

# **RULES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS**

## **Article I: Names, Abbreviations, and Definitions**

### **Section A: Definitions Related to General Operations**

1. UVM refers to the University of Vermont.
2. The SGA is defined as those who comprise the University of Vermont Student Government Association.
3. The Members of the Student Body is defined as any undergraduate degree students of UVM, paying the Student Government Association Fee.
  - a. An undergraduate is defined as any undergraduate degree-seeking student taking four (4) or more credits that has automatically paid the Student Government Association Fee.
  - b. Any undergraduate non-degree students may pay the Student Government Association Fee and be eligible to be considered an undergraduate degree student for the purpose of participation in SGA.
4. The Senate is defined as those who comprise the University of Vermont Student Government Association Senate.
5. The Elections Committee is defined as the committee of five (5) senators, who have declared that they have no intent to run in the upcoming election.
  - a. The Elections Committee is responsible for creating, maintaining, and interpreting the SGA Elections Rules and Regulations.
  - b. The Elections Committee is responsible for ensuring that all candidates uphold the SGA Elections Rules and Regulations, and issue sanctions when deemed necessary by the committee.

### **Section B: Definitions Related to Candidacy, Campaigning, and Elections Materials**

1. An official candidate is defined as anyone running for an elected office within SGA that maintains adherence to the rules and regulations outlined in this document.
2. Campaigning is defined as any statement publicly endorsing a candidate or declaring a person as a candidate.
  - a. Examples include posters, handouts, banners, buttons, t-shirts, dedicated social media accounts, and any other item or circumstance that labels a person as a candidate.
3. The SGA Elections Waiver is the online form, available on UVMClubs, that must be completed by candidates prior to the deadline set forth by the Elections Committee to become an official candidate.
  - a. This form includes the submission of a written platform and the optional submission of a photo and PDF version of the candidate's platform.
  - b. A platform is defined as the document to be completed by the candidate, including information about themselves and any goals or aspirations for their role in SGA.
4. An Information Session is an open meeting scheduled by the Elections Committee to inform interested parties about the process for running for SGA and the expectations of a SGA Senator, attendance at one information session per election cycle is mandatory for all candidates.
5. A petition is defined as the online form available on UVMClubs for interested parties in Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections. This form must be signed and completed by undergraduates who support the interested parties' candidacy.

- a. Petition Verification is defined as the process of ensuring signatures collected for Presidential and Vice-Presidential Petitions for Candidacy are sufficient and valid.

### **Section C: Definitions Related to Election Type**

1. General Elections is defined as the election SGA President, Vice President, and Senate are elected in anticipation of the expiration of a term as defined by the Constitution of the Student Government Association.
2. First Year Elections is defined as the election SGA First-Year Senators are elected in accordance with the First Year Seat Reservation Policy as defined in the SGA Constitution.
3. Midterm Elections is defined as the election that occurs if the number of vacant Senate seats at the conclusion of the Fall Semester exceeds the number of seats outlined in the Constitution of the Student Government Association.

## **Article II: Rules and Regulations**

### **Section A: Requirements for Candidacy**

1. In order to be eligible to run for the positions of SGA President, Vice President, or a Senator, a candidate must be a fully matriculated, undergraduate who has paid the Student Government Association Fee at the time of the election.
  - a. Each candidate running for the position of SGA President or Vice President must have at least one full academic year remaining at UVM.
  - b. Each candidate running for the position of a Senator must have a minimum of one semester of study remaining at UVM.
  - c. Senators running in General Elections may not be studying abroad in the subsequent fall semester.
2. To be considered an official candidate for the position of SGA Senator and appear on the ballot in any SGA Senate Election, the interested party must read, complete, and submit the SGA Elections Agreement form available on UVM Clubs before the due date determined at the discretion of the SGA Elections Chair. Candidates must also attend an Information Session hosted by the Elections committee.
  - a. Once a candidate has signed the SGA Elections Waiver and attended an Information Session, they will be considered an official candidate for that election provided that the candidate maintains adherence to the SGA Elections Rules and Regulations.
  - b. Students studying abroad are eligible to run for office if they will be completing coursework at UVM the term they would serve if they were elected.
    - i. Candidates running from abroad must notify the Elections Chair after completing their SGA Elections Agreement to be included on the ballot.
3. To be considered an official candidate for the position of SGA President and Vice President and appear on the ballot in a SGA Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections, the interested party must read, complete, and submit the SGA Elections Agreement form available on UVM Clubs before due date determined at the discretion of the SGA Elections Chair and attend an Information Session hosted by the Elections Committee.
  - a. Once the interested party has completed the SGA Elections Waiver, a SGA Presidential/Vice-Presidential Petition will be generated for the interested party.

