

Student Assembly Elections Rules

Adopted on Thursday, December 3 2009. Amended Friday, December 3, 2010; Friday, December 2, 2011, Thursday, November 29, 2012, Friday, December 6, 2013, Thursday, May 1, 2014, Thursday, November 20, 2014, Thursday, March 26, 2015.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLE I. Election Guidelines

A. Voter Eligibility

B. Candidate Information

1. Eligibility and Requirements

2. Petitioning

3. Written Statements

4. Pictures

5. Promotional Materials

6. Candidate Forum

C. Election Guidelines

1. Early Campaigning

2. Restrictions on Current Student Assembly Members

3. Compliance with University Policies and Campus Code of Conduct

4. Campus Mail

5. Electronic Communications and Social Media

6. Campaign Finance

7. Endorsements

8. Campaign Ethics

ARTICLE II. Direct Election of President and Executive Vice President

A. President and Executive Vice President Designation and Eligibility

B. Restrictions on Ticketing and Slates

1. General Rules

2. Plagiarism

ARTICLE III. Election Procedures

A. Elections Calendar

B. Elections Committee

C. Independence of the Elections Committee

D. Conduction of Election and Tabulation

E. Challenges

1. Eligibility to Challenge

2. Challenge Deadlines

3. Format of Challenges

4. Notification of Challenge

5. Response to Challenge

6. Challenge Review Meeting

7. Preliminary Report

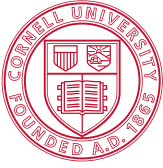
8. Reconsideration

9. Finality

10. Confidentiality

Appendix A: Approved Student Assembly Committees

Appendix B: Sample Promotional Materials



Cornell University Student Assembly

48 **Article I. Election Guidelines**

49 Elections are the foundation upon which representative governance rests. These rules are
50 designed to protect the rights of all candidates, as well as all members of the University
51 community, and to ensure that the election process takes place in an open and fair arena.
52 Candidates must respect the rights and privileges of all members of the Cornell community, and
53 to follow all election guidelines outlined in this document. Election rules are subject to yearly
54 approval by voting members of the Student Assembly.

55 56 **A. Voter Eligibility**

57 To vote in an election for a seat in the Student Assembly (SA), a person must:

- 58 1. Be a full-time, matriculated undergraduate student enrolled in a degree-granting unit of
59 the Ithaca campus of the University; and,
- 60 2. Be a member of the constituency for which the seat is designated, if it is designated for
61 one of the following:
 - 62 a. Specific to college of enrollment
 - 63 b. Freshman at Large
 - 64 c. Transfer at Large

65 66 **B. Candidate Information**

67 **1. Eligibility and Requirements**

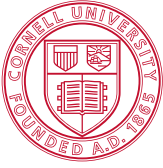
68 To be a candidate, a person must, prior to the petitioning deadline specified in the elections
69 calendar:

70 Be eligible to vote in the election for the seat and plan to remain so for the full term for which
71 he or she is seeking election¹

- 72 1. Submit a completed candidate registration form and any associated materials required in
73 that form
- 74 2. Submit petitions endorsed by the required number of people who are eligible to vote in
75 the election for that specific position, which is the lesser of 10% of those eligible to vote
76 for that specific position or:
 - 77 a. 300 for President and Executive Vice President
 - 78 b. 150 for all other At-Large seats;
 - 79 c. 100 for Arts and Sciences seats;
 - 80 d. 25 for New Transfer seat;
 - 81 e. 75 for all other seats.
- 82 3. Have not violated the early campaigning guidelines, as outlined in Article 1, Section C(2)
- 83 4. **Have not resigned or been removed from the SA in the academic year of the election**

84
85 To be a candidate, a person must, prior to the commencement of voting as specified in the
86 elections calendar:

¹ **Candidates should not plan to pursue study abroad programs or internships that would require them to leave the Ithaca campus for any semester during their tenure.**



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 87 1. Attend at least one full SA meeting in that semester and register his or her attendance at
88 that meeting with the Director of Elections, unless waived by the Director of Elections
89 for extenuating circumstances;²
90 2. Apply online to serve on at least one committee of the SA³

