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
  o Calling the attention of the chair to egregious procedural errors
  o Advising the chair on procedural matters
  o 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