

Senate procedure, a building block saga
[Incomplete draft]
Adam Swenson¹

(0) A unanimously supported proposal which no one feels the need to discuss

Narrator: A Standing Committee has introduced the following motion

Main motion: That tacos be declared the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

Narrator: Since it comes from a Standing Committee, no second is needed. If the motion had been introduced from the floor, the Chair would call for a second before beginning discussion.

Chair: Would anyone like to be recognized? [pauses]

Narrator: Any member may raise their hand to seek recognition in order to speak in favor or against the motion, ask questions, propose changes, or make other motions.

Chair: Seeing no one seeking recognition, we will now vote on whether to declare tacos the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

[Vote happens]

Chair: The motion passes.

(1) A proposal with debate

Narrator: A Standing Committee has introduced the following motion

Main motion: That tacos be declared the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

Chair: Would anyone like to be recognized?

Narrator: Two members raise their hands.

¹ Comments and suggestions very much appreciated: adam.swenson@csun.edu

Chair: I have two members on the speakers list. Speaker 1 you will be first followed by Speaker 2. If anyone else would like to be recognized, please raise your hand and I will add you to the list.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Tacos are delicious, perhaps singularly so amongst the foods. Therefore I urge my colleagues to support this proposal.

Chair: Thank you **Speaker 1**. Next on my speakers list is **Speaker 2**

Speaker 2: While I do not contest the deliciousness of tacos, I am unsure that the CSUN faculty are the sort of organization which should have an official food.

Chair: Thank you **Speaker 2**. I have no one else on the speakers list. Seeing no one else seeking recognition, it appears we are ready to vote. [pauses] We will now vote on whether to declare tacos the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

[Vote happens]

Chair: The motion passes.

(2) A proposal with debate and a question

Narrator: A Standing Committee has introduced the following motion

Main motion: That tacos be declared the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

Chair: Would anyone like to be recognized?

Chair: I have 3 members on the speakers list. Speaker 1 you will be first followed by Speaker 2. If anyone else would like to be recognized, please raise your hand and I will add you to the list.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Tacos are delicious, perhaps singularly so amongst the foods. Therefore I urge my colleagues to support this proposal.

Chair: Thank you **Speaker 1**. Next on my speakers list is **Speaker 2**

Speaker 2: While I do not contest the deliciousness of tacos, I am unsure that the CSUN faculty are the sort of organization which should have an official food.

Chair: Thank you Speaker 2. Next is Speaker 3.

Speaker 3: I have a Point of Information.

Narrator: This is a fancy way of saying “I have a question”. It’s also fine to just say “I have a question”

Chair: Go ahead.

Speaker 3: Will declaring an official food of the faculty lead to any form of discount at campus dining?

Chair: Good question. Perhaps **Speaker 4**, the chair of the sponsoring committee, has some information. **Speaker 4?**

Speaker 4: That’s not something the committee looked into in creating this proposal. However, my committee has heard reports showing that the pandemic has been extremely hard on the University Corporation who runs campus food services. So I doubt they’re going to offer too many discounts.

Chair: **Speaker 3** does that answer your question?

Speaker 3: It does. Thank you, **Speaker 4**.

Chair: Thank you **Speakers 3 and 4**. I have no one else on the speakers list. Seeing no one else seeking recognition, it appears we are ready to vote. [pauses] We will now vote on whether to declare tacos the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

[Vote happens]

Chair: The motion passes.

(3) A proposal with a great deal of debate

Narrator: A Standing Committee has introduced the following motion

Main motion: That tacos be declared the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

Chair: Would anyone like to be recognized?

Narrator: 53 members raise their hands.

Chair: I have 53 members on the speakers list. Speaker 1 you will be first followed by Speaker 2. If anyone else would like to be recognized, please raise your hand and I will add you to the list.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Tacos are delicious, perhaps singularly so amongst the foods. Therefore I urge my colleagues to support this proposal.

