



## STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

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### Senate Bill

**Act Number: 2023-04**

**15 February 2023**

**Introduced by: Senate President Ashley Gomez**

**Proposed by: Chief Justice Victor Oluwagbemi**

**Whereas:** The Student Government Association of Ramapo College of New Jersey is the liaison body to the Faculty, Staff, Administration, the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors of Ramapo College of New Jersey;

**Whereas:** The Student Government Association Bylaws state that the Election Committee will enact specific rules and regulations for each election to be approved by the Senate and distributed to the candidates prior to the start of the elections;

**Whereas:** General Elections for 2023-24 Student Government Association will take place in Spring 2023;

**Whereas:** The Student Government Association is committed to running fair and impartial elections for all positions within the organization;

**Proposal:** The Student Government Association of Ramapo College of New Jersey proposes these rules for the 2023-24 Elections:

## **I. Election Committee Members**

- The Election Committee will consist of the Judicial Panelists, Senate President & Vice President, Vice President, Secretary of Public Relations, and any other member of the SGA appointed by the Chief Justice.
- The Secretary of Public Relations of the SGA will automatically be a part of the Election Committee.
- The Secretary of Public Relations will help the committee in the promotion of the election and review of candidates' election promotional materials.
- The President and Secretary of Public Relations are responsible for adding and editing content relating to the election on the SGA's website and social media as decided by the committee.
- The Elections Committee will be advised by the SGA advisors. They will assist with any questions and concerns regarding the election process.

## **II. Role of the Elections Committee**

- Responsibilities of the Election Committee Chair (Chief Justice):
  1. Publicize and Oversee Elections.
  2. Organize the tabulation of electronic votes and publicly announce the results, including all the vote counts.
  3. Investigate all alleged violations and determine if violations have occurred according to these regulations.
  4. Serve as the primary interpreter of these regulations.
  5. Assign penalties to and/or disqualify a candidate according to the defined rules and regulations.
- The Election Committee will advertise that the SGA will be holding elections and the times at which a student can vote.
- The Election Committee must act fairly and be unbiased toward all candidates.
- If Election Committee Members are accused and/or found in violation of any of the election rules, not adhering to their responsibility, giving an unfair advantage to selected candidates, or engaging in any form of activity that violates the integrity and fairness of the election, then the

Election Committee Members can be subject to appear before the Chief Justice. If an Election Committee member(s) is found to have acted in such a way, the Chief Justice will remove the individual(s) from the Election Committee and refer the individual(s) to the SGA Senate for disciplinary action as described in the SGA Constitution or Bylaws. SGA Advisors can recommend actions to the Chief Justice.

### **III. Election Platform (Qualtrics)**

- The official Voting Platform used by the SGA is Qualtrics. It will include a statement/bio, and information such as name, email, and year in school.
- The statement/bio cannot exceed more than 150 words and will be displayed on the Qualtrics voting platform.

### **IV. Elected Positions**

- President and Vice President: Candidates must run together as a party during elections. The application must be submitted on Archway.
- Secretary: Application must be submitted on Archway.
- Treasurer: Application must be submitted on Archway.
- Graduate School Senator (1): Application must be submitted on Archway.
- School Senator (5): Application must be submitted on Archway.
- Senator-at-Large (10): Application must be submitted on Archway.

All the candidates are required to submit an Application through Archway on the SGA Archway page by the required deadline.

## V. Requirements for Candidacy

### ○ General Requirement:

1. All candidates must be registered members of Ramapo College of New Jersey's student body and meet all requirements as stated in the SGA Constitution.
  - a) This includes the GPA Requirement of 2.5 and good standing with the Office of Student Conduct.
2. There will be one final deadline to complete all registration requirements for all potential candidates in each election cycle.
3. Potential candidates who do not complete the registration process, in its entirety, by this deadline will not be considered candidates in that election, and will not appear on the ballot.

### ○ Running as a Party:

1. The President and Vice President will run on the same ticket.
2. Senators may choose to run as a party. Parties of Senators are limited to a maximum of five (5) candidates.
3. All Parties of Senators must have a unique Party name.
4. Party names cannot suggest an affiliation with the Student Government Association.

### ○ Running while currently studying at another institution or studying abroad:

1. Ramapo students who are currently studying at another institution or Ramapo-affiliated program may run for an elected position.
2. In order to do so, they must email a letter of intent to the Election Committee at least one week before the application deadline. The Election Committee will then inform the candidate after approval of such intent to run.

