Election Policy

Policy Statement

The following document outlines the Graduate Students’ Association of the University of Calgary (Association) election guidelines. This document is designed to provide information to all Association Active Members in relation to the Association’s electoral process.

Definitions

Definitions herein shall have the same meaning as in the Association's bylaws. Should there be a discrepancy between this policy and the Association’s bylaws, the Association’s bylaws shall prevail.

“Academically Employed Graduate Student” (AEGS) is an Active Member employed as a teaching or research assistant as defined in the Post-Secondary Learning Act (Alberta). For the purposes of these bylaws, any Active Member whose academic employment has terminated within the last twelve (12) months is also considered an Academically Employed Graduate Student, with all rights and privileges except those restricted by the Post-Secondary Learning Act (Alberta) or the Labour Relations Code (Alberta).

“Active Members” means all persons registered as graduate students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies or as Credit Certificate and Diploma Program students at the University of Calgary who pay full- or part-time Association fees.

“All-Candidates Meeting” means a meeting scheduled by the Chief Returning Officer that is mandatory for all Candidates or Designates to attend.

“All-Candidates Forum” means a moderated forum in which Candidates address specific questions as posed by the moderator and/or Active Members at a predetermined time and place as identified by the CRO. The All-Candidates Forum shall take place according to the timeline identified in Appendix A.

“Association” means the Graduate Students’ Association of the University of Calgary.

“Banners” means multiple individual posters hung together or near each other, where each subsequent poster is a continuation of the previous. Posters hung together or near each other, each individually a containing a complete message, independent of other posters, are not considered a banner. Any poster over 11”x17” will also be considered a banner.

Approved on: January 24, 2019
“Board” means the Board of Directors of the Association.

“Chief Returning Officer” (CRO) is an Active Member elected by the GRC to organize and oversee the annual election of the Board and any necessary by-elections, Plebiscites and Referenda. The CRO will be excluded from voting in Association elections, by-elections, Plebiscites, and referenda.

“Campaign Materials” means banners, posters, handbills, AV materials, related social media content (twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) and any other Electronic Campaign Materials.

“Candidate” means any person running for an Association Executive Board of Directors’ position.

“Collective Agreement” means the governing document that outlines the relationships between the Board of Governors of the University of Calgary and graduate students employed by the University of Calgary as Graduate Assistants (Teaching), Graduate Assistants (Non-Teaching), and Graduate Assistants (Research).

“Deputy Returning Officer” (DRO) is an Active Member appointed by the CRO and approved by GRC. The DRO will carry out the duties of the CRO should the CRO be unable to perform their duties as identified herein. Should the CRO transfer their duties to the DRO, the DRO will be excluded from voting in Association elections, by-elections, Plebiscites, and referenda. For the purposes of this document, the DRO will assume all rights and responsibilities as assigned to the CRO should they take on the role of CRO. At the discretion of the CRO, the DRO may take on responsibilities as assigned by the CRO depending on the work-load required to carry out a successful election.

“Designate” means any Active Member designated by the Candidate and has been registered with the Chief Returning Officer to act on the behalf of the Candidate in all matters related to the Election.

“Electronic Campaign Materials” means online voting materials, websites, blogs, and other services such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, other forms of text-messaging, or more broadly, activities such as blind phone calling, and any material made accessible by the Candidate on the internet or other communication service or device (such as cell/smart phones, computers, tablets, etc.).

“Eligible Voters” means all Active Members, excluding the Chief Returning Officer, of the Association.

“Executive Officer” (EO) is a full-time staff member responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Association; the Executive Officer reports directly to the Board.

“Faculty Representative Member” means an Active Member who is currently employed by a specific faculty at the University of Calgary.

“First Past the Post” means the candidate who receives the most votes wins.

“Graduate Representative Council” (GRC) is a group of Active Members from eligible departments at the UCalgary; GRC members deliberate on issues affecting the
Association, offer advice to the Board, and disseminate information to other Active Members.

“Handbill” means any material meant to be distributed to electors and not posted.

“Labour Relations Committee” (LRC) means a group of Active Members comprised of academically employed graduate students who are responsible overseeing the Collective Agreement on behalf of the Association.

“Plebiscite” means a single question presented to Active Members for their opinion in relation to a specific issue facing the Association. A Plebiscite is an expression of opinion of Active Members and is used for decision making purposes only; a Plebiscite is non-binding to either the Board or the GRC.

“Posters” means an advertisement smaller than 11” x 17”.

“Referendum” means a question to be voted on by Active Members related to establishing or increasing fees not covered in the Associations Bylaws. Results of Referenda are binding upon the Association.

