

GSS Election and Vacancy Guidelines

Ratified March 22nd, 2017

Amended September 19th, 2018 (Nomination Procedures)

Elections

Election Timeline

- 1) Elections shall take place at the second to last General Assembly meeting of the academic year and the new Executive Board shall take office at the last General Assembly meeting of the academic year.

Authority during Elections

- 1) Election proceedings shall be governed by a volunteer **Election Committee**. The Election Committee shall minimally consist of a supervisor, an announcer, and two (2) record keepers. No member of the Election Committee shall be permitted to run for office or vote in the elections. Efforts should be made to include one graduate student from each college in the Election Committee. Graduate students do not need to be Unit Senators or Club Representatives in order to volunteer as a member of the Election Committee.
 - a) The Graduate Life Director shall serve as the **supervisor** of the Election Committee and will serve as the tie-breaker in the case of any disputed decision by the Election Committee. The supervisor shall ensure that the GSS Election and Vacancy Guidelines are followed, oversee the counting of votes, and certify the election results.
 - b) The **announcer** shall be one (1) student who shall preside over all election proceedings and be the primary speaker during election activities at the General Assembly meetings.
 - c) The **record keepers** shall be two (2) students including at least one outgoing Executive Board member (if possible).
 - d) The Graduate Life Office Graduate Assistant is not a voting member of the Election Committee but may assist with organizing the election.
- 2) The Election Committee may declare any candidate's name stricken from the ballot for specific violations of the GSS Constitution, GSS Election and Vacancy Guidelines, GSS Fiscal Governance, or Lehigh University Code of Conduct.
 - a) The Election Committee supervisor may require any nominee to submit verification from the Dean of Students Office that the student has not violated the University Code of Conduct and is in good academic standing.

Nomination Procedures

- 1) Nominations shall be taken for the following Executive Board positions: President,

- Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Communications Officer, Travel Grant Officer, Historian, and External Affairs Officer.
- 2) For each position, the current officer shall give a brief introduction to the duties involved for that post and make a document describing their responsibilities accessible to the all Graduate Students.
 - 3) The announcer shall ask for nominations for each position. Any graduate student who has not violated the University Code of Conduct and is in good academic standing may be nominated by any graduate student (including oneself). All nominations must be seconded by at least one Unit Senator. Candidates need not be present to be nominated, but must accept their nomination in order to be a candidate.
 - a) Nominees' names and acceptances of nominations shall be recorded by the record keepers.
 - 4) Each graduate student may only accept up to two (2) nominations.
 - 5) Nominees must submit a Candidate Intent Statement by the announced deadline in order to formally accept their nomination(s) and become a candidate for any position(s).

Candidate Intent Statement

- 1) In order to accept a nomination, each nominee must submit a Candidate Intent Statement to the Graduate Student Senate via the ingss@lehigh.edu email. The Graduate Student Executive Board will set a deadline for Candidate Intent Statements that is no more than three (3) weeks prior to and no less than least three (3) days prior to the elections. A Candidate Intent Statement includes: a Statement of Intent and Personal Photo.
 - a) Statements of Intent are strictly limited to 500 words and should describe the candidate's qualifications for the position and plans if elected.
 - b) Personal Photos should be an image of the candidate taken within one (1) year of the nomination.
 - c) The Communications Officer shall post all Candidate Intent Statements on the Graduate Student Senate website within 24 hours of the Candidacy.
 - d) The administrator of the official Graduate Life Office social media pages (e.g., Facebook) will publish one (1) post (with commenting turned off) including the Candidate Intent Statements.

Campaign Policies

- 1) Campaigning is not required or expected of candidates. The candidate is responsible for all campaigning done on their behalf, regardless of his or her involvement. Any violation of the campaign policies will be reviewed by the Elections Committee and candidates may be disqualified from the elections or a specific candidacy at the Election Committee's discretion.
- 2) Under no circumstances will negative campaigning or propaganda be permitted, as judged by the Election Committee.
- 3) Media (posters, social media, pamphlets, etc.)
 - a) Media contents must be ethical and appropriate in nature, as determined by the elections committee.
 - b) Media deemed inappropriate by the Elections Committee will be removed.
 - i) In the case of any uncertainty, candidates may submit any media to the

Elections Committee for pre-approval.

- c) Removal of opponents' media by other candidates is not permitted until after the election.
 - d) No campaigning material may be posted on behalf of the candidate to the official Graduate Life Office social media pages (e.g., Facebook).
 - e) Candidates are NOT permitted to send mass emails (defined as 5 or more recipients).
- 4) Campaign Events
- a) A campaign event is defined as any event organized by the candidate to introduce himself or herself or hold a discussion on the candidate's platform.
 - b) All campaign events must be open to all graduate students.
- 5) Spending Limits
- a) The spending limit on all campaign-related activity (e.g., creating media, hosting events) must not exceed \$50.
 - b) Candidates are required to save receipts from any campaigning as they are subject to review by the election committee.
 - c) GSS funds may not be used on campaign events unless they are intended to benefit all candidates and pre-approved by both the GSS Executive Board and Elections Committee.

Election Procedures

- 1) Elections will take place at the General Assembly meeting designated for elections. For each position, the announcer shall read the names of the candidates for that position.
 - a) Each candidate will have the opportunity to address the General Assembly for no less than two (2) minutes and no longer than five (5) minutes as predetermined by the Elections Committee.
 - b) After each address, the announcer will lead a time-limited question-and-answer period with the candidate.
 - c) After the candidates for each position have had a speech and questioning opportunity, the announcer may lead a discussion of the candidates by the General Assembly.
 - d) This will occur for each position.
- 2) Voting shall be conducted by electronic ballot using an online form requiring a login (e.g., Lehigh user account) to prevent duplicate voting. At a minimum, the form shall include:
 - a) A listing of all position titles with the names of all candidates for each position under the title.
 - b) A "vote for" choice, an "abstention," and "no confidence" choice for each position.
 - c) A link to all Candidate Intent Statements.
- 3) Only Unit Senators are eligible to vote per the GSS Constitution.
 - a) Record keepers shall ensure that only eligible voters are included in the counted results.
- 4) Voting shall begin at the end of the designated General Assembly meeting and remain open until 10:00 pm that night.
- 5) To win an election, a candidate must receive a simple majority vote, or more than half of

- the votes received.
- a) Abstentions shall not be counted.
 - b) Votes of “No Confidence” shall be counted.
 - c) In the event of a tie between multiple candidates, a runoff election between those candidates will take place immediately via online vote.
 - d) If the candidate with the most votes does not win the simple majority and the second and third candidates are tied, a run-off election between the top three candidates will take place immediately via online vote.
 - e) If only one (1) person is running for a position, the candidate must still receive a simple majority vote to win the election.
- 6) The results of each election shall be announced via email to all Unit Senators as soon as the results are certified by the Election Committee supervisor. The results of the election shall also be posted on the GSS website within a week of election result certification.

Executive Board Vacancies

- 1) Should the office of President become vacant:
 - a) the Vice-President shall immediately assume the position of President and a new Vice-President shall be elected.
 - b) If the Vice-President position is also vacant, the President’s duties shall be assumed by another officer until a new President is elected. The order for this temporary succession shall be: Treasurer, Secretary, Communications Officer, Travel Grant Officer, and Historian.
- 2) Should any other Executive Board office become vacant for any reason:
 - a) less than one (1) month before the regularly-scheduled elections, the Vice-President shall assume the duties of the vacant position until a new officer is elected.
 - b) more than one (1) month before the regularly-scheduled elections, the vacancy shall be announced at the next meeting of the General Assembly and the floor shall be opened for nominations at that meeting. At the following General Assembly meeting, the floor shall again be opened for nominations and the vacancy shall be filled immediately by election.
- 3) In the event of an immediate post-election resignation, a new election for that position will take place at the last meeting of the academic year.
- 4) If a vacancy occurs and no nominations for that position are received, the Executive Board may appoint an interim officer or distribute the duties of the vacant position amongst the remaining officers. An interim officer shall not have voting privileges on the Executive Board.