ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGN PROCEDURES

Please note:

All candidates for Student Senate elected offices are responsible for the knowledge of and observance of all official Student Senate Election and Campaign Procedures as given to the prospective candidate at the time the petition is taken out, as well as all other university policies.

Ignorance of these procedures shall at no time be considered a valid defense for failure to at all times during a campaign and election process properly observe these procedures.

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of these policies is to ensure that all candidates for Student Senate elected offices have a fair and equal opportunity in attaining an elected position. These policies may also be used as a guideline in resolving any conflicts in the election process.

CANDIDATE LIVING STATUS:

Each candidate shall run for either an on- or off-campus position corresponding to the community in which he/she will reside during the following semester. Proof of on- or off-campus residence must be provided upon request.

CREDIT AND GRADE POINT CRITERIA:

Any candidates for office shall maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 and be officially enrolled in at least six credit hours at the university at the time of election and must thereafter maintain a minimum official enrollment, exclusive of summer and winter sessions, of six credit hours while in office.

PETITION FOR OFFICE:

Petitions are to be given out by the Student Senate Program Assistant, Student Body President and Vice-President if they are not running for office, Elections committee members and office assistants who are not running for office.

The completed petition must be returned to the Student Senate Program Assistant. Once the petition is returned to the Student Senate office, the student will become an official candidate providing that the student meets the credit and grade point criteria stated above.

Students participating in an off-campus program (including but not limited to, Study Abroad and National Student Exchange) during elections may run for office if they will return in the following semester. They must provide evidence that they are participating in an off-campus program sponsored by UW-Eau Claire (a letter or email from the Center for International Education or the appropriate educational department will suffice). They must also contact the Student Senate Program Assistant to get information on the procedure for running for office from off-campus (“abroad”). In these cases, petitions may be filed electronically using a method determined by the Elections Committee, in consultation with Learning and Technology Services. If
elected, absences at meetings while “abroad” are excused.

A student may campaign and file a petition for both a Student Senator position and an executive ticket. An executive ticket will consist of a Presidential and Vice Presidential candidate and will require only one petition.

A student winning both an executive and senatorial position must resign their senatorial position at the same meeting they are appointed to the executive position.

CAMPAIGNING:

Campaigning will be defined as any activity, either written or spoken, that is designed to influence students to vote for a prospective or official candidate or a referendum question on the ballot.

**CAMPAIGNING SHALL NOT BEGIN UNTIL AFTER THE COMPLETED PETITION FOR OFFICE IS RETURNED.**

The Student Senate office shall not be used for ANY campaigning or storage of campaign material. This also includes materials related to a referendum question on the ballot. The signing of petitions may occur in the Student Senate office.

Campaigning shall strictly adhere to the Student Senate Election and Campaign Procedures given to the prospective candidate at the time the petition is taken out, as well as university policies.

A candidate shall at no time interfere with another candidate’s right to legally campaign; this includes the removal of another candidate’s properly-displayed campaign material.

During the election period, no personal campaigning shall be allowed inside any classroom space or University computer lab (including walk-up computer labs), or otherwise within twenty feet of a fixed University computer station.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS:

All candidates shall be given copies of the poster and solicitation regulations of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Candidates shall be held responsible for that information.

*IMPORTANT. All candidates must submit one copy of each poster, yard sign, table tent, and leaflet for approval to the Program Assistant. Bridge signs, buttons, stickers, and t-shirts do not need to be approved. If any of the above named campaign materials are displayed before approval by the senate program assistant, the candidate will be asked to remove all materials until approval is received. Anything submitted for approval that contains inappropriate material as determined by the senate program assistant, will not be valid for display

Students may display material on their own property, such as residence hall doors or the side of one’s house. These materials do not need to be approved by the Chair of the Elections Committee, unless produced or distributed by a campaign.
All campaign materials not meeting these requirements may be removed, documented, and destroyed by any member of the Elections Committee if they are discovered.

Candidates cannot use the Student Senate bulletin board located on the second floor hallway of Davies Center at any time.

