

# 2015-2016 Elections Code



**Student Government Association**  
**Missouri State University**

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## **PREAMBLE**

It is the intent of the Elections Commission that all of the guidelines and regulations of this document be interpreted in the strictest manner permissible. The regulations herein are written in confidence that no candidates shall willfully bend, alter, or misinterpret their true and most conservative intent. Any conduct after such a fashion, including the conduct of a candidate's staff, team, or designees, reflects poorly on the candidates and on Missouri State University as a whole; such conduct is unfit of candidates for such a dignified position of leadership at this great University.

### **ARTICLE I: PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES: PRE-ELECTION**

- I. Qualifications for Candidacy
  - A. All candidates and campaign managers for any ticket, special project, or issue must be a Missouri State University Student during the semester in which the election is held. Candidates must be considered full-time students at the undergraduate or graduate level.
  - B. Candidates must possess a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 or greater at the time of the election in order to assume their office.
    1. Hereafter, a cumulative GPA can be interpreted to mean transfer and Missouri State University GPA, or Missouri State University GPA alone, to benefit the potential candidate.
  - C. Potential candidates for the office of Senior Class President must have completed ninety (90) credit hours by the end of the semester in which the candidate is running. Failure to do so will result in immediate removal from office.
  - D. No person may file for more than one office, or on multiple tickets, during a single elections cycle.
  - E. Each candidate seeking the office of Student Body President and Student Body Vice President must maintain a status of good standing as a senator throughout the semester they wish to seek office. Potential Candidates that have not turned in their senator application by Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 will be ineligible to seek office.
- II. Qualifications of Elections Commission
  - A. All members of the Elections Commission must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA or greater by time of the application submission.
  - B. No member of the Elections Commission may hold any other office within the Missouri State University Student Government Association.
  - C. All potential elections commissioners must disclose the organizations that they are a member of.
  - D. Members of the Elections Commission may attend senate. However they shall be unable to be voting senators.
- III. Timeframe of Elections

- A. The Elections Commission, via the Chief Elections Commissioner, shall notify the SGA Senate and the campus media of the date and details of all filing procedures, as well as the names of the candidates and issues appearing on the ballot when that information becomes available.
  - B. The president, vice president, and campaign manager of each ticket appearing on the ballot must attend an informational session held by the Elections Commission on the subject of rules pertaining to the elections process before the elections process begins. At that meeting, or soon thereafter, the tickets will receive all required forms implemented by the Elections Commission.
  - C. Petitions for candidacy will be available in the SGA office by 8:00 a.m. on Monday February 8<sup>th</sup> 2016. Petitions, as well as all required campaigning forms, will be due to the Dean of Students Office by 4:00 p.m. on the following Friday February 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - D. Certification of petitions will commence immediately upon receipt of all forms from a candidate/ticket. Once such forms have been confirmed, the Elections Commissioner will inform the ticket of such certification within 3 days of the filing deadline by 4:00 p.m.
  - E. Campaigning begins for candidates/tickets immediately upon receipt of their notification of approval. Campaigning before this receipt will result in a sanction from the Elections Commission.
  - F. Polls for the election will be open from 12:01 a.m. on Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- IV. Petitions for Candidacy
- A. Candidates are required to attend at least one mandatory informational seminars presented by the Chief Elections Commissioner before the candidate(s) become eligible to petition for signatures.
  - B. Candidates must deliver platforms to the Chief Elections Commissioner before the candidate(s) become eligible to run for office.
  - C. Candidates for President/Vice President shall collect seven hundred and fifty (750) signatures from Missouri State University students in order to campaign for their respective offices and for their names to appear on the ballot. Candidates for Senior Class President shall not be required to collect signatures. Ballot order will be randomized.
  - D. The candidates and their respective campaign manager may only collect signatures.
  - E. Candidate(s) may not petition for signatures within residence halls including the dining centers. The only exception to this rule is that candidates may petition for signatures at a meeting of an official Missouri State University student organization that meets within a residence hall with emailed permission from an officer of that organization sent to the Elections Commission.

