



## **OCAD STUDENT UNION ELECTIONS POLICY**

### **1. PREAMBLE:**

The Elections Policy outlines the rights, rules and responsibilities of candidates during the Elections and By-Elections. This policy also outlines the roles and responsibilities of the OCAD Student Union during Elections and By-Elections of the OCAD Student Union Board of Directors and Executives. The Chief Returning Officer will use this policy as a guideline for running Student Union Elections and By-Elections. Any current member of the Board, staff, volunteer, and committee member of the corporation who decides to run for an elected position shall disassociate from all areas in their position relating to the Elections from the beginning of the nomination period.

### **2. ELECTIONS:**

Elections happen every winter term for every position on the OCAD Student Union Executive Committee and Student Union Board of Directors.

### **3. BY-ELECTIONS:**

By-Elections happen every fall to fill any other vacancies on the OCAD Student Union Executive Committee and Student Union Board of Directors.

### **4. APPOINTMENT:**

If a position becomes vacant after October 31st, or after the fall By-Elections, whichever is later, an appointment to fill the vacancy will be made by a 2/3 vote of the Student Union Board of Directors. The appointment will last until the next scheduled Election or By-Election.

### **5. ELECTIONS NOTICE PERIOD:**

- A. The advertising of the opening of nominations, stating where nomination forms are available, shall occur on the opening day of nominations and shall continue until the day nominations close.
- B. Methods and the requirements for voting shall be advertised at least two (2) weeks before the first day polls open.
- C. Methods and the requirements for voting shall be communicated by mass email to



Student Union members, and shall be posted on the OCAD Student Union website at least two (2) weeks before the first day polls open.

## **6. ELECTION OFFICIALS**

### **6.1 Chief Returning Officer**

- A. There will be a Chief Returning Officer hired to oversee the general elections procedures as outlined in the OCAD SU Elections Policy.
- B. The Chief Returning Officer is supported by the Elections Committee, composed of three general members who are not holding a Board or Staff position. .
- C. Only the Chief Returning Officer in partnership with the Elections Committee will have the power to make judgements and rulings on matters regarding the election process. The CRO must not be: A student or faculty member of OCAD University, nor a member of the OCAD SU staff.
- D. The Chief Returning Officer in partnership with the Elections Committee shall have the sole authority to administer the provisions of this policy.
- E. The Chief Returning Officer reserves the right to make rulings on issues and events not otherwise covered in this policy, or to add in such rulings to supplement existing sections.
- F. Inquiries to the Chief Returning Officer will be responded to promptly and no later than 24 hours during the campaign period.
- G. Any candidate appealing a decision made by the Chief Returning Officer must submit their appeal to the Elections Committee in writing within 48 hours of the decision having been communicated.

### **6.2 Manager of HR & Administration and Administrative Coordinator**

- A. The Manager of HR & Administration assists in or delegates to other hired SU staff, ie. the Communications Coordinator, the task of logistical planning and implementation of the election procedures. For example, room bookings, work order requests etc.

### **6.3 Elections Committee and Elections Appeal Committee**



- A. The Elections Committee works in tandem with the Chief Returning Officer and ensures that the work of the Chief Returning Officer is carried out in a timely fashion.
- B. The Elections Committee will review and make a decision about any appeals submitted by a candidate challenging a decision made by the Chief Returning Officer. A decision of the Elections Committee is considered final and cannot be appealed.
- C. The Committee has the authority to overturn a decision made by the Chief Returning Officer by majority vote of the committee.
- D. The Elections Committee is composed of three general members who are not holding a Board or Staff position
- E. In regards to appeals of the Election, the Elections Committee will convene to address irregularities in the elections process. This committee will last meet not more than two (2) weeks following the expiration of the time allowed for requesting a recount of ballots.

