



Graduate and Professional Student Government Election Code

Article I. Election Commission

Section I. The Election Commission (henceforth referred to as the Commission) shall facilitate the election process of the Graduate and Professional Student Body President.

(a) The Election Commission shall be chaired by the Election Commissioner and is responsible for the execution of all election-related activities including but not limited to screening applicants for eligibility, clarifying procedures for students wishing to run for office, and adherence to campaign rules and regulations.

(b) The Graduate and Professional Student Body President shall be responsible for interviewing and appointing the Election Commissioner. A call to fill the position of the Election Commissioner shall be sent out via email to all graduate and professional students by the first Monday of October. The position must be filled by the first Senate meeting in November..

(c) The Election Commissioner shall assemble a committee to assist with facilitating the election process. All members must be chosen and informed by the first Senate meeting of the spring semester. Members of the committee are chosen at the purview of the Election Commissioner, where the recommended number of committee members is three to five. Committee members must be currently enrolled as graduate or professional students at Texas A&M and not seeking election for any Graduate and Professional Student Government Office or Senator positions in the following academic year.

Section II. Candidates for any election shall be responsible for these regulations provided herein. Ignorance of these regulations shall not be an acceptable defense in response to any offense in any election.

Section III. These regulations are subject to interpretation only by the Election Commissioner and the commission. **Section IV.** Candidates and their staff members may contact the Election Commissioner for the purpose of consultation pertaining to the election at the official email of the Election Commissioner, gpsgelections@tamu.edu

Section V. Elections will be held between the last full week in March and the first full week of April. Specific dates and times voting shall be listed on the official GPSG website and social media accounts.

Article II. Filing

Section I. Candidate Eligibility

- (a) All candidates must be enrolled under a classification of G, D, L, M, P, or V for at least one full semester prior to the election.
- (b) Meet eligibility criteria outlined by Student Activities for all Student Leaders and Texas A&M University Student Rules.
- (c) Dual enrollment students will not be able to run or hold the office of the President. The office of the President is strictly classified as a Gant position per order of the Graduate and Professional School and not under our jurisdiction

Section II. Filing Process

- (a) Commission Mandates
 - (i) The Election Commission shall make available to each candidate:
 - (1) The Election Regulations
 - (2) Dates, times, and locations for Mandatory Candidates' Meeting that will be available online on the Texas A&M Graduate and Professional Student Government website.

(3) Finance Forms:

- a) Expense Report
- b) Fair Market Value Assessment Form
- c) Null Expenditure Statement

(4) Intent to Run Form

(5) Date, time, and location for the Mandatory Senate Meeting for Student Body President candidates that will be available online on the Texas A&M Graduate and Professional Student Government website.

(b) Candidate Mandates

(i) By filing, the candidate agrees to abide by these Election Regulations.

(ii) All candidates for positions elected under the supervision of the Election Commission shall file their intention to run for office with the Election Commissioner by 11:59 p.m. on February 28. Filing should be done online through the designated filing system found through the Texas A&M Graduate and Professional Student Government website by each candidate, or in person at the discretion of the Election Commissioner, and in accordance with the guidelines set forth within these regulations.

(1) Requests to file in person must be sent via email to the Election Commissioner no later than 11:59 p.m. on February 21. Such requests will be approved or denied and arrangements shall be communicated to the candidate within one (2) calendar days of the request.

(2) A candidate must submit the following at the time of filing:

- a) An Intent to Run Form containing a signature from an Academic Advisor or Committee Chair, signatures from both GPSG advisors, candidate's information including name as it shall appear on the ballot, email address, and phone number.

i) Student Body President candidates will have to meet with the current Student Body President and obtain a signature.

1) This meeting will not impact the Student Body President candidates chances of running.

ii) Meetings with GPSG advisors will be conducted in the form of an interview to answer questions.

b) Completed Application.

c) A signed grade release statement enabling the Department of Student Activities to check academic, classification, and conduct qualifications of candidates.

d) Acknowledgement of mandatory presentation to the Senate for Student Body President candidates.

e) Any other reasonable information required by the Election Commissioner.

f) Filing shall only be considered complete upon the candidate receiving a confirmation email via the Election Commissioner.

g) Any candidate who files for election and fails to comply with all filing requirements shall not be qualified for election to any office.

Section III. General Filing Information

(a) For the election, filing for office shall begin on the first Monday of February at 8:00 a.m. and conclude on February 28 at 11:59 p.m. Filing may not be re-opened for any reason.

