

<b>Category:</b>	Elections
<b>Administered by:</b>	Elections Committee
<b>Date Ratified:</b>	January 2023
<b>Next Review:</b>	

## ELECTION POLICY

1. **Scope.** This policy shall apply to all SGA/AGÉ President, Vice President, or Senator positions that are elected by the entire membership as per the Constitution or any other rule of the SGA/AGÉ.
2. **Platform of Election.** The Board of Directors shall decide on which platform elections shall take place. All platforms shall be accessible to all members entitled to vote and shall conform to all rules of the SGA/AGÉ.
3. **Nomination and Notice of Candidacy.** As per Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution the form for notice of candidacy shall be made available at least 21 days prior to election day.
  - 3.1. The form for notice of candidacy shall be administered by the Governance Committee through the Chairperson and at the end of the nomination period as per the election timeline set by this policy, the Chairperson shall present the list of candidates for ratification to the Board of Directors as per Article IV, Section 3 of the Constitution.
4. **Form of Ballot.** All candidates standing for election shall appear in reverse chronological order based on their intention of candidacy.
  - 4.1. **Slates.** All candidates who are members of a slate are entitled to have the name of said slate appear beside their name on the ballot.
5. **Ties.** In the case of an election race resulting in a tie, the winner shall be determined by a coin flip between the two candidates administered by the CRO. The results of the coin flip shall be included in the reports of the CRO and Election Committee.
6. **Election Independence.**
  - 6.1. The views of any candidate during campaigning are separate from those of the SGA/AGÉ and its current officials.
  - 6.2. The SGA/AGÉ and its members are not accountable for any misinformation that

results from a candidate's actions.

- 6.3.** The SGA/AGÉ Board of Directors, Executive, Senators, and staff shall remain neutral throughout the campaigning and election period to ensure equity and fairness.
- 6.3.1.** All current SGA/AGÉ Board Directors, Executive, Senators, and staff shall not endorse any candidate or provide any advantage to candidates due to the position that they hold with the SGA/AGÉ.
- 6.3.1.1.** In the case that any of the prohibited members of the SGA/AGÉ violate section 6.3 or 6.3.1 a motion to suspend their membership shall be referred to the Board of Directors at the next Board meeting.
- 6.3.1.2.** In the case that any staff violate section 6.3, or 6.3.1 they shall be subject to discipline by their direct supervisor.

## **7. The Election Committee.**

- 7.1. Role.** As per, Article VII, Section 2.3 of the Constitution, the role of the Election Committee shall be: *"Section 2.3 Election Committee. The election committee shall hear appeals from candidates, administer disciplinary action as required against candidates or the Chief Returning Officer, and interpret the rules of an election."*
- 7.2. Neutrality.** All members of the Election Committee shall remain neutral during the course of all Elections. No member of the committee shall seek election to a position in an election they oversee. In the case that an immediate-family member is seeking election in an election they oversee, the member of the Committee shall resign.
- 7.2.1. Appeals.** If a candidate legitimately appeals from the decision of the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), the CRO shall forward that appeal to the Elections Committee and the Election Committee shall decide to either sustain the decision of the CRO or not sustain it. A majority vote or a tie sustains the decision of the CRO. In the case that an appeal is sustained or not sustained and a decision by the Election Committee has been made, it shall not be subject to further appeal by any candidates.
- 7.3. Chief Returning Officer.** The CRO shall be invited to all meetings of the Elections Committee, except meetings regarding discipline against the CRO.
- 7.4. Election Report.** The Election Committee shall render a report to the Board of Directors,

in which, the Election Committee shall provide the preliminary election results and a recommendation regarding their ratification by Board. The report of the CRO shall be an appendix to this report.

## 8. The Chief Returning Officer

**8.1. Role and Duties.** The Chief Returning Officer shall be responsible for administering the SGA/AGÉ election, adjudicating election issues, liaising with the elections committee, applying all election penalties to candidates, interpreting the rules of the election, and referring all appeals to the

Elections Committee.

**8.2. Rulings.** The CRO shall be responsible for ruling on all election issues, including all penalties. When a CRO rules on any issue they shall inform the candidate(s) who the ruling applies to and inform the Election Committee as well. All rulings shall be made in writing and shall be kept for future CROs to consult.

**8.3. Appeals.** The CRO shall be responsible for receiving all candidate appeals. In the case that the CRO deems an appeal is meritorious and the CRO believes that there are at least two reasonable interpretations of this policy or a ruling of the CRO, the CRO shall forward that appeal to the Election Committee for a decision within 48 hours.

**8.3.1. Non-appealable decisions.** If the CRO is of the opinion that their ruling is on a question about which there cannot possibly be two reasonable opinions, an appeal would be dilatory and is not allowed.

**8.4. Report.** The CRO, at the conclusion of the election period, shall render a report to the Elections Committee indicating the preliminary election

results, including all candidate infractions, disqualifications, and/or any other irregularities in the election process.

