

# HSGSA ELECTIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

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## **ARTICLE I — AMENDMENT PROCEDURES**

1. This Policy and Procedure Manual may be amended at a meeting of Council with a regular majority.
2. Any proposed amendments to this document must be circulated one week prior to the Council meeting.
3. Any ratified changes to this document must be made available to the membership by electronic means within one week of the changes being accepted.
4. No changes may be made to this document during the election period; this period runs from the first day of nominations until the ratification of the results by Council.

## **ARTICLE II — RELEVANT BYLAWS**

1. This Policy Manual applies to Article IV and V of the Association's Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE III — CRO and DRO Selection and Responsibilities**

1. Appointment
  - a. One Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and one Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) shall be appointed after an interview process held by an Ad hoc committee comprising four volunteer councilors.
  - b. Both appointments must be confirmed by Council.
  - c. The CRO serves as Chair of the Elections Committee; the DRO serves as Vice-Chair.
2. Term of Office
  - a. The CRO and DRO remain in their positions from appointment until the changeover of all Executives.
  - b. They act as CRO/DRO for all General Elections, By-Elections, and Referenda during their term.
3. Responsibilities of the CRO
  - a. Oversee the undisturbed execution of the election process.
  - b. Publicize nomination and campaign periods, voting procedures, and timelines.
  - c. Organize at least one All-Candidates Forum during the campaign period.
  - d. Approve campaign materials and enforce election rules.
  - e. Respond to questions and requests within 24 hours.
  - f. Liaise with the UMGPS CRO to ensure consistency across elections.
  - g. Submit approved receipts and reimbursement forms to the Finance Committee within one week of elections.
  - h. Ensure impartiality and confidentiality throughout the election process.
4. Responsibilities of the DRO
  - a. Assist the CRO in all duties, including publicity, candidate meetings, and forums.
  - b. Act as CRO in the event of absence, illness, or conflict of interest.

- c. Support enforcement of campaign rules and assist in adjudicating complaints.
  - d. Maintain impartiality and confidentiality equal to the CRO.
5. Elections Committee Conduct
- a. No member of the Elections Committee may participate in the election as a candidate or campaign volunteer.
  - b. Any member engaging in campaigning will be immediately removed from the Committee.
  - c. The CRO and DRO must ensure impartiality and avoid sharing confidential information with candidates or slates.

#### **ARTICLE IV — NOMINATIONS**

1. Any Member of the Association in good standing may run for any Executive position, except the current HSGSA CRO and members of the Election committee membership; any member of the HSGSA may run for any UMGPS Executive position.
2. Any member of the Association is not allowed to run for any one executive position for more than two consecutive years.
  - a. Except if the position remains vacant by the end of the nomination period.
3. A student member shall be nominated by ten (10) members of the Association; the student must collect signatures from these individuals on the official nomination form. A graduate student may only nominate one individual for one executive position. For example, a graduate student cannot nominate two candidates for the same position. When running in the HSGSA Executive Election, the candidate must be nominated by members of the HSGSA; when running in the UMGPS Executive Election, the candidate may be nominated by any GSA member, including HSGSA members.
4. During the nomination period, no campaigning is to occur.
5. Completed nomination forms must be submitted to the HSGSA CRO by email or in person, who will date-stamp and verify its completeness. The HSGSA CRO will hold a mandatory "Candidates Meeting" at the end of the nomination period (before pre-campaigning period).
  - a. After notifying the HSGSA CRO, candidates will not be allowed to switch and run for another position unless a position is announced as vacant by the HSGSA CRO in the event of not receiving any nomination for that position.
  - b. Soon after the all candidates meeting, the HSGSA CRO will electronically post a complete list of individual candidates and slates so that all members of the Association can access the information.
6. The nomination period shall coincide with the UMGPS nomination period, as indicated in the UMGPS Election Policy and Procedure Manual (Article VI).
  - a. If the above is not possible, the HSGSA Election Committee may recommend an alternative nomination period for approval at Council.

b. The nomination period may be extended by the HSGSA Election Committee without approval from council if its extension will not interfere with the election timeline set forth by the UMGPS.

7. All candidates shall attend the “All Candidates Meeting” in its entirety. The HSGSA CRO may exempt individuals from attendance under extenuating circumstances, but only if the person requesting an exemption does so in writing at least 24 hours prior to the All Candidates Meeting or informs the HSGSA CRO of an emergency for which no notice could reasonably be given. Failure to attend in “All Candidates Meeting” without a valid reason may subject the candidate to disqualification.

