



Valdosta State University

Student Government Association Code of Elections

This code shall be the governing document in regard to all aspects of the elections process for the Student Government Association of Valdosta State University.

Section 1: Elections

- A. First Year Senator Program
 - a. The SGA Executive Board will establish an application, selection and training process for First Year Students to join the Student Government Association.
 - b. First Year Senators will have the same rights and privileges as all other members of the Student Government Association
- B. Graduate Student Senators
 - a. VSU Graduate Students shall be able to apply to run in regular Senate and Executive Elections.
 - b. VSU Graduate Students may apply for any vacant Senate Seats.

- c. In order to ensure Graduate Student Representation in the SGA Senate, if there are less than five, the SGA President may appoint up to five Graduate Students to become Senators. These Senators must be confirmed by a majority vote.
- C. Senate Vacancies
 - a. The SGA Executive Board must provide an application, selection, and training process to fill vacancies when determined necessary by the SGA Vice-President. The process must be approved by the Executive Council and selected individuals must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Senate.
- D. Spring Elections
 - a. Shall be overseen by the SGA Elections Committee and strictly follow the election guidelines provided within the SGA Governing Documents.

Section 2: SGA Elections Committee

- A. Composition
 - a. The SGA Elections Committee, heretofore referred to as “the committee” or “the elections committee,” shall be comprised of four members: the Elections Commissioner, the Elections Chairperson, the Elections Vice-Chairperson one faculty/staff member.
 - b. The Elections Commissioner shall be the Vice-President for Student Affairs or his/her designee and shall vote only in the case of a tie.
 - c. The Elections Chairperson shall be the Chief Justice of the Student Conduct Council and shall be a voting member of the committee.
 - d. The Elections Vice-Chairperson shall be the Associate Chief Justice of the Student Conduct Council and shall be a voting member of the committee.
 - e. The Faculty/staff member shall be appointed by the Vice-President for Student Affairs and shall be a voting member of the committee.
- B. Duties of the Committee
 - a. Shall approve an appropriate application process for both executive and senate candidates in line with the requirements of the SGA Governing Documents.
 - b. Shall certify eligibility of applicants and election results.
 - c. Shall coordinate the voting process for all candidates.
 - d. Shall interpret, execute, and enforce all election laws provided in the Election Code.
 - e. Shall disseminate rules and regulations to the extent that they are necessary in providing an equal opportunity to all candidates during the entire election process.
 - f. No member of the Elections Committee shall assist, endorse, or support with a campaign for office in the Student Government Association while serving on the Elections Committee.
 - g. Shall annually review the elections code and regulations of the SGA By-laws.
 - h. May adjudicate decisions by majority vote of the committee.

- i. The Elections Committee may choose to host a candidate seminar to explain elections rules to candidates.
- C. Duties of the Commissioner
 - a. Shall verify the GPA and conduct eligibility of applicants
 - b. Shall report to the Senate on all elections issues when appropriate.
 - c. Shall be responsible for ensuring the enforcement of relevant rules outlined in the SGA Governing Documents.
 - d. Shall explain any ambiguities or queries that the candidates or campaign staff may have.
- D. Duties of the Elections Chairperson
 - a. Shall coordinate all logistical and organizational efforts of the elections and campaign period.
 - b. Shall coordinate with the SGA Executive Board when necessary for the drafting of documents, use of supplies, space reservation, and communication with the student body.
 - c. Shall ensure all candidates have access to all rules and relevant information.
 - d. Shall work with the SGA Secretary to notify candidates of their eligibility or ineligibility within two business days of the application deadline.
 - e. Shall fulfill the duties of the Elections Vice-Chairperson along with their own duties in the Election Vice-Chairperson's absence.
- E. Duties of the Elections Vice Chairperson
 - a. Shall assist the Elections Chairperson in the performance of their duties.
 - b. Shall be responsible for the recording of minutes of election committee meetings
 - c. Shall ensure all relevant information and minutes of committee meetings are communicated to the Vice President for Student Affairs, SGA Executive Board, SGA Speaker of the Senate, and SGA Parliamentarian.
 - d. Shall fulfill the duties of the Elections Chairperson along with their own duties in the Elections Chairperson's absence.
 - e. Shall work with the SGA Executive Board to ensure the elections packet is posted on the SGA Website and available in the SGA office.

Section 3: Candidate Eligibility

- A. Executive Candidates
 - a. Must be registered as a full-time student in good standing with the university and must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.7 on a 4.0 scale prior to the start of the campaign period and throughout the elected term.
 - b. Candidates for President and Vice-President must have served one full year in SGA to be eligible for candidacy.

- c. Candidates for Secretary and Comptroller must have served at least one semester in SGA to be eligible for candidacy. This includes Individuals who began their tenure in January and will complete the current semester in SGA
 - d. Must submit a 200 signature petition for nomination to be eligible for candidacy.
 - e. Must be able to fulfill the obligations of the position during the term as listed in the SGA Constitution.
 - f. Must submit one letter of recommendation from VSU Faculty/Staff to be eligible for candidacy.
 - g. Each candidate shall file an elections packet including a statement of intent and grade release statement.
 - h. 5. May serve no more than two terms in a SGA Executive Board position
 - i. 6. Any person elected as a part of the Executive Branch may not hold more than two executive board positions including SGA in any other student organization on campus during their term.
- B. Senate Candidates
- a. Must be registered as a full-time, twelve or more credit hours, student in good standing with the university and must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale prior to the start of the campaign period and throughout the elected term.
 - b. Must submit a 100 signature petition for nomination to be eligible for candidacy.
 - c. Only students enrolled in classes at the Valdosta State University campus are eligible to run for office in Student Government Association.
 - d. Must be able to fulfill the obligations of the officer during the term as listed in the SGA Constitution
 - e. Each candidate shall file an elections packet including a statement of intent and grade release statement.

