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## PURPOSE

This manual is a guide to procedures of the PRSSA National Assembly. It informs Assembly Delegates on parliamentary rules of order, protects their rights and opinions, and instructs them how to ensure that proper, fair consideration is given to even the most controversial resolution.

The PRSSA National Assembly is PRSSA's governing body. It has authority to amend the National Bylaws and elect National Officers annually. To effectively represent their Chapters, Delegates must be familiar with the national organization and how it works. They should familiarize themselves with PRSSA Bylaws and other Society documents, including this PRSSA National Assembly Procedures Manual, before attending an Assembly meeting. This Manual is the official document outlining the procedures for National Assembly, including electing National officers and bylaw guidelines.

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## CONDUCT OF THE ASSEMBLY

### I. Rights and Duties of the Delegates

#### 1. Delegates and Officers

It is the duty of every Delegate and Officer to obey the Society's rules, whether the person approves of them or not; to try to further the Society's objectives; to respect the Officers in their official capacities as Society representatives; to attend every Assembly meeting; to observe the rules of debate; to faithfully carry out assigned duties, or to ask to be excused when that is impractical; and to preserve and respect the rights of all Assembly members.

#### 2. Assembly Membership

The National Assembly shall comprise the PRSSA National Committee and one elected representative of each active Chapter. No other persons will be allowed on the floor of the Assembly, unless voted upon by the Assembly. The National President, Immediate Past President, the Parliamentarian and a recording secretary (appointed by the National President) shall face the front of the Assembly. The National President is the presiding officer of Assembly. If the National President cannot fulfill his or her duty for any reason, the Immediate Past President shall preside.

#### 3. Quorum

A quorum of Delegates must be present to conduct business. A quorum is equal to a third of active Chapters.

#### 4. Voting

Every Delegate and each National Officer is entitled to one vote, except the presiding officer of the Assembly, who only votes in the case of a tie.

#### 5. Express Opinion

Every Delegate has the right to speak at least once to every matter brought before the Assembly's consideration. The time may be restricted by the Assembly and, in unusual circumstances, the right may be removed from the Delegate or Delegates. However, the presiding officer should guide and advise the Assembly to a just decision.

#### 6. Use of Online/Mobile Devices

Delegates must refrain from using online, social, or mobile communication to comment on any part of the Assembly proceedings until the Assembly meeting has been adjourned for the year.

#### 7. Appeal

Every Delegate has the right to appeal a decision of the presiding officer. The presiding officer may be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly.

8. Consideration

Business may not be expedited at the expense of the members' rights. If the Assembly meeting runs beyond the time allocated, the presiding officer may extend the time or reconvene later.

9. Roll Call

The presiding officer will call roll at the National Assembly meeting to ensure proper Assembly Delegate representation. PRSSA HQ shall make available to the presiding officer a master list of Assembly Delegates to verify the authenticity of a Delegate.

10. Absentee Ballots

There shall be no provision for absentee ballots. Votes may be cast only by Assembly Delegates present at the National Assembly meeting.

11. Absences

Assembly Delegates not able to attend either the candidate speeches or the National Assembly meeting because of an emergency must immediately notify and be excused with reason by PRSSA HQ. Absent, unexcused Assembly Delegates shall forfeit their travel allowances.

In the case of an excused emergency absence by an Assembly Delegate, the elected alternate or appointed representative from their Chapter may substitute for the Assembly Delegate, if PRSSA HQ is notified of such a substitution.

## II. Bylaw Amendments

As stated in the PRSSA National Bylaws, bylaws amendments may be proposed by the PRSSA National Committee or an Assembly Delegate or by majority vote of a PRSSA Chapter, provided that the text of the proposed amendment is submitted to the National President 30 days before the PRSSA Assembly meeting and provided that notification of the proposed amendments is given to all Assembly Delegates, Chapter Presidents, and PRSSA National Committee members 21 days before that meeting. Chapters must be notified of any proposed change in national dues at least 21 days prior to the National Assembly. Bylaw amendments must receive a two-thirds approving vote to be enacted.