(i) However, in the case of candidate vacancies or extreme circumstances, deadlines for filing might be extended for the specified position.

Section IV. Races

(a) Student Body President

(i) A race in which every student may vote, regardless of class, residency, college, or any other demographic information.

(b) Senate

(i) A race in which students only in their college or program can vote for open Senate seats in the college or program.

(1) Each academic constituency may elect or appoint their senator and alternate by ways and means of their own choosing. The GPSG may only certify the election or appointment of said senator and alternate, and may not influence the way in which senators and alternates are selected.

Section V. Mandatory Candidates' Meeting

(a) For elections, the mandatory candidates' meeting shall be held the Sunday after the close of filing.

(b) At the mandatory candidates' meeting, the Election Commissioner shall explain the Election Regulations, answer any questions, and announce any notable interpretations of the Election Regulations.

(c) The Election Commissioner shall announce the days and times that finance reports and receipts are due, and the location at which they must be turned in.

(d) The Election Commissioner shall announce the day and time that all Student Body President candidates must present to the Senate and receive a majority Vote of Confidence from the Senate.

(e) Any candidate who is unable to attend the mandatory candidates' meeting must contact the Election Commissioner in writing at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting to report a reason for their absence as well as name an agent to attend the meeting in the candidate's place. The agent must show written verification from the candidate, identifying the person as an agent.

(f) Failure for a candidate or their registered agent to attend the mandatory candidates' meeting in a timely manner shall result in disqualification.

(g) All candidates are responsible for all information covered at the mandatory candidates' meeting without exception.

Article III. Campaigning

Section I. Process

- (a) A candidate may not campaign until the time and dates specified by the Election Commission and these regulations.
- (b) The candidate shall be held responsible for the actions taken by their supporter. Any violation of the regulations by a supporter of a candidate could result in a fine for the candidate. A supporter is anyone who (including but not limited to):
 - (i) Speaks as a delegate of the candidate, posts or shares material online as a delegate of the candidate, holds banners, or distributes campaign materials as a delegate of the candidate.
 - (ii) Works on any financial reports for a candidate.
 - (iii) Works on the candidate's campaign team in any capacity.
- (c) The current Student Body President can not publicly support, advocate, or campaign for any candidate in any races of the election.
- (d) Pre-Campaigning Period
 - (i) The pre-campaigning period shall be defined as the period of time during which candidates and their supporters may begin speaking to any university-recognized student organization during meetings at locations on-campus or off-campus.
 - (ii) Pre-campaigning period shall begin immediately after the mandatory candidates' meeting and shall end at 11:59 p.m. on the Sunday before the Monday that general campaigning and voting begin.
 - (iii) Speaking engagements shall be at the discretion of the organization being addressed.
 - (iv) Distribution of any flyers, passing out campaign materials, and holding campaign signs during this period is strictly prohibited.
 - (1) Candidates and their supporters shall be allowed to wear any article of clothing that supports their candidate during the pre-

campaigning period, as long as these materials are not distributed to the general graduate and professional student population.

(e) General Campaigning Period

(i) General campaigning shall be defined as the period of time after the pre-campaign period and before voting during which candidates may actively campaign (in addition to all activities permitted during the pre-campaign periods) while following all campaign rules listed in these Election Regulations.

(1) Candidates may engage in actions that support their election such as, but not limited to, the distribution of any flyers and campaign materials, publication of social media ads, and holding campaign signs during this Period.

(ii) The first day general campaigning shall begin at 12:00 AM the Monday of the week before voting and shall continue until the 12:00 PM on the final day of voting.

(iii) Materials used for general campaigning must be included in the expense report that is submitted on the second to last day of voting by 5:00 p.m.. No expenses shall be made past this deadline.

(1) Social media purchases must be made prior to these days and included in expense reports.

(iv) Candidates may not speak to organizations on voting days.

Section II. Commission-Sponsored Campaigning

(a) Debates

(i) The Election Commissioner may set dates and times for candidates to participate in sponsored forums, debates or other public demonstrations or congregations. Registered candidates that have submitted a Voluntary Compliance Notice are eligible to participate.

(1) Any student organization or group interested in hosting an Election Commission-sponsored campaign event for any elected position must register their event with the Election Commissioner

no less than one week prior to the date that their event is expected to occur.

a) To seek event registration, a student organization or group should contact the Election Commissioner via email (gpsgelections@tamu.edu) and inform them of the name, student organization affiliation, intended date, time, and location of the event. The Election Commission maintains discretion in granting sponsorship of any campaign events.

