



Elections and Referenda Policy and Regulations

Graduate Students' Association, Concordia University

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1. Election Officials – Chief Returning Officer (C.R.O.) Hiring Procedure

- a. An elections committee shall be struck consisting of council members and executives who will not be running for elections or the C.R.O. position. The mandate of the committee will be to send a call out for applications, review and provide C.R.O. recommendations to council.

2. CRO Role and Responsibilities

- a. All elections and referenda shall be conducted by a C.R.O.
- b. The C.R.O. shall have final authority on all decisions pertaining to elections and referenda.
- c. The C.R.O. should not have been a member of the G.S.A. governing structure (Council including the chair, executives, directors, and staff) in the past.
- d. Gather all pertinent information on referendums and candidates for dissemination online and at voting outlets.
- e. The appointment of Deputy Returning Officer(s) (D.R.O.):
 - i. In the case of General Elections a minimum of two (2) D.R.O. will be hired.
 - ii. In the case of referenda a minimum of one D.R.O. will be hired.
 - iii. The D.R.O. should not have been a member of the G.S.A. governing structure (Council including the chair, executives, directors, and staff) in the past.
- f. The instruction and supervision of D.R.O.
- g. The instruction and supervision of other employees as required.
- h. Requesting official list of electors from the G.S.A.
- i. Acceptance and verification of nomination papers from candidates.
- j. Ensuring staff has appropriate resources during election/referenda voting period.
- k. The official tabulation of votes.
- l. The presentation of a written, detailed report to the Council within seven (7) days of announcing the final winning candidates.
- m. Verify that the parties are complying with regulations.
- n. Hold an information meeting for the benefit of candidates and referendum committees.
- o. Is expected to display the highest level of integrity, impartiality, and professionalism.

3. Elections Judicial Committee

- a. An Elections Judicial Committee pool shall be appointed by Council prior to the hiring of the C.R.O.
- b. The Elections Judicial Committee shall be the highest and final adjudicating authority for all issues concerning the elections.
- c. This Committee pool shall be composed of:
 - i. Members of the Executive Committee who are not candidates in the election.
 - ii. A maximum of four (4) Council members who are not candidates in the election.
 - iii. At no point in time shall this Committee have less than five (5) or more than nine (9) members.
 - iv. Quorum for a meeting shall be five (5) members.
 - v. In the event all members of the Council and/or the Executive are running for re-election, the

Council shall advertise among the membership to fill this committee.

4. Chief Returning Officer Remuneration

- a. The C.R.O. and other election officials shall be remunerated in accordance with a contract between the C.R.O. and the G.S.A. as recommended by the elections committee and approved by council.
- b. Failure to complete the tasks outlined in this election and referenda Special By-Laws shall be considered grounds for dismissal. In the case of early dismissal, the C.R.O. shall only be paid for time worked, as per the stipulations of the contract.
- c. The Executive Committee can recommend dismissal to council. The C.R.O. will be considered suspended without pay during this period.
- d. Council and the Executive Committee shall agree upon a maximum remuneration to be taken from the Election budget prior to the hiring of the C.R.O., aforementioned contract shall be offered immediately upon selection of C.R.O.

5. Notice for Nominations

- a. The nomination period shall run for no less than five (5) business days prior to the verification and acceptance period.
- b. The nomination period shall be advertised as follows:
 - i. E-mail to all members using the most current address on file with Concordia University.
 - ii. Any other method the C.R.O. deems necessary.
- c. The notification of nominating period shall include the following information:
 - i. The closing date for nominations.
 - ii. Availability of nomination forms.
 - iii. Nomination requirements as outlined in General By-Laws.
 - iv. Any other information the C.R.O. deems necessary.
- d. All other issues concerning nominations shall be governed by the General By-Laws.
- e. If the situation is not addressed and is not resolvable by the C.R.O., they shall address the matter with the Elections Committee as outlined in Section 3.

