



ELECTION CODE FOR THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

TITLE I ELECTION RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The Student Government Association shall establish rules and regulations regarding the election of members of the Senate and of the Executive Branch of the Student Government Association of Stephen F. Austin State University.

ARTICLE I. GENERAL ELECTIONS

SECTION 1.

FALL GENERAL ELECTIONS

- A. Elections for class senators will be held during September of each year before Student Government Retreat.

SECTION 2.

SPRING GENERAL ELECTIONS

- A. Elections for Student Body President, Student Body Vice President, Academic College senators, and Off-Campus senate seats will be held in the Spring Semester before the final Board of Regents meeting.
 - a. The date of the Board of Regents meeting shall be determined by the Board itself.

ARTICLE II. QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICE

SECTION 1.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE OFFICE CANDIDATES

- A. The requirements and qualifications for executive officers seeking office are as stated in Article IV, Section 3 of the Student Government Association Constitution.
- B. Any student wishing to have their name appear on the ballot for executive office must have experience within any branch of the Student Government Association and have served in a previous semester and the semester of the current semester of which they are seeking to run.
 - a. Experience in a semester shall be defined as having been in office for greater than half of all of the meetings of the Student Government Association.
- C. Determination of the classification of students seeking office and for voter eligibility will be calculated using the current University guidelines and verified through the office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

SECTION 2.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR SENATORIAL CANDIDATES

- A.** The requirements and qualifications for senatorial candidates are as stated in Article IV, Section 3 of the Student Government Association Constitution.
- B.** Determination of the classification of students seeking office and for voter eligibility will be calculated using the current University guidelines and verified through the office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

ARTICLE III. ELECTION OFFICERS

SECTION 1.

ELECTION JUDGE

- A.** An Election Judge will be given the power and authority to coordinate each election that occurs in the Student Government Association.
- B.** The duties of the Election Judge shall be:
 - a.** Executing the election rules of the Student Government Association as defined in the Election Code pending approval of the Election Commission.
 - b.** Provide the election code to each candidate by detailing the rules, regulations, and possible punitive measures to be applied during the election.
 - c.** Determine the maximum number of seats available for senatorial elections within the Senate as defined by Article V, Section 2 subsection B of the Constitution.
 - d.** Certifying election results with the Dean of Student Affairs and notifying the winning candidates by email.
 - e.** Investigating and initiating penalties against candidates who violate Election Code rules and regulations, pending approval of the Election Commission.

SECTION 2.

ORDER OF SUCCESSION OF THE ELECTION JUDGE

- A.** The Election Judge shall not run for office during their term as Election Judge. If the officer holding the specified office is a candidate in the election, they shall not hold the office of Election Judge which shall be assumed by the next available officer in the order of succession until an available officer is found.
- B.** The order of succession of the Election Judge shall be:
 - a.** Speaker of the Senate.
 - b.** Student Body Vice President.
 - c.** Student Body President.
 - d.** If each of these officers are candidates in the election, the Supreme Court of the Student Government Association shall appoint an Election Judge from within the membership of the Student Government Association.

SECTION 3.

ELECTION COMMISSION

- A.** The Election Commission shall be a three (3) person commission from the membership of the Student Government Association.
- B.** The Election Commission shall work in conjunction with the Election Judge and Dean of Student Affairs during the election process.
 - a.** The Election Commission will assist the Election Judge in their duties and will work to ensure the proper conduction of all elections.
- C.** No member of the Election Commission will be a candidate for election during the semester in which they serve.
- D.** No member of the Election Commission may endorse or assist the candidacy of any student in the election cycle over which they preside.

- a. Any assistance or endorsement of an election candidate will result in their removal from the commission as well as possible punitive measures.

ARTICLE IV. ELECTION OPERATIONS

SECTION 1. REGISTRATION

- A. Each candidate shall be provided:
 - a. A copy of Election Code of the Student Government Association.
 - b. An application for election.
- B. Each candidate must provide at the time of registration:
 - a. A signed form consenting to the rules, regulations, and possible punitive measures regarding said election.
 - b. A completed application for election.
 - c. Failure to provide these documents shall prohibit an individual from being added to the election ballot.
- C. Write-in candidates are subject to the same rules and restrictions as registered candidates.

SECTION 2. BALLOT COMPOSITION

- A. The ballot for Student Government Association election shall be composed no later than a week before the opening of the polls, and shall be composed by the Election Judge with the assistance of the Dean of Student Affairs.
 1. The ballot shall be revised as necessary and shall be made public within three (3) days of Election day.
 2. After the ballot has been composed no candidate shall alter their application except to withdraw from the election.
 - i. Should a Candidate choose to withdraw from any election, they shall promptly notify the Election Judge in writing and shall have their candidacy withdrawn.
- B. All election candidates shall have their placement on the ballot determined by a randomized selection process to be determined at the discretion of the Election Judge and shall be verified by the Dean of Student Affairs.
- C. Any candidate seeking Executive Office shall have the authority to petition the Election Judge to have the name of any Presidential or Vice-Presidential candidate listed as a running mate.
 1. Candidates consenting to any listings must submit their consent and signatures to the Election Judge before the Official Ballot is composed.
 2. Candidate seeking to reverse any listings pertinent to their campaign efforts must submit their consent and signatures to the Election Judge before the ballot is composed.
 - i. The names of any running mates and their desired Offices shall be listed in full and in such a manner as to differentiate them from the candidate officially listed.
- D. The ballot shall be submitted to the technology department of Stephen F. Austin State University for web hosting for the election.
- E. Students may only see the election ballot for the college in which they are apart. This will include the Presidential, Vice-Presidential, college, off-campus, and class senators.

