

Student Assembly Elections Rules

Adopted on Thursday, December 3 2009. Amended Friday, December 3, 2010; Friday, December 2, 2011, Thursday, November 29, 2012, Friday, December 6, 2013, Thursday, May 1, 2014, and Thursday, November 20, 2014.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLE I. Election Guidelines

A. Voter Eligibility

B. Candidate Information

1. Eligibility and Requirements

2. Petitioning

3. Written Statements

4. Pictures

5. Promotional Materials

6. Candidate Forum

C. Election Guidelines

1. Early Campaigning

2. Restrictions on Current Student Assembly Members

3. Compliance with University Policies and Campus Code of Conduct

4. Campus Mail

5. Electronic Communications and Social Media

6. Campaign Finance

7. Endorsements

8. Campaign Ethics

ARTICLE II. Direct Election of President and Executive Vice President

A. President and Executive Vice President Designation and Eligibility

B. Restrictions on Ticketing and Slates

1. General Rules

2. Plagiarism

ARTICLE III. Election Procedures

A. Elections Calendar

B. Elections Committee

C. Independence of the Elections Committee

D. Conduction of Election and Tabulation

E. Challenges

1. Eligibility to Challenge

2. Challenge Deadlines

3. Format of Challenges

4. Notification of Challenge

5. Response to Challenge

6. Challenge Review Meeting

7. Preliminary Report

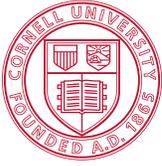
8. Reconsideration

9. Finality

10. Confidentiality

Appendix A: Approved Student Assembly Committees

Appendix B: Sample Promotional Materials



Cornell University Student Assembly

48 **Article I. Election Guidelines**

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

55

56 **A. Voter Eligibility**

57 To vote in an election for a seat in the Student Assembly (SA), a person must:

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

65

66 **B. Candidate Information**

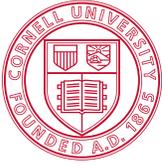
67 **1. Eligibility and Requirements**

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

- 70 1. Be eligible to vote in the election for the seat and plan to remain so for the full term for
71 which he or she is seeking election
- 72 2. Submit a completed candidate registration form and any associated materials required in
73 that form
- 74 3. Submit petitions endorsed by the required number of people who are eligible to vote in
75 the election for that specific position, which is the lesser of 10% of those eligible to vote
76 for that specific position or:
 - 77 a. 300 for President and Executive Vice President
 - 78 b. 150 for all other At-Large seats;
 - 79 c. 100 for Arts and Sciences seats;
 - 80 d. 25 for New Transfer seat;
 - 81 e. 75 for all other seats.
- 82 4. Have not violated the early campaigning guidelines, as outlined in Article 1, Section C(2)

83

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



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 86 1. Attend at least one full SA meeting in that semester and register his or her attendance at
87 that meeting with the Director of Elections, unless waived by the Director of Elections
88 for extenuating circumstances;¹
89 2. Apply online to serve on at least one committee of the SA²
90

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

- 93 1. A sampling method may be used as long as at least 10% of signatures are validated for all
94 petitions and all signatures are validated for any petition found to be ineligible.
95 2. All petitions will be available for viewing only to members of the Cornell community and
96 may be examined in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall. Petitions may not be
97 photocopied once submitted.
98 3. The Office of the Assemblies will notify the Director of Elections, who will notify any
99 candidates who fail to meet petitioning requirements prior to the scheduled
100 announcement of candidates.
101 4. Candidates who are listed on the ballot but found to have not fulfilled eligibility
102 requirements prior to tabulation of results will be disqualified with vote counts untallied
103 and discarded.
104

105 **2. Petitioning**

106 In order to demonstrate that he or she will be a respectable representative of the Cornell Student
107 Assembly and student body at large, candidates are required to collect a certain number of
108 petition signatures. The required number of petition signers is designated above. Candidates are
109 expected to maintain the highest integrity when collecting petition signatures. In addition to the
110 Early Campaigning rules detailed in Article 1, Section C(1) of these Election Rules, the following
111 restrictions are in place to ensure fairness during the petitioning period.

112 Candidates may not:

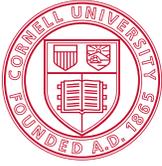
- 113 1. Announce their candidacy on social media platforms in order to collect signatures;
114 2. Announce their candidacy in front of a classroom during class hours in order to collect
115 signatures;
116 3. Circulate unattended petitions.
117

118 **3. Written Statements**

- 119 1. Each candidate is asked to submit a short statement, which may be no more than 1,250
120 characters, including spaces (NOT word count) via the online Candidate Profile portal.
121 2. Statements will be displayed in informational materials published by the Elections
122 Committee, both in print and online.
123 3. Statements may not include names of any political coalitions.

