



# Student Assembly Election Rules

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## 41 **Article I: Election Guidelines**

42 Elections are the foundation upon which representative governance rests. These rules are designed to  
43 protect the rights of all candidates, as well as all members of the University community, and to ensure  
44 that the election process takes place in an open and fair arena. Candidates must respect the rights and  
45 privileges of all members of the Cornell community, and follow all election guidelines outlined in this  
46 document. Election rules are subject to the approval of voting members of the Student Assembly each  
47 semester.

### 48 **A. Voter Eligibility**

49 To vote in an election for a seat in the Student Assembly (SA) or for the directly elected seats on the  
50 University Assembly (UA), a person must:

- 51 1. Be a full-time, matriculated undergraduate student enrolled in a degree-granting unit of the  
52 Ithaca campus of the University; and,
- 53 2. Be a member of the constituency for which the seat is designated, if it is designated for one of  
54 the following:
  - 55 a. Specific to college of enrollment
  - 56 b. Freshman
  - 57 c. Transfer

### 58 **B. Definitions**

59 The following words throughout the Election Rules are defined as such:

- 60 1. Candidate: is any person who has successfully completed the outlined steps to become a  
61 candidate, as described in these Election Rules.
- 62 2. Classroom: is any space in which a professor, teaching assistant, or any other instructor holds  
63 prescribed class time. "Classroom" includes in-person, hybrid, and online courses.
- 64 3. Cyber Bullying: is the act of bullying in any online space. These election rules follow the same  
65 definition of bullying as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and applicable university  
66 policies or governmental laws.



- 67 4. Individual or self-promoting publicity: is any outreach events, office hours, postings, or public  
68 facing events, whether in-person or virtual, in which interaction with, or promotion of, the  
69 candidate is a substantial reason for the act.  
70 5. Petitioner: is any person seeking signatures to become a candidate.  
71 6. Social Media: is any online service that allows users to share, create, or post content for social-  
72 networking purposes. Social media services include, but are not limited to: Instagram, Snapchat,  
73 TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Reddit, MySpace, Pinterest, YouTube, and  
74 CampusGroups.  
75 a. Email, GroupMe, WhatsApp, Signal, and text messaging are not social media.  
76

## 77 C. Candidate Information

### 78 1. Eligibility and Requirements

79 To be a candidate, a person must, prior to the petitioning deadline specified in the election calendar:

- 80 1. Be eligible to vote in the election for the seat and plan to remain seated so for the full term  
81 for which they are seeking election.  
82 a. Candidates should not plan to pursue study abroad programs or internships that would  
83 require them to leave the Ithaca campus for any semester during their tenure.  
84 2. Submit a completed candidate registration form and any associated materials required in that  
85 form. You may not register for more than one position on the candidate registration form.  
86 3. Submit petitions endorsed by the required number of people who are eligible to vote in the  
87 election for that specific position, which is the lesser of 10% of those eligible to vote for that  
88 specific position or:  
89 a. 300 for President and Executive Vice President  
90 b. 75 for Womxn's Issues Representative At-Large, Minority Liaison At-Large, First  
91 Generation Student Representative At-Large, and International Students Liaison At-  
92 Large, LGBTQIA+ Students Liaison At-Large, Students With Disabilities  
93 Representative,  
94 c. 150 for all other at-large seats  
95 d. 100 for Arts and Sciences seats  
96 e. 25 for Transfer seat  
97 f. 75 for all other seats  
98 4. Not already hold a directly-elected voting position on the SA and/or UA for the term for  
99 which they are seeking election.  
100 5. Have never held or currently hold the role of Chair of the Research and Accountability  
101 Committee.  
102 6. Have not resigned for a reason other than a Health Leave of Absence or been removed from  
103 the SA or from a directly elected UA seat during the Student Assembly term prior to the  
104 academic year of the term for the seat being elected.

105 To be a candidate, a person must, prior to the commencement of voting as specified in the elections  
106 calendar:



107 1. Apply online to serve on at least one committee of the SA.

