



THE ELECTIONS CODE OF THE TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Mission

This code aims to uphold the principles of student-led elections and foster a democratic and inclusive environment.

Purpose

This code serves as the framework that governs the conduct of Student Government Association Elections. It establishes rules and procedures to ensure fair, transparent, and orderly elections.

TITLE I: ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY - ELECTION COMMISSION

ARTICLE 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Commission shall be to assist the Election Commissioner in the execution of the election, as well as to serve as initial dispute resolution. All election disputes will first be reviewed by the Election Commission for resolution. Must uphold responsibilities under this election code. All students reserve the right to report any misconduct orchestrated by the elections commissions board to the SGA Judicial Branch.

ARTICLE 2: POSITIONS

The Election Commission shall consist of three representatives. These positions are open to the entire student body, with the Executive Board overseeing the appointment process of all three individuals. The Student Senate shall be responsible for confirming or denying each Election Commissioner during an official hearing in an SGA Senate Meeting, according to a majority vote. The Judicial Branch reserves the right to appeal any and all decisions made by the Student Senate, which can then be taken to the SGA Appellate Court. No representative that serves on the Election Commission shall be a candidate for any SGA Position for the election they are overseeing, nor should they hold an SGA Position for the upcoming SGA year.

ARTICLE 3: SWEARING IN

All commission board members shall be sworn in on the first week of march, at an official SGA Senate meeting. The swearing in process reinstates through oath, that commission board members shall not make any decisions based on personal interests or discriminate based on racial, ethnic, gender, sex, or ability bias and must be ethical in their decision making. In the case of any report made against the Elections Commissioners, refer to the SGA Judicial Bylaws.

TITLE II: RUNNING CANDIDATES

ARTICLE 1: POSITIONS

The positions subject to the Election Code shall be:

- a. President
- b. Vice President
- c. Senators

ARTICLE 2: QUALIFICATIONS

a. President

Candidates for the office of President shall meet and fulfill all requirements of the Constitution, By-laws, and Elections Code regarding the office of the President.

b. Vice-President

Candidates for the office Vice-President shall meet and fulfill all requirements of the Constitution, By-laws, and Elections Code regarding the office of the Vice-President.

c. Senators

Senatorial candidates shall meet and fulfill all requirements of the Constitution, By-laws, and Elections Code regarding the office of Senator.

TITLE III: ELECTION SEASON

ARTICLE 1: The SGA elections shall be conducted during the Spring Semester of the Academic Year. The Election shall be conducted in five phases as follows:

Phase 1- Solicitation of Candidate Pool

Phase 2- Training of Candidate Pool

Phase 3- Campaigning

Phase 4- Elections

Phase 5- Victory

ARTICLE 2: DEFINITIONS

- a. An election is defined as a process in which multiple candidates run for a position, voters cast their votes, and once a candidate gets the majority of the votes, they are declared the winner of the race. In the case of no majority, a runoff election occurs.
- b. A ticket refers to a group or pair of candidates that run together. Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates will be a ticket. Each Senator candidate shall run individually.
- c. A majority vote is defined as 50% + 1 of the total votes.
- d. A runoff election is defined as a process in which the top two candidates from the first round of an election face off in a second election. The runoff election ensures that one candidate will get a majority vote.
- e. A winner can only be declared once they have gotten a majority of total votes.

TITLE IV: PHASE 1 - SOLICITATION OF CANDIDATE POLL

ARTICLE 1: SOLICITATION OF CANDIDATE POOL

The solicitation of the candidate pool shall commence upon the month of March, exact dates shall be up to the commissioner's discretion. The Elections Commissions Board assumes responsibility for advertising the SGA Elections to the Student Body and may request assistance from any organization for additional promotion. The Election commission's Board shall begin to accept applications for candidacy upon the selected dates for verification. Upon verification of the application, the application shall be forwarded to the Election Commissioner. The Solicitation Phase shall end prior to training the candidate pool, as referenced in Title V.

ARTICLE 2: CANDIDATE POOL BACKGROUND CHECK

The Election Commission shall submit student applicant information to the SGA Advisor to conduct a background check. If any candidate applicant has a history of criminal activity or

misconduct, they must be removed from the candidate pool as seen fit by both the Election Commissioners and the SGA Advisor.

