



# Learning to Love Robert's Rules

## A senior project presented by Alyssa Snow and Brooke Gilstrap



### Introduction

Within the California Future Farmers of America Association (FFA), there are a variety of Leadership Development Events (LDE's) including the Parliamentary Procedure contest. Within this contest students sharpen their knowledge through reviewing Robert's Rules of Order and applying this knowledge to an exam as well as a live demonstration. Through this contest, students also improve upon their public speaking skills and research agricultural education and industry issues. Students compete in several invitational contests before entering the sectional, regional, and state levels of competition where their advanced knowledge comes into play with a wider audience. Over the span of California, there are several FFA chapters who participate in the Parliamentary Procedure CDE, however, most of the teams and invitational contests lie in the more northern part of California, with the most Southern contest being in Modesto, California. The purpose of this Parliamentary Procedure workshop is to provide Parliamentary Procedure teams, especially in the Southern regions, with crucial tools to practice and prepare themselves for the contests in order for them to increase their competitive appeal and be able to compete at a higher level with confidence.

### Background

Leadership and Career Development Events (LDE's & CDE's) have been a widespread facet of the FFA for decades, and their goal is to "provide a direct extension of the classroom and laboratory by allowing students to apply their knowledge in a competitive environment and acquire valuable career readiness and life skills" (Lundry, J., et al., 2015). The National Research Council's report in 1988 found that a shift in agricultural education was crucial to allow students in the program to experience a more broad view of the industry "including career opportunities in sophisticated biological, mechanical, and electronic technologies, as well as prepare students for higher education" (Lundry, J., et al., 2015).

There are two levels of the competition, Novice and Advanced, and each team consists of 6 members (CATA Curricular Activities Code- Parliamentary Procedure and Debate). The contest itself consists of a written exam on parliamentary law from Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, an oral demonstration round consisting of a main motion for discussion and 5 required motions, and oral questions asked by the judges at the end of the oral demonstration round. Each Parliamentary Procedure competition usually consists of three rounds, a preliminary, semifinal and final round, and the teams are judged based on the criteria in the Curricular Code defined by the California FFA Association (CATA Curricular Activities Code- Parliamentary Procedure and Debate). The competition consists of competitions at the chapter, sectional, regional, and state levels, and the team who wins in the state of California competes at the National Parliamentary Procedure competition at the National FFA Convention in Oct

### Methodology

When running this Parliamentary Procedure workshop event the first aspect to consider is setting a date for the event. CDE contests in California usually run from February to April, so it would be best to choose a weekend date in January or early February to give students and coaches time to incorporate information they have learned into their practices throughout the season.

The next item to consider would be to finalize the curriculum and activities for the workshop in order to figure out what supplies would be needed. Workshop curriculum activities will include "Understanding Round Flow," "How to Make Robert Your Friend," and "Debate 101" (Workshop Binder). Specific instruction on these activities and workshop curriculum can be found in the workshop binder. The entire event should take place in 4 hours or less.

The next logical step would be to promote the event and contact all the south coast FFA chapters with a Parliamentary Procedure team to get a headcount of all who will be attending. After an accurate headcount is obtained, the correct amount of supplies need to be gathered for the day of the workshop. A facility can be reserved on Cal Poly's campus that will be appropriate for the amount of students attending. One of Cal Poly's many clubs or organizations should be contacted to work through for funding of supplies, possible food options that may be provided throughout the workshop, and reserving a facility.

When the rest of the logistics have been sorted out volunteers with Parliamentary Procedure experience should be obtained to help host workshop activities, set up, and clean up the event. Finally, the workshop will be followed by a survey that students and coaches can fill out about their experience and ways to improve the workshop in the future. This survey should be filled out in the conclusion part of the event or in the last workshops the students attend.

### Results

#### Talking is a club about sponsoring the event

The event should be sponsored through a Cal Poly club to secure facilities, have funding (if needed), and get supplies for the workshops. We recommend contacting the Agriculture Leadership Society (ALS) to sponsor this event. Their mission area is the exact same as the purpose of our club and our event. CALPES Ambassadors should only be used if ALS cannot sponsor the event.

#### Reservations facilities

We recommend hosting this workshop in Building 15- Agriculture and Bldg 8- Bioscience and Agriculture. Building 15 has a large room that can accommodate a lot of people and is a good size for the attendees of the event (rooms: 10-206, 10-202, 10-223, 8-123, and 8-122). The rooms in building 8 could be used to gather all of the attendees together at the beginning and end of the event. Building 15 has a large room that can accommodate a lot of people and is a good size for the attendees of the event. Building 15 would be beneficial for running the workshops because they have desks, whiteboards, and technology (laptops) that will be needed for the presentations and activities.

To secure the correct facilities for the event, it is recommended to go through the Agriculture Leadership Society (ALS) to reserve the facilities. They will help you fill out the correct forms and work with the Associated Students Incorporated to formally secure the rooms.

#### Event promotion

Promoting this event to high school FFA chapters will be essential in the successful Promotion of the event should start 4-6 months sooner than the event date to give chapters ample time to prepare themselves for the event. We recommend using social media to promote the event, leadership, and register for the event. To start promotion of the event, a flyer should be made with all of the event details and this should be mailed and/or emailed to all FFA chapters in the area near Cal Poly. There is a sample flyer placed in the back of the event plan.

### Conclusion

This project was developed and executed due to the lack of invitational Parliamentary Procedure competitions for coastal and southern FFA regions. There is a vast need for supplemental preparation for these regions with the Parliamentary Procedure contest to prepare these CDE teams for the State FFA Finals competition in April of each year in order to give these two regions an equal opportunity to succeed at the State FFA Finals competition and to allow these students to grow in their public speaking skills. The event plan that is the result of this project will allow several Cal Poly students to host this competition year after year so Parliamentary Procedure teams in the coastal and southern regions can practice and grow their skills in this contest. The authors of this project evaluated the contest and chose the most important aspects of the Parliamentary Procedure competition which can be difficult to teach students in creative ways, and these aspects of the contest were the subjects of the event plan. It was the goal of the authors to develop creative and innovative curriculum to teach the material of the Parliamentary Procedure contest to high school students in a way that is engaging and interactive. Another goal was to provide high school FFA teachers with new tools to teach the aspects of the Parliamentary Procedure competition to students after the workshop in order to better prepare them for the State FFA Finals competition. In closing, the authors learned how to create a detailed event plan and develop education curriculums for high school students that are inquiry and discussion based and are also delivered in an engaging format, therefore highlighting the standards that agricultural education operates on.

Back to the top of the page and more detail to debates by incorporating AGED, industry, and chapter issues into their discussion of a motion.

#### Supplies

-Chairman with whiteboardmarker  
-A topic for students to discuss "around the horn" (i.e. Ag Incentive Grant, Discovery Program)  
-A motion created related to "around the horn" discussion

#### Part A (15 Minutes)

- 1) Select topic of conversation for students to discuss
- 2) Give teams 5 minutes to discuss among themselves all the details and opinions they have on the topic
- 3) After the next 10 minutes taking quotes from students about the topic and write on the board
- 4) Students should write into into from board into notebooks

#### Part B (10 Minutes)

- 1) Give students 5 minutes to think of debate topics with their team
- 2) After students 5 minutes to think of debate topics with their team
- 3) Give students 5 minutes to think of debate topics with their team
- 4) If time permits do again with another motion

#### Part C (10 Minutes)

- 1) Give students a main motion relating to the "around the horn" discussion topic
- 2) After students 5 minutes to think of debate topics with their team
- 3) Give students 5 minutes to think of debate topics with their team
- 4) If time permits do again with another motion