8. The HSGSA CRO and election committee are not allowed to nominate a candidate for the HSGSA election by signing the nomination form.

9. Slate formation rules

a. Slates are defined as a group of more than one candidate whose nominations have been accepted and have decided to campaign together for the election.

b. Slate memberships can only be decided prior to the campaign period upon the approval of HSGSA CRO.

c. The HSGSA CRO must be notified of the formation of the slate (including slate name and membership) prior to campaign period.

d. Any candidate may join a slate of two or more members, so long as this occurs prior to final notification to HSGSA CRO of slate formation before the campaign period.

e. HSGSA CRO will approve the slate names on a first come first serve basis.

f. No candidate may simultaneously run as part of more than one Slate.

g. No Slate shall choose a Slate name which is the same as that of a registered federal or provincial political party, or derivation thereof

## **ARTICLE V - SCHEDULING**

The following is the schedule is adapted from UMGPS Elections and Referenda:

a. Week 1 (Six weeks prior to Voting Week): Nominations and Registrations open on Monday at 9:00. This week is part of the pre-campaigning period.

b. Week 2 (Five weeks prior to Voting Week): Nominations and Registrations close on Friday at 16:00. This week is part of the pre-campaigning period.

c. Week 3 (Four weeks prior to Voting Week): This week will normally coincide with the Winter Term Break. This week is part of the pre-campaigning period.

d. Week 4 (Three weeks prior to Voting Week): This week is set aside for campaign preparation. This week is part of the pre-campaigning period.

e. Week 5 (Two weeks prior to Voting Week): This week is set aside for campaign preparation. This week is part of the pre-campaigning period.

f. Week 6 (One week prior to Voting Week): Campaigning begins at 9:00 on Monday and extends through the following weekend.

g. Week 7 (Voting Week): Polls are open from 9:00 Monday to 17:00 Tuesday.

## **ARTICLE VI — CAMPAIGNING**

### 1. Campaign Period

a. The campaign period shall coincide with the UMGPS campaign period, as indicated in the UMGPS Election Policy and Procedure Manual (Article V ).

b. Campaigning shall not take place prior to the official campaign period

### 2. Campaigning Options

a. All forms of advertising by any campus media;

b. The distribution of any material designed and/or likely to influence voters;

c. Any electronic information (web pages, blogs, email, social media)

d. Posters/banner or displays;

e. Speeches and public communication shall only take place with the authorization of the election committee, the instructor, and/or meeting organizer, i.e. journal club, academic meetings.

f. Any candidate or campaign volunteers that are members of the sitting Executive are required to take a leave of absence for the duration of the campaign period and voting period.

g. A candidate or slate is expected to debrief the HSGSA CRO in their campaigning plan including but not limited to all campaigning options - campaigning material, electronic material, social media campaigning, campaigning at classes and seminars.

### 3. Campaign materials

a. All campaign material must be approved in form and content by the CRO prior to distribution. CRO will have the final say on the appropriateness of specific campaigning material. Material will not be approved in the case it:

i. Violates the federal or provincial statute;

ii. Is factually incorrect. Sources must be provided for factual materials;

- iii. Contains libel or slander;
  - iv. Are discriminatory or derogatory towards any person(s) based on the characteristics listed in Article 9 (2) of the Manitoba Human Rights Code.
  - v. Contain logos associated with the UMGPS, HSGSA, or the University of Manitoba.
- b. All campaign material must be removed by 9:00 AM CST on the day following the completion of the voting period. Penalty for non-removal will be decided by the Election committee and HSGSA CRO.
- c. Printed Campaign Material
- i. Printed campaign material is defined as any poster, flyer, handout, banner, written on paper/poster board etc., which announces, advocates or promotes a given candidacy or slate.
  - ii. Each candidate is allowed to print up to 50 photocopies for their campaign material with a dimension limitation of maximum 8.5 x 11 inch. Receipts must be submitted for reimbursement of photocopying expenses.
  - iii. No poster may be affixed in any other prohibited locations in accordance with building regulations.
  - iv. Each Candidate, Slate, or Side must comply with any building regulations of the University, in addition to the following:
    - a) No more than 1 poster per Candidate, Slate or Side may be affixed to any one bulletin board.
    - b) No more than 1 poster per Candidate, Slate or Side may be affixed to the same pillar.
    - c) No poster may be affixed so as to obscure or cover another Candidate, Slate, or Side's campaign material.
  - v. Campaign material will not be placed directly on walls or windows of facilities or areas not under control of the HSGSA, unless the space is granted by the controlling organization (such as student council or departments) and equal space is provided to all candidates.
- d. Electronic Campaign Material
- i. Electronic campaign materials are defined as emails, social media posts, and web pages which announce, advocate and promote a given candidacy or slate.
  - ii. No emails referring to the election shall be sent out by the candidates to the HSGSA members.