Section 3: Election Timeline and Campaigning

- A. Election Timeline
- a. The date of the election shall be approved by Senate forty-five days prior to the election date.
 - i. The spring election date shall occur before the third week of April
 - ii. Fall elections shall be conducted as quickly as can be reasonably done to welcome in freshmen senators.
 - b. The elections timeline shall include the due date of the application, any relevant meeting dates, the campaign period, and the election date and time.
 - c. Campaigning may begin from the time candidates are certified as eligible by the elections committee unless otherwise stated in the elections timeline.

- d. The Senate may, in the essence of timeliness, pass the elections timeline without consultation with the elections committee, but the elections committee may adjust the timeline when necessary by majority vote of the committee. Changes must be immediately communicated to all candidates and both branches of SGA.
- B. Campaigning
- a. The period of campaigning shall be set by the SGA Elections Committee and included in the timeline.
 - b. All candidates should submit a list of official campaign team members.
 - c. Campaigns may utilize posters, chalking, sheet signs, t-shirts, buttons, handbills, cards or other items of nominal value but may not campaign in such a way that disrupts campus life or violates any university policy.
 - d. Campaigning shall take place on campus.
 - e. No campaign materials should be placed on student vehicles.
 - f. All materials shall be removed by 12PM the day following the election.
 - g. Door-to-door and event campaigning is prohibited in the residence halls (signage must follow the residence hall protocol).
- C. Tickets
- a. Executive Board Candidates may choose to run together as a ticket.
 - b. Ticket names will be included on the ballot as long as the ticket affiliation form is signed by all candidates and turned in with the packet.
 - c. Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates shall be elected together on the ballot. Presidential/Vice Presidential candidate affiliation forms should be submitted with the elections packet.
- D. Organizational Endorsements
- a. Registered Student Organizations in good standing with the Office of Student Life and Office of Student Conduct may endorse and assist executive board candidates,” tickets,” and senate candidates in campaigning.
 - b. Endorsement forms signed by the candidate and student organization president must be submitted to the elections committee vice-chairperson.
 - c. The endorsement form shall be included in all packets and may be submitted up to the time of the election.

Section 4: Election Conduct

- F. Campaign Violations and Consequences
- a. Any violation of the student Code of Conduct shall result in a thorough investigation and potential disqualification of a candidate or other disciplinary action by the elections committee.
 - b. Destruction of another candidate’s campaign material by a member of another candidate’s campaign staff, or endorsing organization, may result in the

suspension of campaigning by a particular candidate for a specifically defined period of time designated by the election committee.

- c. It is expected that all candidate will act in a way that reflects the values of the Blazer Creed. The elections committee will not tolerate grossly disrespectful, slanderous, gender/ racially charged tactics, including on social media, will not be permitted within the SGA elections time period and campaign events. and may result in the suspension of the campaign of a candidate or” ticket” for a specifically defined amount of time as a result of such actions,
- d. All admissible evidence shall be presented as supporting documentation and verified by the Elections Commissioner, first before any disciplinary action can be recommended. Any other non-verified evidence cannot be considered valid.
- e. The elections committee shall investigate and adjudicate all campaign violations and inform the Assistant Dean of Students for Conduct of any violations within the Student Code of Conduct.

Section 5: Voting, Results, Run-Off, and Irregularities

A. Voting

- a. It is the right of all Valdosta State students to cast a ballot in the SGA Elections.
- b. Each student shall select their executive candidates of choice and be limited to five senators.

B. Results

- a. Senate Candidates shall receive at least 25 votes to be certified.
- b. The top thirty Senate candidates shall be allowed into the Senate.
- c. Results of the election shall be released by noon the following business day after the election.

C. Runoff

- a. A runoff between candidates will be required in the event that majority (50%+1 of votes) is not obtained by any candidate.
- b. In the event of a runoff election between the two candidates having the largest number of votes will be held on a date no later than ten days after the original election.
- c. A simple majority (50%+1 of votes) will determine the winner.
- d. Any candidate may decide not to run in the run-off election by submitting a statement of such to the Elections Commissioner and Elections Chairman, and by doing so the remaining run-off candidate would then be declared the winner of the office.

D. Irregularities

- a. The Elections Committee shall have the power to withhold the certification and results of an election in which it finds substantial evidence that irregularities and/or fraud and alleged or suspected violations of the Elections Code and

regulations have occurred and may have influenced the outcome or results of the election.

- b. Notice of withholding results must be communicated to the Student Government Association Executive and Legislative branch, outlining investigation focuses prior to the announcement of withholding results to the Student Body and candidates.
- c. The Elections Committee shall have three business days' maximum to investigate and rule on the irregularity.
- d. The Elections Committee may call a new election to be held within 10 days of the original election.

Section 6: Definitions:

- A. "Candidate" is an individual seeking an elected office of Student Government Association.
- B. "Campaign" is any public activity or attempt to influence votes for or against a candidate.
- C. "Campaign agent, assistant, or staff" is an individual assisting or acting on behalf of a candidate.
- D. "Campaign materials or paraphernalia" is any advertisement, flyer, t-shirt, handbill, button, sticker, handout, or other item produced or on behalf of a candidate.
- E. "Ticket" is an affiliation of individuals seeking the position of President, Vice President, Secretary, and/or Comptroller soliciting votes collectively