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## CONDUCTING BUSINESS

### I. Order of Business

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Roll Call of Delegates | 4. Announcement of Officers |
| 2. Bylaw Amendments       | 5. Conference Update        |
| 3. Election of Officers   | 6. New Business             |
|                           | 7. Adjournment              |

### II. Addressing the Assembly

A Delegate must be recognized by the presiding officer of the Assembly before speaking to the Assembly. The presiding officer should be addressed as "Madame Chair," "Mr. Chair," or another acceptable salutation. If another person is addressing the Assembly, anyone wishing to speak should raise a hand and wait until recognized. The presiding officer should not recognize any Delegate who interrupts the proceedings out of order. The presiding officer has authority to remove any Delegate from the Assembly who interrupts business after being warned. Once recognized by the presiding officer, the Delegate shall rise and state his or her name and the Chapter or national office he or she represents before presenting information to the Assembly.

### III. Motions

1. Making a Motion

A motion must have a simple majority to pass, except as noted (i.e., bylaw amendments, rule suspension). Motions must be presented to the Assembly in accordance with the “Conduct of the Assembly” section. The Delegate should state, “I move that the Assembly...” The motion must be seconded, or else the motion dies.

2. Debate

If a motion is seconded, the Delegate who introduced the motion may begin debate. The presiding officer shall decide the order of speakers, alternating between those opposed and those in favor. A speaker list shall be created if many Delegates wish to speak. The speaker’s time is limited to three minutes, unless extended by a two-thirds vote for three more minutes. No member may speak twice until every member choosing to speak has spoken once.

3. Amending a Motion

An amendment to a motion must have direct bearing on the subject of the motion, yet it may be opposite to the spirit of the motion. The Delegate should state “I propose that the original motion be amended by...” The amendment may add or remove words or sentences, or make other changes in the original motion. This amendment must be seconded and voted upon before the original motion may be voted upon.

4. Other Motions

While a motion is “on the floor” or being considered, a member may ask for information from the presiding officer or clarification from the recording secretary or other speakers about that motion. Other motions a Delegate may make are, in order of precedence, setting time to adjourn; questioning privilege (such as asking for information); calling for the agenda; reading of relevant papers; withdrawal of motion; suspension of rules; calling for vote; amending.

### IV. Voting

1. Bylaw Amendments

When practical, the Delegates should present a written version of the amendment, motion or other action to the presiding officer, who should pass it on to the recording secretary. The Delegate may then read the amendment, motion or other action to the Assembly. The presiding officer should repeat the motion.

Bylaw amendments must receive a two-thirds approving vote to be enacted.

2. Other Motions

Motions that require a two-thirds vote: bylaw amendment; objection to the consideration of the motion; closing debate; limiting or extending debate; suspension of rules; others as indicated in this manual.

3. Voting Method

The voting method shall be left to the discretion of the presiding officer of the Assembly.

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## ELECTION GUIDELINES

### I. Eligibility Requirement

1. A student interested in running for a PRSSA National Committee office, including those running from the floor, must be:
  - a. a member in good standing of an active PRSSA Chapter;
  - b. able to maintain PRSSA membership for the duration of his or her term on the National Committee; and
  - c. a full-time student from the time he or she is elected through the fall semester/quarter after they are elected.
2. Candidates for National President must have served on the National Committee for at least six months. If only one candidate for National President has served on the National Committee for six months, candidacy will open to all PRSSA members who meet all other requirements.

## **II. Nomination Procedure**

1. An individual seeking national office must submit to PRSSA Headquarters (unless the candidate is running from the floor (see Section III)):
  - a. The official nomination form which cannot be altered in any way. Changes in the size or format of the form will be grounds for disqualification. Duplicate copies and supplementary pages will not be accepted and shall be grounds for disqualification;
  - b. A description of your leadership style and how it would benefit PRSSA. Use specific examples. Maximum of 250-words, typed.
  - c. One letter of recommendation from the Chapter Faculty or Professional Adviser.
2. Nomination forms, the essay and letter of recommendation from a Chapter Adviser submitted by the candidates will be sent to delegates prior to the Assembly.

## **III. Nominations from the Floor**

1. National Committee Members
  - a. The presiding officer accepts nominations from the floor before the candidate speeches.
  - b. Nominations will be accepted only from Assembly Delegates. Candidates cannot self-nominate. The nomination must be seconded by an Assembly Delegate from a Chapter other than the one sponsoring the nominated candidate.
  - c. Candidates nominated from the floor who are not registered as an official delegate, or non-delegate, must meet the requirements for candidate eligibility and verify those qualifications prior to the election through a representative of PRSSA HQ.
  - d. Anyone who runs from the floor must supply copies of his/her nomination form, essay and letter of recommendation to all the delegates (see Section II), usually around 150 copies.
  - e. Candidates nominated from the floor shall be eligible to present speeches during the designated session, and shall be treated in all respects as an official candidate.

## **IV. Election Procedure**

1. Secret Ballot

To allow maximum privacy, election of all PRSSA National Committee members shall be by secret ballots cast by Assembly Delegates. The election of the officers shall be conducted on the day of the National Assembly. PRSSA HQ shall be responsible for the distribution and collection of the ballots, unless ballots are casted via electronic devices.

## 2. Election Process

- a. Assembly Delegates shall be allowed to cast one vote for a candidate for each of the national officers — i.e., one for National President and one for each of the seven vice presidents. All elections shall be held under a majority elections system. In the case of a failure to reach a simple majority on the first ballot, the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall participate in a runoff election held under a plurality voting procedure. In the event of a runoff, the two remaining candidates will each be given one minute to briefly state why he/she should be elected and then a vote will immediately follow.
- b. When more than one candidate runs for any position, the order of presentations will be decided by a random drawing conducted by the presiding officer at the onset of the session.
- c. Presentations by candidates for vice president offices shall last no longer than five minutes. Presentations by candidates for National President shall last no longer than ten minutes.
- d. If the National President is a candidate for office, the Immediate Past President shall preside at these sessions.
- e. PRSSA HQ shall appoint one or more persons to tally for all elections. PRSSA HQ also oversee the use of voting devices when possible.
- f. If the Assembly deems that none of the candidates for an office are qualified, the Assembly may choose to not to fill the office and re-open the position for additional nominations at a later date to be selected by the current National Committee. An Assembly Delegate must make a motion to leave the office open and the motion must be seconded. The motion will be opened for debate, and then must be approved by a majority vote. If the motion does not pass, then nominations may be reopened from the floor.

## 3. Question-and-Answer Period

- a. All national officer candidates must participate in a 15-minute Q&A after their speech. An extension of the Q&A can be granted by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly, but the initial 15-minute Q&A is mandatory and cannot be waived. Only Delegates and national officers may ask questions. An Assembly Delegate cannot direct his or her question to a specific candidate, but rather must pose a question that all candidates can and shall answer. Candidates running for office remain in the room when other candidates present their speeches; however, they may not direct question(s) to another candidate for the same office.
- b. The purpose of the speeches and the question-and-answer forum shall be to clarify and/or amplify the candidate's platform or position and to present personal attributes and qualifications. Unfavorable comments shall not be directed to any candidate by an opponent, Assembly Delegate or other Assembly participants.
- c. Only official Assembly Delegates shall be allowed to direct questions to the candidates. No delegate shall be allowed to ask a candidate a second question until all other delegates have had the opportunity to question that candidate.
- d. The current National Committee officer reserves the right to ask the first or last question, within the given extended question-and-answer period.

