

RESOLUTION WRITING AND GENERAL ADVICE



STUDENT SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

RESOLUTION WRITING

Since the resolution process guides the work of the Student Senate, care should be taken in developing the resolutions. The following are some guidelines for resolutions, as well as recommendations for proper resolution writing. When in doubt, consult with the Resolutions Committee Chair.

THE BASICS

Four is the Limit

Resolutions cannot contain more than four "whereas" or more than four "resolved" statements.

Resolution Title

Be sure that the title of the resolution accurately reflects the content of the resolution.

Word Choice

Judiciously use words such as "any," "every," "all," "never," "none," or other qualifiers that make sweeping generalizations.

Models

You may benefit from reading some past examples of resolutions for ideas about structuring and phrasing your resolution.

Citing Legislation

Cite the dates on stated legislation or regulations included in the resolution, i.e. AB 1504 (2019)

Facts

Resolutions are best received when the focus is on facts versus rhetoric.

THE DETAILS

Professionalism

Avoid personal attacks or insults of any person or group, even subtle ones. No matter how justified the statement or how offensive the target, such attacks will almost inevitably draw opposition from some members of the voting body.

Reality Check

Be certain that the action is possible for the Senate to accomplish. Some qualifying or alternative terms, such as "work with [other body] to ensure" may help to produce a more realistic resolution.

Avoid Lumping

Limit yourself to one reason in support of or in defense of your resolution per "whereas" statement. Lumping too much into one statement causes confusion and is likely to provoke calls for revision.

Only Senate Action

Remember that resolutions can only direct the Student Senate to take action. The Student Senate does not have the authority to direct or require action from any other group or individual, including local senates.

Do Your Homework

It is possible that a resolution already exists for the position you wish to take. Please review the existing resolutions from the website first so that duplication can be avoided.

Make the Point

Be as direct and to the point as possible. Cleverness that makes a resolution less clear will likely cause that resolution to be defeated, amended, or referred.

THE WORDING

The wording of a Student Senate resolution is an important matter that can sometimes prove tricky or confusing. A resolution with controversial, unclear, or offensive wording can lead to prolonged debate on the session floor and can ultimately cause a resolution to be delayed and rejected, even when its ideas are worth approving. In order to help resolution writers, avoid such frustrating experiences, the Resolutions Committee offers the following advice in order to help you avoid wording and issues that have raised objections in the past:

Recommend

If using the word “recommend” within your resolution, be very clear and cautious about what you are recommending and to whom. Make certain that any recommendation is directed to a specific body with authority over the issue in question and make certain that the Student Senate has standing to make such a recommendation.

Assert/Affirm

Implies that the Senate is taking a specific position on an issue, and these terms have often been used in resolutions relating to matters on which the Senate has not yet researched and developed a clear position. Be cautious about what stand you ask the Senate as a statewide body to take without proper discussion and foundation.

Support

Directions to support local senates, other organizations, documents, and more, are acceptable as desired actions of the Senate. It is worth noting that the Student Senate does not have the wherewithal to financially support individuals or organizations, but resolutions may direct the Senate to support funding from the state or other source for colleges, programs, etc.

Ensure/Require

If using this term, be certain that the Senate has the power to fulfill the goal of your resolution. The Senate may not have the power to ensure many outcomes, especially on its own. In many cases, better phrasing might ask the Senate to work in cooperation with another group to ensure or to accomplish the outcome.

Reaffirm

Make certain that such a reaffirmation is indeed necessary rather than repetitious. In general, reaffirming previous positions is discouraged due to the conflict that will arise if the body votes it down.

Work with

When directing the Senate to work with another official body, be certain that the body in question has appropriate involvement in or authority regarding the issue at hand. Often, the action “work with” is followed by another direction to accomplish something. Consider which is more important to the intent of your resolution: that the Senate work with another group or that the action is accomplished? Then word your resolution in the manner that best emphasizes the goal you most wish to accomplish.

THE OTHER VERBS

Urge

Research

Develop

Distribute

Oppose

Publish

Survey

Encourage

Conclude

Adopt

Request

Form

Express

Communicate

Recognize