### ○ Switching Candidacy:

1. In order to switch candidacies, a new form must be completed and submitted to the Archway SGA page according to the guidelines and deadlines established. Registered candidates may not switch candidacy after the start of the campaigning period.

## VI. Campaigning

- Candidates must adhere to the guidelines and timelines set by the Election Committee. For the purpose of this subsection, campaigning is defined but not limited to:
- Campaign Online Advertising
  1. Publishing a video or other media
  2. Use of social media
  3. Sending emails about your campaign
- Social Media
  1. Candidates are encouraged to use social media to campaign. Campaigns must include the official SGA election hashtag in all of their social media advertising material. The elections hashtag will be #VoteRCNJ2023.
  2. Candidates are permitted to use their personal profiles to campaign on social media.
  3. Candidates are permitted to create accounts specific to their campaign/position to SGA for advertising.
  4. All purchased social media advertisements on Instagram, Facebook, and any other relevant platforms are permitted as long as receipts are provided to the elections committee.
  5. Candidates are not allowed to post on behalf of the SGA.
  6. Candidates are prohibited from posting election content directly to the personal accounts of other users without their consent.
  7. Candidates are permitted to post generic election information in other groups/pages they are affiliated with.
    - a) Individual candidates may endorse themselves within closed groups.
    - b) Individual candidates may not endorse themselves within professional groups including, but not limited to, Residence Life, Center for Student Involvement, and Peer Facilitation.
  8. If a club wishes to endorse an individual candidate, a vote held by the club's voting members must be held and recorded for the Elections Committee to review.

9. Social media advertisements cannot include foul language, anything to be taken as offensive, or anything negative against Ramapo College of New Jersey or any of the students, faculty, and staff.
  10. Ads cannot include any language which negatively targets another candidate.
- Email
    1. If a candidate engages in an email campaign, the candidate must cc the Election Committee in the email.
    2. Candidates may not blast email students at random, however, if a candidate is a member of an organization they can email club members to notify them about generic election information.
    3. Blast emails using college platforms, such as Canvas and Archway, are prohibited.
    4. Emails cannot include foul language, anything to be taken as offensive, or anything negative against Ramapo College of New Jersey or any of the students, faculty, and staff.
    5. Emails cannot include any language which negatively targets another candidate.
  - Club Endorsements
    1. A campaign endorsement can be defined as a club/organization or individual outside of the Student Government Association declaring their support for a candidate.
    2. Endorsements may only be made by outside parties, meaning that the person endorsing cannot be currently serving the Student Government Association or the Election Committee.
    3. Endorsements cannot include monetary donations. Endorsements can only be posted on the personal profiles of the endorser.
    4. If a club wishes to endorse an individual candidate, the club must provide the Election Committee with a record of a vote held by the club's voting members.
    5. Individual candidates may not endorse themselves within professional groups including, but not limited to, Residence Life, Center for Student Involvement, Peer Facilitation.
  - Posters/Flyers
    1. Candidates may get poster or flyer designs approved by the Office of Marketing and Communications and proceed to hang them up where allowed and given permission.

2. Expenses towards these campaign materials will be counted for the \$50 budget limit.
- Communication between Election Committee and Candidates
    1. Candidates can expect to receive frequent email updates from the Election Committee. These emails may contain instructions that candidates must comply with. Therefore, it is essential that all candidates receive and read these emails.
    2. Members of the Election Committee may only be reached by telephone/text message between the hours of 10:00 a.m. –10:00 p.m. in regard to questions, problems, and/or concerns. Problems that arise outside of these hours may be brought to attention via e-mail and will be addressed the following business day. Do not text or call members of the Elections Committee outside of these hours.
    3. Election Committee members will document every telephone call/text message, with a follow-up email regarding the issue for future records.
  - Campaign Budget and Expenditure
    1. Each candidate may spend up to \$50.00 (USD) for campaign materials. If a candidate exceeds this limit, then the candidate is automatically disqualified.
    2. When running for President and Vice President, each candidate can choose to spend \$50.00 individually or combine funds to equal \$100.00.
    3. When running as a party, a party is allowed to spend a total of its every candidate's budget. For example: If a party consists of 5 members then the party is allowed to spend up to  $\$50.00 \times 5 = \$250.00$  in total and it would not matter if a single member spent more than \$50.00.
    4. Candidates or parties may not employ campaign materials or advertising that exceed their budget.
    5. All candidates, even those who spend nothing, must submit a campaign expenditure report electronically by 7:00 p.m. on the last campaigning day to the Election Committee via email.
    6. The campaign expenditure report must itemize all campaign expenses which includes but is not limited to online expenditures and social media campaign expenditures.
    7. The Election Committee has the authority to audit any and all campaign expenses.