¹However, this rule does not apply to past SA representatives.

²A list of such committees is provided in Appendix A to this document.



Cornell University Student Assembly

124 4. If a candidate's statement does not conform with these guidelines, the statement will not
125 be posted

126

127 **4. Pictures**

128 Candidates must have their photos taken in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, before
129 the petition deadline. Photos will be displayed in informational materials published by the
130 Elections Committee. Candidates who do not have their photos taken by the petitioning deadline
131 forfeit the opportunity to have such photos disseminated. Candidates who are studying abroad and
132 not able to appear in person to have their picture taken may submit a photograph of themselves
133 that conforms to the following specifications and any others required by the Office of the
134 Assemblies:

- 135 1. Must be in JPEG format;
- 136 2. Must feature the face of the candidate;
- 137 3. May not be professionally produced;
- 138 4. May not be enhanced after being taken;
- 139 5. Must have a plain, white background; and,
- 140 6. Must be cropped to 263 pixels wide by 351 pixels tall or proportionally larger
141 dimensions.

142 Such a photograph must be submitted by email to assembly@cornell.edu before the petitioning
143 deadline.

144

145 **5. Promotional Materials**

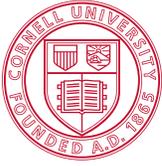
146 Each candidate may receive a combination of up to 300 one-sided 8 1/2" X 11" or 150 two-sided
147 8 1/2" X 11" printed materials at no charge. These may be posters or quarter-cards³, or a
148 combination of both.

- 149 1. The design must be attached, exactly as it is to be copied, as a PDF to the Candidate
150 Profile Form online and submitted by the application deadline.
- 151 2. All materials must include the dates and times of the elections and be in compliance with
152 election guidelines.
- 153 3. Candidates may select up to two different paper colors from the swatches provided by the
154 Office of the Assemblies.
- 155 4. Materials will be printed in black & white only.
- 156 5. No Cornell insignia or logo is allowed.
- 157 6. Candidates who do not submit materials, which meet these criteria by the petitioning
158 deadline, forfeit the opportunity to receive such materials.
- 159 7. The Office of the Assemblies will be responsible for making the copies.
- 160 8. The office will not assist in designing, modifying, or otherwise formatting a printed
161 submission.

162

163 **6. Candidate Forum**

³ See Appendix B for an example of an approved quarter-card.



Cornell University Student Assembly

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

172

173 **C. Election Guidelines**

174 **1. Early Campaigning**

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

- 177 1. Distribution of printed campaign material to the public
- 178 2. Advertising candidacy by chalk, poster, or other method designed for public viewing
- 179 3. Making speeches or statements to student organizations or groups of students
- 180 4. Promoting their candidacy through email, social networking tools, or other digital media
- 181 a. The Elections Committee may challenge or disqualify a candidate if a violation is
182 found to compromise the fairness of the election

183

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

185 Current SA members seeking reelection:

- 186 1. Must refrain from any form of individual or self-promoting publicity during the
187 petitioning period
- 188 2. Must not host constituency outreach events from the deadline for election materials
189 through the last day of voting.

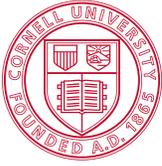
190

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

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

- 194 1. Use of Cornell Name, Logo, and Artwork policy
- 195 2. Event Registration/Use of University Property policies
- 196 3. Facilities reservation policies, including Willard Straight Hall area reservation policies
- 197 4. University Postering & Chalking policies
- 198 5. Campus Life policy for posting in residence halls
- 199 6. Dining hall policies, including a prohibition of distributing printed campaign materials in
200 dining halls without permission from authorized staff, and as designated in the Campus
201 Code of Conduct.⁴

⁴ Please note that it is against the University Postering and Chalking Policy to chalk on any vertical surface, regardless of the location.



Cornell University Student Assembly

202

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

209

210 **4. Campus Mail**

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

212

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

214 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

- 215 1. Must obtain permission from the owner of any university-hosted bulk mailing lists
- 216 2. Must comply with Cornell University e-mail policies
- 217 3. May create a website, Facebook "Page", or "Event" to promote a campaign as long as
218 events are scheduled to occur entirely within the voting period.
- 219 4. May not create Facebook "Profiles" or "Groups" dedicated to a candidate or a
220 candidate's campaign.

