

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ELECTION MANUAL

ARTICLE I. ELECTION STRUCTURE

- A. The President and representatives shall be elected at-large by random electronic ballot from the Muhlenberg College student body when available. Should random electronic balloting not be available, paper balloting at designated stations will be used.
- B. Elections shall be held annually on the third Monday in November. The twenty-two (22) representative candidates and the presidential candidate receiving the largest number of legal votes cast shall be declared the winner(s).

ARTICLE II. ELECTION PROCEDURES

Section One. Nominations & Elections Supervision.

The Student Government Association Nominations & Elections Committee is responsible for the coordination and supervision of Student Body President and Student Government Association Representative elections as outlined further in this document.

Section Two. Nominations.

- A. Students interested in holding office shall complete the following:
 - 1. A *Statement of Intent* providing a brief summary (maximum 150 words) about a student's intent, qualifications and eligibility to hold office in the Student Government Association.
 - 2. At the conclusion of the campaign period, a *Personal Campaign Expenditure Statement* listing campaign-related expenses, accompanied by receipts and/or explanations for those expenses.
 - 3. Individuals shall have their names placed on the ballot if:
 - a. They have completed the requisite paperwork.
 - b. They are full-time students of Muhlenberg College, having paid the student activity fee, with the exception of those who are studying abroad.
 - c. They will be taking classes on campus for at least the spring semester of their term of office.
 - d. They are NOT serving disciplinary suspension or expulsion, unless approved to run for office by the Dean of Students.
- B. Materials required for nomination shall be made available online under the Documents section of the SGA website, from the J. Conrad and Hazel Seegers Union Building Information Desk, and the Student Government Association Office, two weeks prior to Election Day.
- C. Running on a ticket is prohibited. This means that candidates may not run together as a team.

Section Three. Campaigning.

- A. Campaigning shall begin seven (7) days prior to Election Day at 12:01 a.m.
- B. Candidates shall refrain from unfair campaign tactics such as:
 - 1. Mud-Slinging or Smear Campaigning. Under no circumstances or at anytime will negative propaganda be permitted.

- a. Mud-slinging or Smear Campaigning is defined as unjustly insulting or accusing an opponent with the aim of damaging their reputation.
 2. Actively campaigning 30 feet surrounding the designated polling area. Actively campaigning includes engaging other students in consideration of their vote through discussion or display (wearing a campaign shirt, handing out leaflets, etc.), and directly encouraging other students to vote.
 3. Using the Muhlenberg College radio station (WMUH), Muhlenberg Broadcasting Community (MBC), Muhlenberg Weekly, or Digital Signage to record and/or broadcast campaign messages.
 4. Creating and sending mass emails (spam).
 5. Removing, defacing, or posting on top of publicity or campaign material present on bulletin boards or authorized posting locations.
 6. Distributing paper handbills to passers-by in Seegers Union.
 7. Defacing (i.e. chalking) any surface, placing lawn signs, and/or creating table tents.
 8. Creating bulk paper mailings, even when each piece of mail is personally addressed.
 9. Actively campaigning while engaged in work, paid or volunteer, as an agent of Muhlenberg College or during a non-partisan SGA event.
- C. **Campaign Materials.** Campaign Materials shall be any item with a candidate's name, likeness, and/or slogan.
1. Campaign materials to be hung on walls may not be larger than 22" x 28".
 2. One (1) campaign banner per candidate may be hung on campus. Banners may be no larger than 60" x 80".
 3. The use of copyrighted slogans, logos, characters, etc. without written permission from the copyrighter is illegal and the SGA Nominations & Elections Committee shall remove campaign materials using such items.
 4. Campaign materials shall avoid using offensive language or innuendo, advocating the use of drugs and/or alcohol, or degrading any person on the basis of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.
 5. Signs, notices, and banners may be posted or hung in authorized areas only. Authorized areas include:
 6. Parent's Plaza, Residence halls and Academic buildings (after receiving permission from the appropriate office such as Office of Residential Services or an academic office).
 - a. Notices posted in residence halls and academic buildings must be affixed to designated bulletin boards only.
 - b. Posting is not permitted on any painted surface, entrance, fire doors or windows.
 - c. Candidates may not post or hang notices on trees, building exterior, light posts, etc.
 7. Candidates shall be held financially responsible for any physical damage caused by their campaign material.
- D. It shall be the responsibility of the SGA Nominations & Elections Committee to remove campaign material improperly posted any times throughout the campaign week.
- E. Candidates must remove their publicity material within twenty-four (24) hours after results have been declared "official". The only exception is for the candidates involved in a runoff election.

- F. Protests filed in regards to unfair campaign tactics should be filed as soon as possible to be reviewed by the Nominations and Elections Committee. Protests involving unfair campaigning will not be considered after the unofficial results have been released to the Student Body.
- G. If the Nominations and Elections Committee finds a campaign tactic to be unfair, the candidate will be disqualified.

Section Four. Campaign Spending.

