. The Chair votes “aye,” and the legislation is adopted.

After the vote is finished

(Gavel once and call for an authorship/sponsorship speech on the next item of legislation.)

SOMEONE STANDS FOR A MOTION

(DO NOT interrupt a speech, including the accompanying questioning period, to recognize someone standing for a motion. If the motion permits interruption, the legislator making the motion, not the PO, must do the interrupting.)

To what point does the speaker rise?

The speaker rises to a point of personal privilege

State your point. **(The speaker makes her/his request. Decide whether to grant or deny it.)** Granted/denied. **(Take any needed action.)**

The speaker rises to a point of order or a parliamentary inquiry

State your point. **(Listen to the speaker and respond appropriately, conferring with the Parliamentarian if necessary.)**

The speaker moves the previous question

Is there a second? **(If none:** Due to the lack of a second, the motion is out of order.)

The previous question has been moved and seconded. This is a motion to close debate and requires a two-thirds vote of those present. **(Follow the voting procedures for two-thirds votes. If the motion passes, immediately take a passage vote on the legislation.)**

The speaker moves to table the legislation

Is there a second? **(If none:** Due to the lack of a second, the motion is out of order.)

It has been moved and seconded that the legislation be laid on the table. This question requires a majority vote. **(Follow the voting procedures for majority votes—or, if the outcome is apparent, take a voice vote. If the motion passes, entertain any motions; if none, call for an authorship/sponsorship speech on the next item of legislation.)**

The speaker moves to take an item from the table (“unable” legislation)

(If there is already an item under consideration, the motion is out of order.)

Is there a second? **(If none:** Due to the lack of a second, the motion is out of order.)

It has been moved and seconded that **(state the title of the tabled item)** be taken from the table. This question requires a majority vote. **(Follow the voting procedures for majority votes—or, if the outcome is apparent, take a voice vote. If the motion passes, call for the next speech on the legislation.)**

The speaker moves to suspend the rules

(Motions to suspend the rules are only permitted for very limited purposes: (1) changing the calendar before speeches have been given in the session; (2) changing standing to show of hands for voting and/or recognition; and (3) allowing speakers to recognize their own questioners. If the motion is made for any other purpose, or without stating a purpose, rule it out of order.)

Is there a second? **(If none:** Due to the lack of a second, the motion is out of order.)

It has been moved and seconded that we suspend the rules and **(state the purpose of the motion)**. This motion requires a two-thirds vote of those present. **(Follow the voting procedures for two-thirds votes.)**

The speaker calls for the orders of the day

(See “Ending the Session.” If it’s not near the end of the session, the motion is out of order.)

The speaker moves to recess (during the session)

(A maximum of 10 minutes of mid-session recesses are permitted each session. If that maximum has been reached, the motion is out of order.)

Is there a second? **(If none:** Due to the lack of a second, the motion is out of order.)

It has been moved and seconded that the chamber recess for **(length of time)**. This question requires a majority vote. **(Take a voice vote if the need for the recess is obvious; otherwise, take a majority vote.)**

The speaker's motion is dilatory or frivolous

The motion is dilatory/frivolous and is out of order.

The speaker's motion is unclear, incomplete, or incorrectly stated

Will the speaker please clarify her/his motion?

VOTING PROCEDURES FOR VOICE VOTES

All those in favor, please say "aye." **(Pause and listen.)**

Those opposed, please say "no." **(Pause and listen.)**

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes/noes have it, and the motion passes/fails.

If the outcome is unclear

In the opinion of the Chair, the outcome cannot be determined by voice vote. **(Immediately take a majority vote on the question.)**

If a legislator calls for a division of the chamber

Is there a second? **(If none:** Due to the lack of a second, the call for a division is out of order.)

A division of the chamber has been ordered. **(Immediately take a majority vote on the question.)**

VOTING PROCEDURES FOR MAJORITY VOTES

Those in favor, please rise. **(Count the number of legislators standing; these are your ayes.)** Thank you; please be seated.

Those opposed, please rise. **(Count the number of legislators standing; these are your noes.)** Thank you; please be seated.

Those abstaining, please rise. **(Count the abstentions.)** Thank you; please be seated.

If there are more ayes than noes

By a vote of **(number of ayes)** in favor and **(number of noes)** opposed, with **(number of abstentions)** abstaining, the motion passes.

If there are fewer ayes than noes, or there is a tie

By a vote of **(number of ayes)** in favor and **(number of noes)** opposed, with **(number of abstentions)** abstaining, the motion fails.

VOTING PROCEDURES FOR TWO-THIRDS VOTES

Those in favor, please rise. **(Count the number of legislators standing.)** Thank you; please be seated. **(Now count the total number of legislators present in the chamber, not including yourself. You do not need to call for votes in opposition.)**

TWO-THIRDS VOTING THRESHOLDS												
Number present	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Votes for $\frac{2}{3}$	6	6	7	8	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13

If at least two-thirds are in favor

By a vote of **(number in favor)** out of **(number present)** present, the motion passes.

