

Resolution 11: Revising and Formalizing the Procedures for the Consideration of Resolutions

Abstract: The assembly resolves to amend the Bylaws in three ways to improve the procedure by which resolutions are adopted and conveyed: (1) The current Bylaws require that votes on any resolution must be postponed at least one meeting following its introduction, unless two-thirds vote to suspend the Bylaws. This resolution deletes that requirement and allows the Assembly to adopt resolutions in the meeting in which they are introduced. (2) This resolution replaces the absolute majority voting requirement of resolutions with that of a simple majority, as is recommended for deliberative assemblies. (3) This resolution requires the President to convey adopted resolutions to the President of the University and states the recourses in case the President fails to do so.

Sponsored by: David Dunham, President

Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 1/25/2021

Whereas, the Bylaws §4.04.B.iii.c states that upon introduction, “The resolution is immediately postponed until the next GPSA meeting. This can be overridden by a two-thirds majority vote of all seated Voting Members, at which point formal discussion of the resolution ensues”; and

Whereas, the Bylaws §4.04.B.iii.d states that “At the following GPSA meeting, formal discussion of the resolution ensues”; and

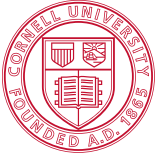
Whereas, the GPSA frequently engages in new business that requires urgent action; and

Whereas, GPSA members have the right to move to postpone consideration of any resolution until any regular meeting, which requires the consent of a majority of Voting Members; and

Whereas, the Bylaws §4.04.B.iii.e states that “For votes on resolutions, majority and two-thirds majority vote shall be determined based on total number of seated members regardless of the number of members present.”; and

Whereas, Robert’s Rules of Order (RONR 44:9(b)) advises against such a requirement, stating that “A *majority of the entire membership* is a majority of the total number of those who are members of the voting body at the time of the vote,” and “prescribing such a requirement is generally unsatisfactory in an assembly of an ordinary society, since it is likely to be impossible to get a majority of the entire membership even to attend a given meeting, although in certain instances it may be appropriate in conventions or in permanent boards where the members are obligated to attend the meetings.”; and

Whereas, the GPSA has failed to adopt resolutions that would likely have been adopted if a greater majority of members had been present (e.g., the vote on resolution 3 in the meeting of 11/09/2020,



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which was renewed as resolution 6 and adopted on 11/23/2020 in a meeting with only slightly higher attendance); and

Whereas, voting requirements based on the number of members *present* is generally inadvisable because an abstention or absence becomes equivalent to a negative vote: “Since an abstention in such cases has the same effect as a negative vote, these bases deny members the right to maintain a neutral position by abstaining. For the same reason, members present who fail to vote through indifference rather than through deliberate neutrality may affect the result negatively.” (RONR 44:9(a)); and

Whereas, the GPSA President is expected but not formally required to convey all adopted resolutions to the President of the University;

Be it therefore resolved, that the Bylaws §4.04.B.iii.c-d (lines 677-680) be deleted in its entirety; and

Be it further resolved, that the Bylaws §4.04.B.iii.e (lines 681-682) be substituted with the following:

- e. For votes on resolutions, a majority or two-thirds majority shall be determined based on the number of Voting Members participating in the vote, with the following exceptions:
 1. Motions to amend or rescind a previously adopted motion shall require either (1) prior notice and a two-thirds majority of those participating in the vote, or (2) a majority of the entire Voting Membership without prior notice.
 2. Amendments to the Bylaws and the Charter shall adhere to majority requirements stated in the Charter §10.01.

Be it finally resolved, that the following §4.04.B.iii.f be inserted after Bylaws §4.04.B.iii.e:

1. If the Assembly adopts a resolution, the President must convey the resolution to the President of the University within two weeks following the meeting in which the resolution is adopted. The wording of the resolution must be identical to that of the adopted resolution. If the President is unwilling or unable to perform this responsibility, the Officer of highest precedence shall have the responsibility to do so. If no Officer is willing or able to perform this responsibility, the sponsor of the resolution shall have the responsibility to do so.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Dunham

President, Graduate & Professional Student Assembly