## V. Campaign Practices

## 1. Rules for Campaigning

- a. The official nomination form, essay, letter of recommendation, candidate's speech and question-and-answer forum shall be the sole basis on which elections shall be carried out.
- b. All candidates must make their presentation in person.
- c. Absolutely no campaigning either before or during the National Assembly is allowed. Infringements of this ruling, either by the candidate or the candidate's supporters, shall be grounds for immediate disqualification of the candidate by PRSSA HQ.
- d. The use of campaign materials, before or during the National Assembly, is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, commercially printed or handmade campaign or promotional buttons, posters, balloons, table cards, banners or newsletters. Any material visibly or audibly expressing support of a particular candidate is forbidden.
- e. Candidates cannot use any form of visual or audiovisual aid for their speech except for the microphone from which the speaker must speak.
- f. Contact by the candidates or their supporters with Assembly Delegates prior to the National Assembly, by any medium, shall also be prohibited and shall be grounds for disqualification of the candidates.
- g. If defeated for the position for which a candidate is nominated, the candidate may be nominated for one, and only one, additional position. After a candidate has run and been defeated for two offices, he or she cannot run or be nominated for another National office until the next election year.
- h. Candidates shall not solicit or use personal endorsements from any source. This includes, but is not limited to, endorsements from PRSSA Chapters, employers, Faculty and Professional Advisers, professionals and peers. Use of endorsements shall be grounds for disqualification. This rule does not apply to the letter of recommendation required in the application.
- i. Candidates and their supporters shall not misrepresent facts or engage in malicious or unethical behavior. They shall not in any way attempt to unethically persuade or entice Assembly Delegates, or disobey any of the rules or procedures of the elections process.
- j. Current PRSSA National Committee members shall not publicly support or assist a candidate for office. This does not, however, prohibit such members from encouraging PRSSA members to run for national offices and more fully participate in the affairs of the Society.

## 2. Sanctions

- a. In the event of alleged infractions of campaign rules and/or unethical behavior, PRSSA HQ shall have original jurisdiction.
- b. Candidates who violate the rules shall be immediately disqualified.
- c. In case of appeal, PRSSA HQ shall present factual reports to the PRSSA National Committee at a special meeting during the Assembly. The accused candidate shall have the opportunity to present his or her case to the National Committee. The National Committee shall decide by a majority of those present and voting, if a quorum is present. The National Committee shall have final jurisdiction in all decisions.

- d. Any and all alleged infractions committed before or during the Assembly must be brought directly to the attention of the Parliamentarian. In this case, the Parliamentarian will call for a break in the Assembly procedures for discussion of this matter before an appointed committee.

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## **SPECIAL RULES**

### **I. Parliamentarian**

A PRSA parliamentarian shall be appointed each year by the current PRSSA National President. The parliamentarian, who must be a member of PRSA, shall attend all PRSSA National Assembly meetings, rule on all questions of procedure, advise the PRSSA National President on matters concerning procedure in transacting the business of the PRSSA National Assembly and maintain a working knowledge of the PRSSA National Bylaws. The parliamentarian shall also be acquainted with the rules and procedures of parliamentary law.

### **II. Presiding Officer's Authority**

The presiding officer shall rule on points of order or refer judgment to the parliamentarian. Any ruling from the presiding officer may be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly.

### **III. Rule Suspension**

In cases which the Assembly deems necessary, rules can be suspended. Rules refer to the rules of order, and the policies and procedures listed in this manual. Rules cannot be suspended to allow non-members to vote, to waive the requirement of a quorum, or to waive the requirement for previous notice for a bylaws amendment. Rules cannot be suspended to take away a basic right of an individual, including the right to attend meetings, make motions, speak in debate and vote; those must be done through disciplinary procedures. Rules which embody the fundamental principles of parliamentary law (i.e, considering one motion at a time, right to vote) cannot be suspended. PRSSA bylaws cannot be suspended. The motion to suspend the rule is undebatable and cannot be amended nor can a vote on it be reconsidered or renewed at the same meeting with unanimous consent. Following a motion from any member of the Assembly to suspend a rule, a vote should be conducted. A two-thirds majority vote of the Assembly shall be sufficient to suspend a particular rule. The suspension may also be achieved by attaining the "general consent" of the Assembly. No objections from the Assembly members shall constitute a "general consent."

### **VI. Rules for Conducting Business**

The Assembly shall follow parliamentary procedure as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order, except where superseded by this manual or by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly.