

Student Government Association Elections Guidelines

William Paterson University Student Government Association

Elections Guidelines

Article I Candidacy

- A. All students running for a Senate position in the SGA must have a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of no lower than 2.5 at the time of candidacy
- B. All students running for an Executive Officer or a Student Representative to the Board of Trustees position in the SGA must have a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of no lower than 2.75 at the time of candidacy. Those running for President or Executive Vice President must have completed or be in the process of completing at least two [2] semesters of membership on the SGA Senate. Those running for a standing committee Vice President position must have completed or be in the process of completing at least one [1] semester of membership on the SGA Senate. The semester exemption is only made if the candidate will assume office after the semester is complete.
- C. Freshmen running for any Senate position in the SGA will be excused from the GPA requirement during their first semester only.
- D. The office of the Dean of Students or the Office of Campus Activities and Student Leadership will certify GPA requirements.
- E. Students running for Senator of Academic Affairs must be members of the respective colleges at the time of elections.
- F. All students must sign a nomination form (located in the SGA Office) stating their desire to run for office. All students must pick up a packet (located in the SGA Office) which will contain a nomination form and a petition.
- G. After being nominated and completing a nomination form, a candidate must attend the required election workshop conducted by the Vice President of the Committee the candidate is running for before campaigning may begin. The Vice President of the Judicial Review Board will coordinate and assist the other Vice Presidents through the workshop process.
- H. Candidates running must have their petitions signed by members of current William Paterson University student body at the time of elections. Petitions must include students' printed first and last name along with their signatures and WPUNJ student e-mail address and Student ID number (for CASL verification).
- I. The number of petitions will be as follows:
 - a. All candidates running for an Executive Officer or a Student Representative to the Board of Trustees position must have at least 100 signatures.
 - b. All candidates running for a position other than the positions indicated above must have at least 50 signatures.
- J. All candidates must sign a job description form confirming that they are aware of and agree to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the position that they are running for and that they are aware of the meetings they would have to attend as well as that they have read and understand the Election Guidelines.
- K. No student may run for more than one (1) SGA Position at a time.

Article II

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Campaigning Regulations

- A. Candidates are ultimately responsible for all campaigning done on their behalf.
- B. Campaigning for any office may begin after attending an election workshop and signing the Affirmation of Candidacy form.
- C. All candidates are responsible for obtaining and understanding the rules and regulations of an SGA Election. Candidates are encouraged to ask questions during their workshops and while campaigning however ignorance of the rules will not be an acceptable excuse for any infractions or violations.
- D. Personal attacks (referred to as “mudslinging”) may result in disqualification.
 - a. Mudslinging is defined by: the use of profanity, libelous or exaggerated statements, photo shopped or altered images, racial/gender/ethnic slurs, or deliberately false accusations directed towards another candidate in public or on/with social media, flyers, word of mouth, electronic or paper correspondence, broadcast or recording. Candidates may be held liable for the actions of those campaigning on their behalf. The definition of ‘Mudslinging’ is not limited to the above and further interpretation may be deemed at the discretion of the Judicial Review Board.
- E. PA systems and bullhorns may not be used as part of a campaign on campus.
- F. The Office of Campus Activities and Student Leadership (Student Center Room 302) must stamp all campaign materials that are to be posted in the Student Center.
- G. All campaign materials that are to be posted in the Residence Halls must be approved by the Office of Residence Life and posted in approved areas only. Each flyer hung in Residence Halls must have an original stamp on it.
- H. All posted materials must comply with the normal WPU posting rules. They may not be:
 - a. Taped on glass, walls or poles
 - b. Posted on trees
 - c. Stamped or taped to any bulletin boards (only pins and thumbtacks may be used)
 - d. Any larger than 18”x24” or smaller than 3”x5”
 - e. Placed off campus
 - f. Posted on bulletin boards labeled “OFF CAMPUS”
- I. All materials posted in any academic building or Residence Hall must also adhere to the following policies:
 - a. Posting is only permitted on non-Dean bulletin boards
 - b. There will be no monopolizing of boards
 - c. There will be no blocking of other flyers
 - d. All flyers must have an original Residence Life Stamp if posting in a Residence or Dormitory
 - e. No more than one flyer per bulletin board
 - f. Flyers may not be posted on glass, elevators, doors or garbage/recycling receptacles
 - g. Flyers and other campaign material may not be distributed under the doors of residents’, clubs, University classrooms, laboratories or administrative offices
 - h. Flyers and other campaign material may not be “left behind” on tables, desks, counters, chairs, chalkboards, walls or other stand-alone objects in a classroom,

