



DSA

Democratic Socialists of America

MADISON-AREA DSA NEW MEMBERS MANUAL

Contents

- Introduction 3
- DSA 101 3
- Madison Chapter Structure 5
 - Monthly Membership Meetings 5
 - Working Groups 5
 - Executive Committee 5
 - Harassment Grievance Officers 5
 - Regional Staff 5
- Chapter Resources 6
- How to Get Involved – FAQ..... 6
 - What does Madison DSA do right now? 6
 - That’s cool, but I want to do something else..... 6
 - There’s an event coming up I want DSA to endorse/put on. How does that happen? 7
 - MADSA isn’t doing X thing. Are you against it? 7
 - How do I submit to Red Madison?..... 7
 - Where can I get some sweet DSA swag? 7
 - I want to meet with members in a similar situation to me to talk about DSA stuff safely..... 7
 - I can’t be all that involved with meetings and things, but I still want to help however I can 7
 - Is there anything I shouldn’t do? 8
- More on Democratic Socialism 8
- Addendum A: Madison DSA Code of Conduct and Resolutions Procedure 9
 - Code of Conduct 9

Resolution Procedure	9
Structure	9
Process	10
Steps Of Grievance Procedure	10
Addendum B: DSA Platform	11
Addendum C: Glossary	12
Addendum D: Robert’s Rules Cheat Sheet	13
Addendum E: Community Agreements for Respectful Discussion	15
Addendum F: How To Facilitate	16
Progressive Stack	16
Working Group Charter Template	17
Article I: Name	17
Article II: Scope	17
Article III: Membership and Voting	17
Article IV: Leadership	17
Article V: Finances	18
Article VII: Terms of Charter	18

Introduction

Welcome to Madison-Area Democratic Socialists of America (MADSA), or Madison DSA for short. Madison DSA is a chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, centered on Madison, Wisconsin but also incorporating surrounding towns like Verona, Fitchburg, Middleton, Sun Prairie, and Stoughton. This guide is intended to give a primer to DSA and to the Madison chapter, how the organization works, what we do, and where you might fit in. We'll include some resources for new members looking for ideas and orientations.

DSA 101

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is a national organization of socialists in the United States. DSA was founded in 1983, and after the 2016 election DSA grew very quickly to become the largest US socialist organization since the 1950's. DSA is a democratic membership organization, run by members like you. DSA is a “**big tent**” socialist organization, meaning that there are a range of politics members hold in the organization: everything from social democracy to Marxism to anarchism. Commitment to an ideology is not a requirement of any member so long as they agree with DSA's core [democratic socialist principles](#).

DSA is organized **bottom-up**, starting with members and moving up from there. Members form **Chapters** (15 or more members), which are the foundation of DSA and where most people really interact with the organization. Chapters organize meetings to discuss politics, make decisions, and coordinate activist work. Bigger chapters might have **Branches**, which are recognized subgroups in a chapter that meet as DSA; often this is by geography (North/East/South/West; nearby towns) but can also be by area of work or identity (labor, language, etc). If a branch is established, it sends a representative to the Chapter leadership.

Every two years, DSA members have a **National Convention** where chapters and at-large members send delegates to decide on DSA's direction, priorities, policies, establish national Working Groups, and to select the **National Political Committee** (NPC), DSA's national leadership. The NPC oversees the entirety of DSA, manages the organization's finances and staff, charters new chapters, issues statements and provides political direction.