91

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

- 94 1. A sampling method may be used as long as at least 10% of signatures are validated for all
95 petitions and all signatures are validated for any petition found to be ineligible.
96 2. All petitions will be available for viewing only to members of the Cornell community and
97 may be examined in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall. Petitions may not be
98 photocopied once submitted.
99 3. The Office of the Assemblies will notify the Director of Elections, who will notify any
100 candidates who fail to meet petitioning requirements prior to the scheduled
101 announcement of candidates.
102 4. Candidates who are listed on the ballot but found to have not fulfilled eligibility
103 requirements prior to tabulation of results will be disqualified with vote counts untallied
104 and discarded.

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2. Petitioning

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Candidates may not:

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3. Written Statements

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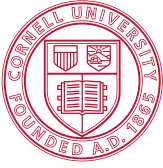
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124

1. Each candidate is asked to submit a short statement, which may be no more than 1,250 characters, including spaces (NOT word count) via the online Candidate Profile portal.
2. Statements will be displayed in informational materials published by the Elections Committee, both in print and online.
3. Statements may not include names of any political coalitions.

²However, this rule does not apply to past SA representatives.

³ A list of such committees is provided in Appendix A to this document.



Cornell University Student Assembly

125 4. If a candidate's statement does not conform with these guidelines, the statement will not
126 be posted

127

128 **4. Pictures**

129 Candidates must have their photos taken in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, before
130 the petition deadline. Photos will be displayed in informational materials published by the
131 Elections Committee. Candidates who do not have their photos taken by the petitioning deadline
132 forfeit the opportunity to have such photos disseminated. Candidates who are studying abroad and
133 not able to appear in person to have their picture taken may submit a photograph of themselves
134 that conforms to the following specifications and any others required by the Office of the
135 Assemblies:

- 136 1. Must be in JPEG format;
- 137 2. Must feature the face of the candidate;
- 138 3. May not be professionally produced;
- 139 4. May not be enhanced after being taken;
- 140 5. Must have a plain, white background; and,
- 141 6. Must be cropped to 263 pixels wide by 351 pixels tall or proportionally larger
142 dimensions.

143 Such a photograph must be submitted by email to assembly@cornell.edu before the petitioning
144 deadline.

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146 **5. Promotional Materials**

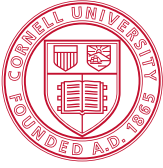
147 Each candidate may receive a combination of up to 300 one-sided 8 1/2" X 11" or 150 two-sided
148 8 1/2" X 11" printed materials at no charge. These may be posters or quarter-cards⁴, or a
149 combination of both.

- 150 1. The design must be attached, exactly as it is to be copied, as a PDF to the Candidate
151 Profile Form online and submitted by the application deadline.
- 152 2. All materials must include the dates and times of the elections and be in compliance with
153 election guidelines.
- 154 3. Candidates may select up to two different paper colors from the swatches provided by the
155 Office of the Assemblies.
- 156 4. Materials will be printed in black & white only.
- 157 5. No Cornell insignia or logo is allowed.
- 158 6. Candidates who do not submit materials, which meet these criteria by the petitioning
159 deadline, forfeit the opportunity to receive such materials.
- 160 7. The Office of the Assemblies will be responsible for making the copies.
- 161 8. The office will not assist in designing, modifying, or otherwise formatting a printed
162 submission.

163

164 **6. Candidate Forum**

⁴ See Appendix B for an example of an approved quarter-card.



Cornell University Student Assembly

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

173

174 **C. Election Guidelines**

175 **1. Early Campaigning**

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

- 178 1. Distribution of printed campaign material to the public
- 179 2. Advertising candidacy by chalk, poster, or other method designed for public viewing
- 180 3. Making speeches or statements to student organizations or groups of students
- 181 4. Promoting their candidacy through email, social networking tools, or other digital media
- 182 a. The Elections Committee may challenge or disqualify a candidate if a violation is
183 found to compromise the fairness of the election

184

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

186 Current SA members seeking reelection:

- 187 1. Must refrain from any form of individual or self-promoting publicity during the
188 petitioning period
- 189 2. Must not host constituency outreach events from the deadline for election materials
190 through the last day of voting.