- b. The candidate is responsible for collecting 150 signatures from undergraduate students at UVM.
  - i. Signatures are subjected to verification and/or dismissal at the discretion of the SGA Elections Committee Chair.
  - ii. The process for verification and rejection of signatures is as outlined.
    - 1. Signee is not a member of the undergraduate student body.
    - 2. Signature does not contain a valid netID.
    - 3. Signee eligibility cannot be confirmed.
    - 4. Signature or netID is not legible.
    - 5. Signature is a duplicate of another on the same petition.
  - iii. If signatures are found to be invalid, the candidate only must make up the number of invalid signatures by the packet deadline. After the deadline, no signatures can be made up.
- c. Once the interested party has completed the SGA Elections Waiver, attended an Information Session, completed their SGA Presidential/Vice-Presidential Petition, and their petition is verified by the Elections Committee, they are considered an official candidate for that election provided that the candidate maintains adherence to the SGA Elections Rules and Regulations.
- d. To appear in an Elections Committee-sponsored debate, individuals must be classified as official candidates twenty-four (24) hours prior to the debate.
- e. Students studying abroad during are eligible to run for office if they will be completing coursework at UVM the term they would serve if they were elected.
  - i. Candidates running from abroad must notify the Elections Chair after completing their SGA Elections Agreement to be included on the ballot.
- 4. For all SGA Elections, write-ins are considered unofficial candidates, however they may win seats in any SGA Elections.
  - a. These candidates have not completed the necessary requirements outlined above, but are still subject to adherence with campaign expenditure, endorsements, campaigning, and sanction rules.

## **Section B: Campaign Expenditures**

- 1. A limit on campaign expenditures is placed on all candidates and is specified for each election in Article III.
- 2. SGA does not reimburse candidates for any incurred expenses.
- 3. The limit on campaign expenditures includes all contributions of funds and services to the candidate and personal expenditures by the candidate.
- 4. Official candidates must submit all campaign expenditures within 24 hours of purchase to the Elections Committee via the "Candidate Expenditures" form on UVM Clubs.
  - a. Free printing afforded to candidates through their major, employment, or any other means will be assessed at the printing rates in the Howe Library.
- 5. Unofficial candidates, as defined in Article II Section A, must submit all campaign expenditures within 24 hours notification of election results.
- 6. Any infringements will be investigated by the elections committee and the candidate may be sanctioned as outlined in Article II - Section F.

## **Section D: Campaign Endorsements**

1. SGA, as a body, and members of the Elections Committee will not endorse any candidates.
2. Official endorsements may be solicited by an interested party after they have met the requirements for official candidacy as outlined in Article II Section B.
3. Registered Student Organizations, henceforth referred to as RSOs, and individuals endorsing a candidate must submit the “Official Endorsement Form” before endorsing candidates for SGA Elections.
  - a. The “Official Endorsement Form” will be publicly available on UVM Clubs.
4. RSOs are responsible for determining their own policy for decisions regarding endorsement of a candidate.
  - a. This form may only be submitted by RSO Club Signers.
5. SGA Organizations and student body members shall not financially contribute to candidates in any way.
6. Any infringements will be investigated by the Elections Committee and the candidate may be sanctioned as outlined in Article II - Section F.
7. Any infringements on this policy by an RSO will be investigated by the Elections Committee and will be referred to the Club Affairs Committee.