221

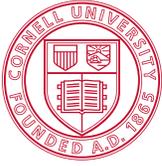
222 **6. Campaign Finance**

223 Candidates or supporters acting on their behalf must submit all receipts and/or proof of fair
224 market value with the signed Expenditure Form in person to the Office of the Assemblies, 109
225 Day Hall, by the deadline specified in the elections calendar. Candidates who do not submit
226 receipts and/or proof of fair market value will be presumed to have spent \$0 on their campaign.

- 227 1) Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf may not exceed the \$50 limit for out- of-
228 pocket expenses and fair market value of donations of materials, professional services, and/or
229 money.
 - 230 a) Fair market value is the value at which something is to be obtained normally if
231 documentation of its dollar value is not provided.
 - 232 b) Therefore, if there is a supporting receipt for a good used in a candidate's campaign, then
233 the value of that good is the dollar value on the supporting receipt.
 - 234 c) For donated materials, professional services, or other goods for which no official receipt
235 is provided, candidates must seek the most plausible assessment of the fair market value
236 of the good.
 - 237 d) Paid advertisements and related costs on social networking sites or other websites must
238 also be accounted for at fair market value.
- 239 2) Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf in races where only one candidate has
240 submitted a petition are limited to 150 copies and \$10 for out-of-pocket expenses. Donations
241 may be used, but proof of their fair market value must be provided and accounted for.

242

243 **7. Endorsements**



Cornell University Student Assembly

244 All registered student organizations receiving funds from the Student Assembly are encouraged to
245 endorse candidates. The Director of Elections will encourage groups to do so, through email
246 notification. If an organization chooses to endorse a candidate, it is expected to abide by the
247 guidelines below.

- 248 1. Student Assembly Finance Commission (SAFC)-funded organizations may endorse
249 candidates. All groups must act in a way that is fair and balanced when deciding
250 endorsement of candidates.
- 251 2. Student Activity Fee (SAF) byline funded organizations seeking to endorse candidates
252 for a position must give all petitioners for that position and the Director of Elections 24
253 hours advance notice of endorsement meetings.
- 254 3. The Elections Committee may recommend that the SA impose fines on or revoke
255 allocated funds from organizations failing to comply.

256 257 **8. Campaign Ethics**

258 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

- 259 1. May not, at any time before, during or after the elections, harass, threaten, or coerce
260 others
- 261 2. May not provide anything of material value to a member of the University community to
262 further themselves in the election, aside from the complementary promotional materials
263 provided to them by the Office of the Assemblies
- 264 3. May not compel any person to endorse their candidacies, assist their campaigns, or act as
265 supporters as an explicit or implicit condition for initiation to, admission into, affiliation
266 with, or continued membership in a group or organization
- 267 4. May not criticize others on the basis of their character
- 268 5. Are allowed to comment on other candidates' platforms, experience, or voting records as
269 long as such comments are grounded in factual evidence.

270 271 **Article II. Direct Election of President and Executive Vice President**

272 **A. President and Executive Vice President (EVP) Designation and eligibility**

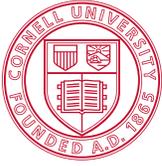
- 273 1. Two of the Undesignated At-Large Representative seats will be reserved for the directly
274 elected seats of President and Executive Vice-President.
- 275 2. Candidates running for the Undesignated At-Large Representative seats may specify
276 themselves as a Presidential candidate or Executive Vice Presidential candidate.
- 277 3. Candidates who do not wish to run for the position of President or Executive Vice
278 President may run individually for an undesignated at-large seat.
- 279 4. All candidates running for any undesignated at-large seat will be listed as Undesignated
280 At-Large candidates on the ballot.

281

282 **B. Restrictions on Ticketing and Slates**

283 **1. General Rules**

- 284 1) Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf may not:



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 285 a) Include any other candidate's name, a common "ticket" name, or a shared slogan and/or
286 symbol on any promotional materials or within any form of electronic communication
287 and/or media
288 b) Share or pool campaign finances with any other candidates or supporters acting on their
289 behalf
290 c) Distribute any promotional materials, send any electronic communication, or utilize any
291 other form of electronic media on behalf of any other candidate;
292 d) Campaign with or on behalf of each other or engage in any coordination of campaigning
293 activities.
294

2. Plagiarism

296 Candidates may not disseminate written statements, promotional materials, or electronic
297 communications that are plagiarized or substantially copied from any such items created or
298 distributed by any current or former candidate.
299

