



Student Assembly Election Rules

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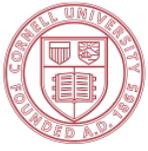
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Article I: Election Guidelines

Elections are the foundation upon which representative governance rests. These rules are designed to protect the rights of all candidates, as well as all members of the University community, and to ensure that the election process takes place in an open and fair arena. Candidates must respect the rights and privileges of all members of the Cornell community, and follow all election guidelines outlined in this document. Election rules are subject to the approval of voting members of the Student Assembly each semester.

A. Voter Eligibility

To vote in an election for a seat in the Student Assembly (SA) or for the directly elected seats on the University Assembly (UA), a person must:

1. Be a full-time, matriculated undergraduate student enrolled in a degree-granting unit of the Ithaca campus of the University; and,
2. Be a member of the constituency for which the seat is designated, if it is designated for one of the following:
 - a. Specific to college of enrollment
 - b. Freshman
 - c. Transfer

B. Candidate Information

1. Eligibility and Requirements

To be a candidate, a person must, prior to the petitioning deadline specified in the election calendar:

1. Be eligible to vote in the election for the seat and plan to remain seated so for the full term for which they are seeking election¹
2. Submit a completed candidate registration form and any associated materials required in that form. You may not register for more than one position on the candidate registration form.
3. Submit petitions endorsed by the required number of people who are eligible to vote in the election for that specific position, which is the lesser of 10% of those eligible to vote for that specific position or:
 - a. 300 for President and Executive Vice President
 - b. 150 for all other at-large seats
 - c. 100 for Arts and Sciences seats
 - d. 25 for Transfer seat
 - e. 75 for all other seats
4. Not already hold a directly elected voting position on the SA and/or UA for the term for which they are seeking election
5. Have not resigned or been removed from the SA or from a directly elected UA seat in the academic year prior to the academic year of the term for the seat being elected

To be a candidate, a person must, prior to the commencement of voting as specified in the elections calendar:

1. Attend at least one full SA meeting in that semester and register his or her attendance at that meeting with the Director of Elections, unless waived by the Director of Elections for extenuating circumstances²

¹ Candidates should not plan to pursue study abroad programs or internships that would require them to leave the Ithaca campus for any semester during their tenure.

² However, this rule does not apply to past SA representatives.



- 89 2. Apply online to serve on at least one committee of the SA
90

91 The Office of the Assemblies, assisted by the Elections Committee, will review submitted materials
92 for compliance with petitioning requirements as follows:

- 93 1. A sampling method may be used as long as at least 10% of required signatures are validated
94 for all petitions and all required signatures are attempted to be validated for any petition
95 found to be ineligible
96 2. All petitions will be available for viewing only to members of the Cornell community and may
97 be examined in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall after the announcement of
98 candidates. Petitions may not be photocopied once submitted.
99 3. The Office of the Assemblies will notify the Director of Elections, who will notify any
100 candidates who fail to meet petitioning requirements prior to the announcement of candidates
101 4. Candidates who are listed on the ballot but found to have not fulfilled eligibility requirements
102 prior to tabulation of results will be disqualified with vote counts untallied and discarded
103

104 **2. Petitioning**

105 In order to demonstrate that they will be a respectable representative of the student body at large,
106 candidates are required to collect a certain number of petition signatures. The required number of
107 petition signers is designated above. Candidates are expected to maintain the highest integrity when
108 collecting petition signatures. In addition to the Early Campaigning rules detailed in Article 1, Section
109 C(1) of these elections rules, the following restrictions are in place to ensure fairness during the
110 petitioning period. Candidates may not:

- 111 1. Announce their candidacy on social media platforms in order to collect signatures
112 2. Announce their candidacy in front of a classroom during class hours in order to collect
113 signatures
114 3. Circulate unattended petitions
115

116 **3. Written Statements**

- 117 1. Each candidate is asked to submit a short statement, which may be no more than 1,250
118 characters, including spaces (NOT word count) via the online Candidate Profile portal.
119 Submissions must be plain text.
120 2. Statements will be displayed in informational materials published by the Elections Committee
121 3. Statements may not include names of any political coalitions
122 4. If a candidate's statement does not conform to these guidelines, the statement will not be
123 posted
124