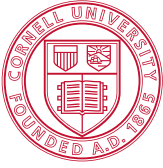
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192 **3. Compliance with University Policies and Campus Code of Conduct**

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

- 195 1. Use of Cornell Name, Logo, and Artwork policy
- 196 2. Event Registration/Use of University Property policies
- 197 3. Facilities reservation policies, including Willard Straight Hall area reservation policies
- 198 4. University Postering & Chalking policies
- 199 5. Campus Life policy for posting in residence halls
- 200 6. Dining hall policies, including a prohibition of distributing printed campaign materials in
201 dining halls without permission from authorized staff, and as designated in the Campus
202 Code of Conduct.⁵

⁵ Please note that it is against the University Postering and Chalking Policy to chalk on any vertical surface, regardless of the location.



Cornell University Student Assembly

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204 A violation of any University policy is a violation of these rules and therefore grounds for a
205 challenge if it compromises the fairness of the election. It is the candidate's responsibility to read
206 the referenced documents and be familiar with the rules and regulations established within them.
207 The Director of Elections may also refer any reported violations to the Office of the Judicial
208 Administrator or other appropriate office, which may impose disciplinary remedies and penalties
209 according to its own rules and procedures.

210

211 **4. Campus Mail**

212 Candidates and their supporters may not use Campus Mail for campaigning purposes.

213

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

215 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

- 216 1. Must obtain permission from the owner of any university-hosted bulk mailing lists
- 217 2. Must comply with Cornell University e-mail policies
- 218 3. May create a website, Facebook "Page", or "Event" to promote a campaign as long as
219 events are scheduled to occur entirely within the voting period.
- 220 4. May not create Facebook "Profiles" or "Groups" dedicated to a candidate or a
221 candidate's campaign.

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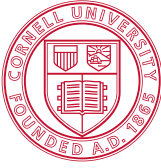
223 **6. Campaign Finance**

224 Candidates or supporters acting on their behalf must submit all receipts and/or proof of fair
225 market value with the signed Expenditure Form in person to the Office of the Assemblies, 109
226 Day Hall, by the deadline specified in the elections calendar. Candidates who do not submit
227 receipts and/or proof of fair market value will be presumed to have spent \$0 on their campaign.

- 228 1) Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf may not exceed the \$50 limit for out- of-
229 pocket expenses and fair market value of donations of materials, professional services, and/or
230 money.
 - 231 a) Fair market value is the value at which something is to be obtained normally if
232 documentation of its dollar value is not provided.
 - 233 b) Therefore, if there is a supporting receipt for a good used in a candidate's campaign, then
234 the value of that good is the dollar value on the supporting receipt.
 - 235 c) For donated materials, professional services, or other goods for which no official receipt
236 is provided, candidates must seek the most plausible assessment of the fair market value
237 of the good.
 - 238 d) Paid advertisements and related costs on social networking sites or other websites must
239 also be accounted for at fair market value.
- 240 2) Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf in races where only one candidate has
241 submitted a petition are limited to 150 copies and \$10 for out-of-pocket expenses. Donations
242 may be used, but proof of their fair market value must be provided and accounted for.

243

244 **7. Endorsements**



Cornell University Student Assembly

245 All registered student organizations receiving funds from the Student Assembly are encouraged to
246 endorse candidates. The Director of Elections will encourage groups to do so, through email
247 notification. If an organization chooses to endorse a candidate, it is expected to abide by the
248 guidelines below.

- 249 1. Student Assembly Finance Commission (SAFC)-funded organizations may endorse
250 candidates. All groups must act in a way that is fair and balanced when deciding
251 endorsement of candidates.
- 252 2. Student Activity Fee (SAF) byline funded organizations seeking to endorse candidates
253 for a position must give all petitioners for that position and the Director of Elections 24
254 hours advance notice of endorsement meetings.
- 255 3. The Elections Committee may recommend that the SA impose fines on or revoke
256 allocated funds from organizations failing to comply.