#### **Section D: Campaigning**

1. Candidates must adhere to all University Policies, Departmental Guidelines, and Solicitation Guidelines.
  - a. These policies will be available through the Elections Committee upon request.
2. Candidates may not campaign in the following scenarios:
  - a. Within residential dining facilities,
  - b. Within the campus libraries,
  - c. Knocking door-to-door in residential halls,
  - d. Using mass email tools,
  - e. Areas of Worship without express permission of the Center’s Director,
  - f. And Identity Centers without express permission by the Center’s Director.
3. During the voting period, candidates may not actively solicit votes using any internet capable device actively displaying the SGA Election.
4. All candidates must remove all campaign materials from all University structures and sites within twenty-four (24) hours of the last day of elections.
5. Candidates may campaign in groups; however, the official election ballot will list candidates only as individuals.

#### **Section E: Elections and Voting**

1. Elections will be held using an online ballot system on the UVM Clubs.
2. In order to vote, students must use the UVM Clubs platform. All UVM students are automatically registered on the UVM Clubs platform.
3. All elections shall be held for three (3) consecutive days.
4. Each member of the student body may cast votes only once in each election.
5. A voter can cast votes for candidates regardless of groupings or tickets.
6. All winning candidates shall be determined by plurality.
7. Election results will be tabulated by the system and will be publicly available within twenty-four (24) hours of winners having accepted their positions.

8. Winning candidates will be notified personally within twenty-four (24) hours of the polls closing.
  - a. Winning candidates have a twenty-four (24) hour period in which they can inform the Elections Committee if they wish to accept the position.
  - b. In the event, in which a winning candidate formally declines the position, the position shall go to the runner-up.
  - c. The Elections Committee shall alert the runner-up immediately upon receiving the declination of the original winner.
9. Official candidates who were not elected will be notified within a forty-eight (48) hour period.
  - a. Unofficial candidates will not receive notification of results, if they are not elected.
10. Results of each election shall be published online to the SGA website within forty-eight (48) hours of winning candidates' acceptances.
  - a. Only the winning candidates' names will be publicized.
11. In the event of a tie, a runoff election will follow.
  - a. Rules and Regulations pertaining to that specific election will be publicized by the Elections Committee as outlined in Article III Section

#### **Section F: Sanctions**

1. The process for sanctions due to any alleged violation of the Rules and Regulations for candidates is as followed:
  - a. The Elections Committee receives an allegation of a violation.
  - b. The Elections Committee will investigate the allegation of a violation.
  - c. Within twenty-four (24) hours of notification, the Elections Committee Chair will present a recommendation to the Elections Committee and the five (5) members of the Elections Committee will vote on the recommendation.
  - d. If the Elections Committee deems sanctions necessary, the Official Candidate will be given an opportunity to appear before the Elections Committee.
  - e. After the hearing, the five (5) Elections Committee will vote on whether sanctions are necessary.
    - i. The candidate will receive notice of the decision immediately.
  - f. Once a candidate is sanctioned by the Elections Committee, the candidate can choose to appeal the case by appearing before the Executive Committee within twenty-four (24) hours of the sanction.
    - i. No member of the SGA Executive committee who has declared their candidacy for the given election may participate in the appeals process.
  - g. During the voting period, the Elections Committee reserves the right to enforce sanctions immediately without hearing.
2. Sanctions may include but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Reduced campaign spending limit.
  - b. Removal from official candidate status, including removal of platform from voting page and removal from ballot.
    - i. The candidate may still be elected by write-in.
  - c. An automatic referral to the SGA Judiciary Committee upon election.