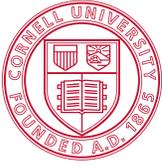
Article III. Election Procedures

A. The Elections Calendar

- 302 1. The Director of Elections, in consultation with the Office of the Assemblies, will draft the
303 elections calendar prior to the semester of the elections, and will be approved by the
304 Elections Committee at a meeting in the prior semester
305 2. Consideration shall be given to any religious holidays that may fall during the election
306 period, guaranteeing that the right to free religious observance is afforded to all potential
307 candidates.
308

B. The Elections Committee

- 310 1. The Director of Elections shall serve as chair and a designated representative of the
311 Office of the Assemblies shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of this
312 committee.
313 2. Members of the Elections Committee may not seek SA or UA office for the academic
314 year following their term of service on the committee.
315 3. The Director of Elections shall publish at the beginning of each semester a list of
316 Assembly seats to be filled, in accordance with Student Assembly Charter section 3.1.
317 4. Elections Committee members are expected to abide by the highest standards of personal
318 conduct and integrity. Students are mandated to excuse themselves from serving on the
319 Elections Committee if they plan to actively take part in a campaign or sit on the
320 executive board of an organization that has endorsed a candidate. Therefore, members
321 should not be actively involved in the campaigning process. All conflicts should be
322 considered and resolved before the election cycle begins.
323 5. The Elections Committee should be prepared to meet immediately following the
324 challenge deadlines to rule on all pertinent challenges. All challenges must be heard
325 simultaneously.



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 326 6. The Elections Committee shall use Robert's Rules of Order in accordance with Student
327 Assembly Charter § 6.6 to consider challenges, in addition to the Undergraduate Election
328 Rules. The Elections Committee has no power to overrule the Undergraduate Election
329 Rules under any circumstances.
- 330 7. The Director of Elections shall give a final report on the results of the elections when
331 there are no remaining unresolved matters.
- 332 8. For the benefit of the students, the Elections Committee shall establish voting booth(s)
333 across campus on the days of the election. Committee members will ensure that no
334 campaigning occurs within 25 feet of a voting booth.
- 335

C. Independence of the Elections Committee

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

340

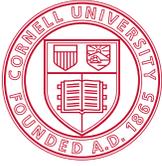
341

342 Subject to the determination by the Elections Committee, any violation of this section can result
343 in temporary or permanent disqualification from contesting elections to the Student Assembly. It
344 may also result in disciplinary referral to the Judicial Administrator. The procedures of
345 reconsideration and review laid down in Article III, Section E will apply in such cases.

346

D. Conduction of Election and Tabulation

- 347
- 348 1. The order in which names appear on the ballot shall be randomly selected.
- 349 2. Tabulation of the results of voting shall be as follows:
- 350 a. The President, Executive Vice President, and other Undesignated-at-Large
351 representatives will be elected by a single transferable voting system according to the
352 Article IV, Section 2 of the Charter of the Student Assembly. Voters may rank all
353 candidates on the ballot for each of these races.
- 354 b. All other representatives shall be elected by a plurality voting system. Voters will
355 cast one vote per available seat, (e.g. if three Arts and Sciences representatives are to
356 be elected, the voter will vote for three candidates).
- 357 3. The Office of the Assemblies will post preliminary results for unchallenged races by 4:30
358 p.m. on the day following the election. Preliminary results for challenged races will be
359 posted after the Elections Committee has ruled on those challenges.
- 360 4. The Elections Committee will not have access to the preliminary results prior to and
361 during challenge deliberations. The Office of Assemblies will release election results
362 from the challenged races after the Elections Committee has validated the election
363 results.
- 364 5. The official announcement of results shall be at the next Student Assembly meeting
365 following the validation of the election results by the Elections Committee.



Cornell University Student Assembly

366 6. A printout of election results for qualified candidates shall be available in the Office of
367 the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, for one year following the election. Disqualified
368 candidates will not have their vote tallies made available.
369

370 **E. Challenges**

371 **1. Eligibility to Challenge**

- 372 1. Any member of the Cornell community may submit a challenge.
- 373 2. The Director of Elections may submit a challenge.
- 374 3. The Elections Committee as a body may submit a challenge by majority vote.
- 375 4. Individual committee members except the Director of Elections may not submit a
376 challenge.
- 377

