

**Berea College Student Government Association Senate  
Standing Rules of Order**

**I. Inaugural Meeting**

- A. Scheduling-** The first Senate meeting will be scheduled during the SGA Retreat.
- B. Election of Speaker and Clerk-** At the first Senate meeting, the first order of business will be the election of Speaker and Clerk. The SGA President shall call the meeting to order and verify that a quorum of 50% of the voting members is present. He/she shall take nominations for Speaker and Clerk. Nominees must have had a semester of experience as a Senator, Representative to the Board of Residents, or Executive Officer or must have attended a significant portion (approximately 50%) of the previous year's Senate and/or Board meetings. The nominees will give a brief statement about their interest in the position. Nominees will leave the room during voting for the position they are seeking. A runoff will be held between the top two candidates in the event that no one candidate receives a majority.
- C. Assumption-** Upon election, the Speaker and Clerk shall immediately assume their roles. If the Speaker of the Senate is also a Class President, he/she may not have two votes in the General Faculty. In this case, the Senate shall designate another officer to serve as a voting representative to the General Faculty.
- D. Provisional Qualifications-** The next order of business will be to look at any provisional qualifications from Spring Elections. If the SGA President or Executive Vice-President was not of at least Junior standing by Spring elections, he/she must submit proof to the Senate that he/she has reached that standing. If it is found that at least Junior standing has not been reached, the runner-up in last Spring's elections is the rightful winner. If this person will not serve, the SGA Advisor will call a closed emergency meeting of the Senate, in which the Senate will appoint and confirm a new SGA President and/or Executive Vice-President by a 2/3 majority.
- E. Election Certification-** The next order of business will be the certification of fall elections, as defined in this document.

**II. Robert's Rules of Order**

*Robert's Rules of Order* shall serve as the standing rules of the Senate, except where these rules may be in conflict with other Standing Rules of the Senate, as contained herein.

**III. Quorum**

Quorum is defined as fifty percent of the voting membership of the Senate.

**IV. Attendance**

- A. Absences-** A senator may miss no more than six (6) meetings per academic year. Of those six (6) meetings, a maximum of two (2) may be used (at the Senator's discretion) as proxy absences. A proxy absence means that the absent Senator will select a student to vote in his/her place. The Speaker and Clerk shall be notified of any proxies at least 24 hours before the meeting. Absences will not be noted in the event that an officer is away for the duration of Short Term.

- B. Tardies-** Any person arriving more than fifteen (15) minutes late to the meeting shall be considered absent.
- C. Notification from the Clerk upon Receiving the Fourth Absence-** Upon receiving the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) absence, the Clerk shall send a written warning to the senator informing him/her of the attendance policy, and the possible consequences of receiving more than six absences.
- D. Action to be Taken-** The Clerk shall notify the Senate when a Senator is absent for a seventh time. That Senator's position will be considered vacant. However, the Senator may attend the next regular Senate meeting and explain the final absence to the membership of the Senate. If the Senate feels an extenuating circumstance exists, it may then vote to allow the member to remain in the Senate upon the affirmative vote of 2/3 of the members present.

#### **V. Meeting Time/Location**

Meetings shall be held every Tuesday at 10:00 P.M., in the SGA Office (100 Woods-Penniman). The Speaker, in consultation with the Clerk, shall have the sole discretion of canceling any previously scheduled meeting, or calling any special, or "emergency" meeting. Cancellations may not occur when extremely urgent business is pending.

#### **VI. Agenda**

The Speaker, in consultation with the Executive Council, shall set the agenda for each meeting. It is preferable that the Agenda be sent to the members the day before the meeting.

#### **VII. Minutes**

Minutes recorded by the Clerk should ideally be approved by the next meeting. The approved minutes shall be posted on the SGA Public Folder and/or Website.

#### **VIII. Confirmation of Nominees**

- A. Non-elected Positions-** Nominations of all non-elected positions, including Vice-President of Finance, Public Relations Secretary, Student Judiciary members, Faculty Committee members, and Executive Cabinet members shall be confirmed by majority vote of the Senate.
- B. Vacancies-** Nominations to fill mid-year vacancies will be confirmed by a majority vote of the Senate.
- C. Hearing-** The Senate may choose to conduct a confirmation hearing for any nominee, at which time the nominee must be present. Any Senator may question the nominee. For those positions that will entail representation to the faculty, the nominee should also answer questions about his/her ability to be in attendance.

