

Illinois Institute of Technology

Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Robert's Rules Guidance

Robert's Rules Guidance

Robert's Rules of Order are a time-tested guide for running fair, orderly, and efficient meetings, and required by the handbook for the Illinois Tech Faculty Senate. The core principles ensure that majority rules, the minority has a voice, and only one subject is discussed at a time.

Core Principles

- **Equal rights:** Every member has the same right to speak, propose ideas, and vote on motions.
- **Single focus:** Only one question or motion is addressed at any given moment.
- **Impartial leader:** The chair or president must remain neutral during debates.
- **Quorum:** Quorum is required for the Senate to do business. The meeting must maintain at least 25 percent of the eligible faculty – tenured professors, tenured associate professors, and active emeriti – to remain actionable; that is currently certified at 52 members of faculty.
- **Participation:** Only members of Senate may speak, unless an audience member is specifically called upon, either through unanimous consent without objection, or by a two-thirds majority to suspend rules.

How Motions Work

- **Making a motion:** A member asks to speak, is recognized by the chair, and proposes an action.
- **The second:** Another member must agree to second the motion.
- **Discussion:** The chair opens the floor so members can debate the topic.
- **Voting:** The chair repeats the motion, takes a vote, and announces the result.

Member Guide for This Special Session

Illinois Institute of Technology

Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Robert's Rules Guidance

Because this meeting was convened by petition under Appendix B, Article VI of the Faculty Handbook, specific parliamentary rules apply under Robert's Rules to ensure an orderly and productive session:

1. Scope & Germaneness of Motions

- **Focus on the Call:** Under Robert's Rules governing special sessions (RONR §9), all discussions and motions must be germane to the topics established in the petition: institutional financial challenges, structural transformations, faculty/staff impacts, and the processes, procedures, and methods used to determine them.
- **Action Items:**
 - Other Business: Item 7 on the agenda is currently listed as "Other Business." We will be calling for an amendment to retitle this as **"Consideration of Motions and Resolutions Germane to the Petition Call."** in order to ensure that there is dedicated time for members to introduce additional formal resolutions not already covered by other agenda items, requests for information/documentation, or motions to refer matters to committees.
 - Time limits: At the beginning of the meeting the Chair will call for rules limiting debate. The time limit for speaking is anticipated at 90 seconds, a provision that can be overturned by unanimous consent or by a two-thirds majority to suspend rules.

2. Decorum in Debate (RONR §43)

- Debate must focus strictly on policies, processes, data, and institutional measures.
- Impugning the personal motives or character of any faculty member, officer, or administrator is out of order.

Illinois Institute of Technology

Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Robert's Rules Guidance

3. Raising Points & Challenging Rulings

- **Point of Order:** If you believe a meeting rule is being breached, you may raise a Point of Order for the Chair to rule upon.
- **Appeal the Ruling:** If you disagree with a procedural ruling by the Chair, any member can move to **Appeal the Decision of the Chair**. If seconded, the assembly votes on whether to sustain the Chair's interpretation (simple majority decides).

4. Informal Discussion & Q&A

- To allow open dialogue and direct communication before formal voting, the assembly may vote to **Consider Informally** (RONR §52). This temporarily relaxes standard formal debate limits during presentation and Q&A portions of the agenda.

5. Adjournment

- Calling a Senate session is complex, requiring a faculty petition; however, maintaining a Senate session and completing business in a second or subsequent meeting simply requires a privileged motion to “Fix the Time to which to Adjourn”, in the process setting the time for the next meeting. A blanket motion for adjournment, however, ends the Senate session and a new petition would be required to reconvene in a fresh session.

Microsoft Teams Meeting Rules

- **Obtaining the Floor:** Use the "Raise Hand" feature in Teams. Wait to be recognized by the Chair before unmuting. Please keep mics muted otherwise throughout the meeting.
- **Submitting Motions:** When introducing a main motion or amendment, please paste the full text into the Teams meeting chat at the same time you speak it so all members and the Secretary can review it.

Illinois Institute of Technology

Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Robert's Rules Guidance

- **Voting:** Votes on main motions or resolutions will be conducted using an external, anonymous, auditable polling tool (acting as electronic ballots). To ensure only one vote from each unique member per motion, credentials will be distributed in advance of the meeting. The number of votes will be tallied; however, how each verified member voted will not be stored.
- **Connection Integrity:** Per standard electronic meeting rules, an individual member's temporary connectivity issue does not invalidate a properly conducted vote.
- **Executive Session:** There are scenarios under which a Senate session may need to go behind closed doors to discuss sensitive information. Should this be needed, this will be achieved through launching a separate Teams session accessible to members of the Senate only.