

# SHARED GOVERNANCE AT VIRGINIA TECH

## HOW TO DETERMINE WHOSE VOTE COUNTS

Definition of the body (the denominator) to calculate:	Present	Eligible to vote**	Actually casts a vote*	Includes only filled positions	Includes all positions, both filled and vacant
Majority (of those present and voting)	X	X	X		
Majority of those present	X	X			
Majority of entire membership		X		X	
Majority of fixed membership					X

\*Abstentions are not counted as votes cast.

\*\*The term “ex officio” means by virtue of position; it has nothing to do with eligibility to vote.

Majority means “more than half,” unless otherwise qualified (e.g. two-thirds majority)

To determine if an action passes, divide the number of positive votes (numerator) by the appropriate denominator (left column).

- Majority or simple majority is greater than 50%
- Two-thirds majority is 66.66% or greater

**NOTE:** A quorum is defined as the minimum number that must be present to conduct business. Business transacted without a quorum (e.g., votes taken) are null and void. Robert’s Rules states that if the by-laws do not define a quorum, then a quorum is a majority of the entire membership (see chart).

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Majority (of those present and voting)	×	×	×		
Majority of those present	×	×			
Majority of entire membership		×		×	
Majority of fixed membership					×

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### At Virginia Tech:

- A quorum is a majority (greater than 50%) of the entire membership excluding non-voting and vacant positions.
- Most actions require an affirmative vote by a simple majority (greater than 50% of members present and voting) to pass.
- A change in the University Council Constitution requires an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all members (UC Constitution does not specify whether this refers to the entire membership or the fixed membership).
- A change in the University Council By-laws requires an affirmative vote of a majority of all members (UC Constitution does not specify whether this refers to the entire membership or the fixed membership).
- A request for first reading and action (commonly referred to as a waiver of first reading) requires an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present.
- University Council may override a request for deferral by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership present.