## **Article III: Individual Election Details**

### **Section A: General Elections**

1. In accordance with the policy outline in the SGA Constitution, Article IV, Section B, the Elections Committee will prepare an adequate timeline for this election.
  - a. General Elections shall be held no later than four (4) weeks before the conclusion of the spring semester classes.
  - b. General Elections shall be held in a matter that will allow the new Speaker of the Senate to call at least to meetings of the newly elected Senate/
2. The Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election must be held in conjunction with one another.
  - a. It may be determined at the discretion of the Elections Chair to hold Senate Elections at the same time with adequate notification and publicization.
    - i. In this scenario, an avenue for candidates to run for both President or Vice President and Senate must be available.
    - ii. In this scenario, a candidate who successfully wins an Executive Position will decline their Senate seat and it will go to the next runner-up.
3. An expenditure limit is placed on all campaigns.
  - a. A limit of \$150.00 per candidate for President and Vice-President is placed on all campaigns.
  - b. A limit of \$50.00 per candidate for Senate is placed on all campaigns.
4. Those elected shall seal their commitment to the SGA in the form of the Oath of Office for President, Vice President, and Senators of the Student Government Association at the first meeting of the new SGA term, administered by the outgoing Speaker of the Senate.

### **Section B: First-Year Elections**

1. In accordance with the policy outline in the SGA Constitution, Article IV, Section B, the Elections Committee must hold a Senate Election for matriculated First-Year Students
  - a. Eight (8) Senate seats are reserved for matriculated First-Year Students.
2. In accordance with the policy outline in the SGA Constitution, Article IV, Section B, the Elections Committee will prepare an adequate timeline for this election.
  - a. First-Year Elections must have occurred within the first three (3) weeks of the Fall Semester.
3. The Elections Committee will be responsible for coordinating with the Public Relations Chair and the Club Affairs Committee to advertise First-Year Elections at New Student ActivitiesFest and the Week of Welcome Club Fair.
4. An expenditure limit is placed on all campaigns.
  - a. A limit of \$50.00 per candidate for Senate is placed on all campaigns.

### **Section C: Midterm Elections**

1. In accordance with the policy outline in the SGA Constitution, Article IV, Section B, the Elections Committee must hold a Midterm Senate Election if there are more than five (5) vacant seats at the end of the Fall Semester.
  - a. If less than five (5) vacancies exist, then it will be the responsibility of the Appointment Committee to fill these vacancies through the appointment process.
2. In accordance with the policy outline in the SGA Constitution, Article IV, Section B, the Elections Committee will prepare an adequate timeline for this election.

- a. If necessary, a Mid-Term Elections must have occurred within the first three (3) weeks of the Spring Semester.

#### **Section D: Runoff Elections**

1. In the event of a tie in any election, a runoff election shall take place.
2. The Elections Committee shall make the announcement of a runoff election within twenty-four (24) hours of this decision.
  - a. The runoff election must take place no later than one (1) week after the initial election.
3. The Runoff Election will be decided by plurality.
4. Eligibility to participate in the Runoff Election will be limited to those directly involved in the tie, new candidates may not enter the election at this point.
5. The Runoff Election will have the same rules and regulations that are outlined in this document.
6. The campaign expenditure limit will be increased in the scenario by an amount decided by the Elections Committee.

#### **Section E: Emergency Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections**

1. This election may only be called in the case that the President and the Vice President resign and/or are removed simultaneously.
2. In this situation the Elections Committee shall call an Emergency Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election
3. In accordance with the policy outline in the SGA Constitution, Article IV, Section B, the Elections Committee has the discretion to develop and enforce an adequate timeline.
  - a. This election shall be publicized within twenty-four (24) hours of the President and Vice President resigning and/or being removed.
  - b. The election shall take place no later than two (2) weeks from the announcement of the Emergency Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections; the election shall take place in accordance with Article VI of the SGA Constitution.
4. The newly elected President and Vice President shall serve the remainder of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential terms.

#### **Section F: Referenda**

1. Voting Referendums will be conducted in accordance with Section B of Article XII of this Constitution.
2. The decisions of legitimate referenda are immune from being overturned by Presidential veto.