108 The Office of the Assemblies, assisted by the Elections Committee, will review submitted materials for  
109 compliance with petitioning requirements as follows:

- 110 1. A sampling method may be used as long as at least 10% of required signatures are validated for  
111 all petitions and all required signatures are attempted to be validated for any petition found to be  
112 ineligible.
- 113 2. All petitions will be available for viewing only to members of the Cornell community and may  
114 be examined in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall after the announcement of  
115 candidates. Petitions may not be photocopied once submitted.
- 116 3. The Office of the Assemblies will notify the Director of Elections, who will then notify any  
117 necessary candidates who failed to meet petitioning requirements prior to the announcement of  
118 candidates.
- 119 4. Candidates who are listed on the ballot but found to have not fulfilled eligibility requirements  
120 prior to tabulation of results will be disqualified with vote counts untallied and discarded.

## 121 2. Petitioning

122 In order to demonstrate that they will be a respectable representative of the student body at large, and/or  
123 of the community they vie to represent, candidates are required to collect a certain number of petition  
124 signatures. The required number of petition signers is designated above. In accordance with university  
125 policies in place at the time, and at the direction of the Elections Committee, petition forms will either  
126 be "in-person" paper forms (available from the SA Elections website), or "virtual/remote" online forms  
127 (available by link from the SA elections website. Candidates are expected to maintain the highest  
128 standards of integrity when collecting petition signatures. In addition to the Early Campaigning rules  
129 detailed in Article 1, Section D(1) of these elections rules, the following restrictions are in place to  
130 ensure fairness during the petitioning period. Candidates may not:

- 131 1. Announce their candidacy on social media platforms under any circumstances
- 132 2. Announce their candidacy in front of a classroom, during class hours, or in interference of the  
133 learning environment in order to collect signatures

134 Supporters of potential candidates may collect petition signatures in accordance with the above rules.  
135 The names and netID of both the potential candidate and the individual who collected the signatures  
136 must be noted on the petition form.

## 137 3. Written Statements

- 138 1. Each candidate is asked to submit a short statement, which may be no more than 1,250  
139 characters, including spaces (NOT word count) via the online Candidate Profile portal.  
140 Submissions must be plain text.
- 141 2. Statements will be displayed in informational materials published by the Elections Committee.
- 142 3. Statements may not include names of any political coalitions.
- 143 4. If a candidate's statement does not conform to these guidelines, the statement will not be posted.



144 **4. Pictures**

145 Photos will be displayed in informational materials published by the Elections Committee. Candidates  
146 may submit a photograph of themselves that conforms to the specifications noted in the online candidate  
147 registration form, or have their photo taken by a staff member in the Office of the Assemblies.

148 **5. Candidate Forum**

149 All candidates are encouraged to participate in the Candidates' Forums held by the Elections Committee  
150 during the campaign period. The Elections Committee will be responsible for planning, coordinating,  
151 and marketing these forums. At the forum, candidates are encouraged to discuss their experience,  
152 platforms, and more. Candidates are also encouraged to use the forum as an opportunity specifically to  
153 discuss why they are more qualified for the contested position than their opponent(s). The Director of  
154 Elections shall reach out to student organizations that receive funding from the Student Assembly,  
155 encouraging them to use the candidate forum as an opportunity to consider candidates for endorsements.

156 **D. Election Guidelines**

157 **1. Early Campaigning Prohibition**

158 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf must not participate in the following campaign  
159 activities until campaigning **officially begins**:

- 160 1. Distribution of online campaign materials to the public.  
161 2. Making speeches or statements to student organizations.  
162 3. Promoting their candidacy through email, social networking tools, or other digital media

163 The Elections Committee may challenge or disqualify a candidate if a violation is found to compromise  
164 the fairness of the election.

165 **2. Restrictions for Current SA Members**

166 Current SA members seeking reelection:

- 167 1. Must refrain from any form of individual or self-promoting publicity during the petitioning  
168 period.  
169 2. Must not host constituency outreach events that are meant to fulfill an outreach requirement from  
170 the deadline for election materials through the last day of voting.