No campaign materials may be placed in university computer labs or inside any classroom space, in accordance with LTS policies.

**The Student Senate area is off-limits for any campaigning or visible storage of campaigning materials.**

**Residence Halls:**

No candidate or student may go door to door in the residence halls to campaign and/or solicit votes and/or hand out promotional materials in accordance with current residence hall policies. Posters placed in the residence halls must be approved by the Hall Director, excluding those placed on personal property (doors).

**Posters:**

Candidates may begin to display posters immediately following the return of the completed petition.

All posters put up in the residence halls must have the Hall Director's approval, excluding those posted on personal property (doors).

It is illegal to put posters up in the stairwells of campus buildings. They will be taken down by anyone if they are discovered.

There shall be NO posters/signs taped to the sidewalk.

The candidate must remove the posters by the Thursday following the completion of the election; otherwise, the candidate could be monetarily charged for their removal.

**Web Presence:**

The creation of personal Web sites and Web presences is permitted. In addition, if the Student Senate Web site or Web presences are used to promote the general election and basic information on all the candidates, equal access and equal opportunity must be available to all of the candidates. Linking to other Web sites from the Student Senate Web site or Web presences is allowable as long as the candidate(s) do not use the University seal, Student Senate logo or any other copyrighted materials without explicit permission.

**E-Mail:**

A candidate or candidates may use e-mail, but they may not use any electronically created university administrative lists for campaign purposes or in any other way that violates the university’s policy regarding the use of e-mail. Anyone that sends a list on behalf of a candidate is responsible for following this policy including faculty, administration, and any student. In addition, the candidate is responsible for informing anyone who sends an email for them of the email policy. The use of organizations lists is, however, acceptable.
Yard Signs: Yard signs may be displayed beginning the Monday before the election. The yard signs can be put up after 7:00 a.m. and must come down by 7:00 p.m. Out of courtesy to other candidates it is suggested that signs be put at least 6 feet from other candidate signs.

Banners in Davies: Candidates can hang banners on the railing of the Davies Staircase. Banners can be displayed April 16 – 18, and will need be approved by the Senate Program Assistant before they can be displayed. Space is limited, we will allow for the president/vice president candidates to display their banners for the three days, I will provide a sign up sheet for senator candidates and will have a rotation schedule for their banners if needed.

ROOM USAGE: Rooms may not be reserved in Davies Center in Student Senate’s name, by individual candidates, or by Presidential tickets for campaign use.

WRITE-IN CANDIDATES: Write-in candidates shall be responsible to know and adhere to all election and campaign rules.

NAME ORDER ON BALLOTS: If paper ballots are used, selection for ballot positions will be at approximately 1:30 p.m. on the date petitions are due. Names will be ordered at random by the Student Senate Advisor. Candidates, or personal representatives, are welcome to be on hand at the time this process is performed. The polling program will automatically randomize the name order.

Candidates for an executive ticket shall be placed distinctly together on the ballot by ticket.

Ample opportunity for casting write in ballots shall be provided on the ballot, whether paper or online.

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE: An Elections Committee of at least four members will be appointed in the Spring Semester. The Parliamentarian will chair the committee. The Senate shall appoint other members. **No member of the committee shall be involved in a referendum or active in a campaign.**

The definition of “Involvement in a referendum” shall include, but not be limited to, being an author in the writing of the bill placing the referendum on the ballot, creating or assisting in the creation or the distribution of referendum literature either for or against, and actively campaigning for or against a referendum. In election years with a United Council referendum, delegation members cannot serve on the Elections Committee in any position. Representatives from United Council must be aware and follow all applicable election laws. All promotional materials created for a referendum must follow applicable election laws and university policies.

The definition of “active in a campaign” shall include, but not be limited
to, attending campaign meetings, creating or assisting in the creation or the distribution of campaign materials, or actively campaigning for or against a candidate or candidates.

The Elections Committee shall be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the elections process: including, but not limited to, investigating any grievances and making Reports and Recommendations regarding those grievances and counting and verification of ballots. The committee will also be responsible with producing non-partisan advertisements including the location and dates of the elections.