#### **IX. Controversial Votes**

Any vote deemed controversial by the Senate may be published on the SGA Public Folder and/or SGA Website. Also, with the consent of the Senate, the Clerk shall send the voting results electronically to the Student Body. Either action will require a 2/3rds vote of the Senate.

## **X. Voting by E-Mail**

With consent of the Speaker and Clerk, an e-mail vote may be held on matters that require timely action. At least fifty percent of the voting members must respond by the deadline stated in the e-mail. If a significant portion of Senators object to the “e-vote”, the vote will then be held at the next meeting.

## **XI. Elections of President, Executive Vice-President, and Senate**

### **A. Elections Board**

- 1. Establishment/Membership of Elections board for Spring Elections-** The Senate shall establish an elections board for elections to be held in Spring Term, consisting of three Senators and the Executive Vice-President of the SGA. If the Executive Vice-President is standing for election to any office, then a fourth senator shall serve in his/her stead as Elections Director. The Vice-President of Labor and Student Life (or Designate) shall advise the Elections board. If the SGA President is graduating and chooses to remain neutral during the election process, he/she may serve as an ad-hoc member of the Elections Board, though largely in an advisory capacity.
- 2. Establishment/Membership of Elections board for Fall Elections-** The Senate shall establish an elections board for elections to be held in Fall Term, consisting of three Senators-elect, and the President and Executive Vice-President of the SGA. The Vice-President of Labor and Student Life (or Designate) shall advise the Elections Board.
- 3. Responsibilities of the Elections board-**The Elections Board shall have the responsibility of:
  - a. enforcing** all procedures set forth by the Senate, as provided in this article
  - b. verifying** that all Applications and Petitions for Candidacy are complete and signed
  - c. determining** whether a particular candidate meets the qualifications for the office of President, Executive Vice-President, or Senator
  - d. supervising** the elections process. Ideally, an online voting system should be used. Otherwise, the board will be responsible for the following:
  - e. securing** the ballot box and all un-cast ballots, and
  - f. counting** all ballots cast for each election, and taking custody of all cast ballots, keeping them for a minimum of thirty days after an election.

### **B. Qualifications of Candidates for President and Executive Vice-President**

- 1. Constitutional Definition-** Article VIII, Section C defines the qualifications required of Candidates for the offices of President and Executive Vice-President.
- 2. Provisional Qualification for Candidates who are Sophomores-** If the candidate does not meet the qualification of Junior standing, but can prove that he/she will meet the qualification by the beginning of Fall Term, the Elections board shall declare that the candidate is provisionally qualified. If provisionally qualified, the candidate must submit proof to the Senate at

its inaugural meeting that he or she meets the qualification of Junior standing. In the event the candidate fails to do so, the Senate shall immediately convene. If the candidate is found to not be qualified, the runner-up shall assume the office, upon proof that he/she meets the qualification of Junior standing. For further explanation, see Article I, Section D.

### **C. Application for Candidacy/Petitions to Run for Office**

- 1. Availability/Submission of Application-** Applications for Candidacy for President, Executive Vice-President, and Senate Positions, shall be made available no later than fourteen days before the general election. Candidates shall fill out all information requested on the form, and submit the Application for Candidacy to the Elections Board. When filling out the application, the Candidate will acknowledge that he/she is available for the date of the SGA retreat. All exceptions will be made by the Elections Board.
- 2. Petition for Candidacy-** Candidates for election shall also submit a petition to have their name placed on the ballot. The petition form shall be included with the application for candidacy. Candidates for election to the offices of President and Executive Vice-President shall have one hundred signatures on their petition. Candidates for all Senate positions shall gain fifty signatures.
- 3. Campaign Finance, Spending Cap, and Budget**
  - a. The Student Government Association Senate shall reimburse the top three vote-garnering tickets for SGA President/Executive Vice-President in the amount of \$120.00. A candidate may decline the acceptance of SGA Funding, but in no case shall a candidate spend more than the specified amount of \$120. The Elections Board will disqualify any ticket found to be in violation of this spending cap, whether during the campaign or after elections, prior to the certification of election results.
  - b. All tickets for SGA President/Executive Vice-President must submit a detailed budget prior to campaigning. The budget must also list any donated goods, which must not have a combined estimated total value of more than \$50.00. The budget must be approved by the Elections Board prior to campaigning. Changes made after the start of campaigning must be approved by the Elections Board.
  - c. Campaign materials not listed on the budget will be removed and confiscated by the Elections Board. Campaign materials that are unaccounted for, whether purchased or falsely placed, may be grounds for dismissal from the campaign or forfeiture of position.
- 4. Deadline for Returning Application/Petition/Budget-** The deadline for returning the Application for Candidacy, with all required information and signatures, shall be at 5:00 P.M. on the Tuesday immediately preceding

the election. No candidate may have their name placed on a ballot unless they have turned in a completed Application for Candidacy, with all required information and signatures, by the prescribed deadline. No student may publicly declare intent to run for elected office until submission of the Application for Candidacy/Petition/Budget.