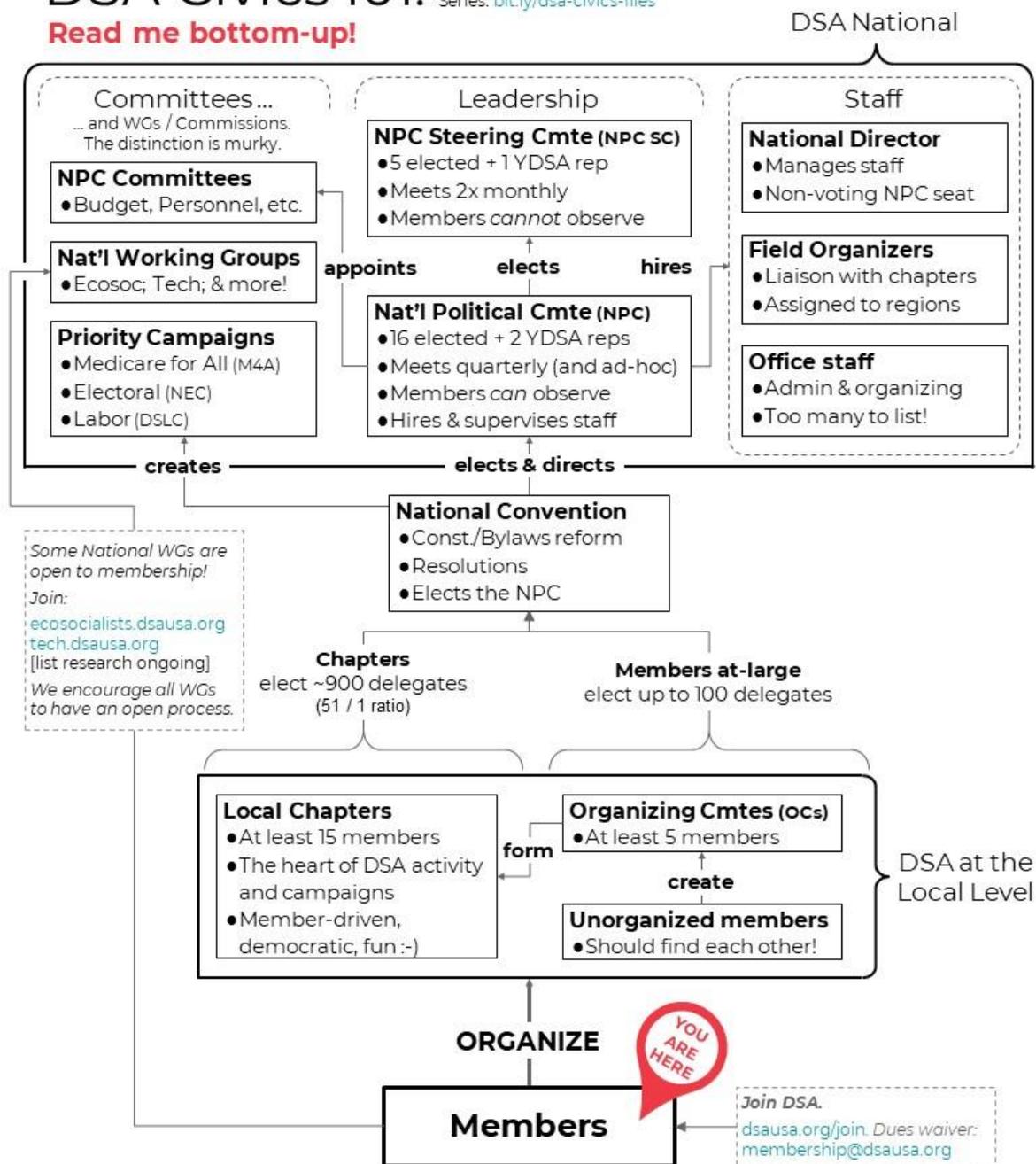
For more information on the National Structure and resources, visit:

<https://www.dsausa.org/about-us/structure/> <https://www.dsausa.org/get-involved/>

DSA Civics 101.

Link: bit.ly/dsa-civics-101
 Outline: bit.ly/dsa-civics-101-outline
 Series: bit.ly/dsa-civics-files

Read me bottom-up!



buildthedsa@gmail.com
dsabuild.org
 DSA is yours to build.

Sources dsausa.org/about-us/constitution
dsausa.org/national-convention
bit.ly/preconvention-slides

Organization chart made by an independent caucus, Build, that outlines how DSA works.

Madison Chapter Structure

The Madison-Area chapter of Democratic Socialists of America has approximately 300 members. There's a lot of activity so it can be hard to know where to start. First, we'll outline how the chapter works, then walk you through how to get involved.

Monthly Membership Meetings

MADSA holds a monthly general meeting open to any member and typically to the public as well. These are considered the "highest body" of the chapter with the most authority to make decisions. Any decision MADSA might make can be done at a membership meeting, but there are some things *only* the membership meeting can do: endorse campaigns, endorse candidates for public office, authorize use of major funds, and/or establish a chartered working group.

Working Groups

Any group of members may meet for any purpose, but in order to represent the work being done as part of Madison-Area DSA, a working group must be **chartered**. Members wishing to do work in an area and represent the chapter must submit a document outlining what they wish to do, the reasons why, and what they would need to the membership meeting. If approved, a chartered working group can create events as MADSA without approval votes, create materials and generally represent DSA in their field.

