

**UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
RULES GOVERNING ELECTIONS**

Revised 6/5/13

Preamble

These election regulations of the Student Government Association are established, consistent with the Student Government Association Constitution and Bylaws, to govern and maintain the regulation of any authorized Student Government Election. These election regulations will not supersede the Student Government Association Constitution or By-Laws. The intent of these elections is to have students vote on their own behalf, as founded by our great nation's federal laws.

I. Student Government Association Elections Committee

- a. All election regulations shall be enforced by what will be known as the Student Government Association Elections Committee.
- b. Violations may subject a candidate to penalties or ultimate dismissal from the elections, upon the decision of the Elections Committee.
- c. The Elections Committee of the Student Government Association will consist of four members of the Student Government Association Senate and three members of the Student Government Association Judicial Branch, one of which being the Chief Justice with the oversight of an independent faculty member recommended by the Judicial Branch and approved by the Council of Presidents by a simple-majority vote of seats filled.
- d. No person who is a candidate for office in the Student Government Association or who is heavily involved in any campaign may serve on the Elections Committee.

II. Duties of the Elections Committee

- a. The Student Government Association Elections Committee will be responsible for performing a number of specific duties, including:
 - i. Certifying the eligibility of individuals who file for candidacy.
 - ii. Enforcing the deadline for candidate filing.
 - iii. Conducting a meeting to explain the election rules with all candidates.
 - iv. Supervising the election (this includes, but is not limited to, investigation of grievances and ensuring a fair election).
 - v. Ensuring that campaign materials are removed after the conclusion of elections.
 - vi. Ensuring that candidates are notified of the results in a timely manner.
 - vii. Meeting one (1) week before elections begin to familiarize themselves with elections rules.
 - viii. Setting the deadline for filing for candidacy, which shall be at least

- three weeks (21 days) prior to the election. The filing deadline should be publicized either by distribution of fliers or by ads placed in *The Vermilion* two (2) consecutive weeks prior to the filing deadline.
- ix. Certifying the final list of candidates and releasing it to the student body by means of, but not limited to, *The Vermilion* no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the election.
 - b. The duties of the Election Committee are inclusive of, but not limited to, these specific duties. The Committee should make every effort to ensure a fair election.

III. Elections

a. Spring Elections

- i. This election will be held during the spring semester to fill positions within the Executive and Legislative Branches, with the exception of the Freshmen Senate seats. The date shall fall between the first day of March and the first Friday of April, inclusive.

b. Fall Elections

- i. This election will be held during the fall semester during the month of October.
- ii. Freshmen Senators will be elected during these elections.

c. Referenda and Constitutional Amendments

- i. Referenda and Constitutional Amendments may be voted on during either election.

d. Special Elections

- i. Special elections may be held at any time so designated by a majority of the Senate seats filled.

IV. Election Dates

- a. The final list of candidates shall be released at least two times to the student body by means of, but not limited to, *The Vermilion* no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the election.
- b. The date for any election, with the exception of special elections, will be recommended by the Elections Committee and approved by a majority of the Senate seats filled.
- c. If voting is conducted by computer ballot, for a minimum of two days, it will not be necessary to have a designated absentee voting day.
- d. The dates of all elections shall be reported to the Dean of Students, the Chairman of the Student Affairs Appeals Committee, and the student body through *The Vermilion*.
- e. The polls shall remain open between the hours of 6 a.m. on the first day of elections and continue until 4:30 p.m. on the final day of elections. These hours can be extended at the discretion of the Elections Committee.

V. Election Results

- a. Election results shall be announced at 5 p.m. on the same day that the polls close.

- b. If any legitimate doubts concerning the validity of the election results arise, the results shall not be announced until the Elections Committee meets, makes a ruling, and that ruling is enforced.
- c. Any student may contest the elections results, in either writing or by emailing the Elections Committee at their officially recognized email address. This must be done within two (2) business days of the announcement of the election results, and if deemed a legitimate concern, the Elections Committee will meet and issue a ruling. The Elections Committee has the authority to do what is necessary to uphold a fair election.

VI. Candidacy

- a. The deadline will be set at least three weeks (twenty-one days) prior to the election by the Elections Committee. The filing deadline will be publicized in either flyers or *The Vermilion* for two (2) consecutive weeks prior to the deadline.
- b. The same deadline set for candidate petition filing will apply for party petitions.
- c. In order to file for candidacy, the candidate must submit:
 - i. A completed application.
 - ii. A completed candidate petition form.
 - iii. **Party Petitions (Used to be under candidacy)**
 - 1. A party petition is defined as a list that includes:
 - a. The party name,
 - b. Candidates affiliated with that party
 - c. The seat they seek
 - d. A list of campaign managers
 - e. A list of major campaign supporters.
 - f. If money is being asked of candidates from their party, parties must properly inform their candidates of this information before submitting petitions to the SGA Secretary.
 - g. If this is not done, the party can be subject to disciplinary action from the Elections Committee.
 - iv. A current transcript.
- d. The Elections Committee shall not constitute this list of campaign managers and major campaign supporters as the only individuals heavily involved in party activities. Any other person who is found to act on behalf of a party shall also be declared a campaign manager or major campaign supporter even if their name does not appear on the party petition.
- e. The party petition shall not have more than one candidate for each seat available in the election.
- f. The party name will appear on the ballot next to all candidates affiliated with that party provided that the candidate's affiliation is indicated on both his or her petition and the party's petition.