171 **3. Compliance with University Policies and Student Code of Conduct**

172 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf must be aware of and comply with all applicable  
173 policies and provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, including but not limited to:

- 174 1. Use of Cornell Name, Logo & Artwork policy  
175 2. Event Registration policies  
176 3. Facilities reservation policies, including Willard Straight Hall area reservation policies



## Cornell University Student Assembly

- 177 4. University Postering & Chalking policies  
178 5. Residential & New Students Programs' policy for postering in residence halls  
179 6. Dining hall policies, including a prohibition of distributing printed campaign materials in dining  
180 halls without permission from authorized staff, and as designated in the Student Code of  
181 Conduct.  
182 a. Please note that it is against the University Postering and Chalking Policy to chalk on any  
183 vertical surface, regardless of the location.  
184 7. Intimidation tactics and cyber-bullying online is strictly prohibited.

185 A violation of any University policy is a violation of these rules and therefore grounds for a challenge if  
186 it compromises the fairness of the election. It is the candidate's responsibility to read the referenced  
187 documents and be familiar with the rules and regulations established within them. The Director of  
188 Elections may also refer any reported violations to the Office of Student Conduct and Community  
189 Standards (OSCCS) or any other appropriate office, which may impose disciplinary remedies and  
190 penalties according to its own rules and procedures.

### 191 **4. Campus Mail**

192 Candidates and their supporters acting on their behalf may not use Campus Mail for campaigning  
193 purposes.

### 194 **5. Electronic Communications and Social Media**

195 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

- 196 1. Cannot receive campaign support through a Cornell Administered list-serv. E.g. The Cornell  
197 Athletics Department  
198 2. Must comply with Cornell University IT policies

### 199 **6. Campaign Finance**

200 Candidates or supporters acting on their behalf must submit all receipts and/or proof of fair market value  
201 with the signed expense report to the Office of the Assemblies by the deadline specified in the election  
202 calendar. Candidates who do not submit receipts and/or proof of fair market value will be presumed to  
203 have spent \$0 on their campaign.

- 204 1. Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf may not exceed the \$25 limit for out-of-pocket  
205 expenses and fair market value of donations of materials, professional services, and/or money  
206 a. Fair market value is the value at which something is to be obtained normally if  
207 documentation of its dollar value is not provided.  
208 b. If there is a supporting receipt for goods used in a candidate's campaign, then the value  
209 of that good is the dollar value on the supporting receipt as long as the transaction was  
210 conducted at arm's length.  
211 c. For donated materials, professional services, or other goods for which no official receipt  
212 is provided, candidates must seek the most plausible assessment of the fair market value  
213 of the good. Professional services will be defined as any work for which the given





- 214 individual/donor is typically compensated. Volunteer time donated by full-time students,  
215 who are not professionals (have received payment for service) in the area of their  
216 volunteer effort, will not be considered professional services.  
217 d. Paid advertisements and related costs on social networking sites or other websites must  
218 also be accounted for at fair market value.  
219 2. Candidates will be eligible for up to \$25 in reimbursements to cover out-of-pocket expenses  
220 from the campaigning period that can be used towards the following expenses: website expenses  
221 (web hosting, domain names, and online advertising) or any other promotional materials  
222 approved by the Director of Elections that are not a violation of these election rules.  
223 3. Candidates may use any platforms at their disposable, granted they are free. If these platforms  
224 require purchasing, candidates are required to report this in their expense report form.  
225

## 226 **7. Endorsements**

227 All registered student organizations receiving funds from the Student Assembly are encouraged to  
228 endorse candidates. If an organization chooses to endorse a candidate, it is expected to abide by the  
229 guidelines below.

- 230 1. Student Activities Funding Commission (SAFC) funded and Student Activity Fee (SAF) byline  
231 funded organizations may endorse candidates. All groups must act in a way that is fair and  
232 balanced when deciding on the endorsement of candidates.  
233 2. The Elections Committee may recommend that the SA impose fines on or revoke allocated funds  
234 from organizations failing to comply.  
235 3. If a member of the Elections Committee sits on the Executive Board or governing body of an  
236 organization, that organization is prohibited from endorsing candidates.