Ad hoc groups of members may not create events as DSA or represent themselves as spokespersons of the chapter without approval of either the membership meeting or the Executive Committee. At the end of any charter, working groups present their activity and ask the membership to approve them for another charter to remain accountable. <https://madison.dsausa.org/groups>

Executive Committee

The chapter annually elects an **Executive Committee** (or "Exec") of five (5) members (two co-chairs, one administrator, one communications officer and a treasurer) who make decisions between membership meetings and serve as chapter leadership. The Executive Committee sets the agenda for membership meetings, issues statements on behalf of the chapter and may endorse individual events. The Executive Committee cannot endorse a political candidate or a campaign; that decision must go to the membership. The Executive Committee handles the chapter membership roster and finances – current policy is that the Treasurer may approve up to \$100 on discretionary items and the Exec up to \$150, but any expenses above this amount outside the budget must be approved by the membership. Lastly, the Exec ensures that the chapter's campaigns and working groups remain accountable to the chapter and do not make decisions that represent the chapter outside of their purview.

Contact: <mailto:dsa-madison-executive-committee@googlegroups.com>

Harassment Grievance Officers

MADSA has a [code of conduct](#) (Addendum A) for chapter members in addition to DSA's national [harassment policy](#). The MADSA membership selects two people to be our "harassment/grievance officers", or "HGOs". Any member with a complaint or concern about another member may speak confidentially to an HGO.

Regional Staff

Each DSA chapter has an assigned staff organizer from the DSA National Office. MADSA's staff organizer is Amy Zachmeyer: amy@dsausa.org [Schedule Time to Talk](#)

Chapter Resources

MADSA has some resources for our organizing work. Here's a brief overview:

- Chapter office: We have office space at Wisconsin Network for Peace, Justice & Sustainability (WNPJ) [520 University Ave #160 | Madison, WI 53703]. Our office has a printer and small meeting space. Please contact the MADSA Exec if you would like to use it.
- Email blast: MADSA sends a weekly email to a list of people who have signed up for announcements. If you have something you would like announced, please email dsamadison@gmail.com by Friday to get it out for Sunday.
- Internal communications: We have an email list for member-to-member discussion (dsa-madison-core@googlegroups.com), a Facebook group, and a slack. You should be on all these lists when you join, but if for whatever reason you think you are not please email dsamadison@gmail.com
- Zoom: If you would like to have an online meeting, we have a Zoom account
- Funds: Our chapter has a modest treasury. If there is funding you need, you can request it either by contacting the Exec or at a Membership meeting.

How to Get Involved – FAQ

What does Madison DSA do right now?

MADSA members are involved in lots of different causes around town, and any member is free to explore and organize towards the things they are passionate about. When enough of that work is happening in concert, or members want something to come under the DSA umbrella they propose a working group to the membership.

Currently we have four official working groups:

- Electoral Politics – Focuses primarily on local elections, interviews candidates who want DSA's endorsement in local races, presents recommendations for the MADSA membership, coordinates efforts to campaign, serves as experts for MADSA members looking to run for local office
- Tenants' Rights – Works on housing and renters' issues in the Madison area, primarily by working to build a tenants' union ("Madison Tenant Power")
- Ecosocialist/Green New Deal – DSA members who work on climate and environmental justice issues. They organize events like the Climate Strike and opposition to F-35's.
- Labor – Meets biweekly to support workplace organizing, guide labor activists and put on events and educational forums. (You don't have to be a union member to attend, though union members definitely encouraged!)

Members also meet to canvass for *DSA for Bernie* and to produce our chapter newsletter/website, "Red Madison". Less formally, an ad hoc study group meets to learn core socialist ideas.

That's cool, but I want to do something else.

Go ahead! The work DSA does always starts with members, so if you have something you're interested in you should think about what you want to do, ask other members if they're interested, and start making it happen. DSA National has priorities around Immigration and Medicare for All, for example, but

our chapter does not always have people working on these issues. If that's your passion, make it happen. The chapter exists as a resource, so ask for help if you need; the Exec is also there for guidance.

You can ask to make an announcement at a meeting, send an email over the dsa-madison-core@googlegroups.com list, or on the Madison DSA Rumpus Room Facebook group. **Remember:** While a DSA member can always represent themselves as an individual DSA member, they cannot say that what they are doing is DSA's opinion **unless they get approval from the meeting on Exec.**

[There's an event coming up I want DSA to endorse/put on. How does that happen?](#)

If it needs to happen quickly, you can email the MADSA Executive Committee with the details of the event and make the ask. Please assume the Exec knows nothing about what you're presenting. Email: dsa-madison-executive-committee@googlegroups.com

You can also bring it at a monthly membership meeting, present and ask for an endorsement there. Please be prepared and do your best to ask for time in advance to ensure you get on the agenda.