iii. The HSGSA CRO will be solely responsible for sending out two unsolicited emails representing all candidates to the graduate students list during the campaign period. The email will be sent out at HSGSA CRO's discretion.

iv. Web pages and/or social media accounts must be approved in form and content by the HSGSA CRO prior to the launching of the site. No changes may be made to the material posted without prior approval of the HSGSA CRO.

e. Social Media

i. Use of social media, as defined by the HSGSA CRO and elections committee, during the campaign period will be at the discretion of HSGSA CRO.

Media Campaign Material: Media campaigning is defined by the HSGSA CRO but can be broadly defined as newspaper articles, newspaper ads, letters to the editor, radio and television commercials, radio and television interviews which announce, advocate or promote a given candidacy or slate.

ii. All advertising will be limited to free of charge services. No paid advertising is allowed.

f. Campaigning Violations

a) If the HSGSA CRO determines that Campaign Material which requires the approval of the HSGSA CRO is being distributed, displayed, or used by a campaign without the HSGSA CRO's approval, then the HSGSA CRO shall:

- i) Order the material immediately withdrawn or removed.
- ii) Assign a penalty, which may include (but is not limited to) any or all of the following:

i. Destruction of the material.

ii. A campaign penalty as determined by the HSGSA CRO and elections committee.

4. Campaign Volunteers

a. A Campaign Volunteer is defined as an individual who is not running for office, but is actively engaging in the process of campaigning for a particular candidate or slate.

b. All campaign volunteers must be registered with the HSGSA CRO. All campaigning by volunteers is subject to GSA election rules. The candidate/slate is responsible for the actions of their campaign volunteers.

c. All volunteers must familiarize themselves with this Manual, as well as the Association's Bylaws.

d. If campaign volunteers are found to be engaging in campaign tactics which are in violation of the election rules the candidate/slate which they campaigned for will be held responsible and face penalty, and possible disqualification.

5. Campaign Budget

- a. Each presidential and vice-presidential candidate will have a campaigning budget as approved by the council. The approved budget will be equally divided amongst the candidates with a maximum allowable budget of \$60. When a slate is formed, budgetary resources can be pooled accordingly.
- b. Each candidate not running with a slate can claim up to \$20 worth of travel expenses (i.e., bus tickets, parking tickets and mileage) and each slate can claim up to \$40 in total of the travel expenses (e.g., bus tickets, parking tickets and mileage).
- c. All expenses are to be approved by the HSGSA CRO and elections committee beforehand.
- d. Receipts for purchases must be provided for reimbursement of expenses no later than a week after elections.
- e. Campaign spending is restricted to the budget provided by the HSGSA and should be divided depending upon the number of candidates.

**ARTICLE VII — PENALTIES AND DISQUALIFICATION**

1. Any candidate or slate found violating the rules of campaigning or in another way attempting to undermine the election process may face penalties.
  - a) "No Candidate, Slate, or Side may collude with another campaign, either prior to, during, or following the campaign period. Specifically, no campaign, volunteer, or candidate shall:
    - a. Appear jointly in any campaign material, except in reference to Slate members as approved by the HSGSA CRO.
    - b) Produce campaign materials whose appearances could cause a reasonable person to associate that campaign with another Slate or Candidate who is not on a Slate.
    - c) Distribute the campaign materials of an opposing Slate, Candidate or Side.
      - i) No paid advertising is permitted.
      - ii) No Candidate, Side or volunteer may campaign:
        - a) In the HSGSA Office.
        - b) In a University library.
        - c) In a classroom during a class period without first obtaining permission from the instructor responsible for the class.
        - d) At an organized event without first obtaining permission from event organizers.