ARTICLE 3: CANDIDATE WITHDRAWAL

If one out of the two candidates in the Presidential/Vice-Presidential Ticket withdraws from the candidate pool, the accompanying candidate may reapply with another individual, so long as the application is resubmitted prior to the training mentioned in Title V. If no substitute candidate can be found, both candidates in the ticket must withdraw from the candidate pool.

TITLE V: PHASE 2 - TRAINING OF CANDIDATE POOL

ARTICLE 1: TRAINING OF CANDIDATE POOL

The Training phase shall commence upon the solicitation of all approved candidates, exact dates shall be up to the commissioner's discretion. The Election Commission's Board maintains oversight of the training, which shall be conducted by the Election Commissioner. The training shall instruct the candidates on the rules and regulations of the election. The training phase shall conclude once all candidates have attended the Election Training, as referenced in Article 2 of this Title.

ARTICLE 2: ELECTION TRAINING

Election Training is mandatory for all running candidates. Only one make-up meeting will be called, and it shall be conducted as soon as possible, per the discretion of the Election Commissioners. Training consists of reading the Election Code by the Election Commissioner and answering any questions asked by candidates. The SGA advisor shall attend all training sessions. Any candidate that breaks any rule under this code shall be disqualified based on the criteria determined in Title XII of the Elections Code.

ARTICLE 3: NEW APPLICATIONS PROHIBITED

No additional candidate applications may be taken after this point. If a candidate who withdrew previously attempts to reapply after Phase 2 – Training of Candidate Pool, they shall not be permitted.

TITLE VI: PHASE 3 - CAMPAIGNING

ARTICLE 1: The SGA Campaign shall commence upon the completion of Candidate Pool Training, as referenced in Title V.

ARTICLE 2: No candidate may appear on a ballot who has not previously submitted an application, duly received before the deadline

ARTICLE 3: Candidates will be verified to ensure that they follow all provisions of the Election Code and the qualifications for the office for which they are a candidate

ARTICLE 4: No candidate shall be on a ballot who has not completed their required Election Training conducted by the Election Commissioner.

ARTICLE 5: A candidate's campaigning expenses will be out of pocket and cannot exceed the following amounts:

- President & Vice President \$400.00
- Senators \$150.00

ARTICLE 6: All candidates shall submit an expense report to the Election Commissions Board. All amounts spent must be detailed in the expenditure report. All expenditure reports must have an accompanying receipt. Expenditure Reports shall be verified by the Election Commissions Board no later than the day after voting closes.

ARTICLE 7: No candidate may campaign outside of the designated election timeline.

ARTICLE 8: Any student assisting a candidate must be recognized as campaign staff by the elections commission board through the submission of the campaign staff form. The candidate assumes responsibility for all actions of campaign staff conducted as a part of the campaign.

- a. Any damages created on campus as a result of a candidate's campaign shall be paid for by the candidate responsible. Expenses coming out of damages shall not be included in their campaign expenses and shall be a separate expense.
- b. All printed campaign material must comply with university guidelines regarding posted material.
- c. All campaign materials must be removed within seventy-two (72) hours of election results being posted.
- d. Candidates and campaign staff may not remove, cover up/conceal (by any means), destroy, or vandalize another candidate's materials.
- e. Candidates may not use the official labels or logo of Student Government including but not limited to Student Government Committees on their campaigning material.
- f. The Election Commissions board will review all campaign material prior to use.

ARTICLE 9: Any disqualified candidate bears the responsibility for removal of campaign material.

ARTICLE 10: Complaints against other candidates shall be submitted to the Elections Commissions Board.

TITLE VII: PHASE 4 - ELECTIONS

ARTICLE 1: The SGA Election shall occur during the month of April and shall last three class days (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday). The results of the election shall be announced in an open forum after all votes have been counted.

ARTICLE 2: Run-off elections, if needed, shall be held the next week for two (2) continuous class days (Tuesday-Wednesday). Final run-off results shall be printed and posted in the morning following the closing of the run-off election.

ARTICLE 3: All election results will be verified by the Election Commission's Board and announced by the Election Commissioner.

ARTICLE 4: All candidates are permitted to continue campaigning, as referenced in Title VI, until the last day of the election, including potential runoffs.

