How to Determine Whose Vote Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of the body (the denominator) to calculate:</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Eligible to Vote**</th>
<th>Actually casts a vote*</th>
<th>Includes only filled positions</th>
<th>Includes all positions, both filled and vacant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority (of those present and voting)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority of those present</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority of entire membership</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority of fixed membership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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; three-fourths 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
- Three-fourths majority is 75% 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).

**AT VIRGINIA TECH:**

- A quorum is a majority (greater than 50%) of the entire membership.
- 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 three-fourths of the members present.
- University Council may override a request for deferral by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the membership present.