Candidates are responsible for saving all receipts until voting has ended.

## **VII. Prohibited Activities**

- Harassing, threatening, or coercing others to vote or not vote is strictly prohibited and will be dealt with serious action by the Election Committee and/or school administration.
- Candidates are not allowed to influence someone who is in the process of voting.
- Campaigning will be prohibited at all Student Government Association events unless sanctioned by the Election Committee.
- Candidates will be prohibited from “dorm storming.” This is per College policy.
- Candidates shall not incite others to perform actions that violate the rules outlined herein; the Election Committee shall treat such actions as being performed by the inciting candidate(s) themselves and handle them accordingly.
- It is the responsibility of the candidates to educate supporters on all the rules governing elections.
- Candidates may not begin campaigning until the official campaigning period has commenced. This date is the day after Archway forms are due or as designated by the Election Committee.
- Penalties for violating the election policies and/or policies stated in the constitution, as well as the school’s policies, will result in a candidate review by the Election Committee.

## **VIII. Violations**

- Anyone can report suspected violations to the Election Committee.
- A candidate or a supporter should not take it upon oneself to confront another candidate for an alleged violation of the rules. Only the Election Committee will address candidates for improper conduct.
- To report a violation related to advertising or other campaign matters, photographic evidence must be provided and sent to the Election Committee along with the date, time, and location. If a violation is reported, the Election Committee will review the complaint and determine whether a violation has occurred. If the Election Committee determines that a violation has occurred, then



the committee members will assess the appropriate penalty, notify the candidate, and update the website.

- A candidate cannot be penalized by the Chair of the election for other actions, as long as no local, state, or federal laws have been broken, all pre-existing external contracts are upheld, and the candidate has complied with Rights, Rules, Responsibilities, and other college regulations.

## **IX. Timeline**

- The Election Committee Chair shall draft all public emails related to the election and set the schedule by which these emails shall be sent. A sample elections cycle is as follows:
- Section 1: Archway Form (February 21, 2023, 12 p.m. – March 7, 2023, 5 p.m.)
  1. Candidate Archway forms open. All election forms are available on Archway. Candidates may now start filling out their application forms.
  2. Candidates must have an email receipt of their form application submission. The form will include the candidate's personal information and their candidate statements.
  3. Between the application deadline and the Candidate's Meeting, at least 3 business days should be allocated for GPA & conduct reviews of the candidates to be conducted by the SGA Advisors
- Section 2: Candidate's Meeting (March 10, 2023)
  1. All eligible candidates will be required to attend this meeting to go over campaigning rules and procedures, or to ask questions they may have.
  2. If a candidate is not able to attend due to a mandatory commitment like class, they will be responsible for reaching out to a member of the SGA Election Committee and cannot begin campaigning until doing so.
- Section 3: Campaigning (March 21, 2023, at 10:00 am – April 4, 2023, at 10:00 am)
  1. The Election Committee Chair will ensure that all candidates have sufficiently satisfied the requirements for appearing on the ballot. All the candidates can expect to receive an email before the opening of the campaigning period either confirming their candidacy or indicating that there is a problem with the candidacy.
  2. Candidates must adhere to the guidelines and dates listed above when campaigning.

- Section 4: Voting (April 4, 2023, at 12:00 pm – April 6, 2023, at 12:00 pm) and Results (April 7, 2023)
  1. The Election Committee will announce the official start of the election via email to all the students and the candidates and only then are students able to vote for the candidates.
  2. The Election Committee will announce the official end of the election via email to all students and the candidates.
  3. The deadline to file complaints about the elections is 10:00 a.m., the day after the elections close. If no complaints have been filed, the election results will be announced as per schedule.
  4. If the Election Committee fails to announce the result as per the schedule, the Election Committee is responsible for informing all the candidates and explaining why the delay occurred.
- Should there be a need to revise the timeline, the Election Committee shall be able to make changes with Advisor approval and without a separate Senate vote.

Failure to comply with these rules may result in potential disqualification from the election and/or charges in violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

**Resolved:**    **The Student Government Association of Ramapo College approves the additional election policies, based on the assumption that a fair and equal election will be upheld and the Election Committee will interpret and follow the exact protocol specified in this bill and in our constitution.**

*Paolo Miyashiro Bedoya*  
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Paolo Miyashiro Bedoya  
President '22 - '23

*Ashley Gomez*  
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