



Student Assembly Election Rules

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1 **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

2 **ARTICLE I. Election Guidelines**

3 A. Voter Eligibility

4 B. Definitions

5 C. Candidate Information

6 1. Eligibility and Requirements

7 2. Petitioning

8 3. Written Statements

9 4. Pictures

10 5. Candidate Forum

11 D. Election Guidelines

12 1. Early Campaigning

13 2. Restrictions for Current Student Assembly Members

14 3. Compliance with University Policies and Student Code of Conduct

15 4. Campus Mail

16 5. Electronic Communications and Social Media

17 6. Campaign Finance

18 7. Endorsements

19 8. Campaign Ethics

20 E. Restrictions on Ticketing and Slates

21 1. General Rules

22 2. Special circumstances for the President and Executive Vice President elections

23 3. Plagiarism

24 **ARTICLE II. Direct Election of President and Executive Vice President**

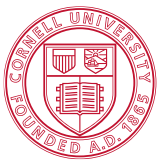
25 A. Designation and Eligibility

26 **ARTICLE III. Election Procedures**

27 A. Election Calendar

28 B. Elections Committee

29 C. Independence of the Elections Committee



- 30 D. Voting and Tabulation
- 31 E. Challenges
- 32 1. Eligibility to Challenge
- 33 2. Challenge Deadlines
- 34 3. Format of Challenges
- 35 4. Notification of Challenge
- 36 5. Response to Challenge
- 37 6. Challenge Review Meeting
- 38 7. Written Report
- 39 8. Reconsideration
- 40 9. Confidentiality

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.



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 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, SMS texting, and private messaging features on
76 other applications are not social media.
77

78 **C. Candidate Information**

79 **1. Eligibility and Requirements**

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

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

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



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

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

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

122 2. Petitioning

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

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

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

138 3. Written Statements

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



145 **4. Pictures**

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

149 **5. Candidate Forum**

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

157 **D. Election Guidelines**

158 **1. Early Campaigning Prohibition**

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

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

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

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

167 Current SA members seeking reelection:

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

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

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

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



Cornell University Student Assembly

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

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

192 **4. Campus Mail**

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

195 **5. Electronic Communications and Social Media**

196 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

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

200 **6. Campaign Finance**

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

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



- 215 individual/donor is typically compensated. Volunteer time donated by full-time students,
216 who are not professionals (have received payment for service) in the area of their
217 volunteer effort, will not be considered professional services.
218 d. Paid advertisements and related costs on social networking sites or other websites must
219 also be accounted for at fair market value.
220 2. Candidates will be eligible for up to \$25 in reimbursements to cover out-of-pocket expenses
221 from the campaigning period that can be used towards the following expenses: website expenses
222 (web hosting, domain names, and online advertising) or any other promotional materials
223 approved by the Director of Elections that are not a violation of these election rules.
224 3. Candidates may use any platforms at their disposable, granted they are free. If these platforms
225 require purchasing, candidates are required to report this in their expense report form.
226

227 **7. Endorsements**

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

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

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

240 **8. Campaign Ethics**

241 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

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

248 **E. Restrictions on Ticketing and Slates**

249 **1. General Rules**

250 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf may not:



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

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

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

268 **3. Plagiarism**

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

273 **Article II: Direct Election of President and Executive Vice President**

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

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

285 **Article III: Election Procedures**



286 **A. The Election Calendar**

- 287 1. The Director of Elections, in consultation with the Office of the Assemblies, will draft the
288 election calendar prior to the semester of the election, and will be approved by the Elections
289 Committee at a meeting in the prior semester if possible³.
290 2. Consideration shall be given to any religious holidays that may fall during the election period,
291 guaranteeing that the right to free religious observance is afforded to all potential candidates.

292 **B. The Elections Committee**

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

320 **C. Independence of the Elections Committee**

- 321 1. While members of the Elections Committee are expected to abide by the highest standards of
322 integrity, they also enjoy independence from undue interference. Hence, students may not falsely

³ 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.



- 323 accuse, harass, threaten or coerce any member of the Elections Committee for actions taken in
324 their official capacity.
- 325 2. Subject to the determination of the Elections Committee, any violation of this section can result
326 in temporary or permanent disqualification from contesting elections to the SA or UA.
- 327 3. Members of the Elections Committee cannot personally endorse any candidates. However,
328 members of the Committee may still privately vote in the elections themselves.

329 **D. Voting and Tabulation**

- 330 1. The order in which names appear on the ballot shall be randomly selected.
- 331 2. Uncontested candidates will not be listed for a vote on the ballot and will be deemed victorious
332 pending the resolution of challenges.
- 333 3. Results for challenged races will be posted after the Elections Committee has ruled on those
334 challenges and all challenges have been fully resolved, including the third party's decision if
335 present.
- 336 4. The Elections Committee will not have access to the results prior to and during challenge
337 deliberations. The Office of Assemblies will release election results after the Director of
338 Elections or the Elections Committee has validated the election results.
- 339 5. A printout of election results for qualifying candidates shall be posted on line on the relevant
340 webpages of the election. Disqualified candidates will not have their vote tallies made available.