6. Certification of Nominations

- a. All nominations deposited that meet the stipulations set forth in the general By-Laws shall be reviewed by the C.R.O. as follows:
 - i. The nominee meets candidacy criteria as set forth in the general By-Laws.
 - ii. That members supporting a candidate's nomination also meet eligibility requirements.
 - iii. Nominations for each Director candidature shall be signed by a minimum of ten (10) G.S.A. members in good standing from their faculty. If a faculty only has less than 500 graduate students, then at least five (5) out of the ten (10) signatures are required to be from the same faculty.
 - iv. Nominations for each Executive position shall be signed by a minimum of fifteen (15) G.S.A. members in good standing from which there shall be at least one (1) G.S.A. member from each faculty.

- v. The nominee must not be in a conflict of interest with the G.S.A.

7. Candidate Eligibility

a. All candidates will sign a waiver form allowing the C.R.O. to inquire as to their current student status through the Dean of Students or other relevant Concordia University officials. Only information relevant to the candidate's nomination shall be requested and all information shall be treated as confidential.

8. Disqualification – Nomination Period

- a. All candidates who fail to meet Nomination criteria, as outlined in Article VI or in the General By-Laws, shall be subject to disqualification.
- b. The C.R.O. shall notify the candidate by the e-mail address provided on the nomination form of the reason for failing to meet the eligibility requirements.
- c. The candidate will have forty-eight (48) hours from the time of the notification being sent to rectify the situation. Failure to do so will result in the disqualification of the candidate.
- d. The C.R.O. shall post a complete list of all names, including those who have not met the criteria, who shall be noted as "pending certification" appended to their candidacy, on the G.S.A. website at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the beginning of the campaign period.
- e. All challenges to the list from the membership must be received within this forty-eight (48) hour period in writing or via e-mail with a clear statement of reason(s) for the eligibility challenge.

9. Elections notice

- a. The elections notice shall be sent:
 - i. To the candidates at the end of the nomination period.
 - ii. To all members on the opening day of the campaigning period via e-mail and posters placed in the G.S.A. place of business and the front halls of the libraries on both campuses at minimum, as well as any other locations the C.R.O. or council deems necessary. This e-mail and poster will include:
 - 1. Candidate's names, faculty, department, and positions they are contesting.
 - 2. Those candidates who have won by acclamation and their position.
 - 5. The eligibility requirements and identification required to vote.
 - 6. A direct contact for the C.R.O. should there be any inquiries.

10. Campaigning Period

- a. Campaigning by and for candidates shall be permitted during the campaign period.

11. Campaign Expenses and Reimbursement

- a. Each candidate shall be limited to a total reimbursable expenditure of \$75 (Cdn.).
- b. All campaigns shall be self-financed. No external organization or individual non-member shall contribute to the financing, directly or indirectly, of any portion of a candidate's campaign costs. This also includes any

costs associated with post-election appeals.

c. The maximum reimbursable expenditure that covers all the campaigning costs per slate shall not exceed \$250 (Cdn.).

d. Each candidate shall be reimbursed for the respective eligible amounts, subject to the verification of receipts, by the CRO within thirty (30) days of receiving having provided itemized receipts.

e. All posters used by candidates and referendum committees for the purpose of campaigning must be printed on 100% recycled paper to be eligible for reimbursement.

12. Campaign Materials

a. The following campaign materials shall be pre-approved by the C.R.O prior to distribution:

i. Printed materials, including student newspaper articles by the candidates.

ii. Electronic communications, including e-mail, personal websites and other external websites.

iii. Any material that the G.S.A. will be asked to reimburse.

b. All candidates are responsible personally for:

i. The form and content of all written material pertaining to their campaign.

ii. Any and all electronic communications sent on their behalf.

c. Materials and/or methods of communications utilized by candidates or their agents shall not be employed in such a manner as to deprive other candidate's equal opportunity to conduct their campaigns.

13. Candidate Campaigning Rules

a. Candidates for all positions have the right to run individually or in concert with other candidates (slate).

b. Slates may pool financial resources.

c. All candidates must clearly state in writing that they are part of a slate/group by the end of the nomination period.

d. Personal attacks and unsubstantiated allegations against other candidates are not allowed, and any violation to this rule can be reported to the C.R.O., who can take immediate action up to disqualification, or refer the case to the judicial committee. This decision can be appealed in the judicial committee according to section 3.

e. Candidates are allowed to campaign on G.S.A.'s social media pages.

f. The C.R.O. has access and authority to remove any spam (repeated) posts on the social media pages.

14. Candidate Disqualification

a. Candidates shall be disqualified for the following reasons:

i. Not adhering to all regulations stipulated in both the Election and the General By-Laws.

ii. Not adhering to the sanctions prescribed by the C.R.O or Elections Judicial Committee.

iii. Any personal conduct towards an election official or any G.S.A. member that breaches Concordia University's code of rights and responsibilities.

15. Voting Procedures

- a. Voting shall be available online through myconcordia portal, as per the dean of student's setup.
- b. Only members of the Concordia Graduate Students Association shall be eligible to vote.
- c. If the voter's name does not appear on the voter list, they may directly contact the C.R.O. who will verify their status.
- d. The procedure for a mail-in ballot campaign, which shall be conducted, if the election period falls after the last day of classes in the winter term, shall be as follows:
 - i. The C.R.O. shall request a list of all full-time Graduate students which will include the following information:
 1. The given and family name of the member
 2. Their complete local address if provided or complete permanent home address, if this is not available.
 3. Their student identification number.
 4. Their Faculty and program of study.
 - ii. The ballot shall have a portion; where the student can clearly indicate their student identification number, full name used at registration, and their Faculty.
 - iii. The letter shall clearly indicate what director they are eligible to vote for.
 - iv. The voter shall return the ballot in a postage-paid envelope provided by the G.S.A.
 - v. The postage-paid envelope shall be clearly addressed to the C.R.O.
 - vi. The C.R.O. and one other election official shall collect the mail-in ballots on a daily basis (business days only) from the Concordia mail house and place them in a secure ballot box clearly marked Mail-In Ballots to be kept in a secure location on-campus, but not in the G.S.A. house.
 - vii. At the close of election period, these ballots will be opened and counted with ballots cast in person. It is assumed that if the member in question appeared on the initial list provided by the Dean of Students, they will have met all eligibility requirements.
- e. Election Officials, C.R.O. and D.R.O. will not be eligible to vote in the election.
- f. All eligible voters may only vote once.
- g. Online voting will be available after the campaigning period.

16. Determination of Results

- a. Candidates who have no competition for a position shall be acclaimed to the position at the closing of the nomination period. Their names shall not appear on the elections platform.
- b. Candidate(s) for the Executive positions, who receive the highest number of votes in each instance shall be declared the winner.
- c. Candidates for Director positions will be declared the winner on the basis of number of votes received in descending order until all positions are filled.
- d. Votes shall be considered spoiled if:
 - i. The voter has voted for a Director outside of their faculty.
 - ii. The voter has not voted for any candidate.
- e. The voter is not required to vote for all positions and may choose to only vote for a partial number of

positions.

f. The Recording Board shall be comprised of the following:

- i. The C.R.O.
- ii. Any D.R.O. hired.

g. In the event of a tie vote, those procedures will be followed:

- i. The C.R.O. shall determine the winner by flipping a coin in the presence of all members of the Recording Board and the candidates in question within seventy-two (72) hours of the elections' results. A candidate may waive their right to be present or nominate one (1) proxy, however their absence does not constitute a right to appeal the result.

h. All results will be made public within seventy-two (72) hours after the final elections results are available to the Recording Board.

17. Contestation of Election Results

a. Election results may only be contested in the 72-hour period following the posting of results.

b. Only the following grounds may be used as a basis for contestation:

- i. Documented proof members of the Recording Board acted in a manner that benefited one candidate over another.
- ii. Documented proof of direct, personal coercion of members during the voting process.
- iii. Documented proof of a minimum of ten (10), or 2% of the total number of valid votes cast, cases of voter ineligibility.
- iv. Documented proof of the ineligibility of one, or more, of the successful candidates.

c. In the case of all contestation, the C.R.O. will convene a session of the Elections Judicial Board to assess the case and render a decision.

- i. Their decision shall be to uphold or reject the contestation.
- ii. Their decision shall be final and binding.