- A. Campaign spending shall be limited to \$100 out-of-pocket, and \$200 from gifts, donations, and fundraising for each candidate seeking the office of Muhlenberg College Student Body President. The total campaign spending can be no more than three hundred dollars (\$300.00).
- B. Campaign spending shall be limited to \$50 out-of-pocket, and \$100 from gifts, donations and fundraising for each individual seeking the office of Muhlenberg College Student Government Association Representative.
- C. For candidates running for both Student Body President and Representative, campaign spending shall be limited to \$100 out-of-pocket, and \$200 from gifts, donations, and fundraising. Distribution for campaign spending cannot exceed campaign spending limits for the respective office.
- D. Gifts and donations cannot be given directly to candidates. Monetary gifts and donations must be submitted to the Nominations and Elections Committee. The Committee will then distribute the funds to the appropriate candidate.
- E. Campaign spending limits are inclusive of outright expenditures and include, gifts, and donations of products or services, and funds raised through fundraising. The cost of donated items should be based upon the candidate's best judgment.
- F. Candidates may not combine campaign funds for any purpose.
- G. Gifts and donations must come from another member of the student body, or a collective group of Muhlenberg college students.
- H. Each candidate shall, on the Friday prior to Election Day, submit a Personal Campaign Expenditure Statement to the SGA Nominations & Elections Committee. The SGA Nominations & Elections Committee reserves the right to assign a different price to any item on a candidate's expenditure sheet provided it can present data justifying the alteration. If a candidate does not incur any expenses for campaign publicity, a Personal Campaign Expenditure Statement must still be submitted.

Section Five. Election Requirements.

- A. Ballots
 1. A candidate's name and class year shall appear on the ballot as it appears on the *Statement of Intent* submitted by the candidate.
 2. The order of candidates' names on the ballot shall be determined by an electronic random draw at a meeting held by SGA Nominations & Elections Committee for this purpose on the Tuesday immediately preceding Election Day.
 3. Elections shall be conducted using electronic balloting, and at the selected polling location in Seegers Union. The link to the electronic ballot will be provided via email to the entire student body.

4. Students studying abroad may vote using electronic ballot.
- B. Voting
1. Voting shall take place from 8:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. via online electronic ballot, and in the Lobby of the J. Conrad and Hazel Seegers Union Building unless otherwise designated by the SGA Nominations & Elections Committee.
 2. Students are required to authenticate with their Muhlenberg network credentials to access the electronic ballot.

ARTICLE III: POST-ELECTION PROCEDURES

Section One. Result Procedures.

- A. Results
1. Results of the election shall be presented in alphabetical order by last name of the candidate and shall include the number of legal votes cast for each.
 2. SGA Nominations & Elections Committee shall meet immediately after closing of the polls to tabulate the votes and will send the results to the Recording Secretary.
 3. The Recording Secretary will send the unofficial results within six (6) hours of the closing of the polls to the entire Student Body.
- B. Counting Procedures
1. The results of the election shall be tabulated by at least two members of the SGA Nominations & Elections Committee.
 2. The SGA Nominations & Elections Committee will meet to verify the results. The results will be considered “unofficial” until the protest period has ended.

Section Two. Contesting the Results of the Election.

- A. A protest contesting the results of the election may be filed by any member of the student body by stating the reason for the protest in writing and providing it to a member of the SGA Nominations & Elections Committee within forty-eight (48) hours of the polls closing.
- B. If after forty-eight (48) hours there are no protests, or all protests have been determined to be without merit, the unofficial results shall be considered official results.
- C. A protest may be made for any reason that would place the validity of the results in doubt. This may include mechanical or physical difficulties with the voting equipment, suspicion that some students may have voted more than once, or concerns that some votes cast were not counted. It does not include allegations regarding the eligibility of a candidate or violations of campaign rules.
- D. The SGA Nominations & Elections Committee shall meet within six (6) hours to review the protest and render a decision before the first meeting of the year.
1. Should the committee determine that the protest has merit, it shall nullify the unofficial results and either conduct a new tabulation of the ballots or order a new election.
 2. Should the committee determine that the protest is without merit, the unofficial results shall be upheld.

Section Three. Runoff Elections, Protest Elections, and Special Elections.

- A. Elections between candidates tied in votes cast for an office or protest elections called to address inconsistencies in the voting process must be scheduled within ten (10) days of the first election.
 - 1. Only those candidates tied in the number of votes for an office shall be listed on the ballot for a runoff election. The candidate(s) with the greatest number of votes cast (singular plurality) shall be declared the winner(s).
 - 2. Should two or more candidates receive an equal number of votes for the last available representative position(s), all tied candidates will participate in a run-off election for the remaining seat(s).
- B. A Protest election will be held in acknowledgement that there were inconsistencies in how the vote was conducted which brought in to question the accuracy of the result.
- C. If a candidate wins election to both the office of President and Representative and assumes the office of President, the Representative candidate not currently awarded an office with the next highest number of votes will assume the vacated office of Representative.

Section Four. Violations of the Election Procedures.

- A. Any member of the student body may report an alleged infraction of The Student Government Association Election Procedures by stating such allegations in writing and presenting them to the SGA Nominations & Elections Committee at any time during the election process and up to forty-eight (48) hours after the closing of the polls.
- B. The SGA Nominations & Elections Committee shall meet as soon as possible to review the allegation and render an opinion.
- C. Sanctions may range from public censure to forfeiture of office depending upon the severity of the infraction. Suspected violations of College policy shall be forwarded to the Dean of Student's Office for adjudication.

ARTICLE IV. AMENDMENTS

Section One. First Reading.

- A. The Recording Secretary must distribute a digital copy of a proposed amendment at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to a meeting.
- B. The amendment may be distributed after this deadline only if the Executive Board declares an emergency situation.
- C. Upon verbal request of any member, the proposed amendment shall be read aloud by the Recording Secretary.
- D. The proposed amendment will automatically advance to a Second Reading at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Student Government Association.

Section Two. Second Reading.

- A. The amendment will automatically be placed on the agenda under Unfinished Business.
- B. Passage of an amendment requires a majority vote roll call vote of the present and voting members of the general assembly.