

Committee Reports
Compiled by Patrick Wilson, January 2011

Among the goals of parliamentary law are short, efficient meetings and accurate record-keeping. Hence, committee reports should

- **Be brief**

“Reports can often be quite brief unless special circumstances or instructions to the reporting body call for a detailed presentation of facts” (*Rules of Order Newly Revised* [10th ed.], p. 486, l. 22–24). Even such a detailed presentation includes only the following: methods, facts, conclusions, and recommendations—not rationale (p. 488, l. 4–10).

“It is often best for the formal report to be confined as much as possible to the recommendations . . . (see examples, pp. 497ff.)” (p. 487, l. 12–15).

“Supporting reasons can be explained at greater length during debate” (p. 487, l. 19–20) by any committee member, subject to the usual limit of two ten-minute speeches per person (unless extended by a two-thirds vote of the faculty).

“The inclusion of supporting facts or reasoning in a report proposing certain action may tend to work against the taking of that action, since some members who might otherwise have been willing to accept the proposals may be led to vote against them if they disagree with the factual background as reported or the reasoning of the reporting body” (p. 487, l. 25–31)

- **Be in writing**

Given the size of the faculty, committee reports should always be in writing and be read by the reporting member. (On the issue of size, see p. 508, l. 27; p. 513, l. 24. On the subject of reports being in writing, see p. 493, l. 29–30; p. 507, l. 26–27; p. 508, l. 25–27.)

One of the enumerated duties of the Clerk is “to keep on file all committee reports” (p. 442, l. 28).

- **Contain only what has been agreed to by a majority vote in a proper committee meeting**

A report “can contain only what has been agreed to by a majority vote . . . at a meeting of the committee . . . where every . . . committee member was notified of the meeting and where a quorum of the . . . committee was present” (p. 485, l. 21–27). The only exception occurs if it is impractical to bring the committee members together for a meeting, in which case the report “can contain what has been agreed to by every one of its members” (p. 485, l. 33–35).