“Slate” means a group of Candidates who run for elected office on a similar or singular platform for mutual advantage.

“Staff Member” means all persons employed by the Association in a paid capacity, whether full-time, part-time, term certain, or contract.

“Third Party” means individuals or organizations including but not limited to Department Graduate Associations, University Faculties/Departments, other campus-based groups, or external organizations.

Applicability

This document applies to all Active Members of the Association and Staff Members.

Reason for Policy

This document is meant to outline election policy and procedures to improve transparency in decision-making. While it outlines how the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and Candidates should act during the election, the CRO reserves the right to act in accordance with his or her interpretation of all pertinent bylaws of the Association in addition to the policies and procedures outlined herein.

It is the responsibility of all Candidates or other interested parties to ensure they are aware of and adherent to this policy document. Parties are therefore invited and encouraged to direct any questions or concerns relating to this policy, Association Bylaws, or any other issue arising from the election process to the CRO or the Executive Officer (EO).

Non-Compliance

This document contains procedures that carry significant liability for the Association as it relates to the electoral process. Failure to comply with this document may result in disciplinary action up to and including disqualification for Candidates.

Approved on: January 24, 2019
Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the CRO to ensure this document is adhered to in its entirety. Should the CRO or Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) be unable to fulfill their obligations under this policy, and a new CRO not be appointed and approved by GRC due to time constraints, the Chair of the Judicial Review Board will appoint a new CRO and the new CRO will fulfill their obligations outlined herein under the supervision of the EO.

Should the Chair of the Judicial Board be unable to appoint a suitable Candidate, acting reasonably, prior to the election taking place, the Chair of the Judicial Board will assume the responsibilities of the CRO.

Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Email address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRO</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:cro.gsa@ucalgary.ca">cro.gsa@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial Board Chair</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:speaker.gsa@ucalgary.ca">speaker.gsa@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
<td>Danielle Abbott</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gsaed@ucalgary.ca">gsaed@ucalgary.ca</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

1. Eligibility

1.1. In accordance with Association Bylaws, all Active Members shall be eligible to run in Association Elections.

1.2. All Candidates or Designates, as identified by the Candidate to the CRO a minimum of 24-hours prior, must attend an All-Candidates Meeting and All-Candidates Forum as scheduled by the CRO.

1.2.1. At minimum, all terms and conditions herein will be discussed in detail; and

1.2.2. All Candidates will sign a form acknowledging they understand all the terms and conditions identified herein prior to being an officially recognized Candidate.

2. Notice of Election

2.1. The CRO will officially announce the upcoming annual election and all pertinent timelines as identified in Appendix A herein.

2.1.1. The CRO and the EO will meet with the Association’s Communications and Marketing Manager in advance of the official announcement to identify a strategy of how best to communicate the
3. Nomination Process

3.1. Following the close of nominations, all nomination forms (Appendix A) received prior to the deadline, either delivered by hand to the Association’s office or by email to cro.gsa@ucalgary.ca, will be officially reviewed by the CRO. Eligible Candidates whose paperwork is in order will be declared official Candidates and will be notified by email as provided in the nomination form by the CRO. Any Candidate whose paperwork was ruled out of order by the CRO will be considered ineligible and will be notified by email, as provided in the nomination form, by the CRO. If any Candidates are deemed otherwise ineligible at the sole discretion of the CRO, they will be notified by email, as provided in the nomination form, by the CRO.

3.1.1. Any Candidates determined ineligible will be provided with a written explanation, provided by the CRO, within twenty-four (24) hours of the close of the nomination period.

3.1.2. Official Candidates will be listed on the Association’s website and the Association’s newsletter.

3.2. Should the CRO, the DRO, or the Chair of the Judicial Board decide to run for an elected position, they must resign from their current position at least fourteen (14) days prior to the first day of the nomination period. Notice must be provided, in writing, to both the Chair of the Governance Committee and to the EO.

3.2.1. Neither the CRO, the DRO, nor the Chair of the Judicial Board are eligible to be nominated for an elected position once the nomination period has started.

4. Campaigning

4.1. No Candidate shall run or be a member in a slate, real or apparent, as determined by the CRO after consultation with the EO, or share expenses for Campaign Materials, work together for mutual benefit, use similar or identical slogans, or otherwise appear to be acting as a slate. Failure to abide by this rule constitutes a serious campaign violation and may result in disqualification of all Candidates that have been identified as running in a slate.

