

Roles of Chair and Clerk
Compiled by Patrick Wilson, January 2014

Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm.

— Publilius Syrus

Chair

- Calls meetings to order and adjourns them at the appropriate times
- Assigns the floor to any person entitled to speak
- States the exact wording of every motion
- Votes, if the chair chooses, only if the vote is by ballot or if the chair's vote will affect the result
- Understands and enforces the rules of debate
- Issues rulings on points of order and gives reasons for each ruling

The chair does *not*

- Rush or cut off debate
- Engage in debate from the chair
- Show partiality to any motion or member
- Suspend any rule unilaterally
- Justify a ruling by appeal to anything but the rules themselves

Clerk

- Takes attendance at faculty meetings
- Prepares draft minutes for faculty approval
- Keeps on file approved minutes and committee reports
- Maintains expertise in parliamentary procedure
 - Calling the attention of the chair to egregious procedural errors
 - Advising the chair on procedural matters
 - Addressing the faculty on only the most involved procedural issues and only if so directed by the chair
- Retains a voting member's rights to make motions, speak in debate, and vote

The clerk does *not*

- Have the final say in the approval of minutes—any voting member may object to approval, but only by suggesting a correction
- Make rules of order—that's the faculty's prerogative
- Enforce rules of order—that's the chair's job
- Have an obligation to defend rules of order—the faculty may suspend, amend, or repeal rules it doesn't endorse