TITLE VIII: PHASE 5 - INAUGURATION

ARTICLE 1: The official inauguration for all elected candidates shall be held during the Emerging Leader's celebration. All candidates must be present to be sworn in.

ARTICLE 2: All elected officials may start their term as soon as they are sworn in, but the official legislative sessions shall start in the second week of the following school year.

TITLE IX: POLLING PROCEDURES

ARTICLE 1: Polling shall be conducted virtually through the official TAMIU Online Platform. No physical polling locations shall be designated

ARTICLE 2: All TAMIU students are eligible to vote in the elections, regardless of graduation year or classification.

TITLE X: DEBATES

ARTICLE 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of the debates shall be to display the campaigns of the running Presidents and Vice Presidents to the student body, allowing for questions and answers, community and civic engagement, and public student input.

ARTICLE 1: HOSTS AND DATES

The Elections Commission board is responsible for the planning and executing of the SGA Debates and shall advise all candidates of the event's time and date at the Election Training. Candidates must confirm their attendance at least three days prior to the event date. This event shall occur on the day before elections open.

ARTICLE 2: SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- a. The presidential debate shall be followed by the Vice-Presidential debate. There will be a 5–10-minute break between the Vice-Presidential and Presidential debates.
- b. Candidates can have a 2-minute opening statement and a 1-minute closing statement. Each candidate will be asked a series of questions, created by the election commissioners board, that will be answered in a randomized order.
- c. After all planned questions are asked and answered, students attending will have an opportunity to ask questions to a candidate. Their questions can be asked of a specific candidate or to all.

TITLE XI: PARTY AT THE POLLS

ARTICLE 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of Party at the polls is to promote and encourage voter turnout for the SGA Elections with the help of Student Organizations. Board members shall give all running candidates the chance to have their own booth to promote themselves at this event and invite all student organizations to have an activity booth to help promote the elections.

ARTICLE 2: HOSTS AND DATES

The Elections Commission board is responsible for the planning and executing of the SGA Party at the Polls and shall advise all candidates of the event’s time and date at the Election Training. Candidates must confirm their attendance at least three days prior to the event date. The event should take place on the last day of elections.

ARTICLE 3: PARTICIPANTS

This event is catered for TAMIU students in collaboration with any student organizations willing to participate with their own activity booth. Candidates and student organizations participating at this event cannot promote campaign merchandise nor help students vote on-site.

SECTION 5: BUDGET

The money being used for this event shall come out of the SGA “Elections Budget”.

TITLE XII: DISQUALIFICATION AND APPEAL PROCESS

ARTICLE 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this title shall be to enforce integrity and fairness throughout the Student Government Association election process.

ARTICLE 2:

All candidates who commit up to three (3) violations of any Election Commission guidelines during campaigning and election dates shall be disqualified. Candidates must receive an official notice from the Election Commission regarding each individual violation committed.

ARTICLE 3:

Candidates will be automatically disqualified without warning if they begin their official campaign and/or discuss endorsements with organizations prior to the official date permitted by the Elections Commission.

ARTICLE 4:

Candidates who believe they have been wrongly accused of committing a campaign violation of any sort may submit an appeal to the Election Commissioners. This appeal must be submitted before the last day of the election phase in which the candidate was accused.

ARTICLE 5:

Candidates who believe the official election results may be inaccurate may submit an appeal to contest the election results. This appeal must be submitted at most forty-eight (48) hours after the official vote count has been released.

ARTICLE 6:

All cases of campaign rule violations and election result objections, as referenced in Title XII – Articles 4 & 5, shall be directed from the Election Commission onto the SGA Appellate Court.

TITLE XIII: VIOLATION REPORTING PROCESS

ARTICLE 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this title shall be to describe how all students may report misconduct from both candidates and Election Commissioners.

ARTICLE 2:

All students reserve the right to report misconduct from candidates to the Election Commissioners. Violations of university guidelines or behavioral conduct may be directed to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement (SCCE) for further action. Reports regarding elections training specifically may be handled by the Election Commission and Appellate Court as necessary.

ARTICLE 3:

All students reserve the right to report Election Commissioners if any of the three members are not upholding their responsibilities. This reporting process must go directly to the SGA Appellate Court for further action. Any issues regarding student conduct or university guidelines must be directed to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement (SCCE) for further action.