[MADSA isn't doing X thing. Are you against it?](#)

Just because our chapter is not involved with something does not mean we are not interested in it. We only have so many people with so much time, and everyone makes choices about what they can commit to. We always want to be doing *more*, but we want to do it well. We invite any member to take up areas of work we're missing and help lead our chapter. As a democratic organization, a member is always empowered to bring up things that they think the chapter should consider, try to persuade and move people in a direction.

[How do I submit to Red Madison?](#)

If you have an article you want to submit, send it to redmadison@googlegroups.com

[Where can I get some sweet DSA swag?](#)

MADSA has a few of our own chapter t-shirts that we have at meetings, plus a lot of buttons. There's the official [DSA store](#), and many members will make their own cool stuff you might find on the interwebs.

[I want to meet with members in a similar situation to me to talk about DSA stuff safely](#)

Members have a right to caucus in DSA, to organize along identity lines (race, gender, sexuality, social class, ability, religion, etc.) and for political purposes. Our chapter supports this self-organization as an important part of creating a strong socialist organization. Currently, there is a regular meeting of women in DSA (whether cis-gendered, queer, trans, or otherwise identified). At the national level, there are standing caucuses: Afrosocialists and Socialists of Color; Disability Caucus & Working Group; Queer Socialists; Religion and Socialism; and Veterans' Working Group.

Political caucuses also exist to promote a perspective within DSA. Madison DSA has some members who are aligned with a caucus, though political caucuses do not currently play a large role in the life of MADSA.

[I can't be all that involved with meetings and things, but I still want to help however I can](#)

Of course! A high level of activity is not a requirement to be in DSA. It helps if you know what kinds of things you want to help with: sending a regular email; stuffing envelopes; greeting new members. Please let us know at dsamadison@gmail.com

There are also national work committees: Members can contribute professional skills such as graphic design, social media organizing, editing, writing, etc. Current working groups are:

- [Communications Working Group](#)
- [Design Committee](#)
- [Legal Working Group](#)
- [Political Education Committee](#)
- [Tech Committee](#)

For all other volunteer opportunities for members not living near a chapter, [please fill out this form to be added to the national at-large volunteer email list.](#)

Is there anything I shouldn't do?

DSA is pretty open, but there are some things you should **not** do.

- Do not violate a person's boundaries, sexually assault or harass anyone. We take this very seriously. You may not mean to do anything intentionally, but if someone says they aren't interested or lets you know your behavior is unwanted then that should be the end of it. **DO: ask for consent before touching anyone or their children.**
- Don't deliberately misrepresent DSA's positions. It is totally fine to state your disagreement with any position DSA has, but members should represent those positions fairly and accurately.
- Don't represent yourself as speaking for DSA without permission.
- Don't view DSA as a dating service – people meet and relationships form, but that is not the primary purpose of this organization. Please don't show up with that intention.

More on Democratic Socialism

Democratic Socialists of America has an introductory reading list here:

https://www.dsasusa.org/strategy/introductory_reading_list/

DSA Official Publications:

- [Democratic Left](#)
- [Socialist Forum](#)
- [The Stacks](#)
- [DSA Statements](#)

Socialist Publishers:

- [Haymarket Books](#)
- [Verso Books](#)
- [Jacobin Magazine](#)

Podcasts:

- The Vast Majority
- Chapo Trap House
- Season of the Bitch

Addendum A: Madison DSA Code of Conduct and Resolutions Procedure

As socialists, we are committed to build a better world through working in movements of working people and the oppressed. DSA Madison expects its members to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with this commitment. As we work toward destroying capitalism, we believe it is important intentionally to create inclusive spaces that reject racism, classism, bigotry, sexism, heteropatriarchy, ableism, and other oppressive power structures.

The scope of this code of conduct and resolution procedure is interactions *between members of Madison Area DSA*. Issues that arise from external conflict (i.e., non-members) should be dealt with by the organization democratically.

At all official DSA events, participants (members and non-members) are expected to abide by community guidelines for appropriate discussion and the code of conduct as a condition of participating in the meeting.

Code of Conduct

The following speech or actions are violations of the code of conduct:

- Sexual assault or threat of sexual assault
- Physical violence or threat of physical violence toward another member
- Threatening speech or behavior toward another member
- Harassment, whether behavioral, verbal, written, physical, or via electronic communication, that has the intent or effect, because of its severity and/or persistence, to be intimidating, hostile, or offensive.
- Discrimination, harassment on the basis of a particular oppression. Harassment of an individual in connection with a stereotyped group characteristic, or because of that person's identification with a particular group, is not permitted.
- Any other action, behavior or demeanor that makes member feels uncomfortable or unsafe based on the speech or actions of another member.
- Uncomradely behavior
 - Willful or deliberate misrepresentation i.e., attending Madison DSA functions with the intent to defraud, implicate, or pull members away from Madison DSA
 - Personal attacks

While the above list cannot describe every situation, the general rule is that members will not engage in unwanted behavior.

