

COME TO ORDER

- By Bev Flatt

I now declare this interview duly open for the transaction of questions or attention to any matter that Dr. Daniel Foster, registered parliamentarian, may properly present.

When it comes to leadership development events, parliamentary procedure is among the most popular. But how often are these skills used outside the chapter meeting room or competition space? Dr. Daniel Foster, one of several professional parliamentarians who serve as superintendents and members of National FFA's Conduct of Chapter Meeting and Parliamentary Procedure Leadership Development committees, shares his experiences with FFA members across the country.



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Q: What inspired you to become a professionally registered parliamentarian (PRP)?

A: If you are going to do something, do it 100%. I was looking for a way to document and convey my parliamentary knowledge to potential clients and stakeholders. Earning an industry credential allowed me to show credibility as well as create a talking point as we come together.

Q: What are some of the most misunderstood topics related to parliamentary procedure that you see?

A: There are several, but two are top of mind: quorum and ex officio. Quorum is the number of members required to legally transact business. It is codified in the bylaws of the organization. Most people mistakenly assume that it has to be a majority, which is not true. It is what is indicated in the bylaws. *Ex officio* means by virtue of title. For example, some organizations will make the president an ex officio member of all committees. The mistake is that people believe that ex officio members do not have a vote, which is not true.

Q: What advice would you give to FFA members looking to pursue a career in this field?

A: Engage with your professional organization early. For any profession, there are groups of individuals who care about advancing the standards and ideals of that profession. Seek those out. You already know the power of belonging to an organization through your membership in the National FFA Organization. Don't assume your personal journey of development and growth ends when your FFA membership is over. For parliamentary procedure, there are two organizations: the American Institute of Parliamentarians (AIP) and the National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP). By the way, if you compete in the National FFA Parliamentary Procedure Leadership Development Event, AIP will provide you membership in the organization until the age of 30.

See the BIG Picture

Participation in events like Parliamentary Procedure and Conduct of Chapter Meetings is about more than the direct link to the field of study. These skills will transfer to other fields you pursue, including preparing for careers and other professional roles. And you're sure to develop numerous soft skills about presenting yourself professionally, communicating effectively and working as a team to achieve a common goal.