237 All registered students, except candidates, are encouraged to individually endorse candidates once the  
238 campaign period officially begins.

## 239 **8. Campaign Ethics**

240 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

- 241 1. May not, at any time before, during or after the elections, harass, threaten, or coerce others.  
242 2. May not provide anything of material value to a member of the Cornell community to further  
243 themselves in the election or to promote their candidacy.  
244 3. May not compel any person to endorse their candidacy, assist their campaign, or act as supporter  
245 as an explicit or implicit condition for initiation to, admission into, affiliation with, or continued  
246 membership in a group or organization.

## 247 **E. Restrictions on Ticketing and Slates**

### 248 **1. General Rules**

249 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf may not:



- 250 1. Include any other candidate's name, a common "ticket" name, or a shared slogan and/or symbol  
251 on any promotional materials or within any form of electronic communication and/or media.  
252 2. Share or pool campaign finances with any other candidates or supporters acting on their behalf.  
253 3. Distribute any promotional materials, send any electronic communication, or utilize any other  
254 form of electronic media on behalf of any other candidate except if the candidate does so for  
255 another candidate in the President and/or Executive Vice President races.  
256 4. Campaign with or on behalf of each other or engage in any coordination of campaigning  
257 activities except if the candidate does so for another candidate in the President or Executive Vice  
258 President races.

## 259 **2. Special circumstance for the President and Executive Vice President elections**

260 Candidates in any race, besides those running for the position of President or Executive Vice President,  
261 will be given the freedom to distribute promotional material, send electronic communications, campaign  
262 on behalf of, and speak for candidates in the President or Executive Vice President races. Candidates  
263 who choose to do so are considered supporters and are held accountable to all clauses in these rules that  
264 pertain to candidates and their supporters. The President and Executive Vice President candidates are  
265 strictly prohibited from coordinating activities. Candidates are strictly prohibited from performing the  
266 actions above for candidates not in the President or Executive Vice President races.

## 267 **3. Plagiarism**

268 Candidates may not disseminate written statements, promotional materials, or electronic  
269 communications that are plagiarized or substantially copied from any such items created or distributed  
270 by any current or former candidate. Materials distributed by the Director of Elections, Elections  
271 Committee, and the Office of the Assemblies may be used as templates.

# 272 **Article II: Direct Election of President and Executive Vice President**

## 273 **A. President and Executive Vice President (EVP) Designation and eligibility**

- 274 1. Two of the six Undesignated At-Large Representative seats are for the directly elected seats of  
275 President and Executive Vice-President.  
276 2. Candidates running for President and Executive Vice President who do not win their race will  
277 automatically be entered into two races for two Undesignated At Large seats, separate from the  
278 Undesignated At Large race. The candidates in each race, one for Presidential candidates and a  
279 separate one for Executive Vice Presidential candidates, will run for one available seat per race.  
280 In the event that there are no other candidates for a particular race, regardless of reason as to  
281 why, the seat shall go to the next highest voted candidate in the original Undesignated At Large  
282 race. No voting shall occur for these two races and the votes shall be tallied from the original  
283 counts for President and Executive Vice President.

# 284 **Article III: Election Procedures**





## 285 **A. The Election Calendar**

- 286 1. The Director of Elections, in consultation with the Office of the Assemblies, will draft the  
287 election calendar prior to the semester of the election, and will be approved by the Elections  
288 Committee at a meeting in the prior semester if possible<sup>3</sup>.  
289 2. Consideration shall be given to any religious holidays that may fall during the election period,  
290 guaranteeing that the right to free religious observance is afforded to all potential candidates.

