

Student Congress Manual

Florida Gulf Coast CFL

Version 17.10

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1 General Rules

1.1 Procedure Manuals and Officials

This manual governs procedure at all FGCCFL-sponsored tournaments. Consult this manual first, followed by the most recent *NCFL Student Congress Manual*, then *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (11th ed.).

Judges (Parliamentarians at Grand Finals) may make rulings at the request of the Presiding Officer but otherwise should only intervene if necessary to correct significant mistakes. Decisions made in the chamber **will not** be overturned except for clear error.

The Congress Director and tab staff may make rulings at the request of the judges and may take all actions necessary to ensure a fair and efficient tournament.

1.2 Conduct and Decorum

Student Congress chambers should embody the best ideals of representative democracy and deliberative policymaking. Participants are expected to treat the officials and one another with dignity and respect at all times. Personal attacks, harassment, or bullying of any sort may result in sanctions up to and including disqualification from the tournament.

1. Legislators must remain silent when others have the floor, and the Presiding Officer (PO) must rule interruptions *out of order* except when (i) permitted by the rules of procedure **and** (ii) in furtherance of the chamber's needs. Legislators **may** pass notes and share materials *discreetly and quietly*.
2. Speakers shall direct their remarks to the chamber as a whole, not to individual members. Legislators are to address and refer to each other as "Representative (*surname*)" or "Mr./Ms. (*surname*).". The PO is addressed as "Madam/Mister Speaker" and is referred to as "the Chair."
3. Legislators **must** attend **all** sessions in their assigned chambers, except for *very brief* exits from the chamber when absolutely necessary. The PO shall deny excessive requests to exit the chamber, and the chamber **may not** suspend the rules to permit "open" exit and re-entry.
4. Legislators are held to the highest ethical standards. Falsification of evidence may result in penalties up to forfeiture of the session. Judges may review evidence in response to an allegation of falsification if the original source is available in the chamber.

1.3 The Presiding Officer (PO)

The PO's job is to lead the chamber in productive and fair legislative discussion. To that end, she¹ **may and should** advise the chamber on matters of procedure not related to the substance of any item of legislation. She should also be careful to recognize speakers fairly and to ensure that legislators maintain decorum.

Furthermore, the PO is strictly charged with the duty to keep debate moving and has substantial discretion to do so. She **must** rule dilatory tactics and frivolous motions *out of*

¹ This manual uses feminine pronouns when referring to Presiding Officers and masculine pronouns when referring to other members. All pronouns should be considered gender-inclusive.

order and **may** deny recognition to legislators attempting to monopolize the floor. These rulings are subject to appeal.

The PO **not not** enter into debate on legislation, and she **may not** relinquish the Chair to participate in floor debate. Legislators may not “approach the Chair” or pass notes to the PO, except to submit an amendment for review.

The PO should stand when addressing the chamber if she is able to do so.

1.4 Electronic Devices