5. **Dual Tickets-** All candidates for SGA President and Executive Vice-President, as well as candidates for Class President and Vice-President, shall run on a dual ticket.
6. **Elections Seminar-** The Election Board shall hold an Elections Seminar for all prospective candidates. The Elections Board may choose to make this Seminar a qualification for seeking office. If this is done, the Elections Board will be responsible for ensuring that all candidates receive proper notification. In the event that a candidate is unable to attend, the Elections Board may choose whether or not to excuse the candidate from the Seminar. In any event, all candidates shall be responsible for knowing what is covered at the elections seminar.
7. **Campaign Code of Conduct-** All candidates shall be required to sign a Campaign Code of Conduct, in addition to their Application for Candidacy. The Campaign Code of Conduct shall state guidelines that candidates shall abide by, and shall inform candidates of their responsibility of knowing all election rules, and ensuring that any supporters and campaign workers know the campaign rules, and abide by the Code of Conduct.

#### **D. Campaigning for Office**

1. **Official Start of Campaigning-** A candidate may only begin campaigning for election only after he/she has returned the completed Application for Candidacy to the Elections Board.
2. **Prohibition against Unsanctioned Postings-** The posting of any correspondence around campus (for example, table tents, posters, banners, and campaign signs) is prohibited. Any correspondence placed around campus in violation of this section may be removed by any person. However, this rule shall not apply to any residence hall student who wishes to place paper correspondence on his/her own individual door. A candidate may personally hand out paper correspondence to voters for that sole purpose; however, in no case shall any paper correspondence be larger than one quarter of an 8.5 x 11 inch piece of paper.
3. **Allocated Posting-** Each ticket for SGA President/Executive Vice-President is entitled to one campaign banner of reasonable size. Candidates will work with the Elections Board to negotiate the place of posting and size of the banner.
4. **Allocated Campaign Display-** The Elections Board will coordinate with Campus Life to provide a reasonable wall or window space for each ticket/candidate to make a campaign display. Most recently, the Baird Lounge windows (facing the TV Lounge) were used for this purpose.
5. **Question and Answer Sessions-** The Elections Board should coordinate with candidates for SGA President/Executive Vice-President to hold

sessions where students can meet and question the candidates. The Elections Board may also chose to hold sessions for other positions.

#### **E. SGA Election Night**

- 1. Campus-Wide Speeches/Debates-** At minimum, one campus-wide election night should take place prior to the start of voting. The following serve as minimum guidelines; the elections committee should ideally replace questions and answers with a structured debate. All candidates standing for election for any office are required to participate in these activities, and may only be excused by the Elections Board.
- 2. Two-minute Speeches-** Candidates for At-Large Senator, Class Senator, and Class Vice-President shall give a speech not to exceed two minutes.
- 3. Three-minute Speeches and Questions-** Candidates for Class President and Executive Vice-President shall give speeches not to exceed three minutes. As each candidate concludes with his/her speech, he/she will entertain two questions from the audience.
- 4. Five-minute Speeches and Questions-** Candidates for SGA President shall give a speech not to exceed five minutes. As each candidate concludes with his/her speech, he/she will entertain three audience questions. After all Presidential Candidates have finished this process, the emcee will then ask five standard questions to all Presidential Candidates. These questions will be prepared in advance by the elections board. The order in which the candidates answer the questions shall be randomly selected, and shall alternate after each question.
- 5. Regulation of Audience Questions-** The emcee of the election night activities shall choose which audience members will ask questions to a particular candidate. This is to ensure that audience members closely associated with the candidates are not asking the questions.
- 6. Response Time-** Responses to any questions should not exceed 45 seconds.
- 7. Order of Events and Emcee-** The elections board shall have the sole discretion of choosing the emcee and determining the order of election night activities.

