

ELECTIONS CODE

6. ELECTIONS

6.1 Elections Code

6.1.1 These codes set forth the Procedures to be followed for a) the annual election of GSA Officers and b) any referendum addressed to all graduate students.

6.1.2 It shall be the joint responsibility of the Commissioner of Elections and the Elections Board to enforce these Codes.

6.2 Commissioner of Elections Duties

6.2.1 The Commissioner of Elections shall be responsible for conducting a fair and timely election that ensures the election of a cabinet for the upcoming academic year

6.2.2 The Commissioner of Elections shall be responsible for informing all graduate students of GSA Elections affairs and elections procedures

6.2.3 The Commissioner of Elections shall be responsible for ensuring that the graduate student body is informed and aware of how to formally vote for annual ballot referenda and candidates for elected office

6.2.4 The Commissioner of Elections shall be responsible for coordinating replacement of elected officers in the event of a vacant office (e.g. resignation or removal).

6.2.5 The Commissioner of Elections is not a member of GSA cabinet. Position is for two quarters- Winter and Spring.

6.3 Impartiality

6.3.1 The Commissioner of Elections is an independent neutral individual and shall not be subject to influence by outside entities including GSA Officers.

6.3.2 The Commissioner of Elections shall ensure fairness by making all elections information available to all graduate students and distributing information regarding elections procedures equally among candidates and individuals seeking to put referenda on the ballot.

6.3.3 No person having served as the Commissioner of Elections shall be eligible for candidacy for any office of the GSA in the academic year in which they served as Commissioner of Elections. The Commissioner of Elections shall not be an author of any proposed referendum.

6.4 Elections Board

6.4.1 The Commissioner of Elections shall bring together representatives of GSA Academic Councils to form an Elections Board.

6.4.2 The Commissioner of Elections shall chair all meetings of the Elections Board. In his/her absence the chair shall be chosen from among the members of the Elections Board.

6.4.3 The Elections Board shall be responsible for enforcing the Elections Code as well as assisting the Commissioner of Elections in planning and executing final elections procedures and enhancing the power of the Commissioner of Elections to carry out a fair and timely election.

6.4.4 The membership of the Elections Board shall include the Commissioner of Elections and one representative from each of the thirteen (13) Councils.

6.4.5 Quorum of Elections Board meetings shall be six (6) members, except that in the absence of the Elections Commissioner quorum shall be seven (7) members.

6.4.6 The Election Board must approve the following before they can be submitted to Forum for approval: the results of the election and the election calendar containing the dates of the election and other important elections dates. The Election Board will also determine whether or not candidates' financial expenditures are to be made public.

6.4.7 The Commissioner of Elections and available members of the Board shall conduct a pre-election candidate's orientation meeting which shall be mandatory for all candidates and representatives in order to inform them of the rules and procedures which shall be enforced during the election. Failure to attend orientation shall result in disqualification.

6.4.8 The Elections Board shall meet no sooner than 1 academic day and no later than 2 academic days after the close of balloting to consider formal complaints, if any to certify elections results. The end date of the election should not be on a Friday in order to allow for this procedure to be followed.

6.5 Elections Procedures- Election Calendar

6.5.1 The annual election of GSA Officers shall be conducted in the Spring Quarter at a time when all graduate students could potentially participate in the Election. Elections are not to be conducted when a majority of graduate students are not in session or taking final exams.

6.5.2 Actual dates of the election and method of voting shall be proposed by the Elections Board and approved by the GSA Forum.

6.6 Elections Procedures-Voting

6.6.1 The recommended form of voting shall be electronic, in a manner that ensures fair access to all currently registered graduate students. However, other methods of voting are available. The Elections Board shall decide on the method of voting and if other than electronic, must develop a protocol to ensure fairness.

6.6.2 Graduate student body must be notified before the election is to take place. Voting information should be made public no later than two weeks before the election opens.

6.6.3 The votes for all GSA referenda shall be cast on the same dates as the officer elections.

6.6.4 All voting shall be done confidentially such that names and identifying information on ballots will be removed.

6.6.5 When there are fewer than three candidates running for an office, the voting shall be by single choice ballot. When there are three or more candidates for an office, the Elections Board shall strive to have voting conducted with preferential ballots whereon voters indicate the rank preference of all candidates. The Elections Board may use either the Instant Runoff Voting or the Borda Count voting tabulation method, but not both. The Instant Runoff Voting method is preferred. If the Elections Board determines that it is not feasible to implement preferential balloting in a way that ensures a fair and impartial election, the voting shall be by single choice ballot. The Elections Board must announce which voting tabulation method will be used and have this decision approved by Forum prior to accepting any petitions for candidacy.

6.6.6 Instant Runoff-All votes shall be credited to the highest ranked preference who has not been eliminated. If all indicated preferences on a ballot have been eliminated that ballot becomes inactive and is dropped from the counting process.

6.6.7 The winner shall be that candidate who first receives more than half the ballots still active. In the event no candidate receives a majority of the ballots still active, the candidate with the least number of votes shall be eliminated and his/her votes redistributed.

6.6.8 In the case of a tie among those candidates with the least number of votes all those candidates tied shall be eliminated unless all of the uneliminated candidates are tied, in which case the GSA Forum shall elect a candidate from the uneliminated candidates with the Vice President-Internal Affairs voting in the case of a tie in that body.

6.6.9 Borda Count- Voters shall be asked to rank the candidates in order of preference (1=highest preference). The winner shall be the candidate who first receives more than half the first-rank votes. In the event that no candidate receives more than half the first-rank votes, the following procedure shall be implemented. Let n be the number of candidates in a given race. Each voter lists their top n choices, in order of preference. A first-place rank is worth n points, a second place rank is worth $n-1$ points, a third-place rank is worth $n-2$ points, and so on. A candidate's score is the number of points that candidate receives. The highest scoring candidate will be elected. In the event of a tie, the GSA Forum shall decide between the tied candidates with the Vice President-Internal Affairs voting in the case of a tie in that body.

6.6.10 Single Choice- Under single choice balloting, each voter may vote for at most one candidate, and the winner shall be the candidate who receives more votes than any other candidate. In the event of a tie, the GSA Assembly Forum shall decide between the tied candidates with the Vice President-Internal Affairs voting in the case of a tie in that body.

6.6.11 The Elections Board shall retain all ballots for thirty (30) days after the election or for thirty (30) days after all appeals have been adjudicated, whichever is later.

6.7 Candidacy

6.7.1 To run for GSA office, candidates must be nominated by a petition signed by fifty registered UCLA graduate students. In addition to peer nomination, candidates must submit an application to the Commissioner of Elections by the deadline designated in the Elections Calendar and based on when final elections are to be held.

6.7.2 Final eligibility is determined by Elections Board as well as records indicating candidate is in good standing as a student.

6.7.3 Order of candidates on the ballot will be determined by random selection.

6.7.4 Names of candidates shall be publicized as early as possible via GSA website.

6.7.5 Two or more candidates may run together as a slate and should indicate such on application materials.

6.7.6 No elected Officer of the GSA shall also function in a stipended position or as a Forum Delegate, Council Officer, Housing Association Officer, or Student Interest Board Officer during his/her term of office.

6.8 Campaigning

6.8.1 Campaigning shall be subject to all regulations of the University, including those concerning individual conduct, the distribution and posting of literature, and the use of University facilities, such as campus telephones, the campus postal system, etc.

6.8.2 Each candidate or referendum representative is responsible for the actions of all persons and organizations participating in his/her campaign.

6.8.3 Candidates and referendum representatives shall only make or distribute factually accurate statements and materials. Candidates and referendum representatives shall not knowingly allow others to make or distribute on their behalf statements or materials the candidates could not themselves make.

6.8.4 There is no limit to campaign expenses and the means, cost, and methods of campaigning are at the discretion of candidates. However, *candidates must submit an itemized list of campaign expenses along with their application. After the election, candidates must submit receipts for all costs associated with the election no later than 5pm on the day after the election.* Candidates must submit financially accurate statements. *Failure by candidates to declare all expenses is subject to disqualification.* No expenditures will be reimbursed by GSA. The Elections Board shall determine if and how campaign expenditures will be made public.

6.8.5 Students must comply with UCLA Acceptable Use Policies regarding use of electronic resources. Candidates must not use departmental listserves for campaigning purposes.

6.8.6 Candidates running for office shall conduct themselves according to the UCLA student code of conduct. Opposing candidates shall respect one another at all times. In the event of misconduct, as defined by the UCLA code of conduct, the Elections Board may propose to remove individuals from the Elections and those individuals may face more serious disciplinary action from the University.

6.9 Violations and Appeals

6.9.1 The Elections Board shall meet to consider violations of these Codes upon receipt of a formal complaint by any member of the GSA, provided such a request is made within twenty-four (24) hours of the close of balloting. Complaints may only be filed once balloting has been completed.

6.9.2 Elections Board shall meet no sooner than twenty-four (24) hours and no later than forty-eight (48) hours after the close of balloting to consider formal complaints, if any, and to certify the elections results.

6.9.3 Any ballots returned before an appeal is adjudicated shall be sealed and remain so until the appeal is adjudicated. In the case of electronic balloting, the results will be sealed until the Elections Board has made its decision.

6.9.4 The Elections Board's decision may be appealed to the Forum within five (5) academic days after the election if such an appeal is sponsored by four (4) Forum Delegates. The appeal will be heard at the next regularly scheduled forum meeting.

6.9.5 The ballots shall be destroyed without being unsealed if the election is declared invalid by the Elections Board or the GSA Forum.

6.9.6 The Elections Board has the power to impose any penalty it deems just and proper up to and including disqualification of the candidate subject to the appeal process above.

6.9.7 Appeals for a recount must be made by 5:00 PM at the GSA Office on the academic day following the announcement of the election results. Recounts may only be requested if a race or referendum is within 3%.

6.10 Oath of Office

6.10.1 This oath is to be taken by all elected officers at the time of being seated in their particular positions. The oath of office is administered at the last Forum meeting of the year by the Commissioner of Elections.

6.10.2 Oath -- I (your name) do hereby solemnly pledge to uphold the duties and responsibilities of my position as an Officer within the Graduate Students Association at the University of California, Los Angeles. I also faithfully affirm my dedication as a member of the GSA, to uphold my duties as a GSA Officer over those in any other student organization, and promise to adhere to the issues and concerns of all graduate and professional students at UCLA. I will also represent, to the best of my ability, the credibility and integrity of all members of the GSA to all other organizations, entities, and other individuals. This oath I have taken of sound body and mind.

6.11 Results

6.11.1 Results of the election should be determined by the closing date of the election.

6.11.2 The Elections Board shall meet to approve results at least twenty-four hours after the election is closed but no later than forty-eight hours after the election has closed.

6.11.3 The Elections Board must approve the results and submit to Forum for final approval.

6.11.4 After Forum approval, results will be made public via GSA website and through Daily Bruin coverage.