1. If emailed permission is not received and submitted to the Elections Commission within 24 hours of visiting the student organization, or the candidates are found in violation of not petitioning for signatures themselves, 25 additional signatures will be required per violation.
- F. Candidates may not petition for signatures inside the gates of any university athletic event.
- G. Candidates may petition for signatures within any official student organization (including Fraternity and Sorority Life houses) with emailed permission from an office of that organization sent to the Elections Commission.
1. If emailed permission is not received and submitted to the Elections Commission within 24 hours of visiting the student organization, or the candidates are found in violation of not petitioning for signatures themselves, 25 additional signatures will be required per violation.
- V. Campaign Budgets
- A. Campaigns for President and Vice President are limited to and shall not exceed one thousand and eight hundred (\$1,800) American dollars, excluding taxes.
1. Campaign expenditures for student body election purposes is defined as money spent on a ticket or monetary value of any campaign materials supporting a candidate or a ticket including, but not limited to, T-shirts, posters, handbills, web and new media, advertising, or campaign events.
- B. Campaigns for Senior Class President are limited to one thousand (\$1,000) American dollars, excluding taxes.
- C. All other candidates, tickets, proposals, referendums, and issues are limited to three hundred (\$300) American dollars, excluding taxes.
- D. Student organizations or individuals may support a candidate or ticket by contributing finances or campaign materials up to 20% of the budget's limit until that respective campaign ticket's expenditures have reached their respective spending limit. Party ticket members will not be considered as student organizations or individuals for the purposes of financial contributions.
- E. Candidates and tickets must log all campaign expenditures on budget forms as provided by the Elections Commissioner.
1. "Expenditures" are defined as all donated and purchased materials and media valued at their fair market price.
- F. Candidates will be responsible for justifying the value of any services received or amounts spent, either through receipt or other reasonable means.
- G. Candidates will be required to submit a budget form of all expenses accrued on the third Monday of March (March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016), each

subsequent Monday (March 21, 2016; March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016; and April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016), and through the elections days (April 6-8, 2016) by noon.

- H. Tickets that exceed spending limits or do not correctly report all expenditures will be removed from the ticket. The Chief Elections Commissioner is required to receive approval for the removal of a ticket from the Dean of Students.

## **ARTICLE II: PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES; ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY**

- I. General Rules of Conduct and Advertising
  - A. All campaigns must follow not only the policies described within the Elections Code, but also all Missouri State University policies.
  - B. Alcohol cannot be a part of a campaign, whether in flyers, coupons, promotional materials, websites, or in any other respect.
  - C. The use of Missouri State University facilities, offices, equipment, or resources (with the exception of paid services and open-access labs) to print or create campaign materials is prohibited.
  - D. No current campaigning or campaign materials are permitted in the SGA offices or chambers. The only exception is when the Speaker may recognize candidates to speak in open forum at a meeting of the Student Government Association.
  - E. Active campaigning within any University building, except for the Plaster Student Union, shall not be allowed outside the context of a student organization meeting with approval from an officer of that student organization.
  - F. All candidate posters, banners, and T-shirts must include notice of the campus body, student group, or campaign that supported and paid for that material. That notice should include the words "Paid for and sponsored by..." and the full name and title of the organization(s). Failure to provide such notice, or its correction, will result in a penalty levied against the ticket in violation. Campus organizations are allowed to sponsor individual campaigns without providing monetary support. It is up to the candidate(s) and the sponsor if the candidate(s) wishes to display this endorsement.
  - G. Candidates must remove all on-campus campaign materials, excluding chalking, by 5:30 p.m. of the final day of voting. Posters within academic buildings must be taken down by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
    - 1. In the event that campaign materials must be removed by University personnel, the candidate or ticket shall be assessed the cost of the personnel's time as per the guideline established in the student organization handbook.
  - H. Candidates, tickets, or supporters of proposals or issues on the ballot may not sponsor any voting booth.
  - I. Candidates assume responsibility for all campaign materials and making sure that it follows the guidelines throughout the elections process.

## II. Speaking at Student Organizations

- A. Campaign tickets must send emailed permission from a student organization officer to the Elections Commission at least twenty four (24) hours before the ticket is permitted to speak at the organization.