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- restroom or laboratory unless posted in an approved area and in accordance with these guidelines
- i. Flyers must be removed no later than two [2] days after the polls close
- J. All materials posted in the Student Center and University Commons and any other campus building not already mentioned must adhere to the following policies:
- a. No staples
 - b. Letter-sized paper only (8.5" x 11")
 - c. There will be no monopolizing of boards
 - d. There will be no blocking of other flyers.
- K. Campaign materials may not exceed two [2] items per candidate per bulletin board, except in the Student Center/ University Commons and the Residence Halls where only one (1) item per candidate per board may be posted.
- L. There will be no defacing, destruction, relocation or obstruction of one candidate's materials by another.
- M. Candidates are responsible for removing campaign materials and flyers, even if they were posted by a supporter no later than forty-eight [48] hours after the polls close. Candidates must remove flyers or campaign materials that become litter or otherwise would be considered refuse.
- N. The SGA copier may be used by candidates to make up to one hundred [100] copies.
- a. Candidates will be charged \$.10 (ten cents) for each additional copy.
 - b. Each candidate will receive from the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board, who in turn had received them from the SGA Secretary, a copier code.
 - c. The Vice President of the Judicial Review Board will report any charges incurred in this manner to the SGA Executive Vice President in a written form.
 - d. Failure to pay this charge within a month of when the copies were made may result in a grievance filed by the SGA Executive Vice President with the SGA Vice President of the Judicial Review Board and the Judicial Review Board.
 - e. If this grievance is submitted before the election takes place, the Judicial Review Board may disqualify the candidate or take other action at their discretion. Their decision may be appealed to the Judicial Review Board within (5) business days.
 - f. If this grievance is submitted after the election is completed, the Judicial Review Board will hold a hearing on the matter to investigate further and decide what action will be taken.

Article III

Election Day Campaigning Regulations

- A. All campaigning materials must be removed from any location where voting will be taking place no later than 9:00pm the day before.
- B. Campaigning and distribution of materials will be confined to the campus outside polling locations.
- a. During the Elections period, all computer labs on campus, to include but not be limited to labs located in, the SGA Office, Career Development and Gloria S.

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Williams Advisement Center, the Library, the Atrium, the Science Building, Ben Shahn, Valley Road, the Power Arts Building, or any wireless access to the online elections set up by the SGA, will be designated as non-campaigning zones. Candidates may not have campaign material within 25 feet of any established polling location as doing so may result in disqualification.

- C. All campaign materials must be removed and disposed of properly. Campaign material must be removed from all SGA designated polling areas no later than twelve [12] hours before the opening of the polls. All campaign material on campus must be removed no later than forty-eight [48] hours after the close of the elections period.
- D. Any campaign material left in designated polling areas while voting is active may be removed by poll workers and may result in disciplinary action at the discretion of the Judicial Review Board.

Article IV

Campaign Infractions

- A. If necessary, the Judicial Review Board will investigate and report to the Executive Board any infraction of these Guidelines.
- B. Any infraction may result in the disqualification of the candidate by the Judicial Review Board. (See Violations of Elections Guidelines)
- C. Elections Guidelines cannot cover every possible situation. Candidates are asked to abide by general rules of “fair play”. Violation of the rules of “fair play” may result in disqualification. Ignorance is not accepted as an excuse.
 - a. Candidates shall not commit any act that violates Local, State or Federal Statute.
 - b. Candidates shall not commit any act that may invalidate the election, including but not limited to:
 - i. Attempting to vote more than once.
 - ii. Harassing rival candidates.
 - iii. Monopolizing space on bulletin boards.
 - iv. Defacing, removing or covering the campaign materials of other candidates.
 - v. Solicitation in any Residence Hall with an electronic device that could be used to vote or by distributing any campaign material in those buildings outside of designated areas
 - c. Every candidate is responsible for his/her own campaign.
 - i. A candidate may be held responsible for individuals or groups, who, in a public manner and with the candidate’s implied or expressed consent, act to promote his/her candidacy.
 - ii. As such, any person or persons fitting the above description who violate Local, State or Federal statutes, University Policy, the SGA Constitution and By-Laws and/or these Elections Guidelines while acting to promote his/her candidacy may be considered the responsibility of the candidate in question by the Judicial Review Board.

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- iii. It is required that anyone campaigning informs their direct campaign supporters of the Election Guidelines, rules and regulations.
- d. The listing of the above rules of fair play in no way limits the Judicial Review Board's power to take action in cases which are not specifically mentioned but are, in the Committee's judgment, a violation of the rules of fair play.
- e. If an alleged infraction involves any sitting member of the Judicial Review Board, the charges will be submitted to the Executive Vice President and any subsequent hearings into the matter will be conducted by the Executive Board.

Violations of Elections Guidelines

Any candidate found to have committed any infraction of the procedures and guidelines faces the possibility of disqualification by the Judicial Review Board. In some cases, disqualification may be too severe of a consequence and it shall remain at the discretion of the Judicial Review Board to decide what an appropriate consequence shall be.

All corrective actions that result in disciplinary recommendations may be appealed to the Judicial Review Board in writing no later than two [2] business days after the issuance of the disciplinary action. The Judicial Review Board shall set a hearing date within ten (10) business days from the notice of the appeal (see 1). The Judicial Review Board shall formulate any subsequent recommendations.

Disqualification shall be defined as such

- a. The candidate may not run for any position in the Election Period during which the infraction occurred.
- b. While due process is taking place, a candidate may continue to campaign. If disqualification is deemed necessary, the candidate will be removed from the ballot and be barred from running in any election, special or otherwise, during the same semester in which the infraction occurred.
- c. If necessary, due to the severity of an infraction, the Judicial Review Board may also bar the candidate from being appointed as Senator, At-Large member or Executive of the SGA through the appointment process during the same semester in which the infraction occurred.

1. Judicial Review Board Appeals Procedure

- a. Appeal meeting procedure is as follows:
 - i. The SGA Vice President of the Judicial Review Board will yield the chair to the Judicial Review Board Vice-Chair for the duration of the appeal.

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- ii. If Judicial Review Board does not have quorum, it will reserve the right to reschedule the appeal.
- iii. Both the appellant and the SGA Vice President of the Judicial Review Board will be allotted five [5] minutes to speak with one extension opportunity of two [2] minutes, approved only by a committee vote.
 1. The SGA Vice President of the Judicial Review Board will speak briefly about his/her decision.
 2. The appellant will present their appeal case. If requested, the appellant may solicit (in writing) the services of the SGA Advocate-General for assistance in presenting their case.
- iv. The committee may ask questions of all parties involved.
- v. The chair (Judicial Review Board Vice-Chair) will call for a motion to grant the candidate's appeal.
- vi. The chair (Judicial Review Board Vice-Chair) will call for a motion to have closed deliberations.
- vii. The appeal will require a simple majority vote in favor of granting the appeal, denying the appeal or changing the original consequence. The appellant will be notified of the committee's decision verbally and in writing no more than two [2] business days after the appeal is heard.

Both speakers will be given an allotted time of five [5] minutes to speak (with a two [2] minute extension if needed and approved by majority vote of the committee.) The committee must be allowed to question both speakers individually. Speakers will be given no more than two [2] minutes to answer each question asked by committee members.

Article V **Voting**

- A. SGA General Elections must be held and completed no sooner than the tenth [10th] week of the Spring semester and no later than the third [3rd] week prior to the closing of the Spring semester.
- B. SGA Elections to fill new-student (freshman or first time transfer) reserved positions must be held and completed between the third [3rd] and fifth [5th] week of the Fall Semester.
 - a. If unavailability of the official roster prevents completion within this time frame, the elections must be held and completed at the earliest possible date.
- C. Online access to the elections will open no earlier than 10:00am but no later than 12:30pm on the first day of the elections period; and close no later than 8:00pm but no earlier than 5:00pm on the final day of the elections period.
- D. Access to the elections shall remain open for a minimum of three [3] days.
- E. Voting shall be limited to those students whose names appear on the official class rosters.

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- a. Students voting for Senator of Academic Affairs must be members of the respective college at the time of elections.
- F. Write-in-votes are acceptable on the ballots.
 - a. A write-in-vote will only be counted if a majority of the members of the Judicial Review Board agrees on the legibility of the name on each ballot that it appears. Write-in-votes must have a first and last name in order to be counted.
 - b. Following the tabulation, if a write-in candidate has won, his/her name will be submitted the Office of Campus Activities and Student Leadership to confirm that he/she fulfills all the requirements of the position he/she has been elected to.
 - c. No candidate will assume office until verified
- G. All candidates for Executive Board and Board of Trustees positions must receive a plurality of the votes cast, which shall not be less than fifty [50] votes in order to be declared a winner by the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board provided they still meet all the qualifications of their position. All candidates for any other Senate positions must receive a plurality of the votes cast, which shall not be less than twenty-five [25] votes in order to be declared a winner by the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board provided they still meet all the qualifications of their position.
- H. In the event that the SGA online elections are, for any reason, inoperable, the following procedure must be adhered to:
 - a. The Executive Board will define the voting areas and polling locations will be open from 10am and remain open until 8pm on each day of the elections period.
 - b. The polls are to be run by an unbiased party who is not a member of the WPUNJ Community (unless cost or circumstances require the use of a member of the WPUNJ Community, this is to be determined by the SGA Executive Board) and monitored by the Judicial Review Board.
 - c. Voting shall be limited to those students whose names appear on the official class rosters.
 - i. Students voting for Senator of Academic Affairs must be members of that respective college or classification of students at the time of elections.
 - d. Students voting must present their WPU picture ID at the time of voting. The Executive Board may suspend this rule with a simple majority vote during the meeting referenced in this section (H.a).
 - e. Provisional ballots must be available to students who do not have their WPU picture ID but can provide their ID number (i.e. 855). The student will be allowed to vote and it will be counted as long as their identity can be verified and confirmed by the office of Campus Activities. Provisional ballot design must be presented by the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board and approved by the executive board during the meeting referenced in this section (H.a).
 - f. All paper ballots accompanied by a student ID will have a space for the student to record their 855 number to prevent votes being counted more than once. Students with a student ID and ID number will not need to be verified by Campus Activities at the time of voting, but during tabulation, the committee must confirm there are

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- no duplicate numbers used. Provisional ballots must be verified before the results of the election can be announced.
- g. Write-in-votes are acceptable on the ballots.
 - i. A write-in-vote will only be counted if a majority of the members of the Judicial Review Board agrees on the legibility of the name on each ballot that it appears. Write-in-votes must have a first and last name in order to be counted.
 - ii. Following the tabulation, if a write-in candidate has won, his/her name will be submitted to the Office of Campus Activities and Student Leadership to confirm that he/she fulfills all the requirements of the position he/she has been elected to.
 - iii. All write-in victors must sign a job description form confirming that they are aware of and agree to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the position that they have been elected to prior to assuming office
 - h. The Judicial Review Board will be responsible for tabulating the vote.
 - i. One unbiased third party from the Office of Campus Activities and Student Leadership must be present at the vote counting.
 - ii. This third party will sign the written reports of the tabulation in the presence of a witness.
 - iii. Candidates, or one person of their choice, may be present to witness the tabulation of the ballots.
 - iv. A designee appearing in place of the candidate must have the candidate's written permission, signed by the candidate, the designee and one witness.
 - I. In the event of an election in which voting is not online, all candidates must still meet the minimum qualifications and vote requirements outlined in Article V Section G.

Article VI

Run-Off Elections

- A. In the case of a tie for a specific SGA position, Judicial Review Board shall conduct a run-off election among the persons receiving the highest number of votes within two [2] weeks after the election in which the tie occurred.
- B. Write-in-votes will not be accepted in a run-off.
- C. The candidate receiving the most votes in the run-off will be declared elected by the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board.
- D. The rules for campaigning in a run-off election will be the same as in any other election, with the exception that the candidates will not be required to attend another Elections Workshop unless the Judicial Review Board deems it necessary.
- E. The time frame in which the run-off election takes place will be determined by the Judicial Review Board, approved by majority vote, but shall not exceed ten [10] business days from the date the original tie-vote was announced. The Board should allow enough time for the candidates in question to campaign and for the SGA to secure polling location(s), update the online site and/or secure enough paper ballots for a legitimate election to take place.

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- F. In the event of a tie in a run-off election, the SGA Senate will be required to vote on the Candidates. The candidate that receives a simple majority (50% +1) of the votes in the SGA Senate will be declared elected by the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board.
- a. There may be no campaigning if the vote is taken to the Senate. Prior to Senate vote, no candidate may meet with any Senator with voting rights.
 - b. Each candidate may have five [5] minutes to address the Senate before the vote.
 - c. The voting in the Senate will be by rising vote unless a motion is passed to allow for the use of secret ballots. If secret ballots are used, the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board and the SGA President will tabulate the vote in front of the SGA Senate and the candidates.
 - i. In the event the run-off involves the current SGA President or the current Vice President of the Judicial Review Board, secret ballots will be tabulated by the Executive Vice President and the SGA Advisor in front of the SGA Senate and the candidates.
 - d. The SGA President will turn over chairmanship of the Senate to the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board in the event of this type of vote only for the duration of the vote.
 - i. In the event that the candidate involved in the run-off is the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board, Chairmanship of the Senate during the vote will be turned over to the Executive Vice President.

Article VII **Special Elections**

- A. Normally throughout the course of the year, positions that become open or remain open shall be filled by appointment by the SGA President or Vice Presidents with the approval of the Senate as prescribed in the SGA Constitution. If, however, there is a preponderance of unfilled positions on the Senate, the SGA Executive Board may by majority vote mandate a Special Election.
- B. Special Elections are considered part of the Elections Process for the purposes of determining the Constitutional duties of the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board.
- C. The rules for nominations, campaigns, voting and tabulation, along with any other details, will be the same as the rules prescribed for SGA General and Fall Elections.

Article VIII **Election Results**

- A. Results of the voting will be available within twenty-four [24] hours of the closing of the polls.
- B. Written tabulations will be provided to the SGA President, Vice President of the Judicial Review Board, President of the University, Dean of Students, Director of Campus Activities and Student Leadership, all SGA Advisors and all SGA Secretaries.

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- a. The names of the winners of all SGA Positions (not the tabulation of the votes) will be immediately provided to the Vice President of Public Relations (Public Relations Committee if Vice President Position is vacant) in the form of a Press Release.
 - b. This press release will also include a report of voter turnout in all significant categories.
- C. The Candidates may request a written tabulation of the vote for the position they were running for from the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board. This must be provided within three [3] business days.
- D. The candidates may request one [1] recount of the ballots by the Judicial Review Board. This request must be furnished in writing to the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board within two [2] business days of the announcement of the election results. A recount may only be requested if the election was conducted with paper ballots. No recounts will be permitted for online elections. In the event that the online process is called into question for fraud or tampering, the Judicial Review Board may order another election be held. Evidence of fraud or tampering must be presented to the SGA Advisor and the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board in writing to be considered valid and to be presented to the Board.

Article IX

Grievance Procedures

- A. All complaints including charges of misconduct, regarding candidates must be submitted to the Judicial Review Board and the Vice President of the Board in the form of a written grievance within two [2] business days of the close of the election. The written grievance shall recite the facts constituting the alleged election violations and contain all supporting documentation.
- a. The Judicial Review Board must schedule a hearing within three [3] business days of the receipt of such a grievance. The Vice President of the Judicial Review Board, the Advocate-General, the filer of the grievance and the candidate charged with misconduct must attend the hearing.
 - b. The filer will present the charges, the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board will present all evidence that has been gathered and the candidate will present a defense with the assistance of the Advocate-General.
 - c. The Judicial Review Board must announce their decision within forty-eight [48] hours of the conclusion of the hearing(s). This decision may not be appealed further.
- B. Should a candidate wish to contest and election procedure, a written grievance must be submitted to both the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board and the SGA President within three (3) business days of the close of the election.
- a. The Judicial Review Board must schedule a hearing within five [5] business days of the receipt of such a grievance. Both the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board and the filer of the grievance must attend this hearing.

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- b. The filer will present the charges and the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board will present a defense with the assistance of the JRB Advocate-General.
 - c. The Judicial Review Board must announce their decision within forty-eight [48] hours of the conclusion of the hearing(s). This decision may not be appealed further.
- C. If the decision of the Judicial Review Board calls for it, a new election must be held within two [2] weeks of said decision.
- D. If the decision of the Judicial Review Board calls simply for the disqualification of a candidate, the candidate who received the next highest number of votes, which must be greater than or equal to twenty-five [25], will be declared elected by the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board. Candidates seeking an executive position must receive at least fifty [50] votes to be declared the winner following a disqualified candidate.
- E. A candidate who has been charged with misconduct or the victor of an election in which the election procedure is being contested may not assume the responsibilities or duties of his/her office until the Judicial Review Board has rendered a decision.

Article X

Amendments to the Elections Guidelines and Election Forms

Amendments to the Elections Guidelines

- A. Any Senator or Judicial Review Board Judge may propose an amendment to these Elections Guidelines by submitting a written copy of it to the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board who will discuss the amendment with the student who proposes it and attach his/her positive or negative endorsement to it.
- B. The Vice President of the Judicial Review Board and the individual proposing the amendment must submit the proposed amendment for approval to the Judicial Review Board. This must occur even if the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board attached a negative endorsement to the amendment, although he/she may feel free to try to convince the JRB not to pass it or to change it to address his/her complaints.
- C. If the amendment is approved by the JRB, the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board and the individual who proposed the amendment must take it to a session of the SGA Executive Board with a two-thirds [2/3] vote needed for approval. It is then forwarded to the Senate and if it is approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at two consecutive meetings, the amendment will be considered passed. This must occur even if the Vice President of the Judicial Review Board attached a negative endorsement to the amendment, although he/she may feel free to try to convince the Senate not to pass it or to send it back to the JRB to undergo changes to address his/her complaints.

Amendments to Elections Forms

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- A. The Vice President of the Judicial Review Board may update or modify forms as he/she finds it necessary to do so. The Judicial Review Board must approve any changes by a simple majority vote. Any changes to the forms that cause changes or inconsistencies in the Elections Guidelines must be approved through the Amendment process referenced in Article X, Section C.

Updated and Revised

May 11, 2009

Elections Chair- Travis Robinson
CJR Chair- Nick DePue
SGA President- Jessica Pepe

December 4, 2014 and March 3, 2015

Vice President of the Judicial Review Board- Joseph S. Oswald
SGA President- Mikaela Polchak

Ratified by the SGA Senate on [03 / 31 / 2015]

Vote: (P) **40** (F) **0** (A) **0**