Summary of Rosenberg’s Rules of Order

This is a summary of the proposed alternative to Robert’s Rules, to be followed in future GSA Council meetings if passed. As the original document states, these rules are attentive to the fact that any set of formal rules for a meeting should:

1. Establish order
2. Be clear
3. Be user-friendly
4. Enforce the will of the majority while protecting the rights of the minority

For further clarifications, please check the document of the original Rosenberg’s Rules, to be found alongside this summary.

- The meeting will only begin once quorum, i.e. attendance of 1/3 of the current Council members, has been established.
- The chair does not vote, except in the event of a tie in a simple majority vote. [Based on the GSA constitution]

Each agenda item will be dealt with as follows:

1. The chair will announce the number of the agenda item and state the subject.
2. The chair will invite the appropriate person to report on it.
3. The chair will ask members of the body if there are any technical questions of clarification.
4. The chair will invite comments from the public.
5. The chair will suggest a motion to the members of the body [“A motion would be in order that...”] and then announce the name of the member who makes the motion.
6. The chair will determine if anyone wishes to second the motion. This is not an absolute requirement and if necessary, based on time available, the chair may proceed with voting on the motion. This is a matter left to the discretion of the chair.
7. If the motion is made and seconded the chair will make sure that everyone has understood the motion by asking the secretary to repeat the motion (from the minutes)/repeat the motion herself.

8. The chair will invite discussion on the motion. If there is no/little discussion, she will proceed with voting. If there is lengthy discussion, the motion will be read again before voting.

9. The chair takes a vote and counts the number of members in favour/opposed/who abstain.

10. The chair will announce the vote and what action the body has taken, and announce the name of members in the minority. (“The motion passes by a vote of 7-2, with A and B dissenting. We have passed the motion to xyz...)

Three main motions:

1. The basic motion - “I move that ...”

2. The motion to amend - “I move that we amend the motion to ...”

3. The substitute motion - “I move a substitute motion that ...”

Of the above, there can be only three motions on the floor at one time (e.g. a substitute motion cannot further be followed by a motion to amend the substitute motion). They will be dealt with in the following order:

1. Discussion and debate on the substitute motion will be followed by a vote. If passed, the process ends here.

2. If the substitute motion is failed, there will be discussion and debate on the motion to amend, followed by a vote. If the amendment is accepted, the amended motion will be passed.

3. If the amendment is rejected, the original, basic motion will be put to discussion and debate and then followed by a vote.

Each of these debates can continue as long as the members of the body wish to discuss an item, subject to the chair’s decision that it is time to move on and take a vote. Exceptions
apply when there is a desire of the body to move on. The following motions are not debatable, and will be immediately voted on:

1. **Motion to adjourn** - Requires a simple majority vote.
2. **Motion to recess** - The chair determines the length of the recess. Requires a simple majority vote.
3. **Motion to fix the time to adjourn** - Requires a simple majority vote.
4. **Motion to table** - To place an item on hold, either for a specific period or indefinitely, in which case it will be brought back to the body in a future meeting. Both require a simple majority vote.
5. **Motion to limit debate** [“I move the previous question”; “I move the question”; “I call the question”; “Question”] - It may be treated as a request, and the chair will ask, “Any further discussion?” If no discussion, then the chair will proceed to taking a vote. If even one person wishes to discuss further, the request will be treated as a formal motion and be voted on. The motion may include a time limit (“Move to limit debate to this item to 15 minutes”). The motion requires a two-thirds vote of the body.

Extraordinary motions (which require a 2/3 majority, or a super majority, to pass):

1. Motion to limit debate (above)
2. Motion to close nominations
3. Motion to object to the consideration of a question (non-debatable)
4. Motion to suspend the rules (debatable)

A motion to reconsider can be made after a decision has been made. It requires a majority vote.

1. It must be made at the meeting where it was first voted upon [unless the motion to suspend rules is made in a later meeting, and passes by a super majority].
2. It can only be made by someone who voted in the majority in the original vote, e.g. because there has been a change of heart.
3. If the motion passes, then the item is back before the body, and a new original motion will be made. It will be discussed and debated on freshly.
Interruptions to a speaker may be in the form of:

1. **Point of privilege** - Relating to anything that interferes with the normal comfort of the meeting.

2. **Point of order** - Relating to procedural objections with regard to the running of the meeting.

3. **Appeal** - A decision arrived at through a vote and announced by the chair may be appealed if a member disagrees with it. The motion should be seconded, debated, and passed by a simple majority vote, after which the decision will be deemed reversed.

4. **Call for the order of the day** - To return to the agenda. The chair will remind the body to return to the agenda item at hand.

5. **Withdraw a motion** - The maker of the motion may withdraw it at any time. The chair may ask the seconder whether they wish to make the motion, or another member may make it anew.