#### **F. Day/Location Elections Shall be Held**

- 1. Days Elections are to be Held-** The election for Senate positions (excluding at-large and Freshman Class positions) shall generally begin on the Wednesday in the third full week of April and end on the Friday of the same week. Elections for at-large and Freshman Class positions in the Senate shall be held, beginning on the Tuesday in the second full week of Fall classes, and ending on the Thursday of the same week (Fall Retreat will generally begin that Friday).
- 2. Online Voting-** The Elections Board should make every effort to assure the use of online voting. The following information, through the end of letter I, specifies regulations in the event that online voting is not used.
- 3. Time Voting is to take place-** Voting shall take place immediately after election night activities are completed, and shall continue for one hour, or until all voters present have voted. Voting shall take place between the

hours of 11:00 A.M.-1:15 P.M., and 4:30 P.M.-7:00 P.M., on the two days after election night. All persons present in the voting line at the time polls close shall be permitted to vote.

4. **Voting Location-** Elections shall be held in the Navy V-12 Lounge in the Alumni Building or near the SGA Office.

#### **G. Voter Eligibility/Identification and Casting of Ballots**

1. **Eligible Voters-** All members of the Student Government Association shall be eligible to vote.
2. **Identification of Eligible Voters-** The Vice-President of Labor and Student Life (or designate) shall submit to the elections board a list, separated by classification, of all full time students, no later than the day before the election. Students must show their Student ID to be permitted to vote.
3. **Offices for Which Eligible Voters may Vote-** All students may vote for candidates for President and Executive Vice-President. In the Spring Election, Freshmen may vote for Sophomore Class candidates, Sophomores may vote for Junior Class Candidates, and Juniors may vote for Senior Class candidates. Seniors are ineligible to vote for Senior Class Candidates. In the fall elections, Freshman may vote for Freshman Class candidates, and all students may vote for at-large Senate candidates.
4. **Separate Ballots-** The elections board shall insure that distinctly separate ballots are made available at the election table, so that students receive a ballot containing only the officers for which they are eligible to elect. For example, in the Spring election, Freshman may only receive a ballot containing SGA President, Executive Vice-President, and Sophomore class candidates.
5. **Provisional Ballots-** Any students who are not on the list of eligible voters may submit a provisional ballot, which will be placed in a sealed envelope and labeled with the Student's name. The Vice-President of Labor and Student Life (or designate) shall verify the student's enrollment status and classification, and inform the elections board of his/her decision. If the student is enrolled, and eligible to vote in the election in which he/she cast a ballot, their ballot shall be removed from the envelope by the Vice-President of Labor and Student Life (or designate), and entered into the ballot box, at the time the votes are counted. This process must be witnessed by all persons eligible to observe the counting process.

#### **H. Supervision of Voting Table/Ballot Box**

1. **Voting Table Staff-** The election table shall contain at least two persons, who must be officers of the Senate, Board of Residents, Executive, or Judiciary. A member of the Elections Board shall be present at all times, if possible.
2. **Election Staff Interaction with Voters-** Staff working the voting booth may only ask potential voters if they have voted. No election staff shall encourage/discourage anyone from voting. When a potential voter presents himself/herself to vote, election staff may only ask necessary questions to determine a voter's eligibility. If a voter is determined to be

ineligible to vote, based on the information available, election staff shall inform the voter of their right to cast a provisional ballot (detailed in the following section), and shall instruct them in the process.

- 3. Security of Ballots-** Voting table staff shall insure that no person receives more than one ballot, and shall ensure that any person who is determined ineligible to vote casts only a provisional ballot. Voters may only receive a ballot for the offices they are eligible/provisionally eligible to vote in. To that end, voting table staff shall take steps to ensure that ballots are not easily accessible to the voter.
- 4. Security of Polling Table/Ballot Box-** Under no circumstances shall the voting table be left unattended at any time. The ballot box should be monitored at all times, to determine that only eligible ballots are placed in the box.
- 5. Lock-Up of Master Hatch-** Two locks shall be placed on the master hatch to the ballot box before the date of the election. The key to one lock shall be in the custody of the Vice-President of Labor and Student Life (or Designate), while the other key shall be in the custody of the Elections Director. This is to insure that no one person may gain access to the voting box. The master hatch shall not be opened until the time at which ballots are to be counted
- 6. Lock-Up of Voting Hatch, Security of Voting Box and Unused Ballots-** When the polls close each day, the lid covering the voting hatch (the slot permitting ballots to be placed in the box) shall be closed and locked. The key, voting box, unused ballots, and provisional ballot envelopes shall be securely stored in the Alumni Association Office (if the polling location is in the Alumni Building) or with Public Safety (if the polling location is near the College Post Office) The ballot box, and any unused ballots, shall be secured in the Alumni Association office.