- g. The Elections Committee will handle other conflicts/problems regarding party name and candidate petitions.
- h. All necessary information must be received by the SGA Secretary and be stamped with the date of receipt. All petitions must be turned in by the end of the business day by the end of the deadline day. No petitions will be accepted after this deadline.
- i. Candidates may indicate a party. If a party is not indicated, the candidate will not have a party associated with his/her name. However, a party must file a petition and list that candidate for that seat in order for a candidate to be declared affiliated. In the event of a conflict of affiliation between the candidate's petition and the party's petition, the candidate shall have no party affiliation status.
- j. If a candidate files more than one petition, the petition filed the latest will prevail over the other(s).
- k. The candidate's name, as registered with the university, will be placed on the ballot. The Elections Committee will consider any exceptions or special appeals.
- l. After a candidate's application packet has been submitted, no person will be allowed to have access to that packet unless:
 - i. That person is the SGA Advisor, the SGA Secretary, or a member of the Elections Committee, or
 - ii. That person obtains written permission from one of the person mentioned in 6a above to access the packet.

VII. Election Eligibility Requirements

- a. Candidates for the Student Government Association shall meet the following requirements:
 - i. Be classified as a student in good standing of the University.
 - ii. Be available to attend Senate and committee meetings during the term of office.
 - iii. Not be on disciplinary probation by the Disciplinary Committee, Dean's probation, or academic probation. This is with the exception for a Graduate student's probation associated with Graduate Record Examination scores.
 - iv. Not occupy more than one (1) seat in Student Government Association at the same time. This includes the provision that no student may be a candidate for multiple offices at the same time.
 - v. Undergraduate students shall have at least an overall 2.25 cumulative grade point average on the 4.0 scale. Graduate students shall have at least an overall 3.0 cumulative grade point average on the 4.0 scale in graduate work.
 - vi. Undergraduate students shall have a minimum course load of nine (9) credit hours and remain enrolled with at least nine (9) hours during the regular semester(s) while in office. Graduate students shall have a minimum course load of six (6) credit hours and remain enrolled with at least six (6) hours during the regular

semester(s) while in office. Both of these provisions are subject to the following exception:

1. Graduate students may be enrolled for a minimum of three (3) credit hours during his or her last semester.
- vii. Uphold and abide by the SGA Bylaws, the Constitution, and all other rules of the Student Government Association during candidacy and while in office.

VIII. Rules Governing Campaigning

- a. No forms of campaign materials may be distributed or posted prior to the mandatory candidate meeting. This includes chalking.
- b. Campaign Functions
 - i. Under no circumstances shall food, beverages (alcoholic or nonalcoholic), or drugs be used in the promotion or fundraising of campaign materials or functions, the campaign itself, or any function related to partisan SGA elections.
 - ii. Any functions held on or off campus to promote the election, a party, and/or candidate must submit a detailed agenda to be approved by the Elections Committee either in writing or by email. The event can be advertised either on campus or by use of social media outlets as approved by the Elections Committee for that election in particular. Exceptions shall include a candidate's opportunities to speak before his/her regularly scheduled classes, which shall be subject to the discretion and approval of the instructor; these shall also include invitations for individual candidates to speak before a University student organization, which must be approved by the organization's president and/or the organization's advisor and must notify the Elections Committee 48 hours before the scheduled event. Any of these instances must submit written documentation to the Elections Committee within forty-eight (48) hours before the speech is scheduled.
- c. Signs/Chalking
 - i. Individual posters, cards, signs or the like may be placed only on bulletin boards. Exceptions may be made by the Elections Committee and other necessary officials as directed by the Elections Committee.
- d. No more than three (3) sign/posters per candidate that is equal to or less than eight and a half inches by eleven inches (8 1/2" x 11") or one (1) sign/poster that is larger than eight and a half by eleven inches but no more than eleven inches by seventeen inches (11" x 17") per bulletin board is permitted. A candidate's name may only appear once per sign/poster.
- e. A party sign/poster and party with named candidates sign/poster cannot be displayed on the same bulletin board. If a party chooses to place either of these kinds of signs/posters to display on a bulletin board, they must choose one. The following further explains the requirements for party and party with named candidates sign/posters:

- i. Only one (1) sign/poster per party no larger than eleven inches by seventeen inches (11" x 17") per bulletin board is permitted. A party sign/poster is defined as having no endorsements or candidate's names on it, but displaying a name or symbol affiliated with a party or ticket.
 - ii. Only one (1) sign/poster per party with named candidates no larger than eleven inches by seventeen inches (11" x 17") per bulletin board is permitted. A party with named candidates sign/poster is defined as having the names of the candidates within the party as well as the name of the party listed on the sign/poster as well.
- f. Placement of campaign material on automobiles located on university parking facilities is prohibited unless approved by the owner of the car.
- g. Chalking of sidewalks is prohibited under covered walkways as well as vertical structures including the Walk of Honor and spheres outside of Dupre Library. Chalking is limited to dry chalk.
- h. The removal of other candidate(s)' or party's campaign materials is prohibited under all circumstances.
- i. Altering another candidate(s)' or party's chalking by any means is prohibited under all circumstances.
- j. Gummed or wettable glue-backed stickers are prohibited from use in Student Government Elections.
- k. Electronic Media
 - i. No sound equipment of any kind is to be used on University property in connection unless approved by the Elections Committee. Campaigning in the library and dining facilities is limited to flyers and one-on-one interaction; projection of one's voice for mass audience is prohibited unless approved as stated in Part 2 of this section.
 - ii. Campaigning announcements on any radio or television station other than the University radio station (KRVS) and campus cable provided is prohibited.
 - iii. Unsolicited mass messaging using cell phones or email accounts is prohibited.
 - iv. Each party or independent candidate shall be allowed to create a Facebook, Twitter, or any other form of social media Page for the purposes of campaigning.
- v. Facebook statuses or endorsements are allowed. Any statuses, messages sent, tags, or mentions that speak against another candidate or party is subject to disciplinary action by the Elections Committee.
- vi. The webpage of any Candidate or Party Page must be closely monitored. If any mention of the opposing parties or candidates is visible, the candidate or party will be subject to disciplinary action by the Elections Committee. If the mention of the other party or candidate is by someone who is not a member of the party, the party or candidate must submit a memo, with photographed proof, to the Elections Committee for notification purposes and delete the post immediately after.

- vii. Campaigning pages can include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Display of candidate or party platform
 - 2. Pictures of candidate(s) running for office
 - 3. Advertisement of SGA election voting dates and times.
 - 4. All discussion/comment functionalities of these items must be disabled. If these functionalities cannot be disabled, the item (s) cannot be used.
- viii. A Page may invite and/or allow people to become members, or fans, of that Page.
- ix. A Page may not reveal itself to public viewing (“go live”) nor invite any Fans other than members of the Elections Committee until the following conditions are met:
 - 1. The candidate/party submits to the Judicial Branch the name of one and only one candidate or supporter who will be the administrator of the Page. This person may not be changed without the expressed approval of the Chief Justice.
- x. The Chief Justice must also be given administrator status on the page. The Chief Justice may, at his/her discretion, give administrator status to other Justices; such administrator Justices shall have all the policing powers of the Chief Justice in regards to that particular page, subject to the final decision of the Chief Justice.
- xi. The Elections Committee shall create an official Facebook group (hereafter, “the Official Group”) in order to disseminate information related to the election.
- xii. The Official Group shall go live no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Monday following the mandatory candidates’ meeting.
- xiii. Official Group membership shall be public; however, only the Justices, who shall be administrators of the group, may post on the group page under any circumstances.
- xiv. The Official Group shall include, at minimum, the following:
 - 1. The time and place of voting.
 - 2. Instructions on how to vote.
 - 3. Concise (less than 500 words) party/independent candidate platforms, and
 - 4. Links to all approved party/independent candidate campaign Pages.
- xv. Campaigning by telephone or in person in the residence halls will be allowed only from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on the Sunday before the election pending the approval of the Department of Student Personnel which must be done through the Elections Committee. If the phone campaigning is approved, candidates will be notified by either telephone or email.
 - 1. Use of aircraft as a means to distribute campaign material or in connection with campaigning is prohibited.

