

# **ELECTIONS POLICY**

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# **POLICY 1: ELECTIONS & REFERENDA IN-GENERAL**

## ***Introduction:***

The purpose of this policy shall be to outline the general rules and procedures of elections.

## ***Section 1: Compliance***

**1.1** Elections shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution, policies and resolutions of the Sheridan Student Union.

**1.2** Candidates and their representatives are responsible for reading and being familiar the Elections Policy.

**1.3** Ignorance of any rule presented in these documents, revisions, or addenda is not an excuse for violations. Candidates should seek clarifications if needed.

**1.4** Any person with concerns regarding the organization, operation, or outcome of the election shall register complaints in writing, to the Returning Officers.

## ***Section 2: Passage***

**2.1** A plurality voting system shall be employed for the counting of ballots.

**2.1.1** Electors shall mark a number of choices not exceeding the numbers of open positions.

**2.1.2** Votes shall be counted for each candidate, and candidate(s) with the most votes shall be duly elected.

**2.1.3** In the event of a vote of confidence, candidates with a simple majority of yes votes shall be duly elected.

## ***Section 3: Electoral Officers***

**3.1** The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) shall oversee the general conduct and execution of elections on behalf of the Board of Directors and shall fulfill these duties with all due diligence and impartiality.

**3.2** The Elections and Referenda Committee shall act as an oversight body to the elections process and the CRO, while also playing an advisory and support role to the CRO and performing such duties as required.

## **POLICY 2: NOMINATIONS**

### ***Introduction:***

The purpose of this policy shall be to outline the rules and regulations relating to the nomination process for an election.

### ***Section 1: Candidate Eligibility***

**1.1** All members who meet the eligibility criteria in Bylaw 5.3 are eligible to run in the election.

**1.2** Any member who has been disqualified from an election may not run for a period of one (1) calendar year from the date of disqualification.

**1.2.1** Any member who has acted in capacity as an agent or campaign team member for the campaign of a candidate who has been disqualified from previous elections may not run or represent a candidate for a period of one (1) calendar year from the date of disqualification.

**1.3** Any member who has previously served as a Director and vacated their seat as per Bylaw 5.6 (b) (ii), shall not be eligible for re-election until one (1) calendar year has passed from the date of their vacancy.

### ***Section 2: Nominations Process***

**2.1** The opening and closing of nominations must be advertised for at least ten (10) business days where regular classes are scheduled.

**2.2** Nominations must be open for a minimum of five (5) business days and may be open in conjunction with the second week of the advertisement of an election as stated in the Elections Policy 2: Item 2.1.

**2.3** Nominees must be a student enrolled during the current academic year, as defined by Sheridan College, and a member of the campus of the position for which they are running.

### **Section 3: Nominations Package**

**3.1** Before nominations are scheduled to open, the CRO shall create a 'Nominations Package' for distribution to all hopeful nominees.

**3.1.1** The 'Nomination Package' will be available for the time period determined by the CRO.

**3.2** The package shall include the following:

**3.2.1** The date on which the nomination period ends;

**3.2.2** The date, time and location of any mandatory meeting;

**3.2.3** A copy of all election-related policies;

**3.2.4** Descriptions of all positions presently open for election;

**3.2.5** A copy of the supplementary 'Code of Conduct';

**3.2.6** A 'Nomination Form' which must include the following in order for the nominee to become an official candidate:

**3.2.6.1** A 'Statement of Responsibility' form which will serve as a declaration of candidacy and understanding of the policies and resolutions governing the election; and

**3.2.6.2** An 'Inspection of Student Records' form to authorize the CRO access to verify with Sheridan College that the nominee meets eligibility requirements; and

**3.2.7** Each candidate must complete their platform as a Board Director including how they will contribute to Sheridan Student Union Board of Directors.

**3.3** All relevant forms within the 'Nominations Package', outlined from 3.2.1 to 3.2.7, must be completed and submitted online before the close of nominations in order for the nominee to meet the criteria to become an official candidate for an election.

## ***Section 4: Elections Application Review Committee***

**4.1** Upon receipt and review of all applications, the CRO shall redact all approved applications in order to remove any identifying information, such as Candidate name and student identification number.

**4.2** The CRO shall then provide all applications to the Elections Application Review Committee for review.

**4.2.1** The committee shall consist of four (4) members:

**4.2.1.1** There shall be three (3) currently serving Directors of the Board as voting members of the committee;

**4.2.1.2** The current serving CRO shall serve as chair of the committee and not have a vote.

**4.2.1.3** Any current serving directors who are seeking re-election are unable to sit on the review committee out of conflict of interest.

**4.3** The committee shall review all applications to determine the suitability of the candidate for a seat on the Board of Directors based off their previous experience and what would be required of them as a Director.

**4.4** Upon selecting no more than six (6) candidates per campus, the committee shall provide their selection to the CRO for release of the “Official Candidates List”.