2. Penalties to a candidate or slate are administered at the discretion of the HSGSA CRO and Elections Committee.
3. The HSGSA CRO must consult only with the Elections Committee prior to determining a penalty. In case of doubt or questions about procedures, the Executive must not be consulted, if the Executive are also candidates. If necessary HSGSA CRO can consult with previous HSGSA CROs or UMGPS CRO
4. Penalties include, but are not limited to (in order of severity as determined by the Elections Committee):
  - a. Shortening of campaigning period
  - b. Requiring public retraction
  - c. Reduction of financial reimbursement from campaigning
  - d. Disqualification
    - i. A candidate or slate should only be disqualified for gross and willful violation of the rules. If another penalty can be found that will rebalance the election process without disqualifying the candidate, it should be pursued.
  - e. A candidate or slate must be informed of the penalty within 48 hours of the HSGSA CRO being alerted to the violation.

#### **Article VIII: Complaints and Appeals**

1. Complaints shall be allegations of a breach of the stipulations in the Election and Referendum Manual against Members of the Association other than the HSGSA CRO.
2. Appeals shall be a disagreement related to a decision made by the HSGSA CRO or allegations of a breach of the Election and Referendum Manual by the HSGSA CRO. These will be adjudicated by the Election and Referendum Committee of the UMGPS, who will conduct a hearing and provide a ruling.
3. A ruling of the Election and Referendum Committee shall be final and can not be appealed.
4. Rulings of the HSGSA CRO not as a result of a Complaint shall be treated as Complaints for the purposes of posting the ruling.
5. All Members of the Association should cooperate with any investigations by the HSGSA CRO or by the Election and Referendum Committee of UMGPS, unless otherwise prohibited by law or the governing documents of the Association.

Article IX: Complaint Procedure

1. Any Member of the Association, other than the HSGSA CRO, may file a Complaint regarding an alleged breach of the Election and Referendum Manual.

2. The following shall be the process by which Complaints are filed, received, and ruled upon:

a. The Complainant must submit a Complaint to the HSGSA CRO using the prescribed form.

b. If the Complaint is validly submitted, the HSGSA CRO shall send a copy to any other parties named in this Complaint.

c. The HSGSA CRO shall investigate the Complaint using whatever means are at their disposal. This investigation shall include requesting a written response to the Complaint from any party alleged to have committed a breach of the Election and Referendum Manual.

d. The HSGSA CRO shall issue a written ruling on a Complaint. This written ruling shall be sent to all parties to the Complaint via e-mail.

e. Written rulings on a Complaint must be issued by the HSGSA CRO within forty-eight (48) hours of complaint submission.

f. Any ruling made by the HSGSA CRO shall take effect immediately unless otherwise explicitly stated.

3. Incomplete complaints may be resubmitted.

4. All Complaints should be submitted by email.

5. Any posted ruling of the HSGSA CRO on a Complaint shall contain:

a. A summary of the allegation.

b. A list of the parties to the complaint.

c. A list of all applicable points from the HSGSA's and UMGPS's governing documents.

d. The HSGSA CRO's ruling regarding the alleged breach.

e. A summary of the rationale for the HSGSA CRO's ruling.

f. The penalties assigned, if any.

g. The complaint submission.

h. The time and date the ruling was posted.

Article X: Appeal Procedure

As mentioned in Article XXIV - Appeal Procedure of UMGPS Elections and Referendum Manual

#### **ARTICLE XI — VOTING**

1. Voting shall take place over the two (2) days following the closing of the campaign period.
2. Polls will be open from 9:00 AM CST on the first day of voting and will close at 5:00 PM CST on the final day of voting.
3. Voting shall be conducted online. Students required technical support should immediately contact the HSGSA CRO.
4. Results
  - a. The ballots shall be tabulated through the online voting system and the number verified by the HSGSA CRO and DRO and members of the Elections Committee. The candidate receiving the greatest numbers of votes shall be declared elected.
  - b. Tie votes and prospective winners by acclamation will be considered by Council according to Article XII of this Manual.
  - c. Results will be kept for a maximum of five (5) days after the ratification of the election, and then the memory wiped if no recount or appeal is called for or ballots shall be kept by the corporation providing the online voting software.
  - d. In the case of a single candidacy, if the “NO” votes exceed the Number of “YES” votes, the position shall remain vacant and a by-election shall be held.

