



STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

o. (201) 684-7271

e: sga@ramapo.edu | ramapo.edu/sga

Senate Bill

Act Number: 2023-01

21 August 2023

Introduced by: Senate President Madison Weeks

Proposed by: President Shannon DeCicco and Vice President 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: 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 Fall Senate Elections.

I. Election Committee Members

- A. The Election Committee for this election will consist of the President, Vice President, Senate President, Senate Vice President, the Secretary of Public Relations, and the Judicial Panelists.
- B. The Secretary of Public Relations of the SGA will automatically be a part of the Election Committee unless they are seeking an elected position in the upcoming term.
- C. The Secretary of Public Relations will help the committee in promotion of the election and review of candidates' election promotional materials.
- D. The Secretary of Public Relations is responsible for adding and editing content relating to the election on the SGA's website and any other platform as decided by the committee.
- E. The Election Committee will be advised by the SGA advisors. They will assist with any questions and concerns regarding the election process.
- F. The Election Committee has the discretion to make changes as necessary without undergoing the amendment process by the Senate.

II. Role of the Election Committee

- A. The Election Committee will be led by two Election Committee Managers, the Senate President and the Senate Vice President. These Managers, through consulting each other as well as members of the committee, shall act as the main leaders in charge of the election process.
- B. Responsibilities of Election Committee
 - 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.

- C. The Election Committee will advertise when the SGA will be holding elections and the times at which a student can vote.
- D. The Election Committee must act fairly and be unbiased towards all candidates.
- E. 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 SGA Advisors. If an Election Committee member(s) is found to have acted in such a way, the SGA Advisors 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.

III. Election Platform (Qualtrics)

- A. The official Voting Platform used by the SGA is Qualtrics. It will include a statement/bio, and information such as your name and class year.
- B. The statement/bio cannot exceed more than 150 words and will be displayed on the Qualtrics voting platform.
- C. Qualtrics work will be completed by the Election Committee.

IV. Elected Positions

- A. There will be six (6) Senator-at-Large positions elected through the general ballot election.
- B. There will be one (1) Graduate Senator position elected through the general ballot election.
- C. All the candidates are required to fill out applications for candidacy on the SGA Archway page and submit the application by the required deadline.

V. Requirements for Candidacy

A. 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) Among these requirements are that School Senators must be students in their respective schools and all Senators must have GPAs of at least 2.5 if they have GPAs/have been students for at least one semester.
 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.
- B. Running as a Party:**
1. Senators may choose to run as a party. Parties of Senators are limited to a maximum of five (5) candidates.
 2. Party members must all be eligible candidates.
 3. All Parties of Senators must have a unique Party name.
 4. Party names cannot suggest an affiliation with the Student Government Association.
- C. 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 send 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.
- D. Switching Candidacy:**
1. In order to switch candidacies, a new application must be completed and submitted according to the guidelines and deadlines established.
 2. Registered candidates may not switch candidacy after the start of the campaigning period.

VI. Campaigning

- A. 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:

1. Publishing a video or other type of social media advertisement
2. Posters on campus
3. Use of social media
4. Sending emails about your campaign
5. Making any kind of mass announcement of candidacy

B. Social Media

1. If candidates wish to engage in social media campaigns, the candidates must include the official SGA election hashtag in all of their social media advertising material. The elections' hashtag will be shared by the Election Committee.
2. Candidates are permitted to use their personal profiles to campaign on social media.
3. All purchased social media advertisements on Instagram, Facebook, and any other relevant platforms are permitted as long as receipts are provided to the Election Committee.
4. Candidates are prohibited from posting election content directly to the personal accounts of other users without their consent.
5. 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.
6. If a club wishes to endorse an individual candidate on social media, a vote held by the club's voting members must be held and recorded for the Election Committee to review.
7. 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.
8. Cannot include any language which negatively targets another candidate.

C. Posters

1. Posters can only be the following dimensions: 8.5x11, 11x17, or 24x36

2. Candidates must be granted permission by the Office of Marketing and Communications before posting printed materials on campus.
 3. Candidates are responsible for making the poster.
 4. Candidates must email a receipt of the funds used for the poster to the committee.
- D. **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, and Peer Facilitation.
 6. An SGA candidate cannot lead a vote for a club endorsement.
- E. **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 strictly prohibited and the candidate can become disqualified.
 4. 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. Cannot include any language which negatively targets another candidate.

F. 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 am - 10:00 pm in regards 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 during general office hours. Do not text or call members of the Election 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.

G. Campaign Budget and Expenditure

1. Each candidate may spend up to \$50 on campaign materials. If a candidate exceeds this limit, then the candidate is automatically disqualified.
2. 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 \times 5 = \250 in total and it would not matter if a single member spent more than \$50.
3. Candidates or parties may not employ campaign materials that exceed their budget.
4. All candidates, even those who spend nothing, must submit a campaign expenditure electronically by 7:00 p.m. on the last campaigning day to the Election Committee via email.
5. The campaign expenditure report must itemize all campaign expenses which include but are not limited to online expenditures and social media campaign expenditures.
6. 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

- A. 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.
- B. Candidates are not allowed to influence someone who is in the process of voting.
- C. Campaigning will be prohibited at all Student Government events unless sanctioned by the Election Committee.
- D. Candidates will be prohibited from “dorm storming.” This is per College policy.
- E. Music or any excessive noise is prohibited for campaign purposes during class hours and quiet hours (as per College policy).
- F. There shall be no election talk or campaigning (materials, party formation, printing, supplies, petition signing, etc) within the Student Government Office.
- G. 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 candidates(s) themselves and handle them accordingly.
- H. It is the responsibility of the candidates to educate supporters on all the rules governing elections.
- I. Candidates may not begin campaigning until the official campaigning period has commenced. This date is the day after petitions are due or as designated by the Election Committee.
- J. Candidates may not book rooms for campaigning, or use any public rooms at Ramapo College.
- K. Candidates can not offer voters compensation or money to entice people to support or vote for them.
- L. 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

- A. Anyone can report suspected violations to the Election Committee.
- B. A candidate or a supporter should not take it upon oneself to confront another candidate for an alleged violation of the rules. This includes removing or destroying another candidate’s illegally

placed campaign literature. Only the Election Committee will address candidates for improper conduct.

- C. To report a violation related to a poster or other campaign materials, 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.
- D. A candidate cannot be penalized by the Election Managers 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

- A. The Election Committee Managers 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:
- B. Section 1: Applications - (12:00 pm Aug 27, 2023 - 12:00 pm Sept. 5, 2023)
 - 1. Candidate registration begins. All election materials are available on Archway. Candidates may now start filling out applications on the SGA Archway page for candidacy. The application will include the candidate's personal information and candidate statements.
- C. Section 2: Campaigning - (12:00 pm Sept. 6, 2023 - 12:00 pm Sept. 12, 2023)
 - 1. Election Managers will convene to 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 shall attend a mandatory Candidate's Meeting at 5:30 pm on September 5th in SC-225 to discuss important social media and campaigning rules before campaigning

commences. Candidates that can not attend must reach out to a member of the Election Committee to receive an overview of the election policies.

3. Candidates must adhere to the guidelines and dates listed above when campaigning.
- D. Section 3: Voting - (12:00 pm Sept. 12, 2023 to 12:00 pm Sept. 14, 2023) and Results (12:00 pm Sept. 15, 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 for the elections is 10:00 am, 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.

Failure to comply with these rules may result in the removal of campaign materials, potential disqualification from the election, and/or changes 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.**

Shannon DeCicco

Shannon DeCicco
President '23 - '24

Madison Weeks

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Senate President '23 -'24