Resolution Procedure

Structure

Following the 2017 Convention's Resolution 33, Madison DSA shall elect two Harassment and Grievance Officers (HGOs). Grievances shall be addressed by these two officers. If the HGOs decide that a grievance requires greater attention, they may convene and select an ad hoc committee of up to seven (7) total members, including the two HGOs. This ad hoc committee should strive for racial and gender balance.

Process

A grievance shall be any difference or disagreements with the principles, practices, and persons within Madison DSA, as espoused in our code of conduct, the local's bylaws, or in national DSA policy. Grievances submitted to the HGOs must contain detail about the date, time, and location of the perceived difference and or infraction and must state clearly the name of the parties involved. The person submitting the grievance shall be known as the concerned member. Since this resolution process is internal, non-members are not allowed to represent.

Concerns that are submitted shall be handled according to the following stages and timelines, and any violations on either side of the concerned or the committee shall cause the concern either to be advanced by the concerned or to be considered resolved and dismissed by HGOs.

Steps Of Grievance Procedure

1. **If a member feels comfortable/able**, they should "call in," which is when the offended party approaches the other party in good faith and lets them know the specific action that offended them. At this point, the party who made the error should cease the problematic behavior. If the call-in procedure does not resolve the issue to the offended party's satisfaction, if they believe that the call-in is not appropriate, they can file a grievance, in the process specified in the resolution procedure below.
2. The offended party will submit a grievance to the HGOs via [email](#).
3. The HGOs will address the grievance at their discretion. Grievances should be dealt with by HGOs within 30 calendar days. In cases where more time is needed, the HGOs will inform the complainant. Complainants may take their grievance to the next step within 15 days if they are unwilling to accept the extension. In keeping with the values of restorative justice, mediation will be emphasized whenever appropriate. Potential courses of action include:
 1. Mediation
 2. Education
 3. Recommendation of discipline
 4. Recommendation of no action
4. If discipline is recommended, the recommendation shall be reviewed by the executive committee. Alternately, if the concerned party is not satisfied with the outcome, they can request a hearing with the relevant parties, the HGOs, and the Executive Committee. This step shall end with the decision to accept or reject the recommendation by the Executive Committee. Disciplinary actions may include:
 1. Suspension
 2. Expulsion

If the parties are not satisfied with the resolution, they can appeal to the NPC and follow the DSA National grievance procedure.

DRAFTED 1/5/18 by Sarah C, Alex G, Ted G, Kai FV, Andy S

Addendum B: DSA Platform

- The economy must be run democratically; none shall be poor so another can be rich. As it stands, the overwhelming majority of people have little power over the nature of their work or their compensation for it. We demand that people have control over how they work, when they work and how their labor is applied.
- The abolition of poverty. Both in the United States and globally, the world is more productive than it has ever been. Yet millions upon millions remain mired in poverty. Coerced by necessity into destructive arrangements at work and at home, they lack adequate access to the necessities of human life. Increased productivity can eliminate poverty and satisfy everyone's material needs. We demand a system that can achieve this.
- An end to racial, gender and all other forms of oppression. Whether it be on the basis of race, gender, religion, orientation or disability, we must fight alongside those who face violence and exploitation. We recognize that the exploitation in our society is as intersectional as its members and our struggle must therefore be intersectional as well.
- Affordable, humane housing for all. A home is not a commodity; it is a human right. We demand that everyone has access to housing that meets their needs and neighborhoods that foster vibrant communities.
- An end to punitive justice and mass incarceration. We demand an end to prisons as a weapon of domination, an end to the Drug War, an end to broken families and an end to our barbaric treatment of inmates. We cannot confront these issues unless we recognize the systemic racism at their very core. We fight for a justice system that prioritizes rehabilitation over punishment.
- Universal Medicare-for-all. No one should risk financial ruin when they consider going to the doctor. Everyone must have access to quality government-financed medical care throughout their lives. This is most immediately achievable through a single-payer system.
- Free education: from pre-K to trades, college and beyond. We reject wealth as a criterion for receiving quality education at any level. We must not only guarantee access to higher education but must also ensure students are provided with the tools to take advantage of that guarantee.
- An end to military and police aggression. Both at home and abroad, violent force is used as tool of racist oppression and capitalist exploitation. As our imperial domination extends on foreign soil, so too does brutal, murderous repression grow in our own communities. We demand an end to American imperialism and police militarization.
- Complete reproductive freedom in all forms. Everyone should have the support and tools to decide if and when to have children. We must ensure access to birth control and safe, legal abortion and all forms of family planning. We must provide material support to ensure every child is raised free from discrimination, violence and oppression.
- Democracy in the workplace; all workers have the right to organize. We see the primary means to improve everyday life through democratic control, manifested in a socialist system. We must resist dismantling of workers' rights to organize and instead bolster them by supporting unions in the fight for living wages, equal pay and safe workplaces. We demand an economic system in which workers control their labor.
- Democratic control over the environment to preserve the planet. If left unchecked, capitalism will destroy our planet and those least responsible will suffer the greatest consequences. We must ensure everyone has access to clean and affordable food and water. We demand