125 **4. Pictures**

126 Candidates may have their photos taken in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, before the
127 petition deadline. Photos will be displayed in informational materials published by the Elections
128 Committee. Candidates may submit a photograph of themselves that conforms to the specifications
129 noted in the online candidate registration form.
130

131 **5. Promotional Materials**

132 Each candidate may receive a combination of up to 300 one-sided 8 1/2" X 11" or 150 two-sided 8
133 1/2" X 11" printed materials at no charge. These may be posters or quarter-cards⁴, or a combination
134 of both.

- 135 1. The design must be attached, exactly as it is to be copied, as a PDF to the Candidate Profile
136 Form online and submitted by the application deadline
137 2. All materials must include the dates and times of the elections and be in compliance with
138 election guidelines



- 139 3. Candidates may select up to two different paper colors from the swatches provided by the
- 140 Office of the Assemblies
- 141 4. Materials will be printed in black & white only
- 142 5. No Cornell insignia or logo is allowed
- 143 6. Candidates who do not submit materials, which meet these criteria by the petitioning deadline,
- 144 forfeit the opportunity to receive such materials from the Office of the Assemblies
- 145 7. The Office of the Assemblies will be responsible for making the copies.
- 146 8. The Office of the Assemblies will not assist in designing, modifying, or otherwise formatting a
- 147 printed submission

148 Candidates that do not receive or choose not to receive free promotional materials printed by the
149 Office of the Assemblies will be eligible for up to \$20 in reimbursements that can be used towards the
150 following expenses: website expenses (web hosting, domain names, and online advertising), chalk,
151 printed materials, or any other promotional materials approved by the Director of Elections that are
152 not a violation of these elections rules. These reimbursements will not be counted in a candidate's out-
153 of-pocket expenses, as detailed in the Campaign Finance rules in Article 1, Section C(6) of these
154 elections rules.

155

156 **6. Candidate Forum**

157 All candidates are encouraged to participate in the Candidates' Forums held by the Elections
158 Committee during the campaign period. The Elections Committee will be responsible for planning,
159 coordinating, and marketing these forums. At the forum, candidates are encouraged to discuss their
160 experience, platforms, and more. Candidates are also encouraged to use the forum as an opportunity
161 specifically to discuss why they are more qualified for the contested position than their opponent(s).
162 The Director of Elections shall reach out to student organizations that receive funding from the
163 Student Assembly, encouraging them to use the candidate forum as an opportunity to vet candidates
164 for endorsements.

165

166 **C. Election Guidelines**

167 **1. Early Campaigning**

168 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf must not participate in the following campaign
169 activities until campaigning officially begins:

- 170 1. Distribution of printed campaign materials to the public
- 171 2. Advertising candidacy by chalk, poster, or other method designed for public viewing
- 172 3. Making speeches or statements to student organizations or groups of students
- 173 4. Promoting their candidacy through email, social networking tools, or other digital media

174 The Elections Committee may challenge or disqualify a candidate if a violation is found to
175 compromise the fairness of the election.

176

177 **2. Restrictions for Current SA Members**

178 Current SA members seeking reelection:

- 179 1. Must refrain from any form of individual or self-promoting publicity during the petitioning
180 period
- 181 2. Must not host constituency outreach events that are meant to fulfill an outreach requirement
182 from the deadline for election materials through the last day of voting

183

184 **3. Compliance with University Policies and Campus Code of Conduct**

185 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf must be aware of and comply with all applicable
186 policies and provisions of the Campus Code of Conduct, including but not limited to:

- 187 1. Use of Cornell Name, Logo & Artwork policy
- 188 2. Event Registration policies



- 189 3. Facilities reservation policies, including Willard Straight Hall area reservation policies
190 4. University Postering & Chalking policies
191 5. Residential & New Students Programs' policy for postering in residence halls
192 6. Dining hall policies, including a prohibition of distributing printed campaign materials in
193 dining halls without permission from authorized staff, and as designated in the Campus Code
194 of Conduct³
195