#### **ARTICLE XII — COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

1. Individual candidates, slates or voters may lodge a complaint or an appeal concerning the results by submitting a written statement to the HSGSA CRO within five day of the ratification of the election results. The HSGSA CRO should confer with the elections committee and/or the UMGPS to rule on the complaint within 48 hours. Any decisions made by the HSGSA CRO will be reported and explained to Council; the Council then has the authority to overturn the decision, should there be cause. However, Executives and Councilors that are also candidates are ruled out from participating on the appeal.
2. Appeals concerning CRO/DRO rulings are referred to the UMGPS Election and Referendum Committee.
3. All rulings must be impartial, documented, and communicated to Council.

#### **ARTICLE XIII — RATIFICATION**

1. Council shall ratify the results of the election at the meeting immediately following the counting of the ballots. The HSGSA CRO will provide a report of actions taken, any incidents of violation or appeal, and a listing and justification of any rulings made. The Elections Committee shall present the full vote-count and

subsequent results. Unless there is due cause to call into question the election results, the Council will ratify the results.

#### **ARTICLE XIV — BY-ELECTIONS**

1. Any position vacated prior to October 1st will be filled by a by-election. Council will have the ability to appoint someone in the interim.
2. Any Member of the Association in good standing may run for any Executive position; a member of the HSGSA may run for any GSA Executive position.
3. A student is nominated by ten (10) members of the HSGSA; the student must collect signatures from these individuals on the official nomination form. When running in the HSGSA Executive Election, the candidate must be nominated by members of the HSGSA; when running in the GSA Executive Election, the candidate may be nominated by any GSA member.
4. Completed nomination forms must be submitted to the CRO, who will verify its completeness.
  - a. The HSGSA CRO will hold a mandatory “candidates meeting” on the closing day of nominations.
  - b. The HSGSA CRO will post a complete list of candidates electronically through email to all members of the HSGSA within 24 hours of the close of nomination period
5. The nomination period shall be ten (10) days prior to the opening of the campaign period.
  - a. The Executive and Election Committee shall publicize the opening and closing dates of a By- Election nomination period two weeks prior to the opening of the By-Election nomination period through an email sent to all members of the HSGSA, all departmental secretaries and the graduate program chairs of all departments containing health sciences graduate programs. This email is to have attached to it a suitable document to be posted in each department.
  - b. Nomination Forms will be made available at the announcement of a By-Election.
  - c. The Election Committee shall ensure that Nomination Forms are freely distributed to all departments.
  - d. Nomination Forms will remain available in the Office of the HSGSA until the close of the Nomination Period.
  - e. To be nominated, ten (10) members of the HSGSA must sign the candidate’s Nomination Form.

- f. Nomination Forms shall be submitted to the HSGSA Office or HSGSA CRO email.
- g. No Nomination Forms shall be accepted outside of the Nomination Period.
- 6. The Campaign Period shall be ten (10) days beginning the Monday following the close of the nomination period.
- 7. Campaign materials and volunteers must follow the same guidelines as listed in VI.2 and VI.3

#### **ARTICLE XV — TIES AND COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

- 1. Any position vacated on or after October 1st shall be filled for the remainder of the year through appointment.
  - a. The Executive shall make a recommendation to be voted on by Council.
  - b. Any executive appointment will require a 2/3 vote of the quorum.

#### **ARTICLE XVI — REFERENDA**

- 1. Referenda shall be initiated by:
  - a. A resolution of the Executive; or
  - b. A resolution passed by two-thirds (2/3) of Council; or
  - c. A petition signed by at least thirty (30) members of the HSGSA.
- 2. Referenda questions shall be phrased by the Executive Committee. However, where a referendum is initiated by petition, the phrasing shall not alter the original intent of the petition.
- 3. At least two (2) weeks public notice of any referendum shall be given.
  - a. No voting shall take place from May 1 – September 1, December 15 – January 15 or during Reading Week.
- 4. For the purposes of campaigning, the two sides of the Referenda shall be considered  
  
'candidates' and expenditure and campaign rules will follow the regulations listed in Articles IV.2 and IV.3.
- 5. Referenda balloting shall be organized by the Elections Committee. Council shall not have the power to void a valid referendum which is held in accordance with the By-laws.
- 6. In the event that a referendum involves less than the required quorum of eligible voters, being five percent (5%), the results shall be considered advice to Council that is in no way binding.