## 291 **B. The Elections Committee**

- 292 1. The Director of Elections shall serve as chair and a designated representative of the Office of the  
293 Assemblies shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of this Committee.  
294 2. The Director of Elections shall publish a list of Assembly seats to be filled, in accordance with  
295 Student Assembly Charter.  
296 3. During a Challenge Review Meeting, the interpretation of the Elections Rules will lie with the  
297 sitting Elections Committee.  
298 4. Elections Committee members are expected to abide by the highest standards of personal  
299 conduct and integrity. Students are mandated to excuse themselves from serving on the Elections  
300 Committee if they plan to take part in a campaign. Therefore, members should not be involved in  
301 the campaigning process. All conflicts should be considered and resolved before the election  
302 cycle begins. Elections Committee members may not sit on the Executive Board of an  
303 organization that endorses candidates in an SA election. If an Elections Committee member sits  
304 on the Executive Board of an organization or sat on that Executive Board at any time during the  
305 same semester of a particular SA election, that organization may not endorse candidates in that  
306 SA election, or that Elections Committee member must resign from the Elections Committee.  
307 5. The Elections Committee should be prepared to meet immediately following the challenge  
308 deadline to rule on all pertinent challenges. The Elections Committee shall use Robert's Rules of  
309 Order to consider challenges, in addition to the election rules. In the event of conflict, these  
310 election rules supersede Robert's Rules of Order. The Elections Committee has no power to  
311 overrule the election rules under any circumstances.  
312 6. The Director of Elections shall give a final report on the results of the election when there are no  
313 remaining unresolved matters.

## 314 **C. Independence of the Elections Committee**

- 315 1. While members of the Elections Committee are expected to abide by the highest standards of  
316 integrity, they also enjoy independence from undue interference. Hence, students may not falsely  
317 accuse, harass, threaten or coerce any member of the Elections Committee for actions taken in  
318 their official capacity.  
319 2. Subject to the determination of the Elections Committee, any violation of this section can result  
320 in temporary or permanent disqualification from contesting elections to the SA or UA.

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<sup>3</sup> The Director of Elections should coordinate the schedule of the Student Assembly elections with other campus elections, such as those of the Student-Elected Trustee and Class Councils.



- 321 3. Members of the Elections Committee cannot personally endorse any candidates. However,  
322 members of the Committee may still privately vote in the elections themselves.

## 323 **D. Voting and Tabulation**

- 324 1. The order in which names appear on the ballot shall be randomly selected.  
325 2. Uncontested candidates will not be listed for a vote on the ballot and will be deemed victorious  
326 pending the resolution of challenges.  
327 3. Results for challenged races will be posted after the Elections Committee has ruled on those  
328 challenges and all challenges have been fully resolved.  
329 4. The Elections Committee will not have access to the results prior to and during challenge  
330 deliberations. The Office of Assemblies will release election results after the Director of  
331 Elections or the Elections Committee has validated the election results.  
332 5. A printout of election results for qualifying candidates shall be posted on line on the relevant  
333 webpages of the election. Disqualified candidates will not have their vote tallies made available.

## 334 **E. Challenges**

### 335 **1. Eligibility to Challenge**

- 336 1. Any member of the Cornell community may submit a challenge.  
337 2. The Director of Elections may submit a challenge.  
338 3. The Elections Committee as a body may submit a challenge by majority vote.  
339 4. Individual Committee members, except the Director of Elections, may not submit a challenge.

### 340 **2. Challenge Deadlines**

- 341 1. Election challenges must be submitted by the election challenge deadline specified in the  
342 elections calendar.  
343 2. The Director of Elections or the Elections Committee by a majority vote can submit a challenge  
344 at any time before the declaration of results.  
345 3. No challenges will be accepted after these deadlines.  
346 4. Once submitted, a challenge becomes part of the formal record, and may not be withdrawn for  
347 any reason or by any person.

### 348 **3. Format of Challenges**

349 Challenges must be in writing, submitted on the signed Challenge Form, and accompanied by the  
350 following supporting documentation:

- 351 1. Challenger's name  
352 2. Candidate's name  
353 3. Date of challenge  
354 4. Reason for challenge and supporting evidence



355 Challenges that fail to provide all required documentation will not be reviewed by the Elections  
356 Committee.

#### 357 **4. Notification of Election Challenges**

358 The Office of the Assemblies will notify the Director of Elections who will send an email notifying  
359 anyone who is named in an election challenge. The email will contain a scanned copy of the challenge.