**VOTING:**

Currently enrolled students at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire are eligible to vote once for representatives running for seats on Student Senate. Students shall be able to cast a cumulative ballot, casting up to nineteen votes for off-campus senators and up to eleven votes for on-campus senator positions. Students will only be allowed to vote for one Presidential ticket.

Polling will take place via online ballots only.

The program employed for polling shall insure privacy for all voters. It will not allow students to vote more than once. Responsibility for set-up and configuration of the polling program shall be primarily that of the Chair of the Elections Committee. Only the Chair of the Elections Committee, the Student Senate Program Assistant and the Student Senate Advisor will have access to the online ballot.

The election will be held on the first three days of the second or third week of April, as mandated by Article 3, Section 1(D) of the Student Body Constitution. An email will be sent to all students at 8 a.m. the morning elections begin. The online ballot will be closed at 5:00 p.m. on the third day of voting.

No persons besides current members of the Elections Committee or those they deputize, whom are not running for election or campaigning for a candidate or referendum question, shall administer (a) polling/voting place(s). It is at the discretion of the Elections Committee each year whether to operate (a) polling/voting place(s) in order to provide access to voting for students who don’t otherwise have access to a computer, laptop, or other electronic mobile device for voting. If (a) polling/voting place(s) is set up it is up to the Elections Committee to determine how long and what days it will operate, but must be available at least one day of the election period from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The polling/voting place(s) will be set up on the first floor of Davies Student Center by the Service Desk. There must be at least two (2) poll workers present. Necessary technology will be provided in enclosed voting booths to ensure privacy when voting. When voting booths are being operated, no campaigning will be allowed within fifty (50) feet of the Davies Student Center.

The candidate with the most votes for an open seat will be declared the winner.
All votes shall be taken by secret ballot. The student must agree to a disclaimer in the online voting program stating they are voting by secret ballot before proceeding to the voting ballot.

**BALLOTS:**

The Student Senate Program Assistant shall publish a list of all candidates, referenda, initiatives, and recall questions placed on the Student Senate election ballot and will post the list in a public manner one week prior to the start of each election.

The daily tabulated elections results shall only be known by the Program Assistant, the Elections Committee Chair, and the Student Senate Advisor until the polls are closed on the last day of elections at which point the members of the Elections Committee will be notified of the results.

A copy of the results must be kept until the next Student Senate election.

If there is an administrative issue with voting while the polls are open or supposed to be open, the administration of the ballot, in conjunction with the Elections Committee, shall be solely designated to resolve the situation.

**BIOGRAPHIES:**

Candidates for President and Vice President receive the opportunity to submit a biography that will be placed on the online ballot. This needs to by the Monday before the election. The online form will be sent via email to the candidate. Biographies will appear on a previous page during the voting process before the students are able to make their official vote(s). However, these biographies will not be present on the same page of the official online ballot.

The biographies will contain four different questions.
1. “What are your past experiences?”
2. “What inspired you to run for (position)?”
3. “What are your future goals for Student Senate?”
4. “How do you plan on representing your constituents?”

The answers for each question on the biography may not exceed 40 words. Candidates who do not submit a biography on time will not receive the opportunity to have a biography present on the sample or online ballot. Before biographies are posted, the election committee will review content for factual and relevant information. If candidates provide false information or personal attacks in their biographies, their biography will not be displayed.

Senator Candidates will also have the opportunity to submit a picture and a profile to be displayed on the online ballot. The picture and profile must be submitted by the Monday before the election. As with the President/Vice President bio’s they will not be present on the actual page as the official online ballot.
NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS:

Upon finalization, the results must be posted outside of the Student Senate office and must include the vote totals for all candidates appearing on the ballot and all write-in candidates. Recounts may only take place within one week of the exact time the polls closed for the election. After any recounts are completed, election winners may take office, excluding the President and Vice President who take office the third meeting after the general elections according to Article III, Section 2, Paragraph C of the Student Body Constitution.