#### **I. Candidates and Campaigning in the Voting Area**

- 1. Candidates in the Voting Area-** Candidates may only be in the vicinity of the election location, for the sole reason of casting a ballot (If voting is held near the CPO, the Elections Board may choose to make exceptions for a candidate to check his/her mail).
- 2. Campaigning in the Voting Area-** No person shall advocate for or against any candidate in the location of the voting area. Public Safety may be asked to remove those violating this rule. Candidate flyers within 30 feet of the voting area will be removed by the elections board.

#### **J. Suspicion of Voting Irregularities**

Any person who suspects a voting irregularity (or violation of election rules) shall inform a member of the elections board, state the reason for their belief, and offer supporting evidence for that belief. The elections board shall convene after the close of voting that evening and resolve the issue. The elections board shall report their findings to the Senate at the time when the Senate meets to validate the results of the election

#### **K. Counting of Ballots/Announcement of Results/Contesting Election**



- 1. Time for Ballot Counting and Witnesses that may be Present-** Ballots should be counted, if possible, immediately after the polls close. The Vice-President of Labor and Student Life (or designate) and the Elections Director, shall open the web-database/ballot box, in the presence of all members of the election board. All candidates for President of the SGA shall be permitted to send one representative to the meeting where the ballots are counted. The outgoing SGA President shall serve as a representative and witness for all other candidates.
- 2. Addition of Provisional Ballots-** At this time, all provisional ballots that have been determined to be acceptable shall be placed in the ballot box.
- 3. Manner in Which Ballots are to be Counted-** The Director of Elections shall proceed to read each ballot, one by one, to the Elections Board. If a ballot is marked incorrectly, all over-votes (in other words, more candidates for a particular office were selected than called for on the ballot), will be thrown out, but votes in all other races shall still be counted. All members present will be allowed to view each ballot. Each member of the elections board shall keep a vote tally.
- 4. Determining Vote Totals-** At the conclusion of reading the votes, each member shall report their election tallies to the Elections Director. If there is a significant difference in the recorded vote totals of the Elections Board for a particular candidate, the votes must be recounted. After the conclusion of counting, the Elections Director shall announce the vote totals.
- 5. Automatic Recount-** In the event the margin of victory in any race is 15 votes or less, an automatic recount shall take place for that race only. Each ballot shall be reviewed again, with close scrutiny. Any changes in the vote totals shall then be announced.
- 6. Optional Recount-** The Elections Board has the option of recount at any time before the Final Results Sheet is signed.
- 7. Runoff-Election Cause-**
  - a. In the event that more votes were cast than students who actually voted in the election, the Elections Board will consider what impact the extra ballots could have had. If the amount of extra ballots could have altered the outcome of an election (a different person might have won), the elections board shall recount the number of voters and the number of ballots. If it is again found that the number of extra ballots could have altered the outcome of an election, the Elections Board shall declare that a run-off election take place on the following Tuesday between the disputed candidates.
  - b. To be elected President/Executive VP, a decisive victory (greater than one percent of the total vote) is required. If a decisive victory is not present, the Elections Board will have complete jurisdiction in the conduct of a runoff election, which must be held.

**8. Final Results-** All vote results shall be logged on a Final Results Sheet and be signed by the Elections Board members present and the Vice-President of Labor and Student Life (or designate). The total number of voters (marked off of the voting list) and the total number of ballots shall be listed. If any recounts were performed, the Final Results Sheet should note the races which were recounted. Any person who has any objection to the results shall attach their objection to the Final Results Sheet.

**9. Unofficial Announcement-** A copy of the Final Results Sheet shall be offered to all present at the counting of the ballots. The Elections Director shall keep the original copy. If graduating, the Student Body President shall announce the results to the candidates and the Student Body at a time and manner chosen by the elections board. Otherwise, this will be the duty of the Elections Director.

**10. Official Certification-** At the next Senate meeting, the Elections Director shall present the Final Results Sheet to the Clerk of the Senate, who shall announce the election results. Members of the Elections Board shall be present to announce any voting irregularities, and any member of the student body may raise questions or concerns about the handling of the election. A majority vote of the Senate shall certify the accuracy of the election results. A quorum must be present. At that time, all winners shall be considered elected to their position, and will take office as specified in the Constitution.