



## **The Graduate Student Organization Elections Committee Bylaws**

The GSO Election Committee Bylaws shall supplement the GSO Constitution on the governing of the GSO Elections Committee.

### **Article I. Purpose**

The Elections Committee shall facilitate all Officer and Senator elections occurring within the GSO. It shall assess candidate eligibility and ensure fair and ethical campaign activity. It shall ensure voting accessibility to GSO members. The Elections Committee shall prepare, conduct and report to the Senate all GSO elections.

### **Article II. Membership**

1. The Elections Committee shall be chaired by the Secretary, shall include at least three Senators, and may include additional non-voting members.

### **Article III. Officer Election Rules and Procedure**

#### **Section III.01 Eligibility**

1. General eligibility requirements for running for GSO executive office are outlined in the Constitution, Section IV.01 (1).
2. Additionally, the following eligibility criteria must hold:
  - a. A candidate for GSO executive committee office must be an enrolled graduate student at Stony Brook University who will have been a GSO member (Student Activity Fee payer) at least two semesters prior to taking office. This may include the Spring semester they are running for office.
  - b. Candidates must be from a department with an active senator.
  - c. Candidates must have attended at least one GSO Senate meeting during the academic year of the election, or be able to demonstrate experience and familiarity with student government subject to majority approval by the Elections Committee.
3. No candidate running for office can be a member of the Elections committee. Members of the Elections committee must resign their position prior to running for office.

4. If the current Secretary wishes to run as a candidate for office, a new Elections Committee Chair who will not be seeking office in the current elections must be appointed from the remaining committee members.
5. Elections Committee members that are intending to run for office, including the chair, must resign the committee by February 15th.
  - a. The chair of the Elections Committee shall reach out to verify continued membership of the committee during the first week of February.

### **Section III.02 Election Deadlines**

1. The elections committee must meet at least once during the spring semester before the call for nominations.
2. Call for nominations must be made at least one week before the March Senate meeting.
3. Election date must be set no later than two weeks after the April GSO Senate meeting.
4. The Call for nominations, date for nominations to be submitted, and announcement of the candidates must be publicized through all GSO controlled communications channels.
  - a. This includes, but is not limited to, GSO mass communication (e.g. email), GSO social media platforms, and the GSO website homepage.
  - b. Publication should also be made through the respective departmental graduate program coordinators and through the Graduate School.
5. The Elections Committee is responsible for setting and extending the deadlines for submitting the nomination forms, candidate statements, and for creating materials for publicity.

### **Section III.03 Nomination**

1. Prospective candidates for GSO office must submit a petition of twenty-five graduate student signatures supporting their bid for office by a deadline to be established by the Elections Committee.
  - a. Petition forms are to be made available by the GSO office and website.
  - b. Signatures are subject to validation by the Elections Committee.
  - c. Once a candidate has successfully completed the nomination procedure, their email should be added to GSO mass communication lists.

### **Section III.04 Campaigning**

1. No GSO mass communication or website may be used by or on behalf of candidates to disseminate campaign material.
  - a. Campaign statements are not considered campaign materials and must be disseminated through GSO mass communication and the GSO website.
  - b. Each candidate shall receive equal opportunity to present a campaign statement and all forms of communication.
2. Graduate student clubs are allowed to endorse and support any candidate of their choosing.
3. Candidates may not use more than \$100.00 dollars on non-printing campaigning. All receipts must be given to the elections committee prior to distributing items. Any candidate found distributing items without providing copies of expenditures will be disqualified from the elections.
4. The elections committee will host at least one but no more than two "meet-the-candidate" events held in a neutral and accessible location on campus.
  - a. Scheduling of this event will be the responsibility of the chair of the elections committee.
  - b. Rules for this event will be finalized by the election committee.

- c. Rules will be distributed to all candidates upon their confirmation of candidacy.
  - d. Candidates will be required to agree to and sign copies of the rules.
  - e. Candidates must be given at least 4 days notice prior to events, and given opportunity to adjust the schedule.
  - f. Should candidates either not respond to a scheduling request or choose not to attend, they forfeit their appearance at the event.
  - g. While all candidates are encouraged to attend, one candidate's decision to not attend will not cancel the event.
  - h. Residence Halls and academic buildings are not considered neutral locations on campus.
5. Residence Hall Directors, faculty, or university staff members may not endorse candidates.
  6. Senators may endorse candidates provided they are not on the elections committee.
  7. Executive Committee Members may endorse candidates provided they are not on the
  8. elections committee.
  9. Endorsements and campaigning should not take place at GSO sponsored events.

### **Section III.05 Elections**

1. Elections will be held electronically, using the university's SOLAR system or another electronic system.
  - a. The system must allow for verification of the voter's identification and graduate student status.
  - b. The electronic voting system must be accessible to all eligible graduate students via the Internet.
  - c. The electronic voting system will only allow voting one time per person.
2. The electronic ballot must be available for voting for a minimum of five-business days.