(2) During such forums or debates, all general campaign practices in or around the area, as defined by the Election Commissioner, where these are taking place shall be prohibited. This includes holding signs or banners, distributing materials, etc. The Election Commissioner shall notify candidates the starting and ending point of time frames when the use of campaign materials will be prohibited. During those times, verbal campaigning may be prohibited. Failure to adhere to this rule may result in sanctions and is a Tier 1 violation.

(b) GPSG-Affiliated Election Events

(i) The Election Commissioner may designate up to two (2) dates and times for Student Body President candidates to participate in GPSG election commission or GPSG committees sponsored campaign events excluding all Election Commission organized events.

(1) Any entity of GPSG may request to hold a GPSG-affiliated election event. All events must be approved by the Election Commissioner and announced at the mandatory candidates' meeting to receive the GPSG-affiliated designation.

(2) All events shall be unbiased and impartial to all candidates.

(ii) All GPSG affiliated campaign events shall be announced at the mandatory candidates meeting and no additions shall be made after the meeting. Any changes to the location or time must be given to the candidates at least 72 hours prior to the event.

(iii) During all GPSG affiliated campaign events, all general campaign practices in or around the area, as defined by the Election Commissioner, where these are taking place shall be prohibited. This includes holding signs or banners, distributing materials, etc. The Election Commissioner shall notify candidates the starting and ending point of time frames when the use of campaign materials will be prohibited. During those times, verbal campaigning may be prohibited. Failure to adhere to this rule may result in sanctions and is a Tier 1 violation.

(iv) Any candidate wishing to attend a GPSG affiliated election event must RSVP at least seventy-two (72) hours before the event date that is announced at the mandatory candidates' meeting to participate in the event. Exceptions to the RSVP deadline may be granted pending extenuating circumstances as decided by the Election Commission.

(1) If a candidate withdraws their RSVP in the seventy-two (72) hour window between the start of the event and the RSVP deadline or does not show up to the event after they submitted an RSVP, they shall be subjected to a Tier 1 violation unless reprieve is granted through unforeseen or emergent circumstances as proven by sufficient supporting evidence and granted by the Election Commission.

(2) Proxies may only be sent in cases of extenuating circumstances as approved by the host Committee Chair or host Commissioner.

(c) Candidates Guide

(i) An Election Commission compiled candidates guide may be posted prior to the start of voting and may contain nothing more than a biography or resume, short platform synopsis and photograph.

Section III. Materials

(a) Campaign materials are defined as anything distributed or displayed for the purpose of soliciting votes for a candidate.

(b) The Election Commission will post promotional blurbs for all Student Body President candidates on the GPSG website.

(c) Flyers

(i) The term “flier” is defined as a single piece of paper with a surface area no longer than 93.5 square inches (equal to that of an 8 1/2 inch by 11 inch piece of paper).

(ii) Flyers may be distributed with a maximum of one flier per bulletin board for each candidate.

(iii) The term “bulletin board” shall be defined as the corkboard and the surrounding frame.

(iv) Candidates may need to obtain approval from a departmental office or building manager or proctor before posting flyers on bulletin boards in university buildings. It is the responsibility of the candidate to obtain any needed approval before posting flyers on campus bulletin boards or other areas within campus buildings. Bulletin boards reserved for departmental or organizational announcements or designated for official use only shall not be used for campaigning.

(v) It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure flyers are being placed in areas allowed by the building manager or proctor. This applies to flyers placed in restrooms, elevators, hallways, dining areas, and any other area within a university building.

(d) No candidate may distribute any food or beverage while campaigning; this includes the distribution of candy.

(e) The Election Commission has the power to remove or order the removal of any materials that are in violation of the Election Regulations.

(f) Each candidate shall be responsible for the removal and disposal of all displayed campaign materials.

Article IV. Restrictions

Section I. Rulings of the Election Commission

- (a) Candidates must adhere immediately to all rulings and directives issued by the Election Commission. Failure to do so may result in a major violation and place the candidate subject to disciplinary action by the Election Commission.
- (b) Anyone may help advertise the time, manner and place of elections.
- (c) Anyone wishing to contact the Election Commissioner in regards to any election related violations must do so through the violation report that can be found on the official Graduate and Professional Student Government website.
 - (i) Reports made through this system shall be done so under the Aggie honor code and have the optional protection of anonymity.
 - (ii) Photographic, video, and written testimonies shall be considered in assessing violations.

