

Going on Record
Compiled by Patrick Wilson, September 2015

We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not proof.
— Edward R. Murrow

In most cases, individual faculty members cannot act unilaterally at faculty meetings: a second is required before any main motion or appeal comes before the faculty; no one can shut off debate simply by “calling the question”; and there is no such thing as a right to have one’s vote recorded in the minutes.

Each voting member, acting alone, does have the following rights:

- To verify a vote (by calling for “division”—no second, no debate)
- To request information from the chair (who may call on someone else to provide it)
- To make a parliamentary inquiry (to ask the chair about proper procedure)

Every voting member, acting alone, also has the right to go on record as follows:

- In offering an unpopular view or proposal
- By objecting to the chair’s interpretation or enforcement of the rules
- By requiring the chair to give a reason for his or her ruling

These latter rights affect the minutes, which are permanently archived, as follows:

- The exact wording of every main motion, as well as the name of its maker, goes in the minutes, even if the motion fails or doesn’t get seconded.
- The substance of every point of order, whether sustained or not, is stated in the minutes. Any voting member can raise a point of order (no second, no debate).
- For every ruling by the chair that is challenged by a point of order, the chair’s reason for the ruling is recorded in the minutes. Such rulings and their rationale create important precedents (although any such precedent can later be overruled by the faculty, who are ultimately in control of the rules governing their meetings).