## III. Online Communication

### Website

- A. Any ticket or individual running for office shall be limited to one website each.

### Mass Messaging

- A. The use of unsolicited mass mailings, e-mailings, or Facebook messaging is prohibited.
  - 1. "Unsolicited" mailings and messages are defined as those sent to individuals who have not willfully added themselves to a campaign's mailing or contact list.

### Emailing

- A. Campaigns may maintain an e-mail list. Students may only be added to such a list with their explicit consent. Only e-mail addresses contained on such a list may receive mass e-mails from a campaign.
- B. E-mail may be used to inquire about speaking to organizations and such e-mail may only be directed to executive officers.
- C. E-mail may be used to answer questions and communicate between campaign members, the Chief Elections Commissioner, and other interested parties.

### Social Media: General

- A. Each ticket or candidate for Senior Class President is allowed one campaign-sponsored account per social media site, unless otherwise noted in this document.
- B. All social media accounts must be submitted to the Elections Commission within 24 hours of the account going live.
- C. Any form of Voter Disenfranchisement will result in an immediate request to remove the item from the social media account. If the request for removal is not responded to within 12 hours of the Chief Elections Commissioner's contact, the parties in violation will be removed from the ticket.
  - 1. Voter Disenfranchisement will be defined as the discouraging of individuals to maximize their autonomy via voting for a candidate.
    - a. An example of a violation is if a ticket discouraging others to vote for an opposing ticket by directly calling for individuals to not vote for that ticket.
  - 2. Voter Disenfranchisement via negative campaigning or slandering on social media will not be tolerated.

- D. Tickets are barred from addressing opposing tickets via any form of media until after the winner of the election has been announced.

#### Social Media: Advertising

- A. Each Ticket will be permitted to purchasing social media advertising promoting their respective account.
- B. All advertising purchases are to be recorded and filed with the Election Commission

#### Social Media: Facebook

- A. Each ticket or candidate shall be limited to one (1) campaign sponsored Facebook page
- B. Individuals who join a campaign's Facebook page imply consent to receive Facebook messages from that page.
- C. The usage of unrelated Facebook groups or pages to send campaign messages is prohibited.
- D. Invitations to join a campaign's Facebook page shall not constitute unsolicited messaging.

#### Social Media: Twitter

- A. Each ticket or candidate shall be limited to one (1) campaign sponsored twitter account.
- B. Individuals who follow a campaign's Twitter account imply consent to receive messages from the Twitter account.
- C. The only mass messaging permitted is from the official Twitter. Individual Twitter accounts are not permitted to send out mass messages to followers about the campaign. However, candidates are able to Tweet and promote them selves via their personal Twitter account.
- D. The official campaign Twitter account following an individual does not constitute unsolicited messaging.

#### Social Media: Instagram

- A. Each ticket or candidate shall be limited to one campaign sponsored Instagram account.

#### Social Media: Tinder

- A. Candidates may create an official Tinder account. Each candidate or ticket is limited to one (1) account.
- B. Each ticket has permission to message matches. A match will be seen as a consenting online gesture made by the constituent to receive information pertaining to the campaign via Tinder.

#### Snapchat

- A. Candidates may create an official Snapchat. Each candidate or ticket is limited to one (1) account.