### **Section III.06 Ballots**

The ballot shall consist of the following:

1. The statement: "Please read the statements from the candidates and vote for one person for each position, or write the name of a current graduate student." Statements should be separated on ballots.
2. If a referendum is present on the ballot: "Additionally, read the description of the referendum(s), and select one of the two positions. Thank you for your participation in this important manner."
3. Any referendums or constitutional amendments to be voted upon.
4. The list of candidates for office.
5. A space for a write-in candidate for each office. A write-in candidate for GSO office must be a member of the GSO.
6. Statements of the candidates must be limited to 200 words, and must not refer to any other running candidate.
7. The ballot must be submitted to the Department of Instructional Technology at least 5 business days prior to the opening of elections if using the Stony Brook SOLAR system for elections. All deadlines must be set before the submission.

### **Section III.07 Results Reporting**

1. Within ten days of the end of elections, copies of election results, signed by the members of the Elections Committee, will be sent to the Graduate School, placed on file at the GSO office, and posted on the GSO website and mass communications

### **Section III.08 Disputes**

1. If any of the concerned parties dispute the results of an election within one week of the tallying of the ballots, they may request a recount. The Elections Committee under the observation of the candidates and the GSO Executive Committee shall conduct the recount.

### **Section III.09 Grievance and Election Validity**

1. Complaints must be lodged with the Elections committee. The case must be forwarded to all candidates in question and brought forth to the GSO Senate.
2. The GSO Senate may decide whether there is sufficient evidence to overturn the results of the election by two-thirds vote.

### **Section III.10 Election Etiquette and Behavior**

1. Candidates, Officers, Appointees, Senators, and GSO members must act in accordance with the Stony Brook student code of conduct.
2. Candidates, Officers, Appointees, Senators, and GSO members may not engage in any activity intended to bribe, bully, threaten, or intimidate other candidates.
3. Candidates, Officers, Appointees, Senators, and GSO members committee may not engage in derogatory or intentionally demoralizing activities targeted at other candidates.
4. Behavior violations will be subject to an investigation by the Judiciary Committee with maximum penalty being removal from office and/or the GSO, according to the results of the Judiciary Committee's findings. Action on the Judiciary Committee's findings shall be voted upon by the senate according to the Judiciary Committee bylaws.

### **Section III.11 Transition**

1. Upon elections, members elect shall serve as non-voting members on all committees of their respective new office. Members elect should attend meetings and shadow outgoing officers during the time between election and taking office.
2. All passwords, notes, and other relevant documents must be handed over to new officers upon their taking office.
3. Once new members have taken office, all passwords and secure accounts should be changed to reflect the new officers.

## **Article IV. Senator Election Rules and Procedures**

### **Section IV.01 Eligibility**

1. A Senator must be a registered graduate student for the entire period they will hold the position.
2. The Senator must be a member of the department they wish to represent. The criteria for determination of affiliation will be the same as that used by the Graduate School.

## Section IV.02 Elections

1. Senators can be elected either (1) by voting or (2) by collecting signatures. The Constitution states that the Senator must be elected through informed consent of the constituency. Any form of election must be held on or after the first day of classes for the election year in question.
  - a. If the department is holding an election:
    - i. If a meeting is chosen as the election format:
      1. The meeting has to be advertised one week in advance.
      2. Sufficient evidence must be submitted to the Elections Committee that the meeting was held and the senator was elected.
      3. The minutes of the meeting and the list of attendees are considered sufficient.
      4. The minutes should clearly state when and where the meeting took place.
      5. At least 10% of departmental students must be present.
      6. The election must be validated three business days after the minutes and the list were presented to the Elections Committee.
    - ii. If a secret ballot is used, it must be submitted in sealed envelopes. The envelopes must have:
      1. Voter's name,
      2. Four last digits of voter's Stony Brook ID number,
      3. Voter's department,
      4. Signature.
    - iii. If an open ballot is open, the ballot itself has to carry the information listed above.
    - iv. Any ballot format used must contain the following information:
      1. GSO Senate election year,
      2. Candidate(s) name,
      3. Department name
      4. Date and time of the close of the election,
      5. I vote for the above candidate to represent [Department Name] at the GSO Senate (Yes/No),
      6. Type of election (GSO Senate),
      7. Term dates (MM/DD/YYYY – MM/DD/YYYY).
    - v. Omission of any of the fields for a ballot will disqualify the ballot.
    - vi. The ballot must be submitted to the Elections Committee either by mail or directly through an Elections Committee member
  - b. If the candidate has decided to collect signatures for a petition in lieu of an election:
    - i. The petition for Senator must be advertised within your department. The caption of the signature list should have the following fields:
      1. Type of election: (GSO Senate),
      2. Term dates (MM/DD/YYYY – MM/DD/YYYY),
      3. Candidate name,
      4. Department name,
      5. Statement of consent
    - ii. Each signature line of the petition must include:
      1. Name of the student (legibly printed or typed),
      2. Student signature,
      3. Student Stony Brook ID number,

4. Student email address.
- iii. Omission of any of the fields for a signature will disqualify the signature (but not the whole list).
- iv. The petition must be validated three business days after it was presented to the Elections Committee.
- v. The candidate may sign their own petition.
- vi. The signature list may be submitted by the candidate soliciting signatures

#### **Section IV.03 Restrictions**

1. Evidence that the election/petitioning was not sufficiently advertised can and will serve as a ground for declaring the elections invalid.
2. Ballots or petitions received on the day of a Senate meeting shall not give the Senator voting privilege for that day's Senate meeting.