SECTION 3. ANNOUNCEMENT TO RUN

- A. Beginning two (2) weeks or 14 days prior to the campaigning start, election candidates shall declare their intent to run for office. .
- B. This announcement shall only consist of the position for which the candidate is running and the dates of election.

- C. C. Any solicitation for a vote is prohibited until the campaigning period has begun.

SECTION 4. CAMPAIGNING

- A. Campaigning is defined as any solicitation of votes for a specific candidate involved in an election by the candidates or their supporters.
- B. Campaigning shall begin two (2) weeks or 14 days prior to election day.
- C. Any candidate or candidate supporter who knowingly solicits votes before the established starting date shall have a percentage of their total vote removed by the Election Judge verified by the Election Committee and the Dean of Student Affairs.
 - a. The removal shall be defined in Article IV, Section 5, Subsection D, subsection d, line j of the Election Code of the Student Government Association.

SECTION 5. CAMPAIGNING EXPENDITURES

- A. A total spending cap shall be instituted for election candidates.
 - a. Presidential candidates shall have a spending cap of \$500.
 - b. Vice Presidential candidates shall have a spending cap of \$250
 - c. College, Class, and Off-Campus senatorial candidates shall have a spending cap of \$100.
 - d. Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates may combine their spending caps into one fund for the purpose of campaigning together.
- B. Any personal monies or exterior donations spent by the candidate for their campaign shall count towards the spending cap.
 - a. Expenditures made by outside sources that directly or indirectly benefit the candidate will be viewed on a case-by-case basis by the Election Commission.
 - b. The Election Commission shall have the authority to count these expenditures against the cap of the candidate.

SECTION 6. CAMPAIGNING INFRACTIONS

- A. The following actions will result in investigation and punishment by the Election Commission:
 - a. Campaigning within 100 feet of a computer lab.
 - b. Providing an eligible voter with an electronic device for the purpose of casting a ballot.
 - c. Posting campaign material within a residence hall without approval of the residence hall director and/or assistant director(s).
 - d. Posting campaign material within a university building without approval of the proper departments and/or colleges.
 - e. Posting more than one poster in an authorized location.
 - f. Posting any poster that exceeds 14" x 22".
 - g. Breaking state or local laws while campaigning off-campus.
 - h. Failing to adhere to University policies.
 - i. Anything deemed to be nefarious to the election process by the Election Commission.
- B. The Election Judge, with a majority vote of the Election Commission, may issue the following punishments in response to one of the above violations:
 - a. Suspension of the accused candidate's campaign rights for up to 24 hours. During this time, the candidate will not be allowed to publicly campaign on or off campus.
 - i. During this time, all posters and signs for the election candidate shall be removed until the designated time has expired.
 - b. Lowering the cap of the accused candidate's budget.
 - c. Removal of the name of the election candidate from the ballot forcing them to run as a

write-in candidate.

- d. Should the actions by the accused candidate be too great of an infraction to use the above punitive measures, the Election Judge, with a majority vote of the Election Commission and verification of the Dean of Student Affairs, may remove a percentage of the total vote of the election candidates.
 - i. Votes may only be removed in increments of 5% and shall be issued before the final vote verification.

SECTION 7.

VOTING

- A. Each registered student may cast one (1) and only one (1) ballot.
- B. Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates shall be voted upon by the entire student body.
- C. Candidates are to be elected to the positions through votes cast from those persons currently enrolled as students in the college or class which is to be represented.
- D. Partially completed ballots are allowed.
- E. All elections will be conducted in an online format. In this regard, when a student logs in to the election system, their identification is checked against the university's student information system to determine if they are eligible to vote and what ballot they will receive.
- F. Candidates may not make the students vote in front of them with mobile phones or any other device.
- G. Candidates may not physically show the students how to vote on mobile phones or any other device.
- H. No absentee voting will be allowed.

SECTION 8.

RESULTS

- A. Elections for Class, College, and Off-Campus Senators, Student Body President, and Vice-President will be decided by plurality vote.
 - a. Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidate shall be decided by a simple plurality vote.
 - b. Class, College, and Off-Campus senators shall fill the seat based upon a plurality vote. Seats shall be filled in descending order with the candidate with the greatest number of votes filling the seats continuing until all seat are filled or no more election candidates exist.
- B. In the event that there is a less than 5% difference in votes between the top two Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates in the primary election, a run-off election will be held between the aforementioned two candidates.
- C. Each run-off shall be run by the Election Judge and Election Commission of the primary election.
 - a. Write-in candidate's names will appear on the ballot in run-off elections.
 - b. Votes cast for any person other than official run-off candidates shall be disqualified.

SECTION 9.

APPEAL PROCESS

- A. Candidates wishing to appeal the election process shall use the following steps:
 - a. Initial appeal falls to the Election Commission with the initial appeal being made within twenty-four (24) hours of polls closing.
 - b. Should an election candidate appeal the initial decision of the Election Commission, a written appeal shall be given to the Supreme Court of the Student Government Association by the candidate within twenty-four (24) hours.
 - c. The Dean of Student Affairs shall have final jurisdiction of all decisions of the appellate process.
- B. Appeals shall be made only by the election candidate.