- B. Each candidate has permission to send Snapchat(s) to those who have accepted the contact invitation. The candidate has permission to post a “story”.
  - C. The acceptance of the contact invitation by the constituents will be seen as a consenting agreement for contact.
- IV. Residence Halls
- A. Windows may be used in the residence halls to promote a campaign, but only with the approval and consent of all residents in a room.
  - B. If a campaign wishes to post flyers, posters, or other campaign materials in the residence halls, the procedures and policies of Residence Life and Services must be followed without exception.
  - C. No campaigning of any kind shall be permitted in the dining centers.
- V. Commercial Businesses
- A. Commercial businesses with Missouri State University contracts may not have their logos on flyers or handbills, or be featured in campaigning including speeches and addresses.
  - B. Exceptions may be made if the business is part of the ticket’s platform (i.e. if a ticket wishes to bring that business to campus or utilize their services on behalf of students), but the exceptions must be approved by the Chief Elections Commissioner before inclusion.
  - C. Off-campus campaign materials are restricted to privately owned property subject to the permission of the property owner(s).
- VI. Posters
- A. Posters will be defined as a single piece of paper. Paper may not be combined to form a single poster.
  - B. Posters may be placed on open bulletin boards on campus, with a maximum of one poster per board, regardless of design.
  - C. Permission must be obtained before putting posters on boards if such boards are maintained by a department, organization, or other Missouri State University entity. If permission is obtained, the signature of the approving party and the date must be on the back of the poster before it is hung.
  - D. Each ticket, candidate, or issue may have no poster exceeding 11” by 17” in size.
  - E. Overlaying or removal of current or applicable posters already on bulletin boards is strictly prohibited.
  - F. Posters may be put up the Monday preceding the week of the election at 7:00am.
  - G. If a poster is found in violation of the requirements set forth above the poster in question shall be removed. If the violation becomes habitual the candidate(s) in question shall be called to a hearing presided over by the Chief Elections Commissioner.

- VII. Staking
  - A. In the interest of sustainability, staking will not be permitted during the elections cycle for any reason.
- VIII. Other Advertising
  - A. Parades and rallies shall only be permitted with the permission of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Dean of Students (or his/her designee).
  - B. Microphones and other amplification devices may only be used to speak at engagements arranged and approved in accordance with all of the appropriate officials.
- IX. Recording of Purchases.
  - A. All purchases of advertising must be reported to the Chief Elections Commissioner by official receipt or bank statement.

### **ARTICLE III: BLITZ**

- I. Blitz
  - A. Blitz shall begin at 12:01 a.m. on the first day of voting (Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016) and shall conclude by 2:01 a.m.
  - B. Should there be a concern of inclement weather, Blitz will be rescheduled for 6:01 a.m. the first day of voting. The call to postpone Blitz will be made by the Elections Commission by 11:00 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding Blitz (April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016).
  - C. All campaign teams participating in Blitz must begin at the Bear Paw. Campaigns that do not begin at the Bear Paw may face the following consequences:
    - 1. A delay of the ticket's start of Blitz to 1:01 a.m.
    - 2. Removal of materials not at the Bear Paw at 12:01 a.m.
    - 3. Docking of votes cast in favor of the ticket
  - D. Candidates and supporters will be allowed to display banners based on a first come-first serve basis. They are also allowed to chalk around campus at this point. These forms of publicity may be removed if they are in bad taste as deemed by the Elections Commission.
- II. Banners
  - A. Each ticket is limited to ten (10) banners.
  - B. Banners may not be larger than a full-sized bed sheet (81 inches x 96 inches).
  - C. Banners may only be hung on non-academic buildings or Missouri State University owned fences. Permission must be obtained from a building's coordinator where applicable prior to hanging banners on a building (i.e. Residence Hall Directors, Bookstore Manager, etc.).
  - D. Banners must be hung in a way that is not damaging to university property. Banners may not be taped to painted surfaces, only to

brick/stone surfaces and must be secured on all four corners and may not impede the flow of campus traffic.

- E. Once put up, a report must be submitted to the Chief Elections Commissioner within twelve (12) hours of Blitz about the location of each banner, along with photocopies of any relevant approvals (if such a location requires one).
- F. Hanging of banners is only permitted during Blitz. The only exception to this subsection is if a University employee is required to hang the banner from a building where the ticket has permission to do so.
- G. For further clarification please refer to the MSU Banner Policy at: <http://www.missouristate.edu/StudentConduct/23800.htm#banner>

### III. Chalking

- A. Chalking must adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Missouri State University Advertising, Distribution, and Solicitation Policies (i.e. "Chalking is permitted only on concrete horizontal sidewalk surfaces, in areas that can be naturally washed by rain, and are not permitted under building overhangs, on building surfaces, curbs, steps, brick surfaces, planters, benches, or similar locations.").
- B. Chalking over other organization's chalking is not permitted in any form, regardless of permission from the organization.
- C. Spray-on chalk, or any other means of altering the chalk (such as hairspray) is not permitted.
- D. Chalking is only permitted during Blitz.
- E. For further clarification please refer to the MSU Chalking Policy at: <http://www.missouristate.edu/StudentConduct/23800.htm#sidewalk>

