

To: Fort Wayne Senate

From: Rules Committee
S. Hollander, chair

Date: April 7, 1997

Subject: Guidelines for minutes of Senate committees and subcommittees

Disposition: To the Fort Wayne Senate for information only

Section 5.1.2 of the Bylaws of the Fort Wayne [Faculty] Senate states, "/senate-dev.Committees and subcommittees shall/senate-dev.keep minutes available to all members of the Faculty/senate-dev/senate-dev" The following guidelines, based on *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* and on precedents established by Senate committees and subcommittees, are intended to suggest the purposes, content, and timeliness of minutes prepared for Senate committees and subcommittees.

Purposes	For members of committees and subcommittees, minutes provide a record of work accomplished and decisions made. For nonmembers, minutes provide a public, permanent record of the activities and actions of Senate bodies. In promoting these purposes, as <i>Robert's</i> says, "[Minutes] should contain mainly a record of what was <i>done</i> at the meeting, not what was <i>said</i> by the members."
Content	To ensure their utility, minutes should contain 3 major sections—a header, a body, and a closing.
Header	The header should identify the (sub)committee; the date, time, and place of the meeting; the person(s) acting as chair and secretary; the members present and absent; and any guests who are permitted to participate in the meeting.
Body	The body of the minutes should offer a chronological record of "what was <i>done</i> " at the meeting, with individual topics identified by informative headings that allow effective access to information. For the sake of efficiency and collegiality, meetings of Senate committees and subcommittees generally proceed, by universal agreement, without strict adherence to parliamentary procedure, and minutes may reflect the common practice of wide-ranging discussion without a formal motion's being on the floor. When a committee or subcommittee agrees to report such discussions, the minutes should attempt a fair and comprehensive

	<p>summary of points of view taken and apparent consensus reached, thus helping to establish the legislative history of subsequent decisions. In the reports of such discussions, individuals should be identified only in 3 circumstances: when a member of the body takes responsibility for carrying out an action of the group ("The chair agreed to request further information from the Dean of Students."), when an ex-officio member of the body is clearly speaking as the authoritative representative of a campus office ("The Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs reported a budget surplus of \$4.6 billion for the current academic year."), or when an individual member requests to "go on the record" with a viewpoint ("Prof. Smith-Brown requested that the minutes reflect his strong opposition to scheduling classes on Christmas."). Any committee or subcommittee decision that is to be reported for further action by the Fort Wayne [Faculty] Senate should be formally moved, and the minutes should contain the substance of the main motion, the substance of any amendments, and the names of the movers; names of seconders are not reported. The disposition of each main motion and amendment should also be reported, of course, and because Senate traditions require that motions from committees and subcommittees be accompanied by a list of the ayes, nays, and abstentions, final votes on all such motions should be by roll call or its functional equivalent. <i>Robert's</i> also advises that points of order and appeals, and their disposition, be reported in the minutes-though these seldom arise in Senate committees and subcommittees.</p>
<p>Closing</p>	<p>The closing section should identify the time of adjournment and the date, time, and place of the next meeting of the body if one has been scheduled. A supplementary list of items pending in the body is a useful tool for reminding members of work in progress and for prioritizing committee deliberations. The minutes should end with a distribution list identifying recipients of the minutes-a group that includes all members of the committee or subcommittee, all guests who participated in the meeting, and the Secretary of the Faculty, who is charged with maintaining a permanent record of minutes.</p>
<p>Timeliness</p>	<p>Minutes should be prepared and distributed to members prior to the next committee or subcommittee meeting, where practicable, or as soon thereafter as possible. These draft minutes are not official until approved by the body, and should therefore not be distributed beyond the membership until such approval (possibly reflecting corrections or other amendments) has been effected.</p>