#### **6.4 Candidate Volunteers**

- A. Candidates may recruit volunteers to assist them in their campaigning for an elected position with the OCAD Student Union.
- B. Volunteers must not campaign within 6 feet of a person or persons directly voting or interfere with the voting process.
- C. All volunteers are expected to comply with the Elections Policy and candidates are responsible for the actions of their volunteers.
- D. Misconduct of volunteers may not only have repercussions for the individual involved, but may also result in disqualification of the associated candidate.

### **7. CANDIDATES**

#### **Eligibility of Candidates**

##### **An eligible candidate:**

- A. Is a full-time or part-time undergraduate or graduate student currently enrolled at OCAD University in a minimum of .5 credits during the fall and winter term;
- B. Must have paid membership fees in full for the current year;



- C. Must be the majority of age 18 years or (per the Corporations Act).
- D. Must be in good standing with the OCADSU. Good Standing refers to general members and political members who have met the requirements of membership in the Student Union and adhere to OCAD SU policies, in particular to anti-oppression when engaging in OCAD SU meetings of the members, programs and activities.

### **Withdrawal of Candidates**

- A. Candidates may withdraw from the OCAD SU elections so long as their withdrawal is submitted in writing to and accepted by the Chief Returning Officer 24 hours in advance of the beginning of the voting period.
- B. Candidates who withdraw once the voting period has begun will remain on the ballot, but votes for the candidate will not be counted and reasonable notice will be given to the membership of the withdrawal.
- C. Candidates whose withdrawal have been confirmed in writing by the Chief Returning Officer may publicly endorse another candidate of their choosing.

### **Candidate Responsibilities:**

- A. Candidates cannot begin campaigning until the Nominations Period has closed and Nomination Packages have been approved by the Chief Returning Officer. The Chief Returning Officer checks each Nominations Package to ensure that candidates are eligible to stand for election under the Student Union's By-laws and policies.
- B. All candidates must read and are responsible to understand and adhere to the OCAD Student Union's Mandate, By-Laws, policies and procedures.
- C. Candidates are responsible to gain a clear understanding of the position they are running for and how their ideas fit or don't fit with the position and how their ideas fit or don't fit with the mandate of the Student Union. It is recommended that candidates speak with a current member of the Student Union to gain a thorough understanding about the position they are running for.
- D. It is the responsibility of each candidate to understand all information in this policy, and to understand all information provided in the Nominations Package. If candidates are unclear about any policy or procedure, it is their responsibility to ask the Chief Returning Officer.



- E. Any campaign posters or materials distributed on campus for a candidate's campaign must be cleaned up/removed/taken down within 24 hours of polls being closed.
- F. While the polls are open and the Chief Returning Officer is approaching students to visit online polls, no candidates shall verbally or auditorily engage with the Chief Returning Officer or voters. Intentional verbal or auditory engagement or actively pursuing the Chief Returning Officer or voters during the voting process will result in disqualification from the elections.
- G. While the polls are open, candidates are not permitted to provide a voting device for voters to use.

#### **Candidate's Information Meeting:**

- A. All nominees must attend the Candidates Information Meeting in its entirety or arrange to meet with the Chief Returning Officer in person within 24 hours of the meeting.
- B. Any candidate who fails to attend the Candidates Information Meeting, or fails to meet with the Chief Returning Officer shall be disqualified from the election.
- C. It is the responsibility of each candidate to understand all information provided at the Candidates' Information Meeting.
- D. The topics at the Candidates' Information Meeting include, but are not limited to:
  - a. The elections process outlined in the Elections Policy, Candidate Responsibilities, and Campaign Guidelines
  - b. The Elections Schedule
  - c. Student Union Code of Conduct
  - d. The duties and functions of Election officials
- E. Each candidate will sign a statement via an electronically signed form before leaving the meeting attesting to the fact that they understand the rules and regulations governing the election.

#### **8. VOTING & ELECTION RESULTS:**

##### **Election of Candidates:**



The winning candidate for each office shall be the candidate with the most votes cast in their name.

### **Acclamation:**

In the event that only one candidate has filed a valid nomination for any of the offices at the end of the nomination period, that candidate shall be subject to a Yes/No ratification vote by the members, to be held at the same time as elections of the other offices. A “Yes” vote of fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of votes cast shall constitute the members’ ratification of this candidate to hold the office. A “No” vote of fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of votes cast shall reflect a vote of non-confidence and the office will remain vacant.

### **Voting Procedures**

- A. Voting will take place online. Every member of the Students’ Union shall be eligible to vote. Voters will be required to (depending on the voting system employed) provide their name by which they are enrolled at OCAD University, their student number and their Program of Study in order to vote. This information will be used for the sole purpose of verifying their name on the list of voters eligible to vote. Any votes cast that does not provide this information will be considered spoiled. Each member is entitled to cast one vote per applicable office standing for election.
- B. The voting period will last a minimum of three (3) days.
- C. There will be a link to online voting distributed to all the members of the OCAD Student Union through their student email.
- D. A photograph and written biography of all candidates will be sent out by electronic mail along with instructions to vote. A photograph of each candidate and text of not more than 100 words outlining their platform and biographical information will be included in this communications and on the OCAD Student Union’s website. Formatting of the photographs and written biographies will be standardized and uniformly presented. The Students’ Union accepts no liability for any technical problems with either medium.
- E. Failure of a candidate to produce a photograph and 100 word biography by the deadline specified and communicated by the Chief Returning Officer will result in forfeiting the right to have their photograph and biography included in these mediums.



F. All files, passwords and access to ballots shall be secured by the Chief Returning Officer.

### **Ballot Counting Process:**

A. . The Chief Returning Officer shall determine which, if any, ballots are to be declared spoiled. Spoiled ballots shall be stored separately from valid ballots and are to be kept and made available by the Chief Returning Officer for examination by each candidate following the counting of all ballots.

The vote for elected positions will take place using the following criteria:

- I. Voting shall be held via a secured balloting website which shall be distributed by email.
- II. The election shall be held by secret ballot.
- III. The Election Committee shall ensure that a representative from the committee is present at the ballot site to respond to questions, comments and concerns regarding the elections process posed by OCAD SU general members.
- IV. Only one (1) vote per position is permitted per member which is limited by the secured balloting system.
- V. The Election Committee shall verify the vote count after the voting period has ended.
- VI. The elected officer(s) shall be based on the candidate(s) receiving the majority vote.
- VII. The candidate(s) for each position receiving the majority vote will be disclosed to all candidates and the Board of Directors via email prior to a public announcement. An announcement of the elected officer(s) will be made by the Chair of the Elections Committee at the next meeting of the members.

**In the case of a tie:**



- A. An election of office that results in a tie between two (2) candidates who are running for the same position will ultimately be determined by a coin toss administered by the Chief Returning Officer.
- B. An election of office that results in a tie between three (3) or more candidates who are running for the same position will ultimately be determined by drawing the name of all tied candidates from a hat by the Chief Returning Officer.
- C. Such procedures will be final and binding after verification of the final count of secure votes

### **Election Results:**

The Chief Returning Officer or their designate shall communicate results of the election represented in percentages to the OCAD Student Union Manager of HR and Administration immediately following the counting of all ballots. Student Union members will be notified of the election results by mass email, on the OCAD Student Union website and through OCAD Student Union Social Media

## **9. CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES**

### **General Campaign Guidelines:**

Candidates are strongly encouraged to run their campaigning in good faith, and in a clean and positive manner. Appendix A provides a guideline for permissible and non-permissible campaigning practices, however these examples should not be taken as a complete and final list. The Chief Returning Officer has discretion to make a ruling about areas not specified in this policy. Candidates are encouraged to contact the Chief Returning Officer about a practice they are unsure about. Violation of permissible campaign practices may result in disqualification of a candidate at the discretion of the Chief Returning Officer.

- A. Candidates may not campaign as a “slate” since the OCAD SU offices are not elected by multi-seat elections. (A slate is a group of candidates that run in multi-seat or multi-position elections on a common platform. The common platform may be because the candidates are all members of a political party, have the same or similar policies, or some other reason.) Candidates may not endorse other candidates, verbally or otherwise, running for separate offices and may not assist another candidate to campaign. Candidates may not use similar colours, fonts, posters or other print media, images, graphics (online or otherwise) on their campaign, in order to avoid suspected



or perceived endorsement of other candidates, suspected or perceived assistance or association with campaigning of other candidates.

- B. Campaigning may only take place after the nomination period has closed and a candidates' Nominations Package has been verified and approved by the Chief Returning Officer.
- C. Candidates must inform the Chief Returning Officer of all campaign materials they distribute both online and on campus. The Chief Returning Officer may request changes to be made to campaign materials if they are deemed to contravene this policy. In the event such a request is made, candidates have 24 hours to make the requested changes. Candidates who do not comply with such a request may be disqualified.
- D. Campaigning includes printed materials, posters, leaflets, banners, websites, online and social media, publications, classroom talks, events on and off campus. The Campaign Guidelines, attached as Schedule A, outline acceptable forms of campaigning and failure to observe these regulations may result in disqualification.
- E. It is the responsibility of the Candidates that all campaign materials and/ or advertisements conform to all policies and regulations of the OCAD Student Union, OCAD University and with all municipal, provincial, federal laws.
- F. It is the responsibility of the Candidates that they follow the OCADU Poster Policy in posting materials on campus.
- G. No campaigning of any form is permitted in the Student Union offices, or any area that can be perceived to be under the jurisdiction of the OCAD Student Union unless otherwise stated by the Chief Returning Officer.
- H. Campaigning within a classroom or studio is forbidden without the expressed permission of its presiding faculty member(s) or technician. To campaign in a classroom or studio, a candidate must obtain consent from the professor/lecturer/technician. For the purposes of this policy, the open studio spaces on the 5th and 6th floor do not require permission from a technician or faculty member.

## **9.1 RESTRICTIONS CONCERNING CAMPAIGNING**

- I. Restrictions concerning campaigning include:



- a. Campaigning shall not take place within sight or earshot of the Chief Returning Officer while they are actively promoting the elections and voting process, unless otherwise specified by the Chief Returning Officer. (For example, if the Chief Returning Officer is attending a Meet the Candidates Elections Event)
  - b. While the polls are open and the Chief Returning Officer is approaching students to visit online polls, no candidates shall verbally or auditorily engage with the Chief Returning Officer or voters. Intentional verbal or auditory engagement or actively pursuing the Chief Returning Officer or voters during the voting process will result in disqualification from the elections.
  - c. While the polls are open, candidates are not permitted to provide a voting device for voters to use. Candidates are permitted to inform constituents about where and how to vote on their own mobile device, and candidates may provide a link to do so. However, once a link has been provided, a candidate must give a voter privacy in casting their vote. A candidate may not wait for a voter to cast their vote after a link has been provided. Privacy must be ensured for a constituent to cast their vote after a link has been provided.
- J. Candidates are not entitled to use in their campaign any service or money, given to them by virtue of holding any position in any campus organization unless such services would still be available to them otherwise. This includes, but is not limited to: printing services, photocopying, office supplies, equipment, advertising space and staff.

**Campaign materials shall not:**

- A. Violate the OCADU Poster Policy; be posted in classrooms or seminar rooms in the library or other university designated non-postering areas, especially where they might obstruct the view on a doorway;
- B. Overlap or be attached to campaign materials already affixed to something, or overlap another candidate's poster;
- C. Be removed from any posted location, without the authorization of the Chief Returning Officer or designate, except a candidate's own materials removed by that candidate or person(s) authorized by that candidate to remove such materials;



D. Be placed on or in offices of the OCAD Student Union;

## 9.2 MEDIA GUIDELINES

### Electronic Media:

- A. Email: Electronic media may be used for campaigning, however candidates are forbidden to campaign using any form of unsolicited electronic mail. The spirit of this policy is to ensure that mass unwanted communications are not received by those who may not want to receive this information. More explicitly, the OCAD SU forbids campaigning via email to those that have not consented to receiving communications from the candidate in question. Candidates may campaign through email IF they have obtained a constituent's consent (ex. When compiling an email list, candidates must include and read out a disclaimer that states that upon signing up, a constituent agrees that they may be sent emails from time to time regarding a candidate's campaign). Constituents that signed up must have the option to opt out of the listserv at any point. Candidates must remove these constituents from their listserv immediately or they will be in contravention of this policy.
- B. Websites: Candidates are allowed to set up a campaign website whose content must adhere to the guidelines in this policy. Candidates are responsible for any and all dynamic material posted on the site and will be held responsible should the material contravene any of the guidelines listed in this policy. The website cannot request email addresses.
- C. Facebook: Candidates are allowed to set up Facebook groups aimed at the electorate whose content must adhere to the guidelines in this policy. The Chief Returning Officer must also be added to each Facebook group created by candidates (by way of the OCAD SU page). Candidates are responsible for any and all dynamic material posted on these groups and will be held responsible should the material contravene any of the guidelines listed in this policy. Messages sent to members of the group are considered a violation of the email clause listed above.
- D. Twitter(X): Candidates must allow the Chief Returning Officer to follow them on Twitter for the duration of the Elections. Candidates are responsible for any and all dynamic material posted in their twitter account and will be held responsible should the material contravene any of the guidelines listed in this policy. Twitter messages do not constitute electronic mail as "followers" choose to follow your posts.



### **9.3 CAMPAIGN FINANCING**

#### **Campaign Financing**

- A. Candidates must provide all receipts for their campaign materials 24 hours before polls open. All candidates will be given an expenses form as part of their nomination package.
- B. The OCAD Student Union will photocopy up to 30 black and white letter sized posters for any candidate who makes such a request. The candidate must provide the original flyer for photocopying.
- C. Registered Student Groups may endorse but not financially support a candidate.
- D. Campaign donations may not exceed \$50.00. If donations were made, a note from the donor validating the donations' monetary value must be given. Donated materials shall be assigned a dollar value based on current market value assessed by the Chief Returning Officer. The dollar value amount for donated materials may not exceed \$50.00.
- E. All campaign donations must be disclosed in writing to the Chief Returning Officer.
- F. Candidates running for a position with the OCAD Student Union are permitted to spend a total of \$200.00 on their campaign.
- G. Violations of campaign financing shall be investigated by the Chief Returning Officer and candidates must be prepared to account for all expenses by providing original receipts. If it is determined not all receipts can be accounted for, and a reasonably prudent person could assume the costs of the campaign materials exceeds \$200.00 without reasonable doubt, the candidate will be disqualified.
- H. Gifts, discounts and previously owned materials used for campaigning will be considered as donations.

### **10. COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATIONS**

It is within the rights of all candidates and community members to lodge complaints for perceived violations to the elections policy and campaign guidelines.

- A. All election related complaints regarding the conduct of another candidate or a person acting on behalf of a candidate must be filed in writing within 72 hours of the incident to the Chief Returning Officer.



- B. Once received, the Chief Returning Officer will conduct an investigation and make a ruling regarding the matter. The Chief Returning Officer shall render a decision within 24 hours in writing to the candidates in questions and the complainant, unless the complaint is time sensitive, in which case the Chief Returning Officer shall render a decision within one business day. A complaint shall be deemed time-sensitive when the activity outlined in the complaint is ongoing. All rulings of Chief Returning Officer shall be done in a fair and consistent manner.
- C. If a candidate is dissatisfied with a formal decision involving a complaint and/or disqualification, this can be appealed to the Elections Committee (see section Election Committee).
- D. The Chief Returning Officer may lay charges of violations of campaign rules at their own initiative. The Chief Returning Officer may act on information about violations discovered at any point during the Elections Period, including up to one week following the announcement of Election Results. The Chief Returning Officer must communicate their intentions to act on the information within 72 hours of discovering the information.
- E. Where the Chief Returning Officer finds there has been a violation, the Chief Returning Officer must communicate their ruling about the violation and details about the violation to the OCAD Student Union Manager of HR and Administration. All violations will be included in the CRO's Final Report of the Election.
- F. Anonymous complaints will not be acted on. Complainants must identify themselves to the Chief Returning Officer. The Chief Returning Officer has the discretion as to whether or not it is appropriate to share the identity of the complainant with the candidate(s) identified in the complaint.

## **11. VIOLATIONS & DISQUALIFICATION**

Regarding penalties for violations the Chief Returning Officer may:

- A. Declare that an election of a candidate be ruled void.
- B. Violations of the following nature will result in an automatic disqualification of a candidate:
  - a. Anyone improperly declared an eligible candidate.



- b. Failure to attend a Candidates' Information meeting.

In the event a winning candidate in any election is disqualified, the runner-up will take the place of the disqualified winner. If there is no runner up, or if the runner up does not wish to take the position, there will be a By-Election at a to-be-determined date or an interim appointment by the board.

### **11.1. GROUNDS FOR DISQUALIFICATION**

Grounds for Disqualification: All candidates, and their volunteers are strongly cautioned against committing any of the following as these will result in disqualification of the associated candidate:

- A. Failure to attend a mandatory event(s) or meeting(s) during the elections period.
- B. Beginning to campaign prior to the campaign period, or before a candidate's Nominations Package has been approved by the Chief Returning Officer. Using the OCAD University or Student Union logo in campaign materials. Attempting to use alcoholic beverages, nicotine or drugs to influence the campaign and/or elections.
- C. Harassment of candidates, volunteers, community members or OCAD SU staff: It is the responsibility of all involved in the election process to ensure civil conduct and to not participate in actions that are deemed as threatening and possibly unlawful. Candidates and their representatives are expected to show respect to all candidates, volunteers, community members and OCAD SU staff.
- D. Alleged misconduct should not and cannot be dealt with by the candidate or representative. Instead, complaints should be immediately directed to the Chief Returning Officer.
- E. While it is permissible to approach constituents and ask for their support, it is not permissible to provide them with a device for voting (ie. tablet, laptop or other mobile device). It is permissible to inform constituents that their own mobile devices may be used for voting when electronic voting systems are employed.
- F. Discriminatory, derogatory or pejorative language, specifically language that promotes hate of groups or individuals, including but not limited to: racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, biphobic, ableist and xenophobic statements, or language that demeans a person's religious, sexual, or ethnic identity, their level of education or financial situation. Any campaigning by candidates, their representatives or any



third parties (whether through verbal or written communication) that is deemed to be pejorative is explicitly prohibited and will be dealt with severely up to and including the involvement of OCAD University officials.

G. Libel, Slander and Gross Misrepresentation: Candidates, their representatives and third parties are explicitly barred from libel, slander or gross misrepresentation of a candidate or their representatives. This does not bar a candidate from voicing an opinion on a matter, however matters represented as substantive or factual must have a basis in fact and must be in accordance with the general spirit of the Code of Conduct.

Note: Libel (written) and slander (spoken) is a claim which is generally false and has been made to someone other than the person being defamed. Libel and slander DOES NOT include speaking or writing about actual events and opinions about actual events, which may also happen to portray said person in a negative manner.

## 12. APPEALS OF ELECTION DECISION OR RESULTS

- A. Any candidate may challenge the decision of the Chief Returning Officer regarding a complaint within 72 hours of the Chief Returning Officer's decision having been communicated.
- B. Any candidate may challenge the validity of their election result in a written submission containing their reasons to the Elections Committee no later than 72 hours after the close of the voting period.
- C. The Elections Committee, which shall investigate any appeal and make a decision regarding the issue. The decision of the Election Committee is final.

By signing below, I agree that I have read and understand the 2026/27 Elections Policy. Furthermore, I acknowledge that if I am in breach of the Elections Policy, I may be removed as a candidate, and any votes cast for me will no longer be valid.

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_