If fewer than two-thirds are in favor

By a vote of **(number in favor)** out of **(number present)** present, the motion fails.

ENDING THE SESSION

(When 5 minutes remain in the session and no speaker holds the floor, proceed below. The “special orders” here are out of order before this time.)

At this time, it is in order for the chamber to consider the orders of the day. **(If an item of legislation was on the floor: By rule, the legislation is laid upon the table.)**

Session 4

The Chair will entertain a motion to adjourn *sine die* **(pronounced “sigh nee die ee”). (Someone will so move. The motion requires a second and a voice vote.)** This Congress stands adjourned. **(Gavel twice.)**

Sessions 1-3

The Chair will entertain a motion to open the floor for Presiding Officer nominations for Session **(number of the next session)**. **(Someone will so move. The motion requires a second and a voice vote.)** The floor is now open. Are there any nominations?

(Recognize legislators who wish to nominate a PO candidate. If the candidate accepts, write her/his last name on the board. When there are no further nominations, continue.)

Are there any further nominations? **(Pause.)** In that case, the Chair will entertain a motion to close nominations. **(Someone will so move. The motion requires a second and a voice vote.)** The floor is now closed to further nominations.

(If there is only one PO candidate, announce the next PO, congratulate him/her, and continue from the three asterisks on the next page. Otherwise, continue at the top of the next page.)

Each candidate is now recognized for a brief statement of their qualifications. **(Recognize the candidates in the order nominated. Their remarks should be about 30 seconds each; gavel them down if they go longer.)**

At this time, please write your choice for Presiding Officer on a small ballot. **(Allow time, then collect the ballots. The Parliamentarian should take over at this point. Otherwise, count the ballots. If a candidate has a majority—more than half of the total votes—announce and congratulate the winner. Otherwise, erase the name of the last place candidate from the board and announce a runoff, which is conducted the same way. Continue until a PO has been elected.)**

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The Chair will entertain a motion to recess until the scheduled start of the next session. **(Someone will so move. The motion requires a second and a voice vote.)** This Congress stands in recess. **(Gavel once.)**

THINGS THAT PROBABLY WON'T HAPPEN

Someone appeals the decision of the Chair

(This motion is only in order if you have just ruled against a *point of order*.)

Is there a second? **(If none:** Due to the lack of a second, the motion is out of order.)

An appeal of the Chair's decision has been moved and seconded. Does the speaker wish to explain the grounds for the appeal? **(Allow the speaker to make a very brief explanation. You may then give a similarly brief explanation of your prior ruling.)**

The question is "Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the chamber?"

Those voting to sustain the Chair, please rise. **(Count the number of legislators standing; these are your *ayes*.)** Thank you; please be seated.

Those voting to overrule the Chair, please rise. **(Count the number of legislators standing; these are your *noes*.)** Thank you; please be seated.

Those abstaining, please rise. **(Count the abstentions.)** Thank you; please be seated.

If there are more ayes than noes, or there is a tie

By a vote of **(number of ayes)** in favor and **(number of noes)** opposed, with **(number of abstentions)** abstaining, the Chair's decision stands.

If there are fewer ayes than noes

By a vote of **(number of ayes)** in favor and **(number of noes)** opposed, with **(number of abstentions)** abstaining, the Chair’s decision is overruled. **(Take appropriate action consistent with the outcome.)**

Someone moves to amend the B/R

(Check with the Parliamentarian to see if the amendment has been approved. If not, the motion is out of order. If it has been approved, take the written amendment from the Parliamentarian and continue.)

There is an amendment on the floor to **(read the amendment)**. A one-third second is required. Those wishing to second the amendment, please rise. **(Count the number of legislators standing.)** Thank you; please be seated. **(Now count the total number of legislators present in the chamber, not including yourself. You do not need to call for votes in opposition.)**

ONE-THIRD VOTING THRESHOLDS												
Number present	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Votes for 1/3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	7

If fewer than one-third are in favor

By a vote of **(number in favor)** out of **(number present)** present, the amendment is not seconded and is out of order. **(Continue where you left off before the motion to amend.)**

If at least one-third are in favor

By a vote of **(number in favor)** out of **(number present)** present, the amendment is seconded. **(Pause. Someone may move the previous question at this time.)**

It is now in order for a three-minute affirmative speech on the amendment. Those wishing to speak, please rise. **(Follow the same procedure as for a speech on a B/R, except that there are NO QUESTIONING PERIODS for speeches on amendments. The author of the amendment DOES NOT automatically get to open debate.)**

(Continue until debate is exhausted or the previous question is ordered, then take a passage vote on the amendment. Debate then resumes on the B/R—or the B/R as amended—where it left off before the motion to amend.)