

Undergraduate Student Government

Election Rules

(1) Establishment – Pursuant to (H)(2) of the USG Constitution; all election stipulations and rules shall be outlined in the USG election rules. The election stipulations and rules set forth in this document shall be those of the Undergraduate Student Government (hereinafter referred to as USG) at The University of Akron.

(2) Elections – Pursuant to (H)(1) of the USG Constitution; USG shall hold both general and first-year elections.

- a. One (1) first year election shall be held in the fall of each academic year. The first year election shall be held within the first six (6) weeks of the fall semester.
 - i. The first year Senators shall be elected on the first year election ballot.
 - ii. All members elected in the first year election shall take office on and be sworn in at the next regular senate meeting of the academic year.
- b. One (1) general election shall be held in the spring of each academic year. The general election shall be held within the first eleven (11) weeks of the spring semester.
 - i. The President, Vice President, Senators At-Large and college Senators shall be elected on the general election ballot.
 - ii. All members elected in the general election shall take office on and be sworn in at the last regular senate meeting of the academic year.
- c. The voting period will begin the next business day following the conclusion of the Meet and Greet and will close a week later at 5:00 pm.

(3) Elections Chair

- a. The Undergraduate Student Government Elections Chair (hereinafter referred to as “the chair”) shall be responsible for organizing and promoting all USG elections.
- b. The chair shall maintain records of all candidates and results.
- c. The chair shall be the current Executive Justice.
- d. In the event that the Executive Justice is unable to successfully fulfill the duties of the chair, he/she will be removed from the position by a 2/3rd vote of the judicial branch as a whole, with a new justice being appointed to the chair position by the Chief Justice.
- e. The chair is the official spokesperson for the elections. Any and all questions should be directed to the chair. In the event that the chair is unavailable, questions regarding the elections should be directed to the Chief Justice and/or the USG full-time advisor and/or

his or her designee.

- f. The chair shall monitor online voting to determine the integrity of the election.

(4) Application Procedures

- a. Applications will be made available and must be returned to the designated place on the date stated by the chair. No late applications will be accepted by the chair.
- b. All applications and petitions must be validated and approved by a USG Advisor within five (5) business days after the stated deadline for turning in applications and petitions. Applicants for candidacy will be notified whether or not their names will be placed on the ballot.
- c. Applications and petitions must be completely filled out prior to the application deadline or they will not be considered acceptable by the chair.

(5) Candidates

- a. Candidates are defined as an undergraduate student seeking an elected office in USG.
- b. Each candidate may seek and/or be elected to one (1) USG position
 - i. All candidates must intend to fill the entire tenure of their elected office.
- c. All candidates must meet the membership requirements for elected officials outlined in (B)(2)(a)(i) of the USG Constitution. The candidates must also meet additional requirements as described in their respective paragraphs of these election rules.
- d. All candidates must attend all candidates meetings, as outlined in section (7) of this document.
- e. Names of the candidates will not be officially announced until during the first candidates meeting.
- f. Senate and First Year Senate candidates
 - i. Candidates running for an office in Senate, upon election, shall be charged with the duties authorized to them pursuant to section (C) of the USG Constitution.
 - ii. Applications must be submitted on an individual ticket bearing the name and signature of the candidate.
 - iii. Candidates eligible for the first year senate positions are students with first year status, at the time of the first year election, at The University of Akron.
 - iv. If no undergraduate student runs for a college represented seat or an At-Large Senate seat, the Senate Chair shall fill the vacancy following appropriate hiring procedures as stated in the General Bylaws.

g. President and Vice President candidates

- i. Candidates for the office of President and Vice President, upon election, shall be charged with the duties authorized to them pursuant to section (D) of the USG Constitution.
- ii. Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates must run as a joint ticket and submit one application, with the signature of both candidates.
- iii. If either candidate (Presidential or Vice Presidential) is voluntarily or involuntarily removed from the ballot, the ticket is void and the remaining eligible candidate must reapply for the election and gather new signatures under the new ticket. If a ticket becomes void, the remaining eligible candidate has the opportunity to come before the Judicial Branch and ask for an extension.
- iv. Additional Requirements

The undergraduate student Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates must have served at least one (1) full, academic semester in USG, in an elected or appointed position and have fulfilled all current membership requirements.

- h. If deemed ineligible, a candidate may not submit a new application for that given election cycle.
- i. All former members of USG who wish to run for a position during an election cycle will be granted permission to run on a case by case basis by the Judicial Branch.
- j. Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates are expected to maintain their respective presidential positions for the following fall and spring semesters if elected. Candidates who are expected to graduate in the fall semester following the elections are not eligible to run.
- k. The Chair shall not be a candidate during the semester in which the said election is being held.