4.2. The Association places a high priority on open lines of communication between Candidates and electors. Candidates, or designates as identified in Article 1.2 herein, are required to attend the All-Candidates forum as identified in Schedule A herein in a location determined by the CRO. The CRO will notify all Candidates in writing to the email address provided on the nomination form of when this forum will occur. If neither the Candidate nor a Delegate attend the forum, the CRO reserves the right to disqualify
4.3. Candidates and Designates shall not be permitted to use the University of Calgary’s electronic communications system for campaigning purposes.

4.3.1. Candidates are not permitted to send emails or other forms of mass communications to Third Party lists for the purposes of Campaigning.

4.4. No Candidate shall make a speech to any class in the University without the prior agreement of the CRO and the professor or instructor responsible for that class.

4.4.1. Candidates are to submit the content of their presentations/speeches to the CRO in advance for approval.

4.4.2. Candidates may not access class lists through formal or informal means for the purposes of campaigning.

4.4.2.1. Candidates shall be required to obtain explicit consent to collect and use students’ personal contact information for Campaigning purposes.

4.5. Candidates may not use their position as Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant to campaign either verbally or electronically.

4.6. During officially organized events, which include all opportunities to officially address the student body either formally or informally, Candidates must behave in a professional manner as outlined in Article 5 of the Association’s Code of Conduct policy; a copy will be provided to all Candidates during the All-Candidates Meeting.

4.6.1. Candidates not acting professionally, as determined by the CRO after consultation with the Executive Officer, acting reasonably, may be disqualified from the electoral process.

4.7. Current Association Board Members seeking re-election may not use any Association resources to promote their candidacy.

4.8. Should a disqualified Candidate wish to challenge the CRO’s decision, they may do so by written appeal to the Judicial Board within twenty-four (24) hours of notification by the CRO.

5. Campaign Materials

5.1. All Candidates must have their campaign and communication materials, which include but are not limited to posters, banners, handbills, online materials, and electronic communication, approved by the CRO prior to distribution to the electorate. All campaign and communication materials must be provided to the CRO at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.
of distribution.

5.1.1. A copy of the campaign materials and/or communication message must be emailed to the CRO identifying when, where, and how the material/communication will be disseminated. Further, Candidates must receive written permission from the CRO for any materials and/or communication in relation to the content of the communiqué prior to dissemination.

5.2. All Candidates shall create a platform which will be posted on the Association’s website after the nomination period by the CRO.

5.2.1. Candidates who do not provide a platform will be disqualified.

5.3. All Candidates are strongly encouraged to submit a video which states their name and the position sought. The video or video URL link must be submitted to the CRO and must be approved by the CRO prior to dissemination of its content and URL.

5.4. No Campaign Materials may contain misinformation, slander, inappropriate endorsements, or inappropriate or discriminatory content. Should the CRO determine, after consultation with the EO, acting reasonably, that a Candidate has contravened this clause, the Candidate may be disqualified.

5.5. During the designated campaign period, Candidates shall not distribute any item to electors, except for approved Campaign Materials.

5.6. All Campaign Materials shall include, in legible form, the name of the Candidate and the position being sought.

5.7. All Campaign Materials shall, where applicable, include in legible form, a statement declaring who paid for the production of the Campaign Material. If campaign materials are paid for by the Association under Article 6.4 herein, the Association must be recognized by having “paid for by the Graduate Students’ Association of the University of Calgary” on said materials.

5.8. Campaign Material shall only be approved if it contains statements about a Candidate’s own campaign and platform.

5.9. A Candidate shall not make reference to the identity of another Candidate on any Campaign Materials.

5.10. A Candidate shall not misrepresent themselves on Campaign Materials.

5.11. Candidates shall not use the logos of the Graduate Students’ Association or the University of Calgary on any Campaign Material.

5.12. A Candidate may have no more than two (2) banners.

5.13. All Candidates shall:
5.13.1. comply with all building regulations;

5.13.2. follow university regulations on posters and use of university grounds; and

5.13.3. not use stickers, decals, or any adhesive material of a permanent or semi-permanent nature.

5.14. Only the Association and Candidates may post election-related or Campaign Material as approved in advance by the CRO.

5.15. Candidates may not campaign or post any Campaign Materials in any campus library.

5.16. No Candidate shall accept in-kind donation of advertising space in any publication, advertisement space or media venue.

5.17. All Candidates are solely responsible for the removal of all their Campaign Materials from campus by the end of the campaign period.

5.17.1. Candidates have 24-hours to remove all campaign materials – both electronic and physical – prior to being reimbursed for campaign spending as identified in Article 6.1 herein. Failure to do so may result in a financial penalty to the Candidate’s campaign and will be deducted from election spending reimbursements.

5.17.2. The amount of the penalty will be determined by the CRO and EO acting reasonably.

6. Election Spending

6.1. No Candidate may spend more than $150 (CAD) regardless of funding source during their election campaign. All election expenses must be reported to the CRO in the form of receipts. Expenses must include all items considered Campaign Materials, the rental or use of facilities, and all items or services of any kind donated to a campaign, which must be assessed and reported at fair market value.

6.2. Candidates must submit a report to the CRO listing all expenses by the end of the campaigning period and before voting commences. If expenses are incurred, Candidates must submit original receipts. Failure to submit a report may result in immediate disqualification of the Candidate.

6.3. If the CRO deems any expense not to be commensurate with the campaign or with fair market value, the CRO reserves the right to investigate the expenses before certifying the result. Further, the CRO reserves the right to invoke disciplinary action up to and including disqualification according to the CRO’s interpretation of this policy.

6.4. The Association will reimburse election expenses for each Candidate in the amount of up to $150 (CAD) after a submission of all receipts (as
specified above) if requested to do so.

6.5. No campaign expenses may be incurred during the voting period.

7. Voting

7.1. Voting shall take place over two days (48 hours) and shall be done through electronic means unless a physical ballot system has been approved by 2/3 majority in a previous GRC meeting.

7.1.1. Polling stations, if required, must be staffed by non-partisan volunteers as coordinated by the CRO (minimum of two (2) per station).

7.1.2. All Active Members of the Association may cast one vote for each position during the election.

7.1.2.1. Ballots must contain an option of not voting for the specific position being contested.

7.2. Positions with only one candidate will be acclaimed.

8. Announcement of Election Results

8.1. After the end of the voting period, the ballots shall be counted by the CRO, if required, and witnessed by a neutral third party.

8.1.1. The ballot count may also be witnessed by one (1) scrutineer appointed by each Candidate (which may be the Candidate him/herself), if so desired by the Candidate.

8.2. A first-past-the-post vote shall constitute the election of an officer in the case of all elected positions. If no Candidate is declared a winner, then the position will be declared vacant, and the vote will go to a by-election as outlined in the Association’s Bylaws as described in Article 10 herein.

8.3. The CRO shall announce the initial results within 24 hours of the end of the voting period.

8.4. The results initially announced will be provisional until all outstanding issues are resolved, with regard to any outstanding violations of policy by Candidates, or other issues that may arise, including confirmation of campaign expenses. Once these issues have been addressed, the CRO shall then officially certify the results.

8.5. The CRO may take up to 2 weeks to certify the results of the election should an appeal take place.

9. Neutrality
9.1. Current Board members may not use their position or influence to campaign on the behalf of another candidate.

9.2. Staff Members shall remain neutral in all matters pertaining to elections, by-elections, Plebiscites, and Referenda.

9.3. Any Active Member who has been elected to the Board through acclamation prior to the election taking place must remain neutral in relation to the other contested positions.

9.4. Should a by-election be required, all members of the Board and Staff Members must remain neutral throughout the by-election process.

10. By-elections

10.1. By-elections for the Association will follow all election policies with the following noted exceptions:

10.1.1. The by-election shall be held as part of the GRC meeting following the end of the campaign period, as per Association Bylaws and as noted in the by-election announcement;

10.1.2. Voting shall occur at the GRC meeting announced in the by-election announcement.

10.1.2.1. Only eligible GRC members may cast votes during by-elections.

10.1.2.1.1. Exceptions may be made by a GRC resolution passed with a super majority (i.e. 2/3) at the previous GRC meeting.

10.1.2.2. Voting shall be conducted using separate ballots for each contested position.

10.1.2.3. Winner is determined by first-past-the-post.

10.1.3. The public forum shall occur prior to the vote in the GRC meeting in which the by-election is held.

11. Labour Relations Committee

11.1. During the Association’s annual election, the Association will include a separate election for the following positions:

11.1.1. Labour Relations Chair who at the time of the election meets the definition of an Academically Employed Graduate Student as defined herein; and
11.1.2. Labour Relations Committee comprising of one Faculty Representative Member from each of the faculties of the University of Calgary who at the time of the election meets the definition of an Academically Employed Graduate Student as defined herein.

11.1.2.1. Faculties making up the LRC must have at least ten (10) Academically Employed Graduate Students in that faculty to be eligible for a seat on the LRC.

11.2. Only Academically Employed Graduate Students may nominate candidates for the LRC.

11.3. Only Academically Employed Graduate Students may vote in the Association’s annual LRC election.

11.4. All rules and regulations contained herein will be applicable to the LRC annual election with the exception of Article 1 and Article 10 of this document.