Chair: Thank you **Speaker 1**. Next on my speakers list is **Speaker 2**

Speaker 2: While I do not contest the deliciousness of tacos, I am unsure that the CSUN faculty are the sort of organization which should have an official food.

Narrator: Many speakers make excellent and trenchant points concerning the proposal.

Chair: The Chair recognizes **Speaker 3**.

Speaker 3: I'd like to call the question.

Chair: It has been moved that we stop debate and move immediately to a vote on the proposal to make tacos the official food of the CSUN faculty. Is there a second?

[(countably) infinite voices] Second!

Chair: Very well. We will now vote on whether to close debate. This is undebatable and requires 2/3.

Narrator: A majority—more than half the votes cast—is enough for the body to make a decision. Thus the main motion requires a majority. But since calling the question takes away the right of other members to voice their opinions or suggest further changes, it requires the much higher threshold of 2/3.

[Vote takes place]

Chair: The motion calling the question passes. We will now vote on the motion that tacos be declared the official food of the CSUN faculty.

[Vote takes place]

Chair: The motion passes.

(4) A proposal with an amendment

Narrator: A Standing Committee has introduced the following motion

Main motion: That tacos be declared the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

Chair: First on our speakers list is **Speaker 1**

Speaker 1: I'd like to propose an amendment.

Narrator: Every member has a chance to suggest changes to the proposal. That includes those who want to honor a different food or who oppose declaring an official food. Everyone has a chance to make whatever passes as, ahem, palatable as possible.

Chair: Go ahead

Speaker 1: I propose we strike the word 'tacos' and replace it with the word 'burritos'

Amendment: That ~~tacos~~ burritos be declared the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

Chair: Is your amendment correctly represented on the screen?

Speaker 1: Yep.

Chair: Is there a second?

Narrator: No one on their own can cause the senate to do anything—especially not the chair. But if any 2 members believe that a matter is worth discussing, we must consider the matter.

Speaker 2: Second!

Narrator: **Speaker 2** might have any number of reasons for seconding the motion. She might support the proposal. She might think it's worth hearing her colleagues' views on it. She might even want it to be discussed so that it can be rejected.

Chair: The amendment to replace tacos with burritos has been moved and seconded.

Speaker 1 would you like to speak to your amendment?

Narrator: The person proposing something normally gets the first chance to speak. While she speaks other members raise their hands to indicate that they would like a turn to speak in favor or opposition, ask a question, or propose a motion.

Speaker 1: Yes. I know it is unfashionable, but I believe burritos are far superior to tacos in terms of flavor, versatility, and neatness of consumption.

Chair: There is no one else on my speakers list. [pauses] Seeing no one seeking recognition, we will now vote on whether to replace the word 'tacos' with the word 'burritos' in the main motion.

[Vote happens]

Chair: The motion passes. The main motion now reads

That burritos be declared the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

Narrator: Now that the word 'tacos' has been replaced with 'burritos' it is no longer in order to change the food in question. Had the amendment failed, it would be okay to propose any other changes to the main motion. It would be even be okay to propose adding the words 'and burritos' after 'tacos' since this is different from just replacing 'tacos'.

Chair: Does anyone seek recognition. [pauses] Seeing no one seeking recognition, we will now vote on whether to declare burritos the official food of the CSUN Faculty.

[Vote happens]

Chair: The motion fails.

Narrator: Rightly so.

(5) A proposal with multiple failed primary amendments

(6) A proposal with a successful secondary amendment

(7) A proposal with a point of order

(8) A proposal with multiple failed secondary amendments

(9) A proposal with multiple failed primary and secondary amendments

(10) A proposal with multiple failed primary and secondary amendments which is tabled for other business then taken from the table.

(11) A proposal with multiple failed primary and secondary amendments, several intervening (special and regular) order of business items, a call to enforce the agenda, and an attempt to kill the proposal through indefinite postponement.

(12) A proposal with the hated and most evil motion to substitute

(13) A proposal, reconsidered