#### 360 **5. Response to Election Challenges**

361 A challenged candidate may request to review challenges to which they are a party in the Office of the  
362 Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, who will share the challenges in a confidential setting. The challenged  
363 candidate may then address written statements in response to the Committee. The challenged candidate  
364 may request a hearing ~~in person~~ with the Committee.

#### 365 **6. Challenge Review Meeting**

366 The Committee will schedule a meeting to review challenges in Executive Session. The Committee, less  
367 temporarily recused members, will provide an opportunity for the challenged candidate to respond in  
368 person if requested by the challenged candidate or a member of the Committee. The Director of  
369 Elections reserves the right to recuse any member of the Committee in the event of a conflict of interest.  
370 Members may either recuse themselves prior to challenge hearings or at the discretion of the Director of  
371 Elections. For each challenge, the Committee will determine:

- 372 1. Whether each alleged violation can be substantiated, beyond a reasonable doubt. This vote will  
373 be taken for each violation individually, and a majority of the members present of the Elections  
374 Committee is required to declare that a preponderance of evidence substantiates each violation;
- 375 2. Which, if any, substantiated violations or combination thereof compromised the fairness of the  
376 election and constituted a material advantage to the extent the challenged candidate should be  
377 disqualified. If the Committee finds either that a single substantiated violation or that a  
378 combination of substantiated violations should, beyond a reasonable doubt, require the  
379 disqualification of a candidate, with at least two-thirds of the members present of the Elections  
380 Committee in the affirmative, may disqualify the candidate. The Elections Committee reserves  
381 the right to impose lesser sanctions on a candidate as it sees fit.

#### 382 **7. Written Report**

- 383 1. For each rule violation, the Director of Elections or a member of the Elections Committee as  
384 delegated by the Director will create a written report thoroughly detailing the challenge(s), listing  
385 the tallies of all votes taken by the Committee including the bifurcated voting process, the  
386 decision made, and how the decision was reached.
- 387 2. The report is kept confidential and only released to the challenged candidate and the  
388 challenger(s).
- 389 3. A copy, with all names other than the challenged candidate redacted, is kept in the Office of the  
390 Assemblies, 109 Day Hall.



- 391 4. For each challenge, the Committee will report to the challenger(s) and the challenged candidate  
392 all evidence received/found, any violations substantiated, and any decisions to disqualify the  
393 challenged candidate.

394 **8. Reconsideration**

- 395 1. If the Committee determines a candidate should be disqualified, the candidate may request  
396 reconsideration within twenty-four hours of receiving the written report. To be reconsidered, the  
397 candidate seeking such reconsideration must submit a request in writing to the Office of the  
398 Assemblies, via email to [assembly@cornell.edu](mailto:assembly@cornell.edu), and the Director of Elections within twenty-  
399 four hours of receiving the disqualification email from the Director of Elections. The statement  
400 should address the specific findings in the written report to be reconsidered and should detail the  
401 specific points where the Elections Committee failed to correctly enforce the challenge  
402 procedure outlined in the Elections Rules Failure to submit all necessary documentation within  
403 twenty-four hours will restrict the seeking for reconsideration and the Elections Committee's  
404 decision will be final.
- 405 2. The Committee will convene in response to such a request. The Committee, after evaluating each  
406 request for reconsideration, will take a vote requiring a simple majority to determine if the  
407 previous decision to disqualify should be overturned. Email voting may be used by Committee  
408 members.

410 **9. Confidentiality**

- 411 1. Members of the Elections Committee and parties to a challenge may not share the contents of  
412 challenges, evidence, or decisions submitted to or received from the Committee, except when  
413 explicitly permitted by these rules or by the Director of Elections. When publicly releasing  
414 confidential information, the Director of Elections must redact the names of all individuals who  
415 are not the challenged candidate.
- 416 2. A review of the Challenges may take place in coordination with the Office of the Assemblies,  
417 109 Day Hall, by any member of the Cornell community. Challenges may not be photocopied,  
418 screen-shared, photographed, digitally recorded or removed from the Office of Assemblies.