(6) Election Petition

- a. An election petition is defined as a list of unique signatures of University of Akron undergraduate students; including each student's name, university identification number, signature, and if applicable, respective college.
- b. Senate candidates must compile a list of seventy-five (75) unique signatures. Senate candidates for first year Senators are exempt from obtaining signatures. A minimum of twenty (20) percent of petition signatures for college-specific seats must be from students enrolled in said college.
- c. A ticket, including one (1) candidate for President and one (1) candidate for Vice President, must compile a list of two hundred (200) unique signatures.

(7) Candidates Meeting

- a. A candidates meeting shall be defined as a mandatory meeting of all candidates with the chair.
- b. The purpose of the first candidates meeting shall be defined as a mandatory meeting to announce candidates, provide petition information, and review the election rules.
 - i. The candidates will sign a document stating they have read and agree to adhere to all election rules.
 - ii. Any candidate who does not attend the candidates meeting, without twenty-four (24) hours' prior notice to the chair, shall be immediately disqualified.
- c. The purpose of the second candidates meeting shall be defined as a mandatory meeting of all candidates with the chair to discuss an updated candidates list, requirements of candidate meet and greet, requirements of President and Vice President debate, and any other pertinent elections updates/information.
 - i. Any candidate who does not attend the candidates meeting, without twenty-four (24) hours' prior notice to the chair, shall be immediately disqualified.
- d. There will be no declaration of candidacy or campaigning to any member of the undergraduate student body, as defined in this document under section eight (8), permitted prior to the first candidates meeting.

(8) Campaign Rules and Guidelines

- a. Campaigning is defined in this document as any activity promoting the candidacy of any person through any means whatsoever, including but not limited to: the posting of print materials, the distribution of campaign materials, the dissemination of materials promoting internet web site(s), promoting a person's candidacy by either conventional or electronic means to students of the university, spoken rhetoric, and otherwise promoting a person's candidacy.
- b. Campaigning in the USG office is prohibited. Candidates and their staff may not use USG resources to conduct or facilitate campaign activities. Members of USG are not permitted to wear campaign regalia expressly advocating the election or defeat of a candidate/ticket while working in an official USG capacity, or while in the USG office (e.g. while serving office hours, manning the front desk, speaking to student organizations as a representative of USG).
- c. The discussion of potential or actual candidates shall be strictly prohibited in the USG office. This includes, but is not limited to, inquiries about potential candidacies, discussing the qualifications of (potential) candidates, discussing the campaigning of candidates, or any other topics that relate to specific individuals and not the election as a

whole.

- d. All candidates must follow the guidelines of each building on campus in which the candidate is campaigning. Guidelines can be obtained from the building coordinator of each facility.
- e. There shall be no campaign material placed in or on the trees of The University of Akron property.
- f. Postings of any kind on The University of Akron property by candidates and their staff (as defined in section nine [9] of this document) with the exception of chalkboards, whiteboards, bulletin boards, sidewalks, and “The Rock” in front of Crouse Hall, is strictly forbidden.
- g. Candidates are responsible for removal of their campaign materials within three (3) business days of the conclusion of the election. If university maintenance is required to remove the materials, the responsible candidate will be billed accordingly. The posting of campaign material in any campus buildings must be done during regularly scheduled building operating hours.
- h. Campaign Material
 - i. All materials must clearly state that the candidate is seeking election to USG as well as state the specific position sought.
 - ii. The use of the USG graphic may be used at the permission of the USG Elections Chair to ensure that the graphic is used in good taste. The use of The University of Akron copyrighted symbols (e.g., Zippy, The University of Akron seal, etc.) on campaign material is forbidden.
 - iii. Candidates will be permitted (and are encouraged) to use the official “URL” directing voters to the voting web site. Allowing the use of this “URL” shall not constitute endorsement of candidates by USG.
 - iv. All candidates must have the following disclaimer on any type of campaign material (e.g., posters, flyers, etc.): “The views and opinions expressed on this document are solely those of the candidate. The contents of this page in no way reflect the views and opinions of the Undergraduate Student Government or The University of Akron.”
 - v. All other materials too small for the previous disclaimer (e.g., pins, buttons, pens, etc.) must be approved by the chair prior to distribution.
 - v. The chair reserves the right to require candidates to remove inappropriate material.
 - vi. Any candidate who engages in the public defamation of another candidate such as slander, libel, etc. will be subject to disqualification.

- vii. A candidate must have the expressed written consent of an organization prior to using that organization's list-serv. The candidate must notify and provide proof of consent to the chair prior to his/her usage of said list-serv.
- i. USG sponsored voting booths, the USG office, and events (except specially designated events such as the Presidential and Vice Presidential debate and the candidate Meet and Greet) will be protected under a fifteen (15) foot radius of a no-campaigning zone.

