This is a guide for those who chair council meetings for Montgomery College's Participatory Governance System.

How to Chair a Council Meeting

<u>**Sample Script**</u>

Call to Order

"I call this meeting of the COUNCIL NAME to order."

Constituent Comments

"There is now time for any comments from guests to our meeting." If guests are present and would like to speak, you can recognize them and ask them to state their name and topic. At this point, you may advise them that they have up to 5 minutes to address the council. The council will not dialogue with them, although a council member may ask a brief question for follow up. After listening to the comment, you can thank the guest. If the topic is considered to be a topic for additional consideration you can place the item on a future agenda, but the topic is not discussed in the meeting. If there are no comments, then you can move to the next item on the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

The secretary should share the draft of the minutes from the previous meeting via e-mail ahead of time so that council members can review. This also allows for the secretary to skip reading the minutes at the meeting or to have printed copies at the meeting. If this has been done say, *"Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes? [Pause.] If not, the minutes will stand approved as written."* If there were corrections, then say *"The minutes will stand approved as corrected."*

Chair's Report

The chair's report is a good opportunity to briefly share any updates from the College Council or from the leader liaison for the Council. If the leader liaison wishes to share any comments with the Council he or she may do so or may send the information to the chair for inclusion. The chair can also share other information here for the good of the council. Some campus councils also include a provost's report in addition to the chair's report. This is acceptable but not required.

Unfinished Business

"The topic of unfinished business before the council now is X." You may state very briefly what the key points of the issue are." Depending on the topic, if there is not already a particular stand or action that the council wants to take, you may wish to allow the council to have a short amount of time to discuss the topic. The goal of the discussion should eventually be for the council to take a stand or action. After a little discussion, you can ask *"Having learned more about this issue, does the Chair have a motion for the council to take a particular action on this*?"

Such a motion is the main motion, a motion that brings before the assembly any particular subject and is made when no other business is pending. If passed, it commits the assembly to do or say something. If there is a motion for an action (e.g., recommend, refer to another council,

refer to another area/department, etc.), then say *"Does the motion have a second?"* Once seconded, say, *"The motion has been made and seconded. Now the council has an opportunity to debate the merits of the motion."* The person making the motion has the right to speak first to the motion. After that, a good way to manage debate is to ask who else would like to speak to the motion and whether they would like to speak for it or against it. Having that list, you can recognize alternate viewpoints. For the group to make a decision on any new business brought up at a meeting, remember what is required: a motion, a second, a chance for discussion/debate and a vote.

Here are some things that can happen while debating the main motion:

1) Amendment (requires majority vote to pass, debatable): In addition to speaking for or against, a council member may move to amend the main motion. An amendment may include inserting, striking out, or striking out and inserting text. Once moved and seconded, you say *"It is moved and seconded that we amend "Motion A" by* [inserting; striking out; striking out and inserting] *as follows [state the change]. If the amendment is adopted the main motion would then read [read the amended motion] Is there any discussion? [After discussion] Are you ready for the question? [Pause] The question is on the adoption of the motion that we amend* inserting; striking out; striking out and inserting] *as follows [state the change]. If the amendment is adopted the main motion would then read [read the amended motion] all those in favor, say aye. [Pause for response] All those opposed, say no." Report the results. Is there any further discussion?*

2) Put the question (requires 2/3rd vote to pass, not debatable) : A council member may "Move the previous question." This essentially calls to end debate and proceed to voting on the main motion. The effect of this motion is to immediately stop debate on the primary motion and any amendments and to move immediately to a vote on the motion. It must be seconded, no debate is allowed, and a two-thirds vote is needed to close debate. Here is what to say once it has been moved and seconded: *"The previous question is moved and seconded on "Motion A". This is not a debatable motion. It takes a two-thirds vote. The effect of the passage of this motion is that we would immediately stop debate and vote on the motion. If you want to close debate, vote in favor of the motion; if you want debate to continue, vote against the motion."* If this passes, then proceed immediately to a vote on the motion before the council.

3) Commit or refer to a committee (requires majority vote to pass, is debatable, is amendable): If the council feels that more deliberation on an issue is warranted before taking a stand or action, and would like a special group to gather information and share findings at a later date, this motion is appropriate.

4) Motion to limit or extend debate (requires 2/3rd vote to pass, not debatable): This is another option for managing debate beyond "putting the question". A council member would make a motion to extend or limit debate by a certain amount of time.

New Business

New business is handled the same way as unfinished business. For the group to make a decision on any new business brought up at a meeting, remember what is required: a motion, a second, a chance for discussion/debate and a vote. *"The topic before council now is X."* Once the listed items are discussed, you can ask *"Is there any new business?"* If there is time, you may address these. If not, you can put them on future agendas.

Adjourn

A motion and second can be requested. Then state, *"Without objection the meeting is adjourned."*