

## **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES MANUAL**

**2010**

### **PURPOSE**

This manual is a guide to procedures of the National Assembly of the Public Relations Student Society of America. It informs Assembly Delegates who are not familiar with parliamentary rules of order, to protect their rights and opinions, and to instruct them on ways to ensure that proper and fair consideration will be given to even the most controversial resolution.

The PRSSA National Assembly is the governing body of PRSSA. It has the authority to amend the National Bylaws and to elect National Officers annually. To effectively represent their Chapters, Delegates must be familiar with the national organization and how it works. They should therefore familiarize themselves with PRSSA Bylaws and other Society documents, including this PRSSA National Assembly Procedures Manual, before attending an Assembly meeting.

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## **CONDUCT OF THE ASSEMBLY**

### **I. Code of Conduct**

1. Duties of the Delegates and Officers. It shall be the duty of every Delegate and Officer to obey the rules of the Society, whether the person approves of them or not; to try to further the objectives of the Society; to respect the Officers in their official capacities as representatives of the Society; to attend every meeting of the Assembly; to observe the rules of debate; to faithfully carry out any duty assigned, and when that is impractical, to ask to be excused; and to preserve and respect the rights of all members of the Assembly.
2. Addressing the Assembly. A Delegate shall wait to be recognized by the Chairman of the Assembly before speaking to the Assembly. If another person is addressing the Assembly, anyone wishing to speak should raise a hand and wait until recognized. The Chairman should not recognize any Delegate who interrupts the proceedings out of order. The Chairman has the authority to remove any Delegate from the Assembly who interrupts business after being warned. Once recognized by the Chairman, the Delegate shall rise and state his or her name, and the Chapter or national office that he or she represents, before presenting other information to the Assembly.

### **II. Assembly Membership**

1. Delegates and Officers. The National Assembly shall comprise the PRSSA National Committee, the PRSSA National Subcommittee Chairmen and one elected representative of each active Chapter. No other persons will be allowed on the floor of the Assembly, unless voted upon by the Assembly.
2. Seating. The National President, Immediate Past President, the Parliamentarian and a recording secretary (appointed by the National President) shall face the front of the Assembly.
3. Chairman of the Assembly. The Chairman of the Assembly shall be the PRSSA National President. In the event the National President cannot fulfill his or her duty for any reason, the Immediate Past President shall preside.

### **III. Presenting a Motion or Action for the Assembly**

1. To introduce a motion or other action, a Delegate must be recognized by the Chairman. When practical, the Delegates should present a written version of the amendment, motion or other action to the Chairman, who should pass it on to the recording secretary. The Delegate may then read the amendment, motion or other action to the Assembly. The Chairman should repeat the motion.
2. Amendments to the Bylaws. As stated in the PRSSA National Bylaws, amendments to the bylaws may be proposed by (a) the PRSSA National Committee or (b) a PRSSA National Assembly Delegate or (c) by majority vote of a PRSSA Chapter, provided that the text of the proposed amendment or amendments in all cases is submitted to the National President thirty (30) days before the annual meeting of the PRSSA Assembly and provided that notification of the proposed amendments is given to all Assembly Delegates, Chapter Presidents and members of the PRSSA National Committee twenty-one (21) days before that meeting. Chapters must be notified of any proposed change in national dues at least 21 days prior to the National Assembly, from Article XIV, Section 1.
3. Other Motions. The Assembly may vote to consider amendments that do not meet the above requirements with a 2/3 vote. This does not apply to amendments to motions, points of order, the rights of members or other similar legislative mechanics.

## IV. Rights of the Delegates

1. Express Opinion. Every Delegate has the right to speak at least once to every matter brought before the Assembly's consideration. The time may be restricted by the Assembly and, in unusual circumstances, the right may be removed from the Delegate or Delegates. However, the Chairman should guide and advise the Assembly to a just decision.
  2. Appeal. Every Delegate has the right to appeal a decision of the chair. The Chairman may be overruled by a 2/3 vote of the Assembly.
  3. Consideration. Business may not be expedited at the expense of the rights of the members. If the Assembly meeting should run beyond the time allocated, the Assembly Chairman may extend the time or reconvene at a time to be determined.
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## CONDUCTING BUSINESS

### I. Order of Business

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|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Roll Call of Delegates   | 5. Conference Update |
| 2. Bylaw Amendments         | 6. New Business      |
| 3. Election of Officers     | 7. Adjournment       |
| 4. Announcement of Officers |                      |

### II. Motions

1. Form. Motions must be presented to the Assembly in accordance with the regulations in Section III, "Conduct of the Assembly," above. The Delegate should then state "I move that the Assembly (state action)." The motion must then be seconded by another member of the Assembly. If there is no second, the motion dies.
2. Debate. If the motion is seconded, the Delegate who introduced the motion may begin debate. The Chairman shall decide the order of speakers, alternating between those opposed to the motion and those in favor. A speaker's list shall be created if there are more than a few Delegates wishing to speak. The speaker's time shall be limited to three (3) minutes, unless extended a second time by a 2/3 vote for three (3) additional minutes. No member may speak twice until every member choosing to speak has spoken at least once.
3. Amending a Motion. An amendment to a motion must have direct bearing on the subject of the motion, yet it may be opposite to the spirit of the motion. The Delegate should state "I proposed that the original motion be amended by (state action)." The amendment may strike out a word, add or insert words or sentences, or make other changes in the original motion. This amendment must be seconded and voted upon before the original motion may be voted upon.
4. Other Motions. While a motion is "on the floor" or being considered, a member may ask for information from the Chairman or clarification from the recording secretary or other speakers about that motion. Other motions that a Delegate may make are, in order of precedence: setting time to adjourn; questioning privilege (such as asking for information, as mentioned above); calling for the agenda; reading of relevant papers; withdrawal of the motion; suspension of the rules; calling for vote; amending, rescinding or reconsidering.

### **III. Voting**

1. Who Votes. Every Delegate and each National Officer shall be entitled to one vote, except the Chairman of the Assembly, who may vote only in the case of a tie or where his or her vote would make a difference.
  2. Quorum. A quorum of Delegates must be present before business may be conducted. A quorum consists of 1/3 of the active Chapters.
  3. Motions. A simple majority vote is required to pass a motion, except for those noted below.
  4. Question and Answer. All national officer candidates must participate in a fifteen-minute question and answer (Q&A) forum after their presentation. An extension of the Q&A can be granted by a vote of the Assembly; however, the initial fifteen-minute Q&A is mandatory.
  5. Amendment to the Bylaws. Amendments to the Bylaws must receive a 2/3 vote of approval from the Assembly to be enacted.
  6. Other Motions. The following motions require a 2/3 vote of the Assembly: objection to the consideration of the motion; suspension of the rules; closing debate; limiting or extending debate; or others indicated in this manual.
  7. Voting Method. The method of taking the vote shall be left to the discretion of the Chairman of the Assembly.
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### **SPECIAL RULES**

#### **I. Parliamentarian**

A PRSA parliamentarian shall be appointed each year by the current PRSSA National President. The parliamentarian, who must be a member of PRSA, shall attend all PRSSA National Assembly meetings, rules on all questions of procedure, advise the PRSSA National President on matters concerning procedure in transacting the business of the PRSSA National Assembly and maintain a working knowledge of the PRSSA National Bylaws. The parliamentarian shall also be acquainted with the rules and procedures of parliamentary law.

#### **II. Chairman's Authority**

The Chairman shall rule on points of order, or may refer such judgments to the parliamentarian. Any ruling from the Chairman may be overruled by a 2/3 vote of the Assembly.

#### **III. Rule Suspension**

In cases which the Assembly deems necessary, rules can be suspended. Following a motion from any member of the Assembly to suspend a rule, a vote should be conducted. A 2/3 majority vote of the Assembly shall be sufficient to suspend a particular rule. The suspension may also be achieved by attaining the "general consent" of the Assembly. No objections from the Assembly members shall constitute a "general consent."

#### **IV. National Officers' Election**

1. Secret Ballot. To allow maximum privacy, election of all PRSSA National Committee members shall be by secret ballots cast by Assembly Delegates. The election of the officers shall be conducted on the day of the National Assembly. The PRSSA Election Eligibility and Rules Subcommittee shall be responsible for the distribution and collection of the ballots.
2. Voting. Assembly Delegates shall be allowed to cast one vote for a candidate for each of the national officers -- i.e. one for National President and one for each of the seven Vice Presidents.
3. Write-in Votes. After the nominations have been closed, Assembly Delegates may cast a write-in vote if the name of the candidate of their choice does not appear on the ballot. If a Delegate wishes to cast a write-in vote, he or she should write the name of the prospective candidate and the particular office for which the candidate should be considered on the ballot. It should be herein recognized that the closing of nominations in no way prevents write-in votes. The closing of nominations does, however, prevent the public endorsement of any such candidates.
4. Tallying. The Chairman of the PRSSA Election Eligibility and Rules Subcommittee shall appoint one or more persons to act as tally clerks for all elections, with the Subcommittee Chairman serving as the head of this vote-counting group. They will also oversee the use of voting devices when possible.

#### **V. Election Eligibility and Rules Subcommittee**

1. Campaigning. Absolutely no campaigning either before or during the National Assembly is allowed. Infringements of this ruling, either by the candidate or the candidate's supporters, shall be grounds for immediate disqualification of the candidate by the Elections Subcommittee.
2. Campaign Practices: If defeated for the position for which a candidate is nominated, the candidate may be nominated for one, and only one, additional position.
3. Delegates. The Subcommittee shall decide on any questions of authorized Delegates and shall admit only chapter Delegates, National Committee candidates and the National Committee onto the Assembly floor.
4. Voting. The Subcommittee is responsible for distributing and collecting official ballots/voting devices.

#### **VI. Rules for Conducting Business**

When there is a question of procedure, the Assembly shall follow parliamentary procedure as outlined in Roberts' Rules of Order, except where superseded by this manual or by a 2/3 vote of the Assembly.