(9) Campaign Staff

- a. To assist the candidates, they may have five (5) staff members. A Presidential/Vice-Presidential ticket staff may be composed of an additional two (2) general staff members, for a total of seven (7) staff members.
 - i. No current member of the Judicial Branch during that given election cycle may be a staff member for a candidate.
 - ii. Each candidate is required to hand in an election staff compliance sheet listing all their staff members to the chair. They do not need to specify the specific role of each staff member. The staff is to adhere to the guidelines and rules set forth by this document and the chair.
 - iii. The election staff compliance sheet must be turned in with the petition signatures, unless otherwise determined by the chair of elections.
 - iv. Campaign staff members engaging in violation of any election rules will be banned from any further campaigning in that election, and may be subject to further action determined by the appropriate university officials. The candidate for whom they are working may be subject to consequences determined by the Judicial Branch or appropriate university officials.
- b. Support is defined as recommending the candidate without material/financial compensation.
 - i. Candidates may have an unlimited number of supporters. Supporters are limited to the following: helping candidates through oral recommendation, wearing campaign insignia, passing out campaign materials (e.g., flyers, posters, etc.), and working candidate-sponsored campaign booths. Supporters cannot in any way help candidates manage finances or create campaign material.
 - ii. Individual supporters do not need to be documented.
- c. Endorsement is defined as supporting a candidate with financial or material compensation.
 - i. If a candidate is endorsed by a student organization, they must submit prior

written permission of the organization to the chair of elections before using said endorsement in campaign materials.

- ii. If a candidate is endorsed by an individual, he/she must submit the appropriate form.
- iii. No monetary restrictions shall be invoked on any campaign.
- iv. If a candidate is endorsed by an organization via materials, the candidate must provide documentation of the material and dollar value of materials to the chair of the elections within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving said materials.

(10) Voting

- a. Online voting shall open and close at times to be announced by the chair of elections at the first candidates meeting.
 - i. Elections will be held over the internet and will be facilitated by a web site to be designed by the chair in conjunction with the appropriate university resources.
 - ii. Voters must have a valid “UANET ID” and password in order to vote in the online election. (The “UANET ID” can be obtained from the help desk, campus ext. 6888.)
 - iii. Voters may vote for the appropriate number of At-Large Senators. Voters may vote for their respective college Senator representative, if applicable, and for a Presidential/Vice-Presidential ticket.
 - iv. Voters need not vote for all vacancies for any available position, nor must they vote for each and every position and/or ballot issue in order for their vote to count.
 - v. No person shall cast a vote on behalf of another except to facilitate voting for individuals with disabilities.
 - vi. Should the university network become unavailable for a period of time greater than twenty percent (20%) of the total polling time, the elections chair shall invalidate the results of the election and shall extend the election for five (5) business days. Should such unavailability of the network be due to the sabotage by any candidate or any candidate’s campaign staff, the chair of elections shall disqualify that candidate and may allow the election to stand provided that the chair determines the election has not otherwise been compromised.
 - vii. The identity of any individual suspected of tampering with or promoting illegal voting through the online voting system or otherwise sabotaging or attempting to unduly influence the outcome of the election by electronic means will be forwarded immediately by the chair of elections to the appropriate university authorities.

- viii. Should the chair of elections determine that the elections are unable to be held in an online format, the chair shall implement another system of balloting to be used for that election. In the event that this occurs, any references in the election rules pertaining exclusively to online elections may be suspended upon direction of the elections chair.
- ix. Promoting illegal voting shall be strictly prohibited. Sanctions will be adjudicated through the Judicial Branch or through other appropriate university officials.
- x. The winners of the elected positions shall be those candidates that receive a plurality of the valid votes cast.
- xi. Results of the election shall not be posted on the university web site or any other place prior to the results being announced to the candidates.

(11) Adjudication

- a. Violation of any of the above election rules will result in sanctions at the discretion of the Judicial Branch, not to exceed, or up to, forfeiture of the elections or, if applicable, forwarded to appropriate university authorities, as stated in (10) (viii) of these election rules.
- b. The Judicial Branch shall have absolute jurisdiction, pursuant to the USG Constitution, to adjudicate any grievance filed in relation to any election, candidate, or campaign staff member.
- c. Election grievances shall be filed with the chair of elections.
 - i. Grievance forms must be typed and signed. All grievances must be submitted in writing to the USG office secure drop box in Student Union room 307A. Anonymous election grievances may not be filed.
 - ii. Grievances that challenge voting or request recounts must be made within three (3) business days following the election.
- d. The hearing process shall be outlined by the judiciary in the most current General Bylaws or by the Chief Justice upon request.
- e. The chair of elections, as a sitting justice, shall have no judicial powers in the event of an election-related grievance. In the event of an election-related grievance, the Chief Justice will preside over any and all hearings in regards to the matter.