378 **2. Challenge Deadlines**

- 379 1. Petition challenges must be submitted to the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, by
380 the petition challenge deadline specified in the elections calendar.
- 381 2. Election challenges must be submitted by the election challenge deadline specified in the
382 elections calendar.
- 383 3. The Director of Elections or the Elections Committee by a majority vote can submit a
384 challenge at any time before the declaration of results.
- 385 4. No challenges or further supporting documentation will be accepted after these deadlines.
- 386 5. Once submitted, a challenge becomes part of the formal record, and may not be
387 withdrawn except by the explicit permission of the Director of Elections.
- 388

389 **3. Format of Challenges**

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

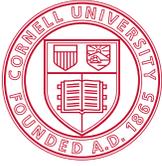
- 392 1. Challenger's name
- 393 2. Candidate's name
- 394 3. Date of challenge
- 395 4. Reason for challenge and supporting evidence
- 396

397 **4. Notification of Election Challenges**

398 The Office of the Assemblies will notify the Director of Elections who will send an email
399 notifying anyone who is named in an election challenge. The email will contain a scanned copy
400 of the challenge.
401

402 **5. Response to Election Challenges**

403 A challenged candidate may review challenges in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall,
404 and address written statements in response to the committee. The challenged candidate may
405 request a hearing in person with the committee. The deadline for responses is set in the elections
406 calendar.
407



408 **6. Challenge Review Meeting**

409 The committee will schedule a meeting to review challenges in Executive Session. The
410 committee will provide an opportunity for the challenged candidate to respond in person if
411 requested by the challenged candidate or a member of the committee. For each challenge, the
412 committee will determine:

- 413 1. Whether a preponderance of evidence substantiates each alleged violation; and,
- 414 2. Which, if any, substantiated violations or combination thereof compromised the fairness
415 of the election to the extent the challenged candidate should be disqualified by a two-
416 thirds majority.

417 The Committee will first vote by simple majority to determine if the evidence substantiated each
418 alleged violation. If the violation is substantiated, the committee will vote which, if any,
419 substantiated violations or combination thereof compromised the fairness of the election to the
420 extent the challenged candidate should be disqualified by a two-thirds majority.

422 **7. Preliminary Report**

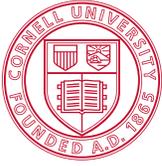
- 423 1. For each rule violation, the Director of Elections or a member of the Elections Committee
424 as delegated by the Director will create a written report summarizing the challenge(s), the
425 decision made, and how the decision was reached.
- 426 2. The preliminary report is kept confidential and only released to the challenged candidate
427 and the challenger(s).
- 428 3. A copy is kept in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall.
- 429 4. For each challenge, the committee will report to the challenger(s) and the challenged
430 candidate all evidence received, any violations substantiated, and any decisions to
431 disqualify the challenged candidate.

433 **8. Reconsideration**

434 If the committee determines a candidate should be disqualified, the candidate may request
435 reconsideration within twenty-four hours of receiving the Preliminary Report. To be
436 reconsidered, the candidate seeking such reconsideration must submit a request in writing to the
437 Office of the Assemblies via email to assembly@cornell.edu. The statement should address the
438 specific findings in the preliminary report to be reconsidered.

439
440 The committee will convene in response to such a request. The committee, after evaluating each
441 request for reconsideration, will take a vote requiring a simple majority to determine if the
442 previous decision to disqualify should be overturned. If the committee votes to overturn the
443 previous decision, then the committee will consider the initial challenge again and will vote to
444 disqualify the candidate by two-thirds majority.

445
446 If a disqualified candidate finds that the Elections Committee was biased in their application of
447 the rules, he or she may request a review by the Judicial Codes and Counselor (JCC). If the JCC
448 review finds that the application of the rules was biased, the decision of the Elections Committee
449 may be overturned.



Cornell University Student Assembly

450

451 **9. Finality**

452 The determination of the committee after expiration or resolution of requests for reconsideration
453 shall be final.

454

455 **10. Confidentiality**

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

464

465 **Appendix A**

466 List of approved Student Assembly committees:

- 467 1. Appropriations Committee
- 468 2. Committee on Inclusion & Diversity Initiatives (SACIDI)
- 469 3. Communications Committee
- 470 4. Community Life Committee
- 471 5. Dining Committee
- 472 6. Diversity Affairs Coalition (SADAC)
- 473 7. Financial Aid Review Committee
- 474 8. Infrastructure Fund Committee
- 475 9. Ivy Council Committee

476

477 **Appendix B**

478 Sample Promotional Materials (Poster and Quarter Card)

479 *Available online.*

480

481