**8.5. Hiring.** The CRO shall be hired by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The Chairperson shall determine the contract of the CRO.

**8.6. Supervisor.** The Election Committee shall supervise the CRO. In the case that the Elections Committee finds by a majority vote that the CRO is derelict in their duties, the Elections Committee shall recommend to the Board of Directors disciplinary actions against the CRO.

**8.7. Training.** The Governance Committee, through the Chairperson shall be responsible for the training of the CRO.

- 8.8. Contact.** The official means for all contact with the CRO shall be by email.
- 8.9. Deputy Chief Returning Officers.** The Board of Directors may appoint additional Deputy Chief Returning Officers if they wish. All Deputy Chief Returning Officers shall report to the CRO and shall assist the CRO in enforcing the Election Policy. The Board shall determine the contract of All Deputy Chief Returning Officers.
- 9. Candidate conduct.** It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that all campaign plans, materials, and/or advertisements conform to all policies and regulations of Laurentian University, the SGA/AGÉ, and with all municipal, provincial, and federal laws.
- 9.1.** Candidates shall not make any statements that are defamatory, libellous, slanderous, or demonstrably untrue.
- 9.2.** Candidates shall not make any statements that are racist or discriminatory in nature.
- 9.3.** Candidates shall not make any statements that defame the SGA, the CRO, or the election process.
- 9.4.** Candidates and campaign volunteers are not entitled to use in their campaign any service or tangible benefits conferred on them by virtue of holding any position in any organization. This includes, but is not limited to, mailing lists, office space, office supplies, equipment, advertising space, and secretarial services.
- 9.5.** Candidates shall be responsible for their campaign volunteers and must ensure that they do not violate any rules of the election as they shall be liable to fines resulting from that behaviour.
- 9.6. Election Obstruction.** Any attempt whatsoever to obstruct election officials, or the voter's right to vote will be treated as election obstruction and will result in disqualification. This includes spreading false information regarding the election, interfering with the balloting process. All instances of election obstruction shall result in disqualification.
- 10. Candidate meetings.**
- 10.1.** Candidates must attend *all* candidate meetings and be on time. Candidates not in attendance *will be penalized* unless prior written notice is given and is accepted by the CRO. Exceptions may be made upon extenuating circumstances approved by the CRO. Candidates are responsible for understanding all content of missed meetings.

**10.2.** Other candidate meetings may be called by the CRO at any time, in which case all candidates will be notified by phone or Laurentian email.

**11. Slates.**

**11.1.** All candidates shall have the right to form a slate of fellow ratified candidates standing for election to other offices, if they wish.

**11.2.** If any candidates elect to form a slate, they shall inform the CRO in writing of their decision to do so. They shall provide the name of each of the member of the Slate and the name of the slate if one exists. Further, all slates have a right to have the name of their slate appear on the ballot next to the name of all members of the slate.

**12. Campaign materials.**

**12.1. Definition.** The definition of campaign material is: "Any media that expresses a preference or opinion for a particular candidate, whether implicitly or implied."

**12.2. Approval.** All campaign materials in each and every unique usage must be approved by the CRO before use or distribution, with no exceptions.

**12.2.1.** If the CRO is not available in-person for approval of campaign materials, the materials are to be left in a dropbox at the SGA/AGÉ office. The CRO will notify candidates when ready for pick up.

**13. Online Campaigning.** The CRO must be provided with a link to all social media accounts and pages that are to be used for campaigning.

**13.1.** All accounts, pages, and posts must be visible to the CRO.

**13.2.** All election material posted on social media by candidates must be done on the accounts and pages provided to the CRO.

**13.3.** Campaigning is limited to existing outlets available through the platforms.

**13.4.** Candidates are responsible for moderating these accounts and pages and must be aware of the following:

**13.4.1.** Any text containing hate speech, slurs, slander, or other content deemed as inappropriate by the CRO will be prohibited.

**13.4.2.** Candidates must endeavor to curb inappropriate actions taken on social media by others by reporting this to the CRO and responding appropriately to deter

continued action of that type.

**13.4.3.** Postings seen as offensive or harmful may require further action which may include but is not limited to:

**13.4.3.1.** Candidate disqualification;

**13.4.3.2.** A report to the University.

**13.5.** All campaign material must not be the intellectual property of any person(s) except the candidate(s). Intellectual property in the public domain shall be allowed.

**13.6.** There will be no email campaigning allowed. This includes campaigning using clubs, class, or department membership lists to reach students. Candidates cannot use Laurentian email databases.

**14. Location of on campus campaign materials.** Laurentian University reserves the right to restrict campaign material usage on campus beyond the rules of the Election Committee or the CRO.

**14.1.** Posters are not to be placed on doors, in stairwells, or on windows in accordance with university fire codes.

**14.2.** Candidates will be held responsible for any damages or clean-up costs incurred as a result of their campaign.

**14.3.** The V-Desk and the SGA/AGE office are off limits for leaving campaign materials and actively campaigning at all times. This includes the inside of the SGA/AGÉ office and any areas on or against the V-Desk.

