

B W2021.10

An Amendment to the Second Chapter of the Bylaws Clarifying Debate Procedures

A bill for the consideration of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government

February 3, 2021

Sponsored by: Tyler Watt, Max Stoneman

Whereas, the mission of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government (hereafter LSA SG) is to “actively seek the voices of LSA students and advocate their interests to improve academic and non-academic life”;¹ and,

Whereas, LSA SG utilizes its Bylaws to structure and facilitate official business, and recognizes the need for amendments to the Bylaws to improve its function and reflect current practices; and,

Whereas, members of LSA SG with speaking rights often find themselves compelled to debate key matters before LSA SG; and,

Whereas, orderly debates are preferred to chaos, as they allow for more people’s views to be heard in a more respectful space; and,

Whereas, Robert’s Rules of Order encourage the wide use of debate to express the views of individual members of an assembly within a set of rules used to limit time and subject matter of debate; and,

Whereas, it is not an enumerated rule within Robert’s Rules of Order to disallow debate if the sides are uneven; and,

Whereas, it is imperative that all speaking members of LSA SG be able to participate in debate if they so choose.

Be it therefore resolved, that the Bylaws be amended in accordance with Appendix A; and,

Be it finally resolved, that these changes take immediate effect.

¹ The Constitution of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government. Article II

Procedures for Debate

2.01.00 **Procedures.** Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised) shall be used except as stated otherwise in this chapter.

2.01.01 **Time Limits.** The time limit for each subagenda item shall be thirty minutes. The time used to debate amendments to the main motion shall be included in the total time limit. The time limit for debate may be extended by a majority vote of the Government.

2.01.02 **Extension of Time Limit for Debate.** The time for debate may be extended by a majority vote of the Government; it still requires a two-thirds majority to reduce the time for debate as described in Robert's Rules of Order.

2.01.03 **Maximum Time for a Speaker.** No speaker may have the floor at any one time for more than three minutes. The intent of this section is to prevent filibustering, and not to stifle debate. The Government may enforce this section at its discretion. *A motion may be made to lengthen or shorten this time.*

2.01.04 **Speaker Qualifications.** Elected representatives, appointed representatives, associate representatives, and executive board members at General Meetings may speak exclusively towards motions at General Meetings. Elected representatives, appointed representatives, and associate representatives shall be given priority on the speakers' list. Individuals who are not members of the government may speak only on government business if they are the sponsor of *the a*-resolution currently being discussed. This excludes individuals speaking during constituents' time and invited guest speakers, who are allotted time on the agenda to speak.

2.01.05 **Amendments.** The speaker of a motion may choose to accept or reject an amendment before the main motion has been made and seconded. The Government may choose to accept or reject amendments once the main motion has been made and seconded.

2.01.06 **Decorum in Debate.** During a debate, the names of individuals within the meeting shall not be included in *speechesakers' orations*. References may be made to individuals using solely their title (i.e., the President, the Representative) or as "the previous speaker", or a similar suitable description. A speaker using the name of a member of the Government during debate should be called to order.

2.01.07 Structure of Debate. After a debate is called, the Chair shall compile a list of all individuals interested in speaking. Further members may be added during the debate. The Chair shall call on individuals to present their speeches, alternating between those in favor and those opposed. If there is an uneven number of individuals on either side of a question, those in excess shall still have the opportunity to speak after all individuals with opposing views have spoken. If there is an overwhelming majority of speakers on one side of the debate, it is encouraged that a member motion to call the question to bring debate to a close.

2.01.08 Yielding Time. Speakers may yield their time to other members of the government, and to the Chair whenever they are done speaking. The balance of a speaker's time is negated after they have finished speaking.

2.01.09 End of Debate. Debate ends when the Previous Question is called, when no further representatives wish to debate or the time limit on debate is reached without extension.