

# Parliamentarian Instructions

Thank you for serving as a Parliamentarian in FGCCFL Student Congress. The League depends on Parliamentarians to be the eyes and ears of the tab staff in the chamber. Always remember, though, that if you have any questions, you can text the Tab Room for assistance at **813-298-8267**.

## Your Role as a Parliamentarian

As a Parliamentarian, you will spend the full day (all **four** sessions) in the same chamber. At the end of the day, you will rank all of the participants; your rankings are used both as regular rankings and as the final tiebreaker for Outstanding Legislator awards.

The primary duty of the Parliamentarian is to be available to settle problems that might arise relating to procedure within a chamber. As long as things run smoothly, you should stay in the background. Even on minor errors, you should let the chamber have an opportunity to recognize the error and resolve it. **The general philosophy should be to let the members of the chamber solve their own difficulties.** You may wish to point out the error briefly at the end of the session.

Only when a major problem or error has been made should you step in and correct matters. In particular, if debate or progress in the chamber bogs down, you may step in and point out ways out of the parliamentary quagmire. You may also counsel the Presiding Officer on her/his discretionary power to rule dilatory motions out of order and to refuse to let speakers monopolize the floor.

If the PO has (or is asked) a procedural question that s/he cannot answer, s/he may refer the question to you. Do your best to answer; consult the [Congress Manual](#) if you need further guidance. If you need to escalate the question to the tab staff, please do so. Do NOT bluff or guess.

You also function as a resource for the Scorers in your chamber. Their questions will likely go to you first; please do not hesitate to give your best guidance in accordance with the rules. Please direct all questions concerning tournament procedures, scoring guidelines, and scoring ranges to the Tab Room. The Tab Room and the Tournament Coordinator are available as a resource for you.

## Timetable for Student Congress

**(NOTE: Recess or adjourn at the scheduled times unless instructed otherwise by the Tab Room.)**

8:30-8:45	Preliminary Business
8:45-10:15	Session 1 (may start as soon as Preliminary Business is finished)
10:30-12:00	Session 2
12:00-1:00	<i>Lunch</i>
1:00-2:30	Session 3
3:00-4:30	Session 4
4:30	Adjourn <i>sine die</i>

## Preliminary Business

Before the start of the first session, you will be given a legislative calendar form, two paper seating charts, and two rosters (preset recency). One chart and roster are for your use. The others should be given to the Presiding Officer and will then be passed along to succeeding POs in due course. The seating charts are “backwards” relative to the online charts because they reflect the view from the PO’s desk at the front of the room. **You are expected to sit near the Presiding Officer.**

At the start of the Congress, you should preside initially, take attendance from your seating chart, help the chamber set the calendar, and conduct the first PO election. **You MAY appoint a Temporary Presiding Officer from the chamber to conduct preliminary business, but you should still count any PO ballots yourself.**

## Setting the Calendar

When setting the calendar, follow these priorities:

1. Items with an author present must be scheduled before all other items. A student from the author’s school may substitute for the author if the author is not in the chamber and the other student does not have legislation of his/her own.
2. Among items with an author, *one item from each school* must be considered before additional items from **any** school may be considered. (After every school with a sponsor has an item on the calendar, school affiliation is no longer a factor.)
3. Supplemental items should go last but may be reordered among themselves. All items must be placed on the calendar except in cases of topic duplication.

Please fill out the calendar form (or have the Temporary PO do it), then take a picture of the form and send it to **813-298-8267**. Also send the names of any missing students.

The chamber **may** suspend the rules to reorder its calendar at the start of each session. This is done “on the clock” and consumes session time.

## Conducting the PO Elections

Entertain a motion to open the floor for PO nominations; it requires a second and a simple majority (normally a voice vote). Recognize legislators to nominate their peers, who may accept or decline the nomination. When there are no further nominations, entertain a motion to close the floor to further nominations. (If there is only one candidate, no election is required.)

Allow each candidate to give a brief (20-30 seconds) statement of her/his qualifications, then have the members of the chamber (including the sitting PO, if any) write the name of one candidate on a small paper ballot. Collect and count the ballots. A candidate must have a majority to win, i.e., more votes than all other candidates combined (including spoiled ballots). If no candidate has a majority, eliminate the one with the fewest votes and hold a runoff among the surviving candidates.

Once you have a winning candidate, announce the winner and text her/his name to **813-298-8267**. If your PO voting has irregularities or is at an impasse, please text the Tab Room for assistance.

## During the Session

Session 1 is 1 hour and 45 minutes long, including Preliminary Business. The other sessions are 90 minutes each, including the PO election and the orders of the day. The chamber recesses at the end of Sessions 1–3 and adjourns *sine die* at the end of Session 4. Recesses in mid-session are limited to 5 minutes total per session unless you approve an additional recess for extreme need.

**Sessions MUST end on time unless otherwise directed.**

## Speaker Priority

During the Congress, please assist the Presiding Officer by keeping a very careful record of speeches and questions and verifying speaker order and recency with the Presiding Officer occasionally. You should track speeches and questions using your seating chart. **Priority accrues over all sessions and DOES NOT reset to zero.** Service as Presiding Officer counts as the **first speech** of the session. Be sure to record the PO's speech at the start of each session.

## Direct Questioning

All FGCCFL tournaments will use the “direct questioning” method. Instead of recognizing questioners for single questions, the PO will recognize each questioner for 30 seconds (or the remainder of the questioning period, if less) to ask multiple questions and receive responses. Questioners have their own recency, separate from speakers. Please see the attached rules.