**14.4.** It is the responsibility of the candidates to remove all posters and campaign materials after the election, and any fallen posters during the campaign and election periods.

**15. Campaign Finances.**

**15.1. Spending limit.** The spending limit established for the SGA/AGÉ General Elections is \$500. Exceeding the \$500 spending limit will result in the disqualification of the candidate. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they do not exceed the spending limit. This limit is in place to ensure equality for all candidates.

**15.2.** All campaign costs incurred are the responsibility of the candidate. The SGA/AGÉ will not reimburse candidates for any campaign spending. Candidates are not required to spend money for their campaign.

**15.3.** All campaign costs that are in-kind shall be given a fair market value by the CRO.

**15.4.** Candidates must submit a financial report to the CRO by 4:00 PM the date of the closing of the polls.

**15.4.1.** All financial reports shall include:

a) all monetary contributions to the campaign (including candidates contributing to themselves);

b) itemized invoices/receipts from all campaign purchases;

c) a declaration of all in-kind contributions;

d) a declaration of all cost sharing incurred due to slate splitting costs.

**15.4.1.1.** Failure to submit a financial report will result in the disqualification of the candidate. If a candidate is found to have withheld campaign expenses or submitted a falsified financial report, they will be disqualified.

**15.5. Slates.** If two or more candidates slate, they may share the cost of producing campaign materials; the full costs of the campaign materials will be applied to each candidate's campaign budget.

## **16. Election Timeline**

**16.1.** The elections for the President and Vice-President positions shall be held in the month of February as outlined in Article IV, section 4 of the SGA/AGE Constitution.

**16.2.** The CRO shall have the responsibility to ensure the following events happen on a timely manner as outlined in the article 4 of the SGA/AGE Constitution:

**16.2.1. Notice of Candidacy:** The form for notice of candidacy shall be made available to the membership of the SGA/AGÉ at least twenty one (21) days prior to the day of the election.

**16.2.2. Ratification of Candidates:** The Board of directors shall ratify all candidates. The ratification or denial of ratification of candidates shall occur at least one (1) week prior to the date of the commencement of the campaigning period for each election.

**16.2.3. Time of election or Selection:** The voting period shall be no shorter than twenty four (24) hours in length and no longer than ninety six (96) hours in length.

**16.2.4.** The CRO shall submit a report on the result of the elections to the Elections Committee

as soon as the information is available to them and no later than 2 business days after the elections close except for extenuating circumstances.

- 16.3.** The results of the election of the candidates shall be ratified by the Board of Directors at the next regular board meeting after election or at the same meeting in which they are selected.
- 16.4.** The Chairperson of the Board shall inform the entire membership of the election results no later than 3:00pm on the day after the meeting in which the results were ratified.
- 17. Candidate eligibility.** Candidates may only nominate themselves for one position. Candidates cannot run for two separate positions simultaneously.

  - 17.1.** Any member who is an employee of the SGA/AGÉ shall be deemed ineligible to be a candidate unless they take a paid leave of absence from their duties beginning from their declaration of interest in being a candidate until the completion of the entire election. If an employee withdraws from the race or is not ratified by the Board of Directors they are able to resume their job.
  - 17.2.** An employee shall indicate to their supervisor that they are indicating their intention to run in an election. Upon indication, they shall be put on a paid leave of absence.

    - 17.2.1.** Any member of the Executive Committee who must take a leave shall not be included in any official action for the period of the leave of absence.
    - 17.2.2. Transfer of Signing Authority.** In the case of a signing authority of the SGA being on a leave of absence during an election due to the provisions of this policy, the signing officers of the SGA/AGE shall serve as signing authorities for any time sensitive matters.
    - 17.2.3. Transfer of Executive Authority.** In the case that a majority of the Executive Committee is seeking election and therefore on a leave of absence, the Governance Committee shall assume all of the powers and responsibilities of the Executive Committee for the duration of the leave of absence. Upon the commencement of this period, the Chair of the Governance Committee shall send a memorandum to all employees who report to the Executive Committee informing them of the transfer of Executive Authority. In this period, the Governance Committee shall not make substantive changes in operations unless absolutely necessary.
- 18. Fines.** All fines shall be deducted from the spending limit of campaigns. In the case that a fine results in a campaign being over their revised spending limit, they



shall be automatically disqualified.

**18.1.** The following shall be the fine structure for the election:

<b>INFRACTIONS</b>			<b>FINES</b>
Campaign materials not approved (1)			<b>\$10.00</b>
Campaign materials not approved (2)		Missed candidates' meeting (1)	<b>\$25.00</b>
Campaign materials not approved (3)			<b>\$50.00</b>
	Violating candidate conduct (1)		<b>\$100.00</b>
Campaign materials not approved (4)	Violating candidate conduct (2)	Missed candidates' meeting (2)	<b>Disqualification</b>