- m. No trailers, trucks, tents, or the like will be permitted on university property for election purposes. Campaign signs are permitted on automobiles with the owner's consent. Automobiles may be used for campaign transportation but not for the transportation of students who are going to vote.
- n. Billboards
 - i. Each candidate will be allowed to place one (1) large sign (billboard no larger than four feet by eight feet [4' x 8']) in designated areas of the campus with the exception of candidates for President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, who will each be allowed to have two (2) signs for each position
 - ii. The Elections Committee will determine the locations where billboards can be placed and the method these locations will be distributed to candidates for use.
 - iii. Names of candidates must appear on their own signs. An individual may allow other names on his/her billboard provided their own name is legible and of a size greater than or equal to the other names.
 - iv. Placement of bulletin boards may begin Sunday at noon the week prior to the start of the election.
 - v. Placement of bulleting boards and distribution of campaign materials will be limited to:
 - 1. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette campus.
 - 2. Land owned or controlled by the University.
 - 3. Land owned, leased, or rented by a University recognized organization and occupied by the organization.
- o. All election campaigning materials not pertaining to the runoff election should be removed within three (3) school days after the election.
- p. Students may not participate in campaigning while in the SGA office or SGA meetings. This includes wearing or distributing any campaign materials.
- q. If the Elections Committee hosts an event to promote student voting, candidates and parties can campaign but are not allowed to project the voice or use any device that does either. These events include, but are not limited to, voting rallies, debates, and roundups.
- r. No university logos, including the SGA logo, are allowed on campaigning materials.
- s. No flyers promoting any one candidate or candidates may be placed in University computer labs. The Elections Committee can place voting flyers on neutral colored paper in University computer labs.
 - i. A University computer lab is any area
- t. If a candidate or party wants to use the University name, brand, registered trademark, or any reference that could be considered a link to the University name, then that must be approved by the Elections Committee.

IX. Election Day

- a. Each voting student must be a valid student in the college in which he/she votes at the time of elections.
 - i. Every student gets one vote and must cast their own vote unless special circumstances that have been deemed appropriate by the Elections Committee are approved. Each student must vote using his/her own UL Lafayette information required in the voting process.
- b. Voting procedures will be governed by requirements of the Elections Committee.
- c. Candidate's names will appear in order of office and in alphabetical order.
- d. Candidates for Big Three and College President seats are to be elected by a majority of participating voters. College Senators are to be elected by plurality vote of participating voters.
 - i. If no candidate running receives a majority vote for President, Vice-President, Treasurer or College President, a run-off election will be held for that office between the two candidates receiving the most votes. ii. In case of a tie, unless one (1) of the candidates in question is willing to concede to the other in writing, a runoff election will be held to determine a winner.
- e. The date any runoff election will be set by the Elections Committee with the approval of the SGA Senate. The date of the runoff shall be no later than fourteen (14) consecutive days after the primary election. If there is another tie, additional runoff elections will be held at the discretion of the Elections Committee with the approval of the SGA Senate.
- f. On Election Day, no distribution of campaign materials will be allowed inside or within twenty feet (20') of any University computer lab, except for wearing campaign attire.
- g. No loitering or verbal campaigning is allowed in the immediate vicinity of the polls.

X. Penalties for Violations

- a. Any violations of these rules or the Code of Student Conduct regarding campaigning should be reported to the Elections Committee as soon as possible. No complaints of illegal or improper campaigning conduct will be accepted after 4:30 p.m. on the concluding day of elections unless there are extenuating circumstances. The committee will announce what method of submitting grievances they will use during the mandatory candidates meeting and must also be posted on the Internet in some public form accessible to all students. This can include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Facebook
 - ii. Twitter
 - iii. ULink
 - iv. UL-Lafayette Student Government Association Webpage
- b. The Judicial Branch has the power to summarily dismiss, without prejudice, any grievance that is frivolous, absurd, dilatory, inconsequential, vexatious, and/or lacking any substantial basis in

evidence. If a grievance is dismissed, the person who filed the grievance will be notified immediately after the decision is made. Repeated grievances of this nature may subject the offending party to a subpoena and/or punishment from the Elections Committee.

- c. The Elections Committee shall meet in a majority of the seats filled to review all complaints in writing that have not been dismissed for reasons stated in Part 2 above. After reviewing all evidence, the Elections Committee shall render their decision.
 - i. The Elections Committee has the power to punish on a case-by-case basis infractions to any rule set forth by the Student Government Association.
- d. The Elections Committee may take into consideration serial grievances and shall issue a punishment and/or disqualification for these grievances.
- e. Any violation of the rules, which is found by the Elections Committee to significantly further the candidate's course, shall be deemed a major offense. All major offenses will be punished by disqualification.
- f. The Elections Committee may subpoena a candidate. The candidate must reply within 24 hours from subpoena and appear before the Elections Committee within 48 hours from subpoena, including weekends unless the Elections Committee decides otherwise. If the candidate fails to meet the time constraints, then the Elections Committee may rule without the candidate's presence and the Elections Committee's penalty will be effective immediately after the deadline for the subpoena.
- g. The Elections Committee is allowed to publicize their meeting schedule during elections. Where and how the committee publicizes their schedule is dependent on what the Elections Committee deems necessary for that election cycle.
- h. Further appeals can be made to the Student Affairs Appeals Court within two (2) business days of the Elections Committee's ruling.

XI. Amendments

- a. A two-thirds vote of the Senate seats filled shall be necessary to amend the Rules Governing Elections.