environmental justice for the living and responsible stewardship in the name of those yet to be born.

Addendum C: Glossary

- Bourgeoisie The class of people in capitalist society who own the social means of production as their Private Property, i.e., as capital.
- Bread & Roses Political slogan originating from a speech given by labor activist by Rose Schneiderman “The worker must have bread, but she must have roses, too.” Essentially, the idea that the people are entitled to not just their basic needs, but a sense of human dignity within society.
- Capital Anything that can enhance one’s power to perform economically useful work.(in our society: U.S. dollars)
- Capitalism An economic system in which the capital and means of production are controlled by private entities or individuals
- Class A group of people sharing common relation to labor and the means of production.
- Democracy A system of governance by the majority.
- Labor Human activity that provides goods and services in an economy.
- Marxism A social & economic analysis of class relations and conflict throughout history.
- Means of Production The equipment and resources needed to create a product or service.
- Praxis Putting ideas into practice aka practical application of social & political theory.
- Socialism An economic system in which the economy is democratically controlled.
- Solidarity Giving support to a stranger on their own terms. This is different from community because it is extended to strangers and different from philanthropy because it is given on the stranger’s own terms, not that of the giver

Addendum D: Robert's Rules Cheat Sheet

Robert's Rules is a relatively simple system for conducting fair and orderly meetings, including voting on important proposals and issues.

Robert's Rules increases democratic functioning rather than limiting it, by giving everyone's ideas and proposals a fair hearing with the general membership and ensuring that the general membership has a clear process for influencing the direction of our chapter. We provide a simple guide to Robert's Rules. The following is a brief to help give you the tools you need to fully participate in chapter business at general meetings.

1

"I move..."

Member makes a clearly worded motion to take action or a position.

Motions are recorded in meeting minutes.

2

"Second!"

A second allows discussion to occur; it does not signify approval.

A motion without a second does not move forward.

3

Chair restates the motion.

"It is moved and seconded that..."

Provides clarity

4

Discussion & Debate

Maker of motion starts discussion.

Amendments may be offered – return to step 1 to amend motion: "I move to amend the motion by..."

5

Chair closes discussion and asks for a vote

"The question is on the adoption of the motion that..."

Motion is repeated word-for-word

6

Chair provides voting directions

"Those in favor of the motion, say aye"; "Those opposed say no"

7

Chair announces result of the vote

"The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted" or

"The noes have it, the motion is lost."

Recorded in meeting minutes.

TO DO THIS	MOTION	YOU SAY THIS	DEBATE ALLOWED?	VOTE REQUIRED
Introduce Business	Main	"I move that..."	Yes	Majority
Second a Motion	Second	"Second!"	No	No
Change the wording or add clarity of a motion	Amend	"I move to amend the motion by..." (adding words; striking out words; substitute words)	Yes	Majority
Send to Committee	Commit/Refer	"I move the motion be referred to..."	Yes	Majority
Postpone action until specific time	Postpone	"I move the motion be postponed until..." (provide a specific time on the agenda or next meeting date)	Yes	Majority
Postpone action until an unspecified time	Lay on the Table	"I move to lay the motion on the table."	No	Majority
Limit debate	Limit Debate	"I move that the debate on this motion be limited to (one) speech of (two) minutes for each member."	No	Two-thirds
End debate or request a vote	Previous Question	"I move the previous question."	No	Two-thirds
Take intermission	Recess	"I move to recess for (time)."	No	Majority
Close meeting	Adjourn	"I move to adjourn."	No	Majority

Addendum E: Community Agreements for Respectful Discussion

Meetings are more productive—and more fun—when the conversation includes everyone. Respectful discussion guidelines are also helpful for keeping things focused. We collectively agree to follow these guidelines for the mutual benefit of everyone in the conversation. Those listed here are a foundation but are not exhaustive! The group may find additional or more helpful ways to express its needs. These are not rules for politeness. Think of them as a signpost to guide DSA members as we struggle together to fight for our liberation!