Section II. Campaigning

- (a) No candidate or their supporters may remove, deface, destroy, or obscure any campaign material of any candidate.
- (b) Off-campus campaigning is prohibited. No campaign materials shall be distributed, posted, or held off campus.
- (c) Any candidate or member of the candidate's staff who violates departmental or university regulations, or Texas A&M University Student Rules, in any action related to campaigning shall be subject to disciplinary action by the Election Commission.
- (d) Forms of campaigning - specifically those that do not involve distribution of materials - may occur anywhere on campus if that location or activity is not in conflict with any regulation or restriction.
- (e) Areas inside the Memorial Student Center, Rudder Buildings, Rudder Fountain, Rudder Plaza, classrooms, the Rec Center, and the John J. Koldus Building are off limits to campaigning during the campaigning period, except when a group or organization allows candidates to speak at their meetings. In these cases, the candidate may only campaign in the immediate room in which the meeting is being held. The only exception to this rule is that articles of clothing may be worn anytime anywhere during the campaign period. Any

candidate found actively campaigning in the aforementioned areas shall be assessed a Tier 1 violation. Wearing t-shirts or apparel is not considered actively campaigning. Apparel includes clothing, backpack tags, tattoos, and anything else deemed apparel by the Election Commission.

(f) No demonstrations, gatherings, or other forms of campaigning, which interfere with the natural flow of either pedestrian or vehicular traffic, shall be permitted. Riding in the bed of a truck, pulling trailers, or offering rides in order to solicit votes or promote a candidate are not permitted. No form of campaigning can impede the health and wellness of any candidate or student.

(g) Candidates are not permitted to display campaign slogans or other campaign related messages by marking them on university sidewalks or buildings.

(h) Only signs flier-size or smaller may be posted or otherwise left unattended on campus.

(i) Flier-size or smaller materials may not ever be placed, whether attended or unattended, on structures such as light poles, utility poles, street posts, trashcans, newspaper stands nor can they be placed on or in landscaping such as trees, shrubs or gardens/garden beds.

(i) Live animals are permitted in photographs used for campaign purposes, but may not be present at campaigning locations. Exceptions shall be granted for service animals.

(i) Reveille may not be used for campaigning in any manner and cannot be present at campaigning locations through intentional solicitation by a candidate.

(j) Paid social media ads cannot be displayed until the start of the general campaigning period.

Section III. Electronic Campaigning

(a) The Election Commission shall not regulate any activity that takes place over the Internet or other electronic media, such as telephone lines or electronic mail.

The following exceptions apply to this rule:

- (i) Any internet activity in which there is a monetary transaction, including, but not limited to, advertisement, hosting, or the purchase of products (physical or electronic) must be documented and expensed in accordance with the financial rules in these Regulations.
- (ii) Use of the Texas A&M University bulk mail system available through bulkmail.tamu.edu is in violation of university policy.
- (iii) Candidates may begin contacting organizations via email to request to speak at their meeting beginning two weeks prior to the mandatory candidates' meeting.
- (iv) Evidence found on the internet of physical campaign violations will be accepted by the Election Commission.
- (v) Videos created in support of a candidate shall be considered campaign materials and the contents within such materials may be subject to regulation. Equipment that is used in the production and creation of electronic media need not be expensed.

Article V. Violations

Section I. Compliance

- (a) Failure to comply with the aforementioned and subsequent regulations may result in a violation as determined by the Election Commission.

Section II. Reporting

- (a) A student who wishes to report an alleged violation of the Election Regulations may do so by filing a written account or online report of alleged violations with the Election Commission within twenty-four (24) hours of the alleged violation. The violation report can be found at the Graduate and Professional Student Government website.
- (b) Violations will not be accepted after 1:00 p.m. of the day that results are announced.
- (c) The Election Commissioner shall keep record of all reported violations against

candidates and the resulting decision to assess or not assess a fine in a document available to the public.

Section III. Tiered Violations

(a) Tier 1

(i) Major violations include, but are not limited to: proven offenses against local, state or federal law to any degree; sabotage of opposing campaigns; voting fraud; falsified documents (with proof included to show falsification, including finance reports); campaign ethics violations; obstruction of the free and fair nature of voting; and violations of the Aggie Honor Code.

(1) Voting fraud shall include but not be limited to voting using another student's credentials, physically selecting options on the ballot for another voter, or anything else deemed to be voting fraud by the Election Commissioner.

