

# How to run an election at Tech Squares

## Notes for the President

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revised through March 2004

Before the meeting

1. ensure the Secretary or a designee is ready to record the outcome of all votes and otherwise record any business of the meeting,
2. ensure the Treasurer or a designee is ready to provide a financial report, and
3. read all the way through this document once.

The meeting has these parts:

1. explain the meeting and voting requirements
2. elect each officer
3. adjourn meeting

The election for each office has these parts:

1. explanation of the office to be elected
2. nominations
3. discussion of candidates
4. election

The Tech Squares officers are elected in this order: President, Treasurer, Secretary, Publicity Coordinator, and Class Coordinator.

## Explanation of Procedure

**For each office, the office will be described, there will be nominations, and we will take a hand vote.**

**The offices are President, Treasurer, Secretary, Publicity Coordinator, and Class Coordinator.**

## Voting Requirements

All voting members of Tech Squares may vote. From the Bylaws:

**Voting members shall have attended at least five club or monthly dances in the last four months ....**

## Explanation of the office

Several ways to explain the office. Reading the formal description from the club Bylaws might be useful. Or the current holder of the office or the meeting chair can just explain in their own words. Ask for questions.

## Nominations

Prior to the meeting there should have been a Nominating Committee ensuring that there is at least one candidate for each office. Announce these candidates. (If you have only a reluctant backup candidate, you might want to hold off announcing their name to see if anyone else volunteers. The meeting Chair may nominate anyone at any time.) Invite additional nominations from the floor:

**Any voting member may nominate anyone, including themselves.  
Are there any (other) nominations or volunteers?**

Nominations do not need to be seconded. The nominee should be asked if they are willing to serve:

***Candidate, do you accept the nomination?***

Repeat all nominations:

***Candidate is nominated.  
Are there any further nominations?***

When no one wants to make any additional nominations, close nominations:

***Are there any objections to closing nominations for (this office)? (Pause briefly.)  
Hearing no objections, ... (pause briefly again) ... nominations are closed.***

Some member may move to close nominations before you suggest it. If there is likely to be general agreement to close nominations, do not let this motion force you into taking the time for a vote. Just proceed into the actions of the previous paragraph. If anyone objects, you need a 2/3 vote.

## Discussion of Candidates

If there is only one candidate, this part of the election can be very brief. Ask,

**Are there any questions for the candidate(s)?**

The Chair (not any of the candidates) recognizes any member who stands up or raises their hand. The Chair then gives the floor to each of the candidates to respond. If the question was directed to a specific candidate, they may answer first, but all candidates get a chance to respond to all questions.

The Chair may ask the candidates to leave the room for further discussion and voting. We normally don't do this unless there is more than one candidate. Always be sensitive to any members trying to signal that they would like additional discussion without the candidate(s) being present.

When discussion has died down, call the vote:

***Are you ready to vote? (Pause briefly.)  
Hearing no objections, ... (pause briefly again) ... discussion is closed.***

Again, some member may "move to close discussion" or "move the previous question." Unless one or more members wish to continue discussion, don't take the time to recognize the motion and call a vote on it. Just proceed as above. If a vote on ending discussion is required, it must pass by 2/3, not simple majority. Therefore a voice vote (with ayes and nos) cannot be used; use a hand count.

## Election (one candidate)

For an uncontested election, often some helpful person will call for a white ballot, election by acclamation, or similar procedure. I am opposed to such supposed time-saving procedures for elections. First, they don't really save time; it takes as long to explain what is going on to everyone else as it does to just hold a simple hand vote. Second, they add unnecessary parliamentary procedure. And third, I like to see people actually vote; it's the American way, and it gives a more visible mandate to the new officers. (But note that this memo shows doing all other business without votes.) So if an election by acclamation is moved, say firmly:

**We will use a hand vote.**

State what the group is voting on and call for votes. It will usually not be necessary to actually count hands to determine the outcome of the vote.

Always ask for abstentions in a vote. To abstain is to choose not vote for any position or candidate. Abstentions do not count when determining a majority; there need merely be more votes in favor than opposed. However, abstentions do provide a consistency check; the total of all votes, including abstentions, should be the number of voting members at the meeting.

**We are voting to elect a (*name of office*).**

**All in favor of (*candidate*) raise their right hand. ... Thank you.**

**All those opposed. ... Thank you.**

**All those abstaining. ... Thank you.**

Announce the results:

***Candidate* is elected.**

## **Election (multiple candidates)**

State what the group is voting on and call for votes:

**We are voting to elect a (*name of office*).**

**All in favor of (*first candidate*) raise their right hand. (*Count hands if necessary.*) Thank you.**

**All in favor of (*second candidate*) raise their right hand. (*Count hands if necessary.*) Thank you.**

***Etc.***

**All those abstaining. (*Count hands if necessary.*) Thank you.**

Announce the results. State who is elected:

***Candidate X* received 23 votes.**

***Candidate Y* received 9 votes.**

***Candidate X* is elected.**

If anyone asks for it or you feel it advisable, do a secret vote with paper ballots.

You are now finished with one office. Proceed to the next office. Fortunately, this often takes less time to do than to read about.

## **Adjourning**

After disposing of all business on the agenda (probably just elections, but possibly also including a Treasurer's report), adjourn the meeting. If no one moves to adjourn, prompt them:

**I (or "The Chair") will entertain a motion to adjourn.**

***Member:* So moved.**

It is usually not necessary to prompt for a second, but if so, ask:

**Is there a second?**

***Member:* Seconded.**

Since a motion to adjourn cannot be debated, proceed immediately to act on it efficiently:

**If there are no objections, this meeting will be adjourned. (*Pause briefly.*)**

**Hearing no objections, ... (*pause again*) ... this meeting is adjourned.**

For more general info on meeting procedures, I have written two largely overlapping memos called "Parliamentary Procedure" (for members) and "Robert's Rules" (for the chair).

## Summary of What the Chair Says

For each office, the office will be described, there will be nominations, and we will take a hand vote.

The offices are President, Treasurer, Secretary, Publicity Coordinator, and Class Coordinator.

Voting members shall have attended at least five club or monthly dances in the last four months.

Any voting member may nominate anyone, including themselves.

Are there any (other) nominations or volunteers?

*Candidate*, do you accept the nomination?

*Candidate* is nominated.

Are there any further nominations?

Are there any objections to closing nominations for (*this office*)? (*Pause briefly.*)

Hearing no objections, ... (*pause briefly again*) ... nominations are closed.

Are there any questions for the candidate(s)?

Are you ready to vote? (*Pause briefly.*)

Hearing no objections, ... (*pause briefly again*) ... discussion is closed.

We are voting to elect a (*name of office*).

All in favor of (*candidate*) raise their right hand. ... Thank you.

All those opposed. ... Thank you.

(*if two candidates, instead of "those opposed" say instead:*

All in favor of (*candidate two*) raise their right hand. ... Thank you.)

All those abstaining. ... Thank you.

*Candidate* is elected.

I (*or "The Chair"*) will entertain a motion to adjourn.

*Member*: So moved.

Is there a second?

*Member*: Seconded.

If there are no objections, this meeting will be adjourned. (*Pause briefly.*)

Hearing no objections, ... (*pause again*) ... this meeting is adjourned.