196 A violation of any University policy is a violation of these rules and therefore grounds for a challenge
197 if it compromises the fairness of the election. It is the candidate's responsibility to read the referenced
198 documents and be familiar with the rules and regulations established within them. The Director of
199 Elections may also refer any reported violations to the Office of the Judicial Administrator or any
200 other appropriate office, which may impose disciplinary remedies and penalties according to its own
201 rules and procedures.
202

203 **4. Campus Mail**

204 Candidates and their supporters may not use Campus Mail for campaigning purposes.
205

206 **5. Electronic Communications and Social Media**

207 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

- 208 1. Must obtain permission from the administrator of any university-hosted bulk mailing lists
209 2. Must comply with Cornell University IT policies
210

211 **6. Campaign Finance**

212 Candidates or supporters acting on their behalf must submit all receipts and/or proof of fair market
213 value with the signed expense report to the Office of the Assemblies by the deadline specified in the
214 election calendar. Candidates who do not submit receipts and/or proof of fair market value will be
215 presumed to have spent \$0 on their campaign.

- 216 1. Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf may not exceed the \$50 limit for out-of-
217 pocket expenses and fair market value of donations of materials, professional services, and/or
218 money
219 a. Fair market value is the value at which something is to be obtained normally if
220 documentation of its dollar value is not provided
221 b. If there is a supporting receipt for a good used in a candidate's campaign, then the
222 value of that good is the dollar value on the supporting receipt as long as the
223 transaction was conducted at arm's length
224 c. For donated materials, professional services, or other goods for which no official
225 receipt is provided, candidates must seek the most plausible assessment of the fair
226 market value of the good. Professional services will be defined as any work for
227 which the given individual/donor is typically compensated. Volunteer time donated
228 by full-time students will not be considered professional services.
229 d. Paid advertisements and related costs on social networking sites or other websites
230 must also be accounted for at fair market value
231 2. Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf in races where only one candidate has
232 submitted a petition are limited to 150 copies and \$10 for out-of-pocket expenses. Donations
233 may be used, but proof of their fair market value must be provided and accounted for.
234
235

³ Please note that it is against the University Postering and Chalking Policy to chalk on any vertical surface, regardless of the location.



236 **7. Endorsements**

237 All registered student organizations receiving funds from the Student Assembly are encouraged to
238 endorse candidates. If an organization chooses to endorse a candidate, it is expected to abide by the
239 guidelines below.

- 240 1. Student Activities Funding Commission (SAFC) funded and Student Activity Fee (SAF)
241 byline funded organizations may endorse candidates. All groups must act in a way that is fair
242 and balanced when deciding on the endorsement of candidates.
- 243 2. The Elections Committee may recommend that the SA impose fines on or revoke allocated
244 funds from organizations failing to comply

245
246 **8. Campaign Ethics**

247 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

- 248 1. May not, at any time before, during or after the elections, harass, threaten, defame or coerce
249 others
- 250 2. May not provide anything of material value to a member of the Cornell community to further
251 themselves in the election or to promote their candidacy
- 252 3. May not compel any person to endorse their candidacy, assist their campaign, or act as
253 supporter as an explicit or implicit condition for initiation to, admission into, affiliation with,
254 or continued membership in a group or organization

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256 **D. Restrictions on Ticketing and Slates**

257 **1. General Rules**

258 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf may not:

- 259 1. Include any other candidate's name, a common "ticket" name, or a shared slogan and/or
260 symbol on any promotional materials or within any form of electronic communication and/or
261 media
- 262 2. Share or pool campaign finances with any other candidates or supporters acting on their
263 behalf
- 264 3. Distribute any promotional materials, send any electronic communication, or utilize any other
265 form of electronic media on behalf of any other candidate except if the candidate does so for
266 another candidate in the President and/or Executive Vice President races
- 267 4. Campaign with or on behalf of each other or engage in any coordination of campaigning
268 activities except if the candidate does so for another candidate in the President or Executive
269 Vice President races.

