

CoUL Decision Making Mechanisms and Protocols

Prepared by and for the UC Council of University Librarians (CoUL)

Introduction

The University of California (UC) Council of University Librarians (CoUL) employs three mechanisms for decision-making: (1) supermajority “yes-no” voting; (2) fist-of-five; and (3) consent-agenda decisions. All mechanisms are described at the end of this document.

The following protocols will be employed for decision-making:

- A. Consent-agenda items will be clearly outlined in the agenda for the applicable meeting; CoUL members will notify the chair in advance if they wish to discuss or object to a consent item.
- B. For discussion items that include decision-making, either the CoUL Chair or the member responsible for the agenda item will affirm which decision-making mechanism should be used (for CoUL confirmation).

Decision-making mechanisms

(1) Supermajority “yes-no” voting mechanism: Council members vote in favor or against a decision item. To receive endorsement, a threshold of 8 out of 11 members must be met.

(2) Fist-of-Five mechanism: Typically used for decision items that involve significant discussion and endorsement from all 11 partners, members vote along the fist-of-five scale (see below). An initial fist-of-five may be taken early in a discussion, to help identify members with reservations; typically, those members voting three or below are given the floor to discuss their concerns and the council will see if any amendments can help address those concerns. If a member votes (1) in the scale, they are blocking the council from endorsing the item.

Fist-of-five decision-making scale:



(5) Full support (endorsed by member with no concerns)



(4) Agreement (endorsed by member with minor concerns)



(3) Reservations, but can live with it (endorsed with reservations/caveats)



(2) Don't like it, won't block it (endorsed but the member registers their disagreement, though they will support the group's decision; this includes publicly supporting the decision, beyond the council)



(1) Cannot support it (member does not endorse and seeks to block it)

(3) Consent-agenda mechanism: Low-risk decisions are bundled into a “consent agenda” item and, unless a group member calls for discussion or objects to the inclusion of a decision item, the consent agenda is immediately approved/endorsed at the meeting in question.