Since elected senators take office the Monday following elections, it shall be the responsibility of all candidates to become informed of the results of the election before that time.

The Elections Committee Chair will certify the results of the election and shall ensure that the results of the election are posted as soon as possible, but no sooner than the closing of the polls.

CAMPAIGN VIOLATIONS:

Campaign violations shall be defined as any activity committed by or given prior approval by a candidate contrary to the Election and Campaign Procedures, which are given to prospective candidate at the time a petition is taken out for an elected Student Senate position, as well as any and all university policies. Write-in candidates shall be responsible to know and adhere to all election and campaign rules.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND PENALTIES:

All complaints concerning elections and violations of the Election and Campaign Procedures or campus shall be submitted in writing to the Student Senate Program Assistant no later than three school days after the alleged violation. **It is up to the discretion of the Senate Program Assistant to determine if the complaint violates election and campaign procedures.** The senate program assistant will discuss the complaint with the candidate in question, if the alleged violation cannot be remedied, the Elections Committee will investigate the written complaint and submit a written, signed recommendation and report to the Senate regarding the alleged violation or complaint. Complaints must include a description of the evidence, or the names of witnesses of the alleged violation. All violations shall be submitted in writing on the official Election-Campaign-Violation form approved by the Student Senate. The Elections Committee will not act on a verbal complaint. The Elections Committee will investigate all written complaints and submit a written, signed recommendation and report to the Senate regarding the alleged violation or complaint.

Any accused candidate will be given a copy of the written complaint prior to a hearing before the Elections Committee.

The Report and Recommendations of the Elections Committee will be open to the public. Members of the Elections Committee may not publicly discuss any grievances before the Report and

Recommendations regarding the grievance has been submitted to the Senate.
The Report and Recommendations of the Elections Committee must state the belief of the Elections Committee regarding the validity of the complaint and its status as a campaign violation. The Elections Committee may recommend:

A. Dropping the case.
B. Holding a formal hearing by the Executive Board.

Following the recommendation of the Elections Committee, the Senate shall consider the report and recommendations.

Following a formal and public hearing, the Senate may, if it votes to, take the following actions:

A. Make the student ineligible for commission membership for a certain time period.
B. Make the student ineligible to run for any elected Student Senate position for a certain time period.
C. Make the student ineligible to hold an executive position (including Executive Board) for a certain time period.
D. May request the University Investigating to require restitution for damages under Chapter 17 of the University of Wisconsin Administrative Code.
E. Recommend a formal meeting with the President and Vice President regarding the alleged violation.
F. Make a motion for the removal of the person from Student Senate office.
G. Write a resolution regarding the alleged violation.
H. Any other disciplinary action approved by the Senate.

The Elections Committee and the Student Senate may not penalize an executive or senatorial candidate with the subtraction of votes.

If the Student Senate, by its own motion, votes to hear the appeal, this shall stop the action taken of the Executive Board.

If the Elections Committee or entire Student Senate finds the alleged violator innocent of a campaign violation, the matter should be immediately dropped.

All grievances and the Reports and Recommendations of the Elections Committee should be kept for a five-year period to aid the Elections and Campaign Procedures Review Committee.

**EXPENSES AND SPENDING:**

Both members of an Executive ticket and senatorial candidates must submit expense reports.

All receipts for campaign expenses must be attached to the submitted expense report. These expense reports shall be kept until the final date of the next Student Senate election and then they may be destroyed. Failure to submit the completed expense report within the one-week time limit will constitute a campaign violation and be treated as such by the Elections Committee.

A presidential ticket may not exceed $1,500 in spending for an election
unless all presidential tickets agree to waive the cap. The presidential ticket(s) who wish to exceed the cap must make their request to the elections committee by the same day that the presidential candidate petitions are due. The place and manner in which the separate presidential tickets shall vote whether to exceed the cap is up to the discretion of the elections committee. A senator may not exceed $500 in spending for an election. Failing to stay below these limits will constitute a campaign violation and be treated as such by the Elections Committee.