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271 **2. Special circumstance for the President and Executive Vice President elections**

272 Candidates in any race, besides those running for the position of President or Executive Vice
273 President, will be given the freedom to distribute promotional material, send electronic
274 communications, campaign on behalf of, and speak for candidates in the President or Executive Vice
275 President races. Candidates who choose to do so are considered supporters and are held accountable
276 to all clauses in these rules that pertain to candidates and their supporters. The President and
277 Executive Vice President candidates are strictly prohibited from coordinating activities. Candidates are
278 strictly prohibited from performing the actions above for candidates not in the President or Executive
279 Vice President races.

280

281 **3. Plagiarism**

282 Candidates may not disseminate written statements, promotional materials, or electronic
283 communications that are plagiarized or substantially copied from any such items created or distributed
284 by any current or former candidate.



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Article II: Election Procedures

287

A. The Election Calendar

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1. The Director of Elections, in consultation with the Office of the Assemblies, will draft the election calendar prior to the semester of the election, and will be approved by the Elections Committee at a meeting in the prior semester if possible⁴

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2. Consideration shall be given to any religious holidays that may fall during the election period, guaranteeing that the right to free religious observance is afforded to all potential candidates

294

B. The Elections Committee

295

1. The Director of Elections shall serve as chair and a designated representative of the Office of the Assemblies shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of this committee

296

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2. Members of the Elections Committee may not seek SA or UA office for the academic year following their term of service on the committee

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3. The Director of Elections shall publish at the beginning of each semester a list of Assembly seats to be filled, in accordance with Student Assembly Charter

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4. Elections Committee members are expected to abide by the highest standards of personal conduct and integrity. Students are mandated to excuse themselves from serving on the Elections Committee if they plan to take part in a campaign or sit on the executive board of an organization that has endorsed a candidate. Therefore, members should not be involved in the campaigning process. All conflicts should be considered and resolved before the election cycle begins.

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5. The Elections Committee should be prepared to meet immediately following the challenge deadline to rule on all pertinent challenges. The Elections Committee shall use Robert's Rules of Order to consider challenges, in addition to the election rules. In the event of conflict, these election rules supersede Robert's Rules of Order. The Elections Committee has no power to overrule the election rules under any circumstances.

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6. The Director of Elections shall give a final report on the results of the election when there are no remaining unresolved matters

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7. For the benefit of the students, the Elections Committee shall establish voting booths across campus on the days of the election. Committee members will ensure that no campaigning occurs within 25 feet of a voting booth.

319

C. Independence of the Elections Committee

320

1. While members of the Elections Committee are expected to abide by the highest standards of integrity, they also enjoy independence from undue interference. Hence, students may not falsely accuse, harass, threaten or coerce any member of the Elections Committee for actions taken in their official capacity.

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2. Subject to the determination of the Elections Committee, any violation of this section can result in temporary or permanent disqualification from contesting elections to the SA or UA. It may also result in disciplinary referral to the Judicial Administrator.

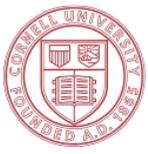
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⁴ The Director of Elections should coordinate the schedule of the Student Assembly elections with other campus elections, such as those of the Student-Elected Trustee and Class Councils.



329 **D. Voting and Tabulation**

- 330 1. The order in which names appear on the ballot shall be randomly selected
331 2. Uncontested candidates will not be listed for a vote on the ballot and will be deemed
332 victorious pending the resolution of challenges
333 3. Results for challenged races will be posted after the Elections Committee has ruled on those
334 challenges
335 4. The Elections Committee will not have access to the results prior to and during challenge
336 deliberations. The Office of Assemblies will release election results after the Elections
337 Committee has validated the election results.
338 5. A printout of election results for qualifying candidates shall be available in the Office of the
339 Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, for one year following the election. Disqualified candidates will not
340 have their vote tallies made available.
341

342 **E. Challenges**

343 **1. Eligibility to Challenge**

- 344 1. Any member of the Cornell community may submit a challenge
345 2. The Director of Elections may submit a challenge
346 3. The Elections Committee as a body may submit a challenge by majority vote
347 4. Individual committee members, except the Director of Elections, may not submit a challenge
348