257

258 **8. Campaign Ethics**

259 Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf:

- 260 1. May not, at any time before, during or after the elections, harass, threaten, or coerce
261 others
- 262 2. May not provide anything of material value to a member of the University community to
263 further themselves in the election, aside from the complementary promotional materials
264 provided to them by the Office of the Assemblies
- 265 3. May not compel any person to endorse their candidacies, assist their campaigns, or act as
266 supporters as an explicit or implicit condition for initiation to, admission into, affiliation
267 with, or continued membership in a group or organization
- 268 4. May not criticize others on the basis of their character
- 269 5. Are allowed to comment on other candidates' platforms, experience, or voting records as
270 long as such comments are grounded in factual evidence.

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272 **Article II. Direct Election of President and Executive Vice President**

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

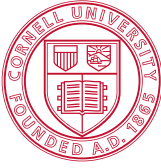
- 274 1. Two of the Undesignated At-Large Representative seats will be reserved for the directly
275 elected seats of President and Executive Vice-President.
- 276 2. Candidates running for the Undesignated At-Large Representative seats may specify
277 themselves as a Presidential candidate or Executive Vice Presidential candidate.
- 278 3. Candidates who do not wish to run for the position of President or Executive Vice
279 President may run individually for an undesignated at-large seat.
- 280 4. All candidates running for any undesignated at-large seat will be listed as Undesignated
281 At-Large candidates on the ballot.

282

283 **B. Restrictions on Ticketing and Slates**

284 **1. General Rules**

- 285 1) Candidates and supporters acting on their behalf may not:



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 286 a) Include any other candidate’s name, a common “ticket” name, or a shared slogan and/or
287 symbol on any promotional materials or within any form of electronic communication
288 and/or media
289 b) Share or pool campaign finances with any other candidates or supporters acting on their
290 behalf
291 c) Distribute any promotional materials, send any electronic communication, or utilize any
292 other form of electronic media on behalf of any other candidate;
293 d) Campaign with or on behalf of each other or engage in any coordination of campaigning
294 activities.
295

2. Plagiarism

296 Candidates may not disseminate written statements, promotional materials, or electronic
297 communications that are plagiarized or substantially copied from any such items created or
298 distributed by any current or former candidate.
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300

Article III. Election Procedures

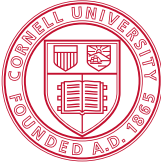
A. The Elections Calendar

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302
303 1. The Director of Elections, in consultation with the Office of the Assemblies, will draft the
304 elections calendar prior to the semester of the elections, and will be approved by the
305 Elections Committee at a meeting in the prior semester.⁶
306 2. Consideration shall be given to any religious holidays that may fall during the election
307 period, guaranteeing that the right to free religious observance is afforded to all potential
308 candidates.
309

B. The Elections Committee

- 310
311 1. The Director of Elections shall serve as chair and a designated representative of the
312 Office of the Assemblies shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of this
313 committee.
314 2. Members of the Elections Committee may not seek SA or UA office for the academic
315 year following their term of service on the committee.
316 3. The Director of Elections shall publish at the beginning of each semester a list of
317 Assembly seats to be filled, in accordance with Student Assembly Charter section 3.1.
318 4. Elections Committee members are expected to abide by the highest standards of personal
319 conduct and integrity. Students are mandated to excuse themselves from serving on the
320 Elections Committee if they plan to actively take part in a campaign or sit on the
321 executive board of an organization that has endorsed a candidate. Therefore, members
322 should not be actively involved in the campaigning process. All conflicts should be
323 considered and resolved before the election cycle begins.

⁶ 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.



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 324 5. The Elections Committee should be prepared to meet immediately following the
325 challenge deadlines to rule on all pertinent challenges. All challenges must be heard
326 simultaneously.
- 327 6. The Elections Committee shall use Robert's Rules of Order in accordance with Student
328 Assembly Charter § 6.6 to consider challenges, in addition to the Undergraduate Election
329 Rules. The Elections Committee has no power to overrule the Undergraduate Election
330 Rules under any circumstances.
- 331 7. The Director of Elections shall give a final report on the results of the elections when
332 there are no remaining unresolved matters.
- 333 8. For the benefit of the students, the Elections Committee shall establish voting booth(s)
334 across campus on the days of the election. Committee members will ensure that no
335 campaigning occurs within 25 feet of a voting booth.
- 336

C. Independence of the Elections Committee

337 While members of the Elections Committee are expected to abide by the highest standards of
338 integrity, they also enjoy independence from undue interference. Hence, students may not falsely
339 accuse, harass, threaten or coerce any member of the Elections Committee for actions taken in his
340 or her official capacity.

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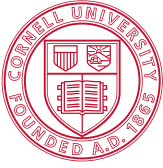
343 Subject to the determination by the Elections Committee, any violation of this section can result
344 in temporary or permanent disqualification from contesting elections to the Student Assembly. It
345 may also result in disciplinary referral to the Judicial Administrator. The procedures of
346 reconsideration and review laid down in Article III, Section E will apply in such cases.

347

348

D. Conduction of Election and Tabulation

- 349 1. The order in which names appear on the ballot shall be randomly selected.
- 350 2. Tabulation of the results of voting shall be as follows:
- 351 a. The President, Executive Vice President, and other Undesignated-at-Large
352 representatives will be elected by a single transferable voting system according to the
353 Article IV, Section 2 of the Charter of the Student Assembly. Voters may rank all
354 candidates on the ballot for each of these races.
- 355 b. All other representatives shall be elected by a plurality voting system. Voters will
356 cast one vote per available seat, (e.g. if three Arts and Sciences representatives are to
357 be elected, the voter will vote for three candidates).
- 358 3. The Office of the Assemblies will post preliminary results for unchallenged races by 4:30
359 p.m. on the day following the election. Preliminary results for challenged races will be
360 posted after the Elections Committee has ruled on those challenges.
- 361 4. The Elections Committee will not have access to the preliminary results prior to and
362 during challenge deliberations. The Office of Assemblies will release election results
363 from the challenged races after the Elections Committee has validated the election
364 results.



Cornell University Student Assembly

- 365 5. The official announcement of results shall be at the next Student Assembly meeting
366 following the validation of the election results by the Elections Committee.
367 6. A printout of election results for qualified candidates shall be available in the Office of
368 the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, for one year following the election. Disqualified
369 candidates will not have their vote tallies made available.
370

371 **E. Challenges**

372 **1. Eligibility to Challenge**

- 373 1. Any member of the Cornell community may submit a challenge.
374 2. The Director of Elections may submit a challenge.
375 3. The Elections Committee as a body may submit a challenge by majority vote.
376 4. Individual committee members except the Director of Elections may not submit a
377 challenge.
378

379 **2. Challenge Deadlines**

- 380 1. Petition challenges must be submitted to the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall, by
381 the petition challenge deadline specified in the elections calendar.
382 2. Election challenges must be submitted by the election challenge deadline specified in the
383 elections calendar.
384 3. The Director of Elections or the Elections Committee by a majority vote can submit a
385 challenge at any time before the declaration of results.
386 4. No challenges or further supporting documentation will be accepted after these deadlines.
387 5. Once submitted, a challenge becomes part of the formal record, and may not be
388 withdrawn except by the explicit permission of the Director of Elections.
389

390 **3. Format of Challenges**

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

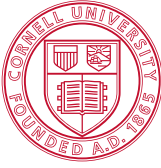
- 393 1. Challenger's name
394 2. Candidate's name
395 3. Date of challenge
396 4. Reason for challenge and supporting evidence
397

398 **4. Notification of Election Challenges**

399 The Office of the Assemblies will notify the Director of Elections who will send an email
400 notifying anyone who is named in an election challenge. The email will contain a scanned copy
401 of the challenge.
402

403 **5. Response to Election Challenges**

404 A challenged candidate may review challenges in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall,
405 and address written statements in response to the committee. The challenged candidate may



Cornell University Student Assembly

406 request a hearing in person with the committee. The deadline for responses is set in the elections
407 calendar.

408

409 **6. Challenge Review Meeting**

410 The committee will schedule a meeting to review challenges in Executive Session. The
411 committee will provide an opportunity for the challenged candidate to respond in person if
412 requested by the challenged candidate or a member of the committee. For each challenge, the
413 committee will determine:

- 414 1. Whether a preponderance of evidence substantiates each alleged violation; and,
- 415 2. Which, if any, substantiated violations or combination thereof compromised the fairness
416 of the election to the extent the challenged candidate should be disqualified by a two-
417 thirds majority.

418 The Committee will first vote by simple majority to determine if the evidence substantiated each
419 alleged violation. If the violation is substantiated, the committee will vote which, if any,
420 substantiated violations or combination thereof compromised the fairness of the election to the
421 extent the challenged candidate should be disqualified by a two-thirds majority.

422

423 **7. Preliminary Report**

- 424 1. For each rule violation, the Director of Elections or a member of the Elections Committee
425 as delegated by the Director will create a written report summarizing the challenge(s), the
426 decision made, and how the decision was reached.
- 427 2. The preliminary report is kept confidential and only released to the challenged candidate
428 and the challenger(s).
- 429 3. A copy is kept in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day Hall.
- 430 4. For each challenge, the committee will report to the challenger(s) and the challenged
431 candidate all evidence received, any violations substantiated, and any decisions to
432 disqualify the challenged candidate.

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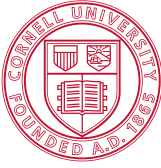
434 **8. Reconsideration**

435 If the committee determines a candidate should be disqualified, the candidate may request
436 reconsideration within twenty-four hours of receiving the Preliminary Report. To be
437 reconsidered, the candidate seeking such reconsideration must submit a request in writing to the
438 Office of the Assemblies via email to assembly@cornell.edu. The statement should address the
439 specific findings in the preliminary report to be reconsidered.

440

441 The committee will convene in response to such a request. The committee, after evaluating each
442 request for reconsideration, will take a vote requiring a simple majority to determine if the
443 previous decision to disqualify should be overturned. If the committee votes to overturn the
444 previous decision, then the committee will consider the initial challenge again and will vote to
445 disqualify the candidate by two-thirds majority.

446



Cornell University Student Assembly

447 If a disqualified candidate finds that the Elections Committee was biased in their application of
448 the rules, he or she may request a review by the Judicial Codes and Counselor (JCC). If the JCC
449 review finds that the application of the rules was biased, the decision of the Elections Committee
450 may be overturned.

451

452 **9. Finality**

453 The determination of the committee after expiration or resolution of requests for reconsideration
454 shall be final.

455

456 **10. Confidentiality**

- 457 1. Members of the committee and parties to a challenge may not share the contents of
458 challenges, evidence, or decisions submitted to or received from the committee, except
459 when explicitly permitted by these rules or by the Director of Elections.
- 460 2. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information may result in a disciplinary referral
461 by the Judicial Administrator.
- 462 3. A review of the Challenges may take place in the Office of the Assemblies, 109 Day
463 Hall, by any member of the Cornell community. Challenges may not be photocopied,
464 photographed, digitally recorded or removed from the Office of Assemblies.

465

466

467 **Appendix A**

468 List of approved Student Assembly committees:

- 469 1. Appropriations Committee
- 470 2. Committee on Inclusion & Diversity Initiatives (SACIDI)
- 471 3. Communications Committee
- 472 4. Community Life Committee
- 473 5. Dining Committee
- 474 6. Diversity Affairs Coalition (SADAC)
- 475 7. Financial Aid Review Committee
- 476 8. Infrastructure Fund Committee
- 477 9. Ivy Council Committee

478

479 **Appendix B**

480 Sample Promotional Materials (Poster and Quarter Card)

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482