## **ARTICLE IV: PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES; VIOLATIONS, SANCTIONS, AND CLARIFICATIONS**

### I. Filing Complaints

- A. Any election complaints caused by a suspected violation of the guidelines must be filed with the Elections Commission within twenty-four (24) hours after the discovery of the suspected violation.
- B. All elections complaints must be submitted to the Chief Elections Commissioner at [Elections@MissouriState.edu](mailto:Elections@MissouriState.edu) and must include the name of the filer, an additional witness to the incident, a description of the violation, and which Elections Guide, Constitutional, or Bylaw stipulation is involved.
- C. Both the petitioning and defending parties will be required to be present if the candidate(s) reported the violation.
- D. Eligible Behavior for reporting is Stalking, Harassment, Physical Altercations, and third party harassment. Behaviors ineligible to report

include but are not limited to political beliefs, religious beliefs, associations or any other form of self-expression that does not directly violate the rights of the petitioning candidate(s).

## II. Hearing Complaints

- A. The Elections Commission will notify the offending ticket no later than twenty-four (24) hours after a complaint has been received via phone or e-mail.
- B. The ticket in question will be given an opportunity to file a rebuttal to the Elections Commission no later than twenty-four (24) hours after notification that a complaint has been received. The candidate must be able to clearly refute the violation and must have a witness if necessary.
- C. At the Election Commission's discretion, they may ask both parties of the complaint to present their case at a designated time and location to be set by the commission.
- D. The validity of complaints, the assessment of violations, and their subsequent consequences will be subject to the decision of the Elections Commission.
- E. Decisions shall be rendered as soon as possible, to a maximum of five (5) business days after a complaint is received.
- F. Decisions shall require a majority of the Elections Commission in agreement regarding the violation.
- G. Any candidate, ticket, or supporter of a proposal or issue found to be in violation of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action (sanctions), including but not limited to, removal from the ballot, or removal or limiting of campaign privileges.
- H. Any member of the Elections Commission shall have the authority to remove any campaign materials found in violation of the regulations noted above or declare inappropriate by the Elections Commission.
- I. Elections Commission decisions can be appealed to the Campus Judicial Board with such ruling, or lack thereof, being considered a subordinate court decision.
- J. In the event that a decision is beyond the scope of the Elections Commission, then the violation will go to the Campus Judicial Board for a ruling where its decision shall be considered binding.

## III. Violations

- A. Any ticket found violating the rules of the Elections Code will face penalties. Penalties will be determined on a case by case basis by the Elections Commission in consultation with the Dean of Students. Penalties may include loss of Blitz privileges, deduction of votes received, and removal from the ballot in extreme circumstances.
  - 1. Violations that occur prior to Blitz will primarily result in the loss of Blitz privileges, such as a delayed start time, a reduction in the

number of banners allowed, and the loss of Blitz privileges entirely in extreme circumstances.

- IV. Clarification from the Elections Commission
  - A. The Elections Commission may, for the purposes of a fair and balanced election with minimal disruption to the student body, clarify any rules or stipulations herein contained.
    - 1. The Elections Commission shall advise all campaigns of such clarifications immediately, and such rules may not take effect until twenty-four (24) hours after notification.
    - 2. When a problem with the election process arises that requires the establishment of a new rule, such rules shall only come into effect with the approval of the Student Government Association Senate and their inclusion in the annual revision to the Elections Code the following year.
  - B. Any additional paperwork approved and implemented by the Elections Commission will be considered binding and shall be strictly interpreted and followed by the candidates/tickets during the elections process.

#### **ARTICLE V: REVISIONS AND RATIFICATION**

- I. Revisions
  - A. The Elections Commission will review and revise the Elections Code each year.
    - 1. The changes will be presented to the Student Government Association Senate by the Chief Elections Commissioner. The changes will be adopted if passed by Senate with a vote of two-thirds of Senate seats filled.
    - 2. Any stylistic revisions may be made by the Chief of Staff.