## ***Section 5: Official Candidates List***

**5.1** A nominee’s candidacy is not official until the Returning Officers have posted an “Official Candidates List” on which the potential candidate’s name appears. The “Official Candidates List” must at minimum, be posted on the Student Union website, emailed to all applicants and available from the electronic voting platform, Simply Voting.

## ***Section 6: Withdrawal of Nomination***

**6.1** All nominees and/or candidates may withdraw their nominations by giving signed written notice to the Returning Officers. Nominees and/or candidates are encouraged to meet with the Returning Officers prior to withdrawing to discuss their decision.



## ***Section 7: Re-Opening of Nominations***

**7.1** If there are fewer than four (4) candidates running for positions on the Board of Directors at Davis Campus and/or fewer than four (4) candidates running at Trafalgar Road Campus and/or fewer than four (4) candidates running at the Hazel McCallion Campus, those submitting nomination forms by the deadline shall be acclaimed.

**7.1.1** In the case of a by-election, if there are fewer than or an equal amount of candidates as there are vacant seats to be filled, those submitting nomination forms by the deadline shall be acclaimed.

**7.2** In the case of Elections Policy 2: Items 7.1 and 7.1.1, there shall be a vote of confidence for the nominee(s). A simple majority of votes cast will be required to elect the candidate. This vote will be operated under the same rules as contested elections.

# **POLICY 3: CAMPAIGNING**

## ***Introduction:***

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rules and regulations of campaigning for elections.

## ***Section 1: Candidate Responsibility***

- 1.1** Candidates shall be responsible for the action, and the violations stemming from such actions, of any non-arm's length party (friends, classmates or any other individuals), however occurring.
- 1.2** Candidates shall be responsible for acting in a manner that would not violate the Sheridan College Student Code of Conduct. Any concerns may be escalated to the Student Right and Responsibilities Office for review under the Student Code of Conduct.

## ***Section 2: Campaigning***

- 2.1** The CRO, with approval of the Board of Directors will be responsible for determining the start and end of the campaign period.
- 2.2** The Student Union will post candidate profiles on the elections page which will include a photograph (if provided), the platform and constituency information of the candidate
- 2.3** Word of mouth shall never be defined as campaigning unless the candidate is implicitly or explicitly soliciting a vote.
- 2.4** The Returning Officers shall be responsible for determining whether any specific action or medium shall be deemed to be campaigning.
- 2.5** During the course of the campaign period, no candidate may:
  - 2.5.1** Interfere with or disrupt the normal operations of the college, which includes any businesses or departments which normally operate on-campus, including but not limited to faculty offices, library, and Sheridan services;
  - 2.5.2** Disrupt any academic setting whether physical or digital, such as a library, or study room or virtual class, so that the academic pursuit of any student(s) is unduly impaired;

**2.5.3** Send communications regarding their campaign to students using any internal Sheridan Learning Management Systems (LMS), such as SLATE;

**2.6** The following people shall not be permitted to campaign for any candidate(s):

**2.6.1** A Director of the Board;

**2.6.2** A full-time staff member of the Sheridan Student Union;

**2.6.3** A member of the current SSU Student Executive, including a Vice-President, Clubs Coordinator or Student Life Coordinator;

### ***Section 3: Campaign Materials***

**3.1** Campaign materials and behaviour may not contain any content, including but not limited to:

**3.1.1** Nudity, violence, alcohol, drugs, or weapons

**3.1.2** Discriminatory or offensive content

**3.1.3** Negative content about another candidate, the Elections Process, the Sheridan Student Union, or Sheridan College.

**3.1.4** Other content as identified by the CRO

### ***Section 4: Social Media Policy***

**4.1** All elections-based social media accounts must be officially confirmed by the Returning Officers.

**4.2** During the election, the following people must remain neutral in their support of the elections through the use of social media:

**4.2.1** A Director of the Board;

**4.2.2** A full-time staff member of the Sheridan Student Union;

**4.2.3** A member of the current SSU Student Executive, including a Vice-President, Clubs Coordinator or Student Life Coordinator.

**4.3** The aforementioned must not express any targeted support for any specific candidate(s) and may only post general information about the election on social media sites.

**4.4** No candidate, agent or member of a campaign team may post either directly or indirectly a link to Simply Voting during voting days should electronic voting be used as a means of voting.

**4.5** Candidates may use any social media channel (ex. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube, etc.), so long as it is approved by the Returning Officers.

**4.6** The Returning Officers will monitor all officially confirmed social media accounts promoting a candidate.

**4.6.1** The Returning Officers may deem content as inappropriate and will notify the candidate of such. The candidate will have four (4) hours from the time the notification is given to remove the content.

**4.7** Contacting students via a mailing list must not infringe on the students' privacy.

**4.7.1** Any use of thessu.ca, sheridansu.net, sheridanstudentunion.com, sheridaninstitute.ca, sheridancollege.ca or any variation of SSUI volunteer lists, or any other college information databases to acquire student emails is strictly prohibited.

**4.7.2** The use of user-generated mailing lists (contacts already in your address book or friends the candidate has on a social network) is allowed.

