

Oklahoma City University
Student Government Association
Election Rules

Contents:

Article 1: General Information
Article 2: Student Court
Article 3: Definitions
Article 4: Pre-Election Procedures
Article 5: Campaigning
Article 6: Election Certification
Article 7: Complaints and Appeals

Article 1: General Information

A.) The policies, regulations, and stipulations set in this *Elections Rules* shall be applicable only to candidates for offices that are elected during an OCU-SGA election. All other campus organizations and bodies wishing to conduct an election must individually establish procedures for their elections.

B.) *Elections Rules* set by the Government Affairs Committee and approved by a majority vote of the Senate must be followed by all candidates in general and special Senate elections.

C.) The electorate of the OCU-SGA general and special elections shall consist of all students currently enrolled in OCU.

D.) The OCU-SGA President, Vice President of the OCU-SGA, Vice President of Student Activities, and representatives from the Academic Districts, OCU Greek System, the international student population as declared by the International Student Office, the Athletic Department, and all At-Large positions excluding Freshman-at-Large shall be elected in the Spring General Election. Elections for the Freshmen-At-Large shall be filled in the Fall General Election.

E.) In the event that any Legislative Branch member gains an office in any other branch of the OCU-SGA by appointment his/her seat will be considered vacant and shall be filled by the procedures that are set in the OCU-SGA Constitution and By-Laws.

F.) In the elections for high office, the candidate that receives the most votes in the election shall be declared the winner, if there are three (3) or less candidates. If there are four (4) or more candidates, the winning candidate must receive a simple majority. If no candidate receives a majority when there are four (4) or more candidates, then a run-off election shall take place between the two candidates receiving the most votes.

G.) In all other elections, the candidate(s) that receives the most votes shall be declared the victor.

Article 2: Student Court

Section 1: Composition

A.) For the purpose of elections, the Student Court's membership shall be the OCU-SGA Advisor and the justices of the Student Court.

Section 2: Election Powers

- A. To supervise and validate all aspects of the OCU-SGA elections.
- B. To organize and coordinate all necessary materials and personnel for the efficient and prompt execution of the General Election, and all other OCU-SGA elections provided for in these rules.
- D. To ensure the accuracy and correct printing of ballots and any other official publications of the Student Court.
- E. To certify elections and campaign materials as prescribed in the *Election Rules*.
- F. To render advisory opinions on the *Election Rules* as requested by candidates.
- G. To provide a secure environment for ballot boxes or machines between voting periods.
- H. To punish violators of the *Election Rules* as they see fit. Punishments shall include but are not limited to fines, suspension of campaigning activities, and disqualification.

Article 3: Definitions

Section 1: Terms

- A. Disqualification- the removal of a candidate from the ballot. Grounds for disqualification include willful, malicious, and/or persistent acts.
- B. Election Fraud: Intentional deceitful practice or willful device resorted to with the intent to deprive a candidate of his/her rights. It includes all acts, omissions, and concealments involving a breach of duty, and resulting in the denial of any or all candidate's rights, including the offering of enticements.
- C. Invalidation: The nullification of an election due to technical problems, including but not limited to poll hours, poll operator misconduct, and ballot availability.
- D. Logistical Problem: An action by a candidate that is in violation of this act and that can have or did have an impact on the results of the election.

- E. Malicious Act: Wrongful and intentional act without just cause or excuse or as a result of ill will.
- F. Persistent Act: A malicious or willful act that continues to exist or is constantly repeated.
- G. Technical Problem: A Problem directly related with the maintenance of the election including but not limited to poll operator misconduct, polling hours, and ballot availability.
- H. Validation: The upholding of election results due to proper execution of responsibilities and procedures by the Student Court and all participating candidates.
- I. Willful Act: An act done intentionally, knowingly, and purposely, without justifiable excuse.
- J. Majority vote: In order to receive a majority of the votes in an election, the candidate must receive fifty (50%) of the total votes plus one (1).
- K. Enticement: Offering a voter something with a monetary value as part of a campaign. Enticement does not include flyers, mini-flyers, stickers, and buttons.
- L. A ticket: When two or more candidates run together as a unit. They are elected together; one may not be elected into office without the other.
- M. Campaign materials: any supplies used by a candidate or the candidate's staff, which have the primary purpose of furthering the candidate's likelihood of being elected.
- N. Formal campaigning: The period after the conclusion of the candidate seminar until the close of the polls on the final day of voting.
- O. Scheduled class- an assembly of students awaiting or attending a scheduled class as per the Oklahoma City University Class Schedule of the respective semester.
- P. High office: Any of the following positions: OCU-SGA President, Vice President of the OCU-SGA, or Vice President of Student Activities.

Article 4: Pre-Election Procedures

Section 1: Filing

- A. Filing for offices shall begin at least twenty (20) calendar days before the Spring General Election. Filing for the Fall General Election shall begin at the Student Court's discretion. The application will be made available in the Student Government Association office and on the official Student Government website.
- B. The filing period will last for a minimum of seven (7) calendar days.

C.) In the any election, each candidate can file for one position only. All subsequent filings must be considered void unless the second application amends the first application.

D.) The names and positions of the candidates who have filed for election shall be open to the public at all times.

E.) Candidates must fulfill the requirements of the office that they wish to apply for in accordance with the OCU-SGA Constitution.

Section 2: Candidate Seminar

A. All candidates must attend a candidate seminar to be held no later than three (3) class days after the filing deadline. At the time of filing, each candidate will be informed in writing of the time and location of the seminar.

B. In the event that a candidate fails to attend the Candidate Seminar, the candidate will be disqualified, unless the absence is requested by the candidate and approved by the Court no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the meeting has occurred.

C.) The topics at the Candidate Seminar shall include but not limited to the following:

A. The *Election Rules*.

B. University Policy relating to the election. (I.e. Posting Policies, use of facilities, etc)

C. Election Schedule.

D. Structure and Functions of the Student Government Association.

E. Duties and Responsibilities of the elected officers of the Student Government Association.

Section 3: Candidate Forum

A. The candidate forum will be established as a means of better informing the constituents of the nature of the candidates as well as the election.

B. The candidate forum must be held a minimum of three (3) calendar days before the beginning of the Spring General Election.

C. At the candidate forum, all candidates will receive a space to set up campaign materials for display.

D. The candidate forum will consist of two main components, the caucus and the debate.

E.) The caucus will be the first aspect of the candidate forum to occur.

E. The caucus will be a time for constituents to come and meet the candidates individually.

- G.) After the conclusion of the caucus, the debate will occur.
 - I. The debate will consist of all candidates for high office in the election.
 - J. The debate will begin with each candidate's designee giving a nominating speech for their respective candidate which shall last no longer than three (3) minutes.
 - K. Each candidate will then be allowed five (5) minutes to give a campaign speech about their qualifications and platform.
 - M. Following the conclusion of the last speech, the candidates will take questions from the audience. The candidates will also be allowed to ask one question each specifically to another candidate for the same office.
 - N. There will only be a mandated candidate forum for the Spring General Election. However, the Student Court does retain the right to hold a candidate forum for any other elections.

Article 5: Campaigning

Section 1: Campaign Materials

- A. No literature posters, advertisements, or other election materials shall be used or distributed during the campaign without prior approval by the Student Court. The Student Court shall not censor or prohibit any material, but will only certify its compliance with the criteria for certification.
- B.) The criteria for approval shall include:
 - A. The material must be accompanied by the name of the individual responsible for its productions and distribution.
 - B. The material shall not be in violation of the Student Government Association Constitution, Election Rules, Student Life Policies, Residential Life and Housing policies, or any other Oklahoma City University policy.
 - C. A sample of each piece of campaign material must be provided to the Student Court prior to the use at the candidates cost.
 - D. All campaign material must be submitted for approval at least twenty-four (24) hours before the beginning of the general election to be considered for certification.
- D. In accordance with university policy, flyers require the additional approval of the Office of Student Life before they can be posted at any location on campus.

Section 2: Budgets and Expenditure Limitations

- A. Candidates for high office shall not expend a total exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500.00). In the case of a run-off, no more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) may be spent for an election for high office.

- B. For all other elections, candidate shall not expend a total exceeding two hundred dollars (\$200.00).
- C. Each candidate will be required to keep an updated record of expenditures which shall be turned in to the Student Court at the close of the polls on the final day of voting. Any candidate's financial records shall be available for inspection by Student Court member at any reasonable time. If a candidate is asked to provide financial information to a Student Court member, that candidate has no more than six (6) hours to obtain and provide that information to the Student Court.
- D.) All candidates are responsible for the accuracy and truthfulness of their financial records and will be held accountable as such.

Section 3: Electronic Campaigning

- A. Candidates may begin campaigning on the internet after the conclusion of the candidate seminar.
- B. Candidates will be responsible for any internet messages, websites, or other online campaign material that is directly associated with their campaign or advertised on their campaign materials.
- C. Candidates may send personal emails as a part of their campaign, but may not use any OCU distribution lists.
- D. Any candidate that chooses to advertise through the internet will be held responsible for the accuracy and truthfulness of any information or statements related to the campaign.
- E. All electronic materials (websites, emails, Facebook, MySpace, etc.) are subject to the same rules as other campaign materials. None of these media may be used without the content having first been approved by the Student Court.

Section 4: Campaign Restrictions

- A. Enticement of constituents by any candidate is forbidden and will not be tolerated.
- B. No candidate may campaign inside of a dormitory hall through any other means other than flyers posted in appropriate locations in a dormitory. This includes but is not limited to going door-to-door and hosting campaign rallies or other gatherings inside of a dorm room.
- C. No candidate speeches or demonstrations will be permitted by any candidate in any scheduled classes.
- D. No member of Oklahoma City University faculty member, staff member, or a member of the Student Court may endorse any candidate nor offer any tangible support to the campaign of any candidate.

- E. Candidates will be held responsible for violations committed by their campaign volunteers and personnel.
- F. It shall be illegal to remove, alter, cover, obscure, or otherwise tamper with campaign materials concerning candidates or questions on the ballot, except by order of the Student Court.
- G. Candidates shall not be allowed to campaign within a fifty (50) feet vicinity of any sanctioned election kiosks. However, candidates have the option of having a picture and biography (no longer than 100 words) available to candidates at the polls.
- H. The Student Court may punish any violators of these Rules or any other university policy through whatever means is determined to be necessary which may include but is not limited to fines and suspension of campaigning activities.
- I. Any money which is collected through fines will be directly deposited in the OCU-SGA account under the line item "Election Funding."
- J. Fines shall not exceed a total amount of fifty (50) dollars per incident.
- K. In the extreme cases of candidate misbehavior though malicious, persistent, and/ or willful acts, disqualification may be a punishment exercised by the Student Court.
- L. Tickets shall not be allowed in any OCU-SGA election.

Article 6: Election Maintenance and Election Validation

Section 1: Election and Post-Election Procedures

- A. Elections will take place online. The polls shall remain open continuously on the two consecutive days chosen for the election. The polls shall open at midnight on the first day of the election. The polls shall close at 7:00pm on the second day of the election.
- B. There will be at least one (1) kiosk available in the University Center available for voting to take place at.
- C. Additional polling places shall be ordered and maintained by the Student Court.
- D. The kiosk(s) will be open from 9:00am to 5:00pm on both days and will be staffed with university personnel.
- E. Any staff at the polls will not be allowed to offer any form of opinion, endorsement, or other enticement as it pertains to the election or any candidate.

- F. The Student Court will maintain a system of paper ballots in the event that online elections become inoperable.
- G. Upon the closing of the polls on the last voting day, the Student Court shall convene within twenty-four (24) hours in order to either validate or invalidate the results of an election.
- H. Validation shall require a majority of the Student Court to be present. The OCU-SGA advisor must be present for validation to occur.
- I. The Student Court will fill out a report which shall include all the election results, a statement of validation or invalidation, and the signatures of all of the present Student Court members.
- J. After the election results have been validated, the victor(s) shall be informed immediately.
- K. All of the victors are to be notified of a forty-eight (48) hour waiting period following the election in which the results of an election may still be contested.
- L. Should the Student Court decide that an election be invalidated, the Student Court shall hold a new election and file a report with the Government Affairs Committee within twenty-four (24) hours of the invalidation detailing the events that resulted in the invalidation of the election results.

Article 7: Complaints and Appeals

Section 1: Complaints and Appeals

- A. Complaints and Appeals must be filed based on violations of the Student Government Association Constitution, Student Government Association By-Laws, *Election Rules*, Student Life Policies, Residential Life and Housing policies, University Policies, or rulings of the Student Court.
- B. Any Oklahoma City University student may file a complaint and/or an appeal.
- C. Complaints and appeals must be filed in writing within forty-eight (48) hours after the violation and not thereafter, with the Student Court. The complaint or appeal will be considered void if it is not filed within this time limitation.
- D. The Student Court will meet at its earliest convenience in order to determine appropriate actions in response to a complaint or appeal.
- E. If the Student Court decides to conduct a hearing, the Chief Justice will first interview each affected party. The Student Court will then convene in a joint hearing with all parties and decide the appropriate action to be taken after the hearing has concluded.