341 **E. Challenges**

342 **1. Eligibility to Challenge**

- 343 1. Any member of the Cornell community may submit a challenge.
- 344 2. The Director of Elections may submit a challenge.
- 345 3. The Elections Committee as a body may submit a challenge by majority vote.
- 346 4. Individual Committee members, except the Director of Elections, may not submit a challenge.

347 **2. Challenge Deadlines**

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

355 **3. Format of Challenges**

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

- 358 1. Challenger's name



- 359 2. Candidate's name
360 3. Date of challenge
361 4. Reason for challenge and supporting evidence

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

364 **4. Notification of Election Challenges**

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

367 **5. Response to Election Challenges**

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

372 **6. Challenge Review Meeting**

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

- 379 1. Whether a preponderance of evidence substantiates each alleged violation. This vote will be
380 taken for each violation individually, and a majority of the members present of the Elections
381 Committee is required to declare that a preponderance of evidence substantiates each violation;
382 2. Which, if any, substantiated violations or combination thereof compromised the fairness of the
383 election and constituted a material advantage to the extent the challenged candidate should be
384 disqualified. If the Committee finds either that a single substantiated violation or that a
385 combination of substantiated violations should require the disqualification of a candidate, with at
386 least two-thirds of the members present of the Elections Committee in the affirmative, may
387 disqualify the candidate.

388 **7. Written Report**

- 389 1. For each rule violation, the Director of Elections or a member of the Elections Committee as
390 delegated by the Director will create a written report thoroughly detailing the challenge(s), listing
391 the tallies of all votes taken by the Committee including the bifurcated voting process, the
392 decision made, and how the decision was reached.
393 2. The report is kept confidential and only released to the challenged candidate and the
394 challenger(s).



- 395 3. A copy, with all names other than the challenged candidate redacted, is kept in the Office of the
396 Assemblies, 109 Day Hall.
397 4. For each challenge, the Committee will report to the challenger(s) and the challenged candidate
398 all evidence received/found, any violations substantiated, and any decisions to disqualify the
399 challenged candidate.

400 8. Reconsideration

- 401 1. If the Committee determines a candidate should be disqualified, the candidate may request
402 reconsideration within twenty-four hours of receiving the written report. To be reconsidered, the
403 candidate seeking such reconsideration must submit a request in writing to the Office of the
404 Assemblies, via email to assembly@cornell.edu, and the Director of Elections within twenty-
405 four hours of receiving the disqualification email from the Director of Elections. The statement
406 should address the specific findings in the written report to be reconsidered and should detail the
407 specific points where the Elections Committee failed to correctly enforce the challenge
408 procedure outlined in the Elections Rules Failure to submit all necessary documentation within
409 twenty-four hours will restrict the seeking for reconsideration and the Elections Committee's
410 decision will be final.
411 2. The Committee will convene in response to such a request. The Committee, after evaluating each
412 request for reconsideration, will take a vote requiring a simple majority to determine if the
413 previous decision to disqualify should be overturned. Email voting may be used by Committee
414 members.
415 3. If a disqualified candidate believes that the Elections Committee failed to correctly follow or
416 enforce the challenge procedure outlined in the Elections Rules after the Elections Committee's
417 reconsideration, they may request a review by a third party, selected by the Office of the
418 Assemblies, within 24 hours after the Election's Committee's Reconsideration vote.
419 4. The challenged candidate will submit to the third party, the Office of the Assemblies, and the
420 Director of Elections all original appeal materials that were previously submitted to the Elections
421 Committee as well as any additional materials that detail failures of the Elections Committee to
422 follow and enforce these Elections Rules within twenty-four hours.
423 5. The Elections Committee will submit all challenge reports pertaining to the candidate's appeal as
424 well as any additional materials refuting or agreeing with claims made by the challenged
425 candidate to the third party within forty-eight hours after the candidate appeals to the third party.
426 If the Elections Committee agrees with the candidate's appeal, a vote with a simple majority of
427 the seated membership of the Elections Committee in the affirmative may overturn their decision
428 before the third party completes a full review.
429 6. After a review of all materials sent by the candidate and the Elections Committee, the third party
430 will determine whether or not to take the case within twenty-four hours. If the third party deems
431 that the appealed case does not merit consideration, then the decision of the Elections Committee
432 will be final. If the third party takes on the case and finds that the Elections Committee did not
433 correctly follow and enforce the challenge procedure outlined in the Elections Rules, the third
434 party has the power to overturn the decision of the Elections Committee.

435 9. Confidentiality



Cornell University Student Assembly

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