

Carnegie Mellon University Student Government Election Rules

Article 1. Purpose and Scope.

- A.** The purpose of these rules is to establish structures and operating procedures for the Elections Board, which is a Standing Committee of Student Government established in the Carnegie Mellon University *Student Body Constitution*.
 - 1.** The purpose of the Elections Board is to oversee annual Student Government Executive and Student Senate elections.
 - a.** The Student Government Executive election is a student body election held each year to select a Student Body President, a Student Body Vice President for Finance, and a Student Body Vice President for Organizations. Additionally, a Student Body Vice President may be elected alongside the Student Body President.
 - b.** The Student Senate election is an undergraduate student body election held each year to allow undergraduates to select their representatives in Student Senate.
 - i.** The number of Student Senate seats available in each college is established by the Carnegie Mellon University *Student Senate Bylaws*.
- B.** When there is a contradiction between these rules and the Carnegie Mellon University *Student Body Constitution*, the *Student Body Constitution* shall supersede these rules.
- C.** When there is a contradiction between these rules and the Carnegie Mellon University *Student Senate Bylaws* or *Graduate Student Assembly Bylaws*, these rules shall supersede those bylaws.

Article II. Terms & Definitions

- A.** *Activities Fee money* refers to the funds that are collected and placed under the control of Student Government by the Carnegie Mellon University Board of Trustees.
- B.** An *announcement* is, at bare minimum, a posting on the Student Government website.
- C.** *Campaign material* is any poster, web page, e-mail document, pamphlet, auditory or visual recording, or other device that is intended to influence voting in a student body election.
- D.** Using campaign material for *campaign purposes* is using campaign material to influence voting for or against one (1) or more candidate(s) in a student body election.
- E.** A *candidate for office* is any person seeking office in student government through a student body election.
- F.** A *candidate platform* is a statement from a candidate or candidates describing that candidate's position(s) regarding issues relevant to a student body election.

- G. *Notification* of a group of students is satisfied by either an e-mail sent to all individuals in that group, or a verbal announcement at a regular meeting of that group, provided minutes of that meeting are recorded and distributed.
- H. A *polling location* is the area within thirty (30) feet of an official voting location designated by the Elections Board while the election is progress, and containing a ballot box.
- I. *Ratification* of election results is a majority vote in favor of a motion to approve the results of that election, as reported by the Elections Board.
- J. The *student body* refers to the collection of students enrolled in undergraduate or graduate academic programs at Carnegie Mellon University's Pittsburgh campus.
- K. The *student body abroad* refers to the collection of students from Carnegie Mellon University's Pittsburgh Campus who are currently studying abroad.
- L. A *student body election* is any voting procedure run by the Elections Board and made available to members of the undergraduate and/or graduate student body, as defined in the Carnegie Mellon University *Student Body Constitution*.

Article III. Structure & Duties of the Elections Board.

- A. The Elections Board shall be established as specified in the Carnegie Mellon University *Student Body Constitution* and shall consist of a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of eight (8) voting members of the student body.
- B. As described in the Carnegie Mellon University *Student Body Constitution*, new members may be appointed to fill vacancies on the Elections Board by way of a majority vote of approval at a meeting of the Elections Board, provided there are at least six (6) seated members of the Elections Board, and provided Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly are notified of this appointment within one (1) week of the appointment.
 - 1. If there are fewer than five (5) seated members of the Elections Board at a time, vacancies may be filled by joint appointments by the Elections Board Chair and the Student Body President, provided Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly are notified of this appointment within one (1) week of the appointment.
- C. The members of the Elections Board shall select their own Chair by way of a majority vote at the first meeting of the Elections Board.
 - 1. The Elections Board Chief Technical Officer may not serve as Chair of the Elections Board.
 - 2. The Elections Board may remove their Chair from office by way of a three-fourths (3/4) supermajority vote from the members of the Elections Board.
 - 3. The Chair may resign from office by notifying the Board, via e-mail, of his or her resignation from the office.
 - 4. In the case of the removal or resignation of the Elections Board Chair from office, the Elections Board shall select a new Chair from their membership by way of a

majority vote at the next regular meeting of the Elections Board following that removal or resignation.

D. General Duties of Members of the Elections Board:

1. Attend Elections Board meetings;
2. Coordinate to publicize the Student Body Election;
3. Coordinate to run the Student Body Election;
4. Participate in the process of validating petitions;
5. Participate in the process of determining the results of the Student Body Election.
6. Set the elections percentage minimums prior to each election cycle.

E. Duties of the Elections Board Chair:

1. Schedule and chair meetings of the Elections Board;
2. Provide written updates to the Student Government Executive Committee regarding the work of the Elections Board;
 - a. Updates must be sent to the Executive Committee at least once every two (2) weeks beginning at the time the Elections Board is first convened, and continuing until the conclusion of the election procedure.
3. Present, or designate a representative to present, updates at every other regular meeting of Student Senate and every regular meeting of the Graduate Student Assembly, beginning at the time the Elections Board is first convened, and continuing until the conclusion of the election procedure;
4. Ensure that the election procedure adheres to these rules;
5. Educate candidates regarding the portions of these rules that apply to them.
6. Sit on the Student Government Student Leadership Council, from the time of election as Chair until the end of the Spring semester.

F. Duties of the Elections Board Chief Technical Officer:

1. Maintain a secure Elections website which includes:
 - a. a secure online voting application;
 - b. a secure and up-to-date voter verification database containing data provided by Carnegie Mellon University Enrollment Services;
 - c. links to candidate platforms;
 - d. a link to a copy of these rules;
 - e. directions for any candidate or voter to report problems encountered with the voting process.
2. If the Chief Technical Officer is not also the Student Government Application Engineer, then the Chief Technical Officer must ensure that the Application Engineer does not have access to the Elections application, and that the Application Engineer has not disturbed the integrity of the Elections application. Further, the Chief Technical Officer must remove the Application Engineer's access to the server containing the Elections application for the duration of the election, and for one (1) week preceding the election.

Article IV. Meetings

- A.** The Student Body President shall convene the Elections Board for their first meeting.
- B.** Once elected, the Elections Board Chair shall schedule and chair all Elections Board meetings.
- C.** Quorum for Elections Board meetings is a majority of the members of the Elections Board.
- D.** At the first meeting of the Elections Board, the following business must be conducted:
 - 1.** Overview the role of the Elections Board;
 - 2.** Select a Chair for the Elections Board;
 - 3.** Set the date of the next meeting of the Elections Board;
 - 4.** Establish the timeline for the Student Body Election, as governed by these rules.

Article V. The Student Body Election Procedure.

- A.** There are twelve (12) components to the running of the Student Body Election:
 - 1.** Convening the Elections Board;
 - 2.** Announcing the Student Body Elections timeline;
 - 3.** Candidate eligibility;
 - 4.** Petition Validation period;
 - 5.** Petition Re-submission deadline;
 - 6.** Campaigning;
 - 7.** Voter eligibility;
 - 8.** The Election;
 - 9.** Counting the votes;
 - 10.** Ratification meeting;
 - 11.** First failed ratification contingency plan;
 - 12.** Second failed ratification contingency plan.
- B.** General Timeline:
 - 1.** The Elections Board shall be convened by the end of the second full week of the Spring Semester.
 - 2.** The Elections Board shall announce the dates of the Petition Validation period, the election, and the Student Senate and Graduate Student Assembly ratification meeting no later than the end of the third week of the spring semester.
 - 3.** The Election shall begin:
 - a.** at least thirty (30) days after the Elections Board first announces the date of the election;
 - b.** at least twenty-one (21) days after the end of the Petition Validation period;
 - c.** at most seven (7) days before the ratification meeting.
 - 4.** The Election shall run for no more than one-hundred and twenty (120) hours

5. The Elections Board shall count the votes received by each candidate in an election within twenty-four (24) hours of the close of the student body election.
6. The ratification meeting shall be scheduled no later than April 14th of the year during which the election is held.

C. Candidate Eligibility:

1. Only members of the student body are eligible to run for the office of Student Body President, Student Body Vice President, Student Body Vice President for Finance, or Student Body Vice President for Organizations.
 - a. Only members of the student body eligible to hold the office for which they wish to be elected, as defined by the *Student Body Constitution*, may run for said office.
 - b. Only students who have served at least one term as a member of a Student Government financial committee and/or have as served at least one term on the Joint Funding Committee, may run for the office of Student Body Vice President for Finance
 - c. Only students who have served at least one term as a student leader and/or have served at least one term on the Committee on Student Organizations and/or have served at least one term on the University Center Allocations Board, may run for the office of Student Body Vice President for Organizations
2. Only undergraduate students who are members of the student body are eligible to run for a position in Student Senate.
3. Only students who are officially registered in the college they wish to represent are eligible to run for a Student Senate seat representing that college.
 - a. If the Elections Board determines that an undergraduate student is likely to transfer to the colleges s/he wishes to represent, by the start of the following academic year, then this requirement for candidate eligibility may be waived – by way of a majority vote from the Elections Board.
 - b. If the Elections Board determines that an undergraduate student is enrolled in a dual degree which includes the college they wish to represent, which their official registration does not list in its entirety, then this requirement for candidate eligibility may be waived – by way of a majority vote from the Elections Board.
4. Only members of the student body who have submitted a valid petition to the Elections Board by the petition deadline will appear on the ballot for the relevant position.
 - a. Candidates for Student Body President may appoint a Vice President running mate who is a member of the student body. Running mates shall be listed together, as one entry, on the ballot.

D. Petition Validation Period and Petition Re-Submission:

- 1.** To be listed on the election ballot as a candidate for the office of Student Body President, Student Body Vice President for Finance, or Student Body Vice President for Organizations, an individual must submit a petition containing the names, signatures and AndrewIDs of at least one hundred (100) members of the student body, twenty (20) of which need to be undergraduate students and twenty (20) of which need to be graduate students. This petition may be submitted online through the Elections website.
- 2.** To be listed on the election ballot as a candidate for Student Senate, an individual must submit a petition containing the names, signatures and AndrewIDs of at least twenty-five (25) members of the student body who belong to the college the individual intends to represent. This petition may be submitted online through the Elections website.
- 3.** The Elections Board is responsible for validating all submitted petitions within two (2) business days of their submission.
 - a.** A petition is valid if it contains the required number of names, signatures and AndrewIDs from the required type of student.
 - b.** If a petition is deemed valid and the individual who submitted the petition is eligible to run for the office the petition indicates s/he wishes to fill, the Elections Board must notify the individual who submitted the petition:
 - i.** that s/he is a candidate for the upcoming election;
 - ii.** of the date of the election and ratification meeting;
 - iii.** of all campaigning regulations contained in these rules.
 - c.** If the individual who submitted the petition is not eligible to run for the office the petition indicates s/he wishes to fill, the Elections Board must notify that individual that s/he is not eligible to run for the office the petition indicates s/he wishes to fill.
 - d.** If a petition is deemed invalid, the Elections Board must notify the individual who submitted the petition:
 - i.** that the submitted petition is invalid, and that s/he is not yet a candidate for the upcoming election;
 - ii.** the number of valid names, signatures and AndrewIDs s/he must provide in order to supplement her or his petition and become a candidate in the upcoming election;
 - iii.** the deadline and method for submitting the supplementary names, signatures and Andrew IDs.
 - e.** Petitions submitted by the petition deadline but deemed invalid by the Elections Board after the deadline for petition submission has passed may be re-submitted within thirty-six (36) hours of the Election Board's notification of such petitions as invalid.

- i.** Any petition deemed invalid after this thirty-six (36) hour period has passed may not be re-submitted.
- f.** The Elections Board's decision regarding the validity of any submitted petition is final.

E. Campaigning:

- 1.** Candidates for office are responsible for familiarizing themselves with and following all relevant Carnegie Mellon University and Student Government policies.
- 2.** Candidates may not begin campaigning until the beginning of the semester during which the election is held.
- 3.** No campaigning may take place at any polling location during polling hours on the election days, nor may any campaign material be present at a polling location during polling hours.
 - a.** This shall exclude candidate platforms received and approved by the Elections Board at least one (1) week prior to the Student Government Executive and Student Senate elections.
- 4.** No painting of the fence is permitted for campaign purposes.
- 5.** Libelous or slanderous campaigning is not permitted.
- 6.** No Activities Fee money shall be used for campaigning purposes, unless that money has been designated to candidates by the Elections Board.
 - a.** This shall exclude the Elections Board reproducing candidate platforms approved by the Elections Board.
- 7.** No candidate for any office may spend in excess of five-hundred (500) American dollars for campaign purposes.
 - a.** No person may bribe, give, or lend anything of over twenty-five (25) American dollars in value in order to induce a person to vote or refrain from voting, or to vote for or against a candidate or referendum.
 - b.** The fair market value of any items donated to the candidate's campaign or provided at a discounted rate unavailable to other candidates for the same position shall count towards this total.
 - c.** Candidates must submit all receipts of purchases and documentation of the fair market value of any donated items within two (2) business days of any purchase or donation.
- 8.** No person may personally or through an agent intimidate, harass, use or threaten the use of force, violence, persistent or undesired presence of campaign members in proximity to voters, or restraint in order to compel or induce any person to vote, abstain from voting, or vote or abstain from voting for a particular candidate or referendum.

9. Violations of these rules may result in penalties, cumulatively applied, of up to ten (10) percent of votes received for each of the above classifications of violation (Article V.E 1-8), at the discretion of the Elections Board.

- a. Violations of these rules shall be identified through first-hand accounts from individuals against whom the violation was committed. Such accounts shall be received by members of the Elections Board only.

F. Voter Eligibility:

1. Only members of the student body and members of the student body abroad are eligible to vote in the election of Student Body President, Student Body Vice President, Student Body Vice President for Finance, and Student Body Vice President for Organizations.
 - a. Eligible voters may cast a maximum of one (1) vote for each office.
2. Only undergraduate students who are members of the student body or the student body abroad are eligible to vote in the election of members of Student Senate.
 - a. An undergraduate student is only permitted to vote for Student Senators representing the college to which that student belongs.
 - b. Eligible voters may cast a maximum of one (1) vote for each Student Senate seat in their college, as established in the Carnegie Mellon University *Student Senate Bylaws*.

G. The Election:

1. The Elections Board is responsible for advertising the Student Body Election to the student body, implementing and overseeing all balloting procedures, and presenting the results of the election to Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly at the ratification meeting.
2. In addition to the online voting application maintained by the Elections Board Chief Technical Officer, the Elections Board must also provide timely opportunities for voters to report problems voting, and to cast paper ballots.
3. Write-in candidates are permitted, but they may only be included in the final vote count if they meet the requirements for candidate eligibility described above.
 - a. Locations where paper ballots are accepted must be staffed by two (2) members of the Elections Board, and may not be staffed by anyone who is not a member of the Elections Board.
4. In addition to all candidates for each position and the option of write-in candidates, a no confidence option will be available for each position.
5. Paper ballots must be cast at a polling location using the following procedure:
 - a. The voter shall provide his or her student card to the pollster in order to confirm his or her identification;
 - b. The pollster shall provide the voter with a paper ballot for each vote s/he is eligible to cast, and two (2) envelopes;

- c. The voter shall mark his or her ballot(s) and seal the ballot(s) in one (1) envelope, which shall then be sealed within the second envelope;
 - d. The pollster shall write the voter's name and AndrewID, and the reason for casting the paper ballot, on the outside of the second envelope;
 - e. The voter shall deposit the whole package into the secure ballot box.
- 6. The Elections Board is responsible for counting the votes received by each candidate in the election. A representative from the Office of Student Activities and at a three-fourths (3/4) supermajority of members of the Elections Board, including the Elections Board Chair, must be present for the vote counting procedure. No one other than the members of the Elections Board and representatives from the Office of Student Activities may be present for the vote counting procedure.
- 7. Vote counting shall proceed as follows:
 - a. The Elections Board shall decide, by way of a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote, upon any penalty that should be assessed to any candidate, in light of violations of campaigning rules in this document;
 - b. The Elections Board shall decide, by way of a majority vote, upon the margin of victory that is needed in the contest for a particular seat in order for the Elections Board Chair to recommend that Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly ratify the election results;
 - c. The Elections Board Chief Technical Officer shall determine whether any of the paper ballots was cast by someone who also voted online;
 - d. The Elections Board shall destroy the paper ballot of any individual who also voted online;
 - e. The Elections Board shall consider, on a case-by-case basis, the remaining paper ballots. The Elections Board shall decide, by way of a majority vote, whether each ballot should be included in the final vote count;
 - f. The Elections Board shall destroy any rejected paper ballot;
 - g. The Elections Board shall remove and destroy the outer envelope from all remaining paper ballots;
 - h. The paper ballots shall be opened and tallied by two (2) members of the Elections Board. These ballots shall be counted and re-counted until a majority of the Elections Board present agree upon the accuracy of the count;
 - i. The Elections Board Chief Technical Officer shall unlock the online election results, add the paper ballot tallies, and subtract any penalties deemed necessary by the Elections Board before the results were opened;
 - j. The Election Board Chief Technical Officer shall share the results with the rest of the Elections Board, who shall determine, via majority vote, whether they endorse the results of the election as valid results.

8. Upon conclusion of the vote counting procedure, the Elections Board shall notify the Student Government Executive Committee, and all candidates in the election, of the election results. The Elections Board shall also communicate to all candidates that the results remain unofficial and non-binding until ratified by Student Senate and/or the Graduate Student Assembly.

H. Percentage Minimums:

1. In order for a candidate for Student Body President, Student Body Vice President, Student Body Vice President of Finance, or Student Body Vice President of Organizations to win in an election, they must receive the percentage minimum of votes required below by both the undergraduate and graduate eligible voting populations.
2. The percentage minimums must be equal for both the undergraduate and graduate populations
3. The percentage minimums must be set at at least one percent (1%)
4. The Elections Board must review the percentages each year and has full discretion to increase or decrease the percentage set, as long as the threshold is one percent (1%) or above
5. Should no candidate running for the same position reach both the percentage minimums required, then the percentage minimums will be not included in determining the winning candidate of that election
6. After votes have been transferred via STV then the percentage minimums will be assessed per candidate

I. Ratification:

1. The Chair of the Elections Board must present the results of the Election at a joint meeting of Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly, along with any problems and/or unusual circumstances encountered during the course of the election.
2. The results of the Student Senate elections shall not be official unless ratified by way of a majority vote of Student Senate at this joint meeting.
3. The results of the Student Government Executive elections shall not be official unless ratified by way of a majority vote of Student Senate at this meeting, and by way of a majority vote of the Graduate Student Assembly at this meeting.
4. Once ratified, the candidate for each position who has received the pre determined voting percentage minimums and the most votes shall be declared the winner of that seat.
 - a. No candidate may accept more than one (1) office: anyone who has been elected to more than one (1) office must decline all but one (1) of those offices.
 - b. If a successful candidate declines a seat, the candidate with the next highest vote count shall be declared the winner.

- c. Tie-breaking:
 - i. In the event that more than one (1) candidate for a position on the Student Government Executive Committee receives the most votes for that position, the tie shall be broken by way of a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote by Student Senate and a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote by the Graduate Student Assembly, at this meeting.
 - ii. In the event that more than one (1) candidate receives the most votes for a seat in Student Senate, and no other seats are available in that candidate's college, the tie shall be broken by way of a majority vote at a meeting of Student Senate.
 - iii. If an impasse is reached and a tie cannot be broken, then the status of ratification of the relevant portion of the election shall be withdrawn.
- J. In the event that there is not a successful ratification, the following measures shall be taken:
 - 1. A new election date will be announced by the Elections Board no more than forty-eight (48) hours after the failed ratification.
 - a. The beginning date of the new election shall be no more than ten (10) calendar days after the failed ratification.
 - b. Only candidates who ran in the most recent election may run in this election, and they must run for the same position in each election.
 - 2. This second election shall be governed by the same rules as the first election.
 - 3. The second election results shall be put forward for ratification no more than forty-eight (48) hours after the election closes.
- K. In the event that the second election results are not ratified, the following measures shall be taken:
 - 1. The Student Body President, Student Body Vice President for Finance, and Student Body Vice President for Organizations shall be elected at a joint meeting of Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly by way of a simple majority vote of approval from Student Senate and a simple majority vote of approval from the Graduate Student Assembly.
 - a. This joint meeting will occur during the last week of classes.
 - b. Only a candidate who ran in the most recent election may be elected to fill the position for which they ran.
 - c. If an impasse is reached then the offices of Student Body President, Student Body Vice President, Student Body Vice President for Finance, and Student Body Vice President for Organizations shall be declared vacant, and the current Student Government Executive Committee shall fill those vacancies according to the procedures laid out, in the Carnegie

Mellon University *Student Body Constitution*, for filling vacant Student Government Executive Committee positions

- L. In the event that a circumstance not accounted for in these rules arises, the Elections Board and the current Student Government Executive Committee shall determine, by way of a majority vote of the collected body, a new timeline and set of policies to govern resolution of that circumstance.
 - 1. Any member of the current Student Government Executive Committee who is a candidate in the relevant election may not participate in this process.

Article VI. Override & Amendment

A. Override:

- 1. By way of a three-fourths (3/4) supermajority vote of the Elections Board, the Elections Board Chair is permitted to request that these rules be overridden.
- 2. A two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of approval at a meeting of Student Senate, and a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of approval at a meeting of the Graduate Student Assembly, is required to approve an override request.
 - a. The Elections Board Chair must give Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly at least one (1) week's notice of the override request before either body is permitted to vote on the request.

B. Amendment:

- 1. Amendments to these rules must be proposed and passed in accord with the amendment procedure set out for amendment to the Carnegie Mellon University *Student Body Constitution*.
- 2. A record of all amendments to these rules must be kept, by the Constitutional Advisor, as an appendix to these bylaws.

Adopted by Student Senate: February 3rd, 2010.

Adopted by the Graduate Student Assembly: February 3rd, 2010.

Revised by Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly: April 6th, 2011.

Appendix: Amendments to the Student Government Election Rules

Note: In September 2009 the Amendment procedure for the Student Government Election Rules was changed to require that amendments be kept as an appendix to these rules. In February 2010 major revisions to the Student Government documents were approved by both Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly, effectively replacing the old documents. What is contained in this appendix are the changes that have been made to the Student Government Election Rules since February 3rd, 2010.

April 6, 2011:

All references to notification “in writing” changed to notification “via e-mail” – for the sake of clarity.

Article II: Terms & Definitions arranged in alphabetical order.

March 21, 2013:

Article I.A.1.a: Clause expanded to clarify that a Student Body Vice President may be elected alongside the Student Body President.

Article II.K: Added definition for student body abroad.

Article V.E.7: Capped the amount of money candidates may spend at 500 dollars.

Article V.F: Amended to indicate that members of the student body abroad are eligible to vote.

December 7, 2014:

Article V.D: Allows for the submission of electronic petitions.

August 13, 2019:

Article III.A: Elections board has minimum of five (5) and a maximum of eight (8) voting members of the student body

Article III.B.1: If there are fewer than five (5) seated members of the Elections Board at a time, vacancies may be filled by joint appointments by the Elections Board Chair and the Student Body President, provided Student Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly are notified of this appointment within one (1) week of the appointment

Article V.B.2: The Elections Board shall announce the dates of the Petition Validation period, the election, and the Student Senate and Graduate Student Assembly ratification meeting no later than the end of the third week of the spring semester.

May 14, 2020:

Article V.C.1: Adding restrictions for eligibility to run for SBVPF and SBVPO

Article V.D.1: Adding election petition restrictions

Article III.D: Set the elections percentage minimums prior to each election cycle.

Article V.H: Add in election percentage minimums section

Article V.I: Change old section H to Section I

Article V.I.4: Voting percentage requirements to declare winner

Article V.E.6: Allow for elections board to designate money to candidates