(2) Falsification of documents refers to the intentional and substantive corruption of documents that undermines the transparent nature of the election.

(3) Obstruction of the free and fair nature of voting shall include but not be limited to operating a polling location without the consent of the Election Commissioner; candidates and their staff asking students to vote in their presence, and/or coercing students to vote against their own volition.

(4) The Election Commission may determine what constitutes significant ethical violations based on judgment of common sense and reasonability, in accordance with the Election Commission's duties to uphold a free and fair election, to look after the safety of their fellow students, and to adhere to the standards of the Aggie CoreValues.

(b) Tier 2

(i) Minor offenses include, but are not limited to: pre-campaigning, finance violations, and offenses not included within the major violations criteria as

determined by the Election Commission and these regulations.

(c) Any violation found in the Common Violation Table shall be fined the amount therein associated with the first offense, scaled up for subsequent offenses thereafter.

Section IV. Fines

(a) Major violations shall be assessed by the entire Election Commission. Meetings shall be called at the discretion of the Election Commission to address potential major violations. During these meetings, the Election Commissioner shall direct the Election Commission to discuss the violations at hand, take into account all evidence presented, and vote on one (1) of two (2) reasonable actions:

- (i) A maximum fine of 15% of the candidate's allocated budget
- (ii) Disqualification

(b) Disqualification shall only be applied in cases where the violation can be confidently determined to undermine the free, fair, and safe nature of the election, or the candidate has committed an act which prevents them from maintaining qualification as a candidate within the current election.

- (i) The following acts prevent a candidate from maintaining qualification within a current election: failure to meet eligibility requirements, failure of themselves or their proxy to attend the mandatory candidates' meeting, failure to submit a signed finance form by the appropriate deadline, exceeding the defined budget limitations, and, if elected to the position being sought, failure to submit payment of all fines by the appropriate deadline.

(c) Decisions must be the result of a majority of the Election Commission members present. The Election Commissioner shall be a non-voting member unless they are required to achieve a majority. The Election Commissioner shall notify the candidate of the decision through the "Major Violation Report" within seventy-two (72) hours of the Election Commission meeting.

(i) Candidates who commit a minor campaign violation will be assessed one (1) warning for the respective violation and notified of this warning via email. This warning will be documented on the public report of submitted violations that can be found at the Graduate and Professional Student Government website. Any additional offenses of the same violation will be assessed as minor violations, warranting the appropriate fine amount.

(d) Minor violations shall be assessed within twenty-four (24) hours of the violation report by the Election Commissioner.

(i) Candidates filing under Student Body President Race shall be subject to a base \$75 fine following their first warning of the relevant offense. Each subsequent related offense shall result in an additional fine, with a \$15 increase to the amount of the last fine.

(e) The total amount of fines shall be deducted from the candidate's budget and one-half of the fines shall be paid by the candidate to the Election Commissioner.

(i) All such payments must be made within ten (10) days after the final day of voting.

(ii) Should a candidate fail to pay their fines, the candidate may not be appointed, selected, or elected to any office in the Graduate and Professional Student Government until such time as their fines are paid in full.

(1) If needed, a candidate can request an extension of fine payment from the Election Commissioner, it is at the discretion of the Election Commissioner to grant such extension. The Election Commissioner has twenty-four (24) hours from the time of the request to provide an approval or disapproval.

(2) Any elected candidate who fails to pay their fines within ten (10) days after the final day of voting, or extension deadline, shall be disqualified from taking office.

Common Violation Table

Violation	Fine
Live animal used for campaigning	Minor Violation
Unattended campaign materials	Minor Violation
Campaigning in unapproved locations	1st Offense - 5% of budget 2nd Offense - 10% of budget 3rd Offense - 15% of budget
Missing Mandatory Candidates' Meeting	Disqualification
Failure to submit Finance Form	Disqualification
Putting flyers in restricted area	Minor violation
Total lack of receipts or fair market value form to expense purchases	Disqualification
Less than 2 valid vendors on Fair Market Value Form	Minor violation

Section V. The Election Commission shall collect all fines in the Graduate and Professional Student Government Student Organization Financing Center account.

Article VI. Finance

Section I. General Expenditure

(a) Each candidate for any office shall be required to keep accurate, up-to-date records of all campaign receipts and expenditures.

(i) The term "expenditure" is defined as the fair market value or actual cost, depending on the appropriate circumstance, