

Consent Agenda

What is a consent agenda?

A consent agenda groups the routine, procedural, informational and self-explanatory non-controversial items typically found in an agenda. These items are then presented to the Faculty Senate in a single motion for an up or down vote after allowing anyone to request that a specific item be moved to the full agenda for individual attention. Other items, particularly those requiring strategic thought, decision making or action, are handled as usual.

What does it mean if we adopt a consent agenda?

- Documentation for consent items must be provided to the Faculty Senate prior to meetings so that directors feel confident that their vote reflects attention to their duty of care.
- Senators are encouraged to ask prior to the meeting all the questions that they want related to consent agenda items.
- If it is determined that an item on the consent portion of the agenda actually requires action or a decision, that item should be removed from the consent portion of the agenda and raised later in the meeting. Senators requesting an item to be removed from the consent agenda should be prepared to give reasons for removal of said items to move discussion forward during the Senate meeting.
- Any Senator can request that an item be moved to the full agenda.
- A vote on the single motion applies to all the items on the consent portion of the agenda.

What does it *not* mean if we adopt a consent agenda?

- Consent agendas do not make it easier to ramrod through decisions since decision items are not placed on the consent portion of the agenda and all items on the consent portion of the agenda are still open to discussion and debate if someone requests they be moved.
- It is not always necessary to remove an item from the consent agenda if people have simple questions or wish to discuss the item further. Discussion is permitted after the motion for approval

is made, but before the vote. However, everyone should remember that extensive conversation defeats the purpose of the consent agenda.

What normally is found on a consent agenda?

Routine, informational, procedural and self-explanatory non-controversial items are generally placed on the consent portion of the agenda. These typically are such things as:

- Approval of Faculty Senate meeting minutes
- Correspondence requiring no action
- Committee and staff reports (Committee Chairs can of course request that their reports be included in regular discussion.)
- Updates or background reports provided for informational purposes only
- Appointments requiring Faculty Senate confirmation
- Final approval of proposals that have been thoroughly discussed previously, where the Senate is comfortable with the implications
- Confirmation of pro forma items or actions that need no discussion but are required by the bylaws
- Dates of future meetings
- Deletion of courses from the course catalog due to the courses no longer being taught
- Adding prerequisites to course listings
- Adding co-requisites to course listings

What is the process for using a consent agenda?

- The Faculty Senate must begin by approving a motion to adopt the consent agenda for its meetings.
- The Faculty Senate should then craft a policy about what may and may not be included in the consent portion of the agenda.
- The full agenda, including the consent items should be disseminated prior to the Faculty Senate meeting along with copies of reports and back up materials so that Faculty Senate members can do their due diligence prior to voting.
- As the first item of business the Faculty Senate Chair should ask if anyone wishes to remove an item from the consent portion of the agenda.

- The Faculty Senate Chair then asks for a motion to accept the consent agenda.
- Once the motion has been received, the Faculty Senate Chair opens the floor for any questions or discussion on the items remaining on the consent agenda. The understanding, though, is that the Senators have come prepared and, other than a quick point or question, they are comfortable voting for the items or they would have asked to have them removed.
- If any items were removed from the consent portion of the agenda the Faculty Senate Chair may determine where on the agenda those items will be discussed, e.g., immediately after the consent agenda has been accepted or later on the agenda.
- Quickly reviewing the remaining items, the Faculty Senate Chair asks for any objections to the adoption of those remaining items. If none are offered, all items on the consent agenda are considered to be passed.

Adapted from source: www.CoreStrategies4Nonprofits.com