- Assume good faith in fellow comrades Assume good faith in each other. Please try to speak from experience, speak for yourself, and actively listen to each other. When someone makes a point, repeat what you heard, summarize, and ask clarifying questions like “did you mean X” or “what makes you say that” to get more information. Encourage yourself and others to maintain a positive attitude, honor the work of others, avoid defensiveness, be open to legitimate critique and challenge oppressive behaviors in ways that help people grow. We want to “call each other in” rather than calling each other out — in other words, if you are challenging someone’s ideas or behavior, do it respectfully, and if you are being challenged, receive it respectfully. Remember, mistakes will be made, nobody is perfect.
- Why am I talking (WAIT) We have a limited amount of time for discussion and to accomplish the tasks before us. When in discussion, please ask yourself “Why am I talking (WAIT)?” Consider whether or not what you want to say has already been said, whether what you want to say is on topic or if there’s a better time and place to say it, and other methods for showing how you feel about the conversation (nodding your head, etc.)
- Know whether you need to “Step up” or “Step back” Help create a safe and inclusive space for everybody. Please respect others by recognizing how often, much, and loud you’re speaking and whether or not you’re dominating the conversation. Step back to leave space for others to voice their opinions and feelings. If the facilitator of the meeting asks you to wrap up, recognize that you should step back. This especially applies to participants who have privileged backgrounds. On the other hand, if you don’t often speak up, we encourage you to do so now!
- Recognize and respect the feelings and cultural background of others Many people have different levels of experience, knowledge, and feelings in social justice and radical activism and all participants should respect and embrace this diversity. Many people from different backgrounds have different definitions of what it means to be an “activist” or “radical.” While we all don’t have to agree on everything, we should respect our diversity of opinions. Recognize that everyone has a piece of the truth, everybody can learn, and everybody has the ability to teach and share something. Don’t use language that’s clearly oppressive or hurtful. Please, refrain from using acronyms or complicated language that could exclude others.
- We have a “one mic” – do not interrupt or speak over others Many of us will have different opinions on matters. However, speaking while others are talking or adding comments when they cannot respond appropriately does not build community. If you have a disagreement, wait for your turn to address it.
- Respect the facilitator when they use Progressive Stack. Progressive Stack is a form of leading discussions that involves a facilitator keeping a list of names of people who wish to speak. The facilitator scans the group during the discussion, and if someone wishes to speak, they raise their hand to catch the facilitator’s eye. The facilitator nods and makes eye contact to indicate the person is now put on the list to speak, and then the person can put their hand down so it does not distract other discussion participants. However, the facilitator does not simply write a list of names in the order that people raise their hand. Rather, if someone who has not spoken raises their hand, they go to the top of the list. If someone who is of an oppressed group raises their hand, they go to the top of the list unless they have already contributed significantly to the discussion.
- Have a sense of humor Who said movement building can’t be fun? Every meeting is a great opportunity for people to get to know one another, building lasting friendships and relationships, to laugh, love, and build a movement.

Addendum F: How To Facilitate

Facilitating a meeting can seem like an intimidating task, but some basic guidelines can help you keep a meeting running smoothly on the rails.

1. Create a thorough agenda. Having an agenda on hand will allow attendees of the meeting to see the overall goals of discussion and allow you to have a framework to guide the meeting.
2. Have an introductory activity if there are new people at the meeting. It's important to create a comfortable environment to encourage engagement.
3. Go through the agenda line by line. If there are action items, make sure to include "what, how, who, when and where." Make a note of deadlines and volunteers.
4. Keep an eye on the mood and energy of the room. If people look disengaged, it may be because there is a small group dominating the discussion or it may be that the meeting is just dragging on. Make sure to include breaks. Group go-rounds and brainstorming sessions can encourage more involvement. If there are "difficult" people in the meeting, be sure to address their behaviors in a manner that is not accusatory. Set time limits for comments, go-rounds, and a reminder of the rules of respectful discussion before the meeting can all help mitigate disruptive behavior.
5. End the meeting in a timely way, don't let it go over the time you asked people to give to the meeting. Summarize and synthesize the contributions to the meeting. Make sure all responsibilities moving forward are understood.