## Scoring, Ballots, and Nominations

You do not score speakers or Presiding Officers. If you would like to give written feedback to students, you may do so. Depending on whether Tabroom is behaving, you may need to record comments for Sessions 1 and 2 in a separate document, then paste your feedback into Tabroom and write additional feedback during Session 3.

At the end of Session 4, you will rank ALL of the legislators in the chamber (where 1 is best). No ties or blanks are permitted. You should consider speaking and presiding, but also participation in the chamber, good questioning, effective use of procedure, statesmanship, leadership, and decorum.

**Please submit and confirm your rankings as soon as possible after the chamber adjourns.**

*Thank you once again for your help!*  
*We hope you enjoy your time in the chamber.*

## § 9 Questioning Periods (Cross-Examination)

(a) Questioning periods are **2 minutes** in length following a sponsorship speech and the first negative speaking opportunity. Questioning periods are **1 minute** in length following all other speeches. There are no questioning periods during debate on an amendment. All questioning periods will use the “direct questioning” method. The chamber **may not** suspend the rules to extend questioning, to alter the regular questioning periods, or to **abolish** “direct questioning.”

(b) The PO shall recognize all questioners unless the chamber suspends the rules to permit speakers to do so themselves. The PO always has the power to cut off a questioner or speaker and to select a new questioner, or to direct the speaker to do so.

(c) **Priority system for direct questioning.** The Presiding Officer must track *questioning* recency separately from *speaking* recency using the seating chart or another means. The system is similar to the priority system used for speakers:

(1) **Number of questioning periods (precedence).** The PO must recognize a legislator who has not yet asked questions. If all those standing have asked questions, the PO selects the one who has had the fewest questioning opportunities on the day.

(2) **Recency.** If there is a tie for fewest questioning periods, the PO recognizes the legislator whose *most recent* questioning period was *earliest* in the day.

(3) **Priority list.** If multiple legislators rise who have not yet asked questions, the PO selects the one whose name appears closest to the **bottom** of the randomized priority list given to her by the Parliamentarian. The priority list does not apply once recency has been established.

(4) **PO’s discretion.** If multiple legislators rise who have not yet asked questions and no priority list has been provided, she may select at her discretion, but she **must not** consider questions, motions, “standing time,” or school affiliation in her decision.

(d) **Procedure for direct questioning.** Questioners shall rise (or raise their hands) to seek recognition. Upon being recognized, the questioner shall have a maximum of **30 seconds** to ask questions and receive responses. Questions and responses must be kept brief, but the speaker may not be limited to a “yes” or “no” response. Clarifications may be requested and given as appropriate. The speaker may refuse to answer a question offered in bad faith.

(d) Personal attacks, repetitive questions (“asked and answered”), irrelevant questions, and requests to engage in prohibited conduct **must** be gavelled down and ruled **out of order**. Serial questions and cross-debate are permitted within the 30-second window for the questioner. Additionally, the PO **must** cut off excessive commentary or oration by the questioner or the speaker. A questioner who engages in prohibited conduct or solicits prohibited conduct from the speaker forfeits any remaining questioning time.

(e) At the end of 30 seconds of direct questioning (or if the questioner has no further questions or is gavelled down), the PO should gavel once, then recognize the next questioner if there is time remaining. The overall questioning time continues to run while the PO is selecting the next questioner. At the end of 1 or 2 minutes, the PO should rise and gavel twice to signal the end of the questioning period. If there is a lack of questioners with time remaining, the PO should rise, end the questioning period early, and dismiss the speaker.

## Table of Parliamentary Motions

Class	Name of Motion	Purpose	Interrupt	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Privileged	18. Fix time for reassembling	To arrange the time of next meeting	Yes	Yes	Time	Time	Majority
	17. Adjourn	To dismiss the meeting	No	Yes	No	Time	Majority
	16. Recess	To dismiss the meeting briefly	No	Yes	Yes	Time	Majority
	15. Point of personal privilege	To make a personal request during debate	Yes	No	No	No	Decision of Chair
	14. Call for the orders of the day	To force consideration of a postponed item	Yes	No	No	No	Decision of Chair
Incidental	13g. Appeal	To reverse the Presiding Officer's ruling	Yes	Yes	No	No	Maj. neg.
	13f. Point of order	To correct a procedural error	Yes	No	No	No	Decision of Chair
	13e. Division of the chamber	To verify a voice vote	Yes	Yes	No	No	None
	13d. Object to consideration	To completely suppress action	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 neg.
	13c. Divide a motion	To consider a motion's parts separately	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
	13b. Modify/withdraw a motion	To modify or withdraw a pending motion	No	No	No	No	Majority
	13a. Suspend the rules	To take action contrary to standing rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Subsidiary	12. Rescind	To repeal previous action	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3
	11. Reconsider	To consider a defeated motion again	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	10. Take from the table	To consider a tabled motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	9. Lay on the table	To defer action	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	8. Previous question	To close debate and vote immediately	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
	7. Limit or extend the limits of debate	To modify freedom of debate	No	Yes	No	Time	2/3
	6. Postpone to a certain time	To defer action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Time	Majority
	5. Refer to committee	For further study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	4. Amend an amendment	To modify an amendment	No	1/3	Yes	No	Majority
	3. Amend	To modify a motion	No	1/3	Yes	Yes	Majority
Main	2. Postpone indefinitely	To suppress action	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	1. Main motion (B/R)	To introduce business	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

### Notes

- The shaded motions are generally not applicable to Student Congress and are included for historical reasons.
- The incidental motions have no order of precedence among themselves (that's why they're all numbered 13).
- Legislation placed on the calendar is presumed to have been moved and seconded.
- Consult this manual and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (12th ed.) for detailed rules of procedure.