349 **2. Challenge Deadlines**

- 350 1. Election challenges must be submitted by the election challenge deadline specified in the
351 elections calendar
352 2. The Director of Elections or the Elections Committee by a majority vote can submit a
353 challenge at any time before the declaration of results
354 3. No challenges will be accepted after these deadlines
355 4. Once submitted, a challenge becomes part of the formal record, and may not be withdrawn
356 except by the explicit permission of the Director of Elections
357

358 **3. Format of Challenges**

359 Challenges must be in writing, submitted on the signed Challenge Form, and accompanied by the
360 following supporting documentation:

- 361 1. Challenger's name
362 2. Candidate's name
363 3. Date of challenge
364 4. Reason for challenge and supporting evidence
365

366 **4. Notification of Election Challenges**

367 The Office of the Assemblies will notify the Director of Elections who will send an email notifying
368 anyone who is named in an election challenge. The email will contain a scanned copy of the challenge.
369

370 **5. Response to Election Challenges**

371 A challenged candidate may review challenges to which they are a party in the Office of the
372 Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, and address written statements in response to the committee. The
373 challenged candidate may request a hearing in person with the committee.
374

375 **6. Challenge Review Meeting**

376 The committee will schedule a meeting to review challenges in Executive Session. The committee will
377 provide an opportunity for the challenged candidate to respond in person if requested by the



378 challenged candidate or a member of the committee. For each challenge, the committee will
379 determine:

- 380 1. Whether a preponderance of evidence substantiates each alleged violation; and,
- 381 2. Which, if any, substantiated violations or combination thereof compromised the fairness of
382 the election and constituted a material advantage to the extent the challenged candidate
383 should be disqualified by a two-thirds majority

384 The Committee will first vote by simple majority to determine if the evidence substantiates each
385 alleged violation. If the violation is substantiated, the committee will vote which, if any, substantiated
386 violations or combination thereof compromised the fairness of the election and constituted a material
387 advantage to the extent the challenged candidate should be disqualified by a two-thirds majority.
388

389 **7. Written Report**

- 390 1. For each rule violation, the Director of Elections or a member of the Elections Committee as
391 delegated by the Director will create a written report summarizing the challenge(s), the
392 decision made, and how the decision was reached
- 393 2. The report is kept confidential and only released to the challenged candidate and the
394 challenger(s)
- 395 3. A copy is kept in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall
- 396 4. For each challenge, the committee will report to the challenger(s) and the challenged
397 candidate all evidence received/found, any violations substantiated, and any decisions to
398 disqualify the challenged candidate
399

400 **8. Reconsideration**

- 401 1. If the committee determines a candidate should be disqualified, the candidate may request
402 reconsideration within twenty-four hours of receiving the written report. To be reconsidered,
403 the candidate seeking such reconsideration must submit a request in writing to the Office of
404 the Assemblies via email to assembly@cornell.edu. The statement should address the specific
405 findings in the written report to be reconsidered.
- 406 2. The committee will convene in response to such a request. The committee, after evaluating
407 each request for reconsideration, will take a vote requiring a simple majority to determine if
408 the previous decision to disqualify should be overturned.
- 409 3. If a disqualified candidate finds that the Elections Committee was biased in their application
410 of the rules, they may request a review by the Judicial Codes and Counselor (JCC). If the JCC
411 review finds that the application of the rules was biased, the decision of the Elections
412 Committee may be overturned.
413

414 **9. Finality**

415 The determination of the committee after expiration or resolution of requests for reconsideration shall
416 be final.
417

418 **10. Confidentiality**

- 419 1. Members of the committee and parties to a challenge may not share the contents of
420 challenges, evidence, or decisions submitted to or received from the committee, except when
421 explicitly permitted by these rules or by the Director of Elections
- 422 2. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information may result in a disciplinary referral to the
423 Judicial Administrator
- 424 3. A review of the Challenges may take place in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, by
425 any member of the Cornell community. Challenges may not be photocopied, photographed,
426 digitally recorded or removed from the Office of Assemblies.