Progressive Stack

Progressive Stack is a method of ordering comments that privileges those who have not yet spoken, as well as people who may face exclusion due to their race, age, sexuality or gender. All too often, white men in our society are socialized to dominate conversations. This is a method that checks this tendency and puts other voices to the front of the line. In a large meeting, a "stack-keeper" will note everybody who would like to speak and ensure that the order of speakers does not facilitate a few voices at the expense of others. We also encourage people to "step up" or "step back," depending on the dynamics of a meeting.

Working Group Charter Template

If you want to create a formal working group that can represent MADSA in a field, you need to create a charter and get it voted on at a membership meeting. A charter should explain what the group's purpose is, what it should be doing, how it will work, and what the group needs (particularly if money is involved). No group gets an indefinite charter, that way the chapter can hear from the group about what its done and evaluate.

Article I: Name

The name of this group shall be [NAME HERE], hereafter [ABBREVIATION].

Article II: Scope

The purpose of the [WORKING GROUP] shall be to fulfill the following objectives:

1. [MAIN OBJECTIVE]
2. [SECONDARY OBJECTIVE]
3. [SECONDARY OBJECTIVE] (etc)
4. The [WORKING GROUP] shall report to MADSA and its Executive Committee.

Article III: Membership and Voting

- A. [WORKING GROUP] meetings shall be open to [EVERYONE all DSA members in good standing / SPECIFIC PEOPLE - DEFINE]; [WORKING GROUP] may not prevent a DSA member from attending [WORKING GROUP] meetings. Any membership-related issues are to be brought to the MADSA Executive Committee. As a body of MADSA, [WORKING GROUP] is subject to the Harassment-Grievance process.
- B. [WHO VOTES? EXPLAIN PROCESS FOR DETERMINING WHO CAN MAKE DECISIONS] Ex: "Only DSA members who have attended at least two (2) [WORKING GROUP] meetings in the past six months are to be considered voting members of [WORKING GROUP]."
- C. [CAN NON-MEMBER PARTICIPATE?] EX: "Non-DSA members are invited to participate in meetings but are not voting members of [WORKING GROUP]."
- D. [DECISION-MAKING PROCESS] [WORKING GROUP] will make decisions in a democratic manner, voting on what actions they take. Any working group member may call for a vote on any decision. A simple majority will suffice for any decision.
- E. [HOW OFTEN SHOULD IT MEET?]

Article IV: Leadership

- A. [WHAT'S THE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE?] Ex: "[WORKING GROUP] shall elect a Steering Committee (SC) from its membership consisting of four (4) at members. The SC shall select a chair from amongst themselves. The chair shall be responsible for coordinating the work of the group, including ensuring regular meetings of the steering committee and of the working group, and communicating with the MADSA Executive Committee."
- B. [TERM-LIMITS?] Chairs are limited to two (2) consecutive one-year terms, but may run for as many terms total as they like
- C. [HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE CHAIR BE ELECTED?] Elections shall be held annually, ideally after the adoption or extension of a charter.

- D. [WHAT IF LEADERSHIP VACATES?] Ex: “Vacancies on the SC shall be filled by the steering committee or a process they determine.”
- E. Recall of steering committee members shall be conducted through the Executive Committee of MADSA

Article V: Finances

- A. [BUDGET: IF COMPLICATED “A budget for [WORKING GROUP] shall be submitted at the time of charter and upon successive rechartering.”; IF SIMPLE INCLUDE REQUEST IN CHARTER]
- B. [WORKING GROUP] finances are to be handled through MADSA’s Treasurer and should not be independently managed. Any funds raised by [WORKING GROUP] shall be submitted to MADSA’s Treasurer; funds submitted are not for MADSA general purposes and are to be added to [WORKING GROUP]’s ledger. MADSA’s Treasurer must disperse allocated funds as directed by [WORKING GROUP].
- C. [HOW TO DECIDE ON EXPENSES? Ex: “[WORKING GROUP]’s SC may spend up to \$100 at a time on working group activities as they deem fit. Larger expenditures must be voted on by [WORKING GROUP] membership.”]

Article VII: Terms of Charter

1. To last for [X MONTHS] after the adoption of this charter, [or until the next MADSA Convention Meeting, whichever is shorter.]
2. [WORKING GROUP] will be governed by the bylaws of DSA Madison, which describe in detail the operation and leadership selection of Working Groups.
3. For the duration of this charter, [WORKING GROUP] shall be empowered to represent itself as MADSA for issues relating to [SCOPE OF CHARTER] and may create events and promotional materials to achieve its ends. Written statements shall be brought to the MADSA Executive Committee for approval.