

COMMITTEE CHAIR WORKSHOPS

Running List Committee Tips

- Boundary Spanning: Realize that your committee is part of a larger group. Span across faculty, staff, students and administration at all levels. That is, connect with all stakeholders to ensure that you have a complete picture of the impact(s) your decisions will have across the University.
- Evaluate last year's process and consider ways to improve, ask members for ideas/suggestions.
- Prepare and use agendas (set in advance, distribute and stick to it) - keeps meetings on task and controls unruly/animated members.
- Chair's role: Use Robert's Rules when necessary to help control and move discussion along. Be careful not to squelch discussion but to facilitate. As chair you **can** interrupt and request that others be given a chance to speak such as in an endless/repeating discussion.
- Member's role: Think about informing members that they must be recognized by chair to speak, respect others. Motions and seconds come from members e.g. motion to accept, amend, propose, postpone, previous question, etc.
 - To stop an endless/repeating discussion use previous question -- Robert's Rules* on previous question use: member must be recognized by chair, cannot interrupt speaker, requires a second, is non-debatable, and requires 2/3rds majority vote.
 - Member/*ex officio* who controls conversation or rambles – ask to pause the conversation, summarize and then ask if others have anything new to add. This ensures understanding, keeps discussion on topic, treats everyone fairly, and allows time for a member to propose a motion.
 - Members talking over each other – ask to pause the meeting and request that members observe Robert's Rules by raising their hands before speaking.
 - Off-campus members – recognize them, allow them to speak first, don't forget they are there, use skype, Zoom, speaker phone (Faculty Secretary's office has disc phone that can be borrowed). Consider using the Paul J. Joyce Lounge in Brink if you need a meeting space with Zoom/Skype capabilities. Consider time difference for southern Idaho members.
- Send material in advance and encourage members to come with ideas and share ahead if possible, especially controversial items.
- Review processes/policy/criteria to ensure consistency, understanding and reasonableness.
- Meet as needed – do not meet just for the sake of meeting, there is no set number of meetings for committees. However, don't wait for things to come your way as they may not. Be diligent, ask for ideas/suggestions from members or others (see brainstorm below).
- Start/end meetings on time - finish discussion by email if possible, or carryover to next meeting.
- Create sub-groups to address a particularly controversial/in-depth issue to report back on summarizing findings will save valuable time for the committee as a whole.
- Minutes/annual report - critical for historical record: 1) saves rehashing issues/repeating history, 2) provides institutional memory e.g. why/how/when a policy was changed, 3) provides supporting documentation to ensure your hard work on an issue gets approved, and 4) new chairs/members gain a better understanding of the committee's work/future topics.
- Robert's Rules (RR) is your friend but be careful in its use e.g. motion to table: frequently used, typically misused, and should rarely be used - if at all. Google or contact Faculty Secretary's Office for clarification on the use of RR.

First meeting guidelines (setting the stage):

- Introductions and review/clarify purpose of committee as stated in [FSH 1640](#).
- Establish set meeting time (if established time is in FSH, ensure members vote on change).
- Establish procedures (e.g. vote to sometimes conduct business by email allowing more time for face-

to-face discussion/vote).

- Ask members to think about process improvement for meetings and to consider the committee's work throughout the year to determine if it aligns with FSH 1640.
- Brainstorm - take time at this first meeting to ask members for ideas and let them know it is okay to propose ideas at any time (caution: as chair choose one or two items you believe are important and pursue first, otherwise valuable time may be spent on issues of less urgency).
- Discuss ways to engage and retain students, often difficult towards end of the year – recognize, praise, offer to be a reference, emphasize importance of student involvement, bring food.

What makes a good chair?

- Be organized, send out agenda in advance, and stick to agenda.
- Be prepared prior to all meetings gathering material and your thoughts so that you can begin on time. Starting/ending on time and staying on task recognizes member's time as valuable.
- Communicate regularly with members, but don't overload by sending message after message.
- Don't control every aspect - set the tone through carefully prepared messages: short, detailed description of issue(s) followed by bulleted action items or key points. Framing the discussion ahead of the scheduled meeting allows members to think about the issue for the face-to-face discussion and whether to discuss further, vote, or whether to pursue further.
- Invite individual(s) who made contact with you about an issue to the meeting, or invite *ex officio*/administrator who has oversight over a specific issue/policy.
- Take minutes (perhaps delegate minutes to a member) all motions, voting and decisions should be recorded.
- Conflict of interest: recuse oneself from the discussion/voting. Note: Documentation in the minutes where a conflict of interest may exist is crucial.
- Communicate with Faculty Secretary's office if you have questions or are working on a Faculty Staff Handbook policy (new or revised). Work through the Faculty Secretary's Office to fill vacancies on your committee.