**4.7.2.1** If, at any point, a student communicates interest in being removed from a mailing list as defined above, the candidate must respect the student's wish and avoid contact with said student via a mailing list from that point forward.

**4.8** No candidate will resort to phishing, social engineering, or otherwise collect Sheridan student usernames and/or passwords with the intent of committing voting fraud.

## ***Section 5: Platforms***

**5.1** All platforms must meet the requirements of the Sheridan Student Code of Conduct and not infringe upon the individual rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

**5.2** It is the responsibility of all candidates to provide their approved platform to the Returning Officers upon submission of their nomination package.

## ***Section 6: Withdrawal or Disqualification of a Candidate***

**6.1** Candidates must withdraw in writing to the Returning Officers, and where possible meet in person with the Returning Officers to discuss their withdrawal.

**6.2** Where a candidate has withdrawn or been disqualified from an election, any votes cast for that candidate are to be considered spoiled, and the resulting count being added to the classification of “spoiled” when the election results are released.

**6.3** No disqualified candidate or their candidate representative shall be allowed to be present during ballot counting.

## **POLICY 4: VOTING & BALLOTS**

### ***Introduction:***

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rules for voting and ballots for elections.

### ***Section 1: Means of Voting***

**1.1** Voting shall be conducted through Simply Voting, an online voting software, with a plurality ballot.

### ***Section 2: Polling***

**2.1** A complete list of eligible voters shall be provided by Sheridan College.

**2.1.1** The list will only include students that are eligible to vote at their respective campus.

**2.1.2** If a student is not on the voters list, they are ineligible to vote.

**2.2** Members shall vote by secret ballot.

### ***Section 3: Voting Ballot***

**3.1** The ballot shall specify how many candidates the voter may select for the position of Director of the Board and it will list the candidates for the respective position(s) in the order that the Returning Officers have received the nomination package.

**3.2** A ballot shall be considered official upon submission.

**3.3** A ballot shall be considered spoiled if:

**3.3.1** The member has not selected any candidates;

### ***Section 4: Counting***

**4.1** Electronic voting allows for ballots to be tabulated automatically.

**4.2** Should votes be cast for any candidate that has withdrawn or is disqualified, but whose name could not be removed from the ballot, then that ballot shall be discounted.

**4.2.1** Votes discounted as per this section shall only be discounted for the individual who has withdrawn or been disqualified; therefore the ballot will still be counted for the remaining candidates.

**4.3** All decisions regarding candidates' disqualification must be made prior to the release of electronic results of ballots.

**4.4** Votes shall be counted for each candidate, and the candidate(s) with the most votes shall be declared duly elected.

### ***Section 5: Election Results***

**5.1** Unofficial results will be released within two (2) business days following the close of the polls.

**5.2** Prior to the release of the official results, the elections committee will be responsible for reviewing the results of the election. Within a twenty-four (24) hour period, the elections committee must address any issues that have arisen from the release of the unofficial results.

### ***Section 6: Destruction of Ballots***

**6.1** Relevant balloting data shall not be destroyed until seventy-two (72) hours after the ballots are tallied or re-tallied but must be destroyed within one-hundred-and-twenty (120) hours of the election.

# **POLICY 5: DEMERITS, DISQUALIFICATIONS & APPEALS**

## ***Introduction:***

The purpose of this policy shall be to outline the rules regarding demerits for elections.

## ***Section 1: Sanctions and Disqualifications***

**1.1** The Returning Officers shall be responsible for enforcing campaign regulations, and shall have the power to levy sanctions against any member of the Student Union for any infraction of the By-Laws, policies or Code of Conduct related to elections.

**1.2** Any violation of the Elections Policy by a Candidate or other individuals representing and/or acting on behalf of the Candidate shall be considered grounds for sanction.

**1.3** To ensure fair elections, the CRO will supersede the policies in granting sanctions for events of extensive ethical reasoning or extenuating circumstances which may include but are not limited to: discrimination, unfair campaigning practices etc.

## ***Section 2: Publication of Rulings***

**2.1** Within twenty-four (24) hours of the Returning Officers making a ruling on a policy violation, they must publish the ruling on the SSU website. The ruling shall include a description of their reasons, evidence considered, and any punishments.

## ***Section 3: Sanctioning Process***

**3.1** The process and timeline for alleged violations resulting in sanctions shall be as follows:

**3.1.1** The Returning Officers are informed of an alleged violation or witness unsatisfactory behaviour. They will communicate written notice of the violation which will be provided via email to the candidate within twenty-four (24) hours. The notice will include the alleged violation, the section of the Elections Policy that the violation infringed, and any sanction being levied.

**3.2** Sanctions may include, but are not limited to: written warning, suspension of campaign, or disqualification from election.



*Note: Sheridan Student Union Inc. wishes to acknowledge Brock University Students' Union, IGNITE Student Union, McMaster Students Union, Mohawk Students' Association, Student Association of George Brown College, University of Toronto Students' Union, and University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union as sources for parts of this policy.*