11.5. Should a LRC position remain vacant after the electoral process, LRC members may be appointed by the LRC through a process approved by the Board in advance of the appointment as long as the appointment process does not contravene Association Bylaws, The Post-Secondary Learning Act (Alberta), or the Labour Relations Code (Alberta).

12. Complaints, Infractions and Penalties

12.1. Any Active Member who believes that any Campaign Materials violate Association bylaws, this policy, University policy or any other election procedure, should contact the CRO. After adjudication, the CRO reserves the right to either warn a Candidate, disqualify the Candidate, or ultimately refuse to certify the election if such action is deemed appropriate by the CRO.

12.2. The following violations regarding Campaign Materials will result in the Candidate being disciplined up to and including disqualification, and the Warning Procedures herein will come into effect:

12.2.1. Campaign Materials on a painted wall or surface;

12.2.2. Campaign Materials displayed in an unauthorized area;

12.2.3. Campaign Materials posted before the campaign period begins;

12.2.4. Disobeying university, municipal, provincial, and/or federal law/regulation while campaigning;

12.2.5. Campaign Materials containing misinformation, negative campaigning, slander, inappropriate endorsements, or discriminatory content;

12.2.6. Campaign Materials submitted by any outside organization or
individual that is not an Active Member; and/or

12.2.7. Candidates themselves enforcing bylaws or policy or otherwise being seen to “police” other Candidates.

12.3. Any election violation including but not limited to policies outlined in this document will result in the Candidate being disciplined up to and including disqualification, and the warning procedures herein will come into effect.

12.3.1. The CRO reserves the right to act in a manner reflective of the severity of the infraction according to the CRO’s interpretation of said infraction up to and including disqualifying the Candidate(s). Should the infraction(s) be severe enough in the opinion of the CRO, the CRO may refuse to certify the election.

13. Warning Procedures

13.1. Any Candidate who violates any provision herein that results in an official warning or disqualification will be notified of their violation in writing to the e-mail provided on the nomination form by the CRO. All warnings, sanctions, and disqualifications will be posted on the Association’s website and in the Association’s office.

13.2. Any Candidate receiving an official sanction not including disqualification because of a policy violation will have twenty-four (24) hours to fix the violation; otherwise the Candidate will be disqualified from the election.

13.3. Any violation of Campaign Material expense limits may result in immediate disqualification from the election without a previous warning.

14. Deputy Returning Officer

14.1. The CRO may employ the DRO to assist with any provision herein should the CRO feel, acting reasonably, the workload is beyond their capabilities.

14.2. Should the CRO employ the DRO in any capacity, the DRO is subject to the same conditions as outlined in Article 2 herein.

15. Appeals

15.1. As per Association bylaws, Candidates may appeal decisions made by the CRO to the Association’s Judicial Board.

15.1.1. Appeals must be received by the Chair of the Judicial Board in writing within 2 business days of receiving notice by the CRO.

16. Reporting
16.1. The CRO will provide a written report to the Board no later than thirty (30) days after the election has completed. This report will outline at minimum:

16.1.1. A summary of the election including:

16.1.1.1. Number of candidates who ran for specific elected positions;

16.1.1.2. Number of Active Members who voted; and

16.1.1.3. Election Results.

16.1.2. A summary of any concerns, complaints, comments, observations, and issues that need to be addressed prior to the following year’s electoral cycle; and

16.1.3. Recommendations for changes to the Associations Bylaws and/or election policy

17. Interpretation and Approval

17.1. This policy must be reviewed and approved by the Board of the Association of the on a yearly basis prior to the beginning of the nomination period. The interpretation of this policy is at the sole discretion of the Chief Returning Officer as defined herein.

Appendix A - Timeline

First Monday in February – Official Announcement of Election
First Monday in February – Nominations Open (12:30 PM)
Third Tuesday in February – Nominations Close (4:30 PM)
Third Wednesday in February – Nominees are Notified (before 12 PM)
Third Wednesday in February – Campaigning Begins (1 PM)
Fourth Monday in February – Nominee platforms sent to CRO (12 PM)
Last Tuesday in February – All-Candidates Forum as determined by the CRO
Second Sunday in March – Campaigning Ends (Midnight)
Second Monday in March and the subsequent day - Voting days

Within 24 Hours of Polls Closing – Uncertified election announcements (in LDL)

Forms

Board of Directors Nomination Form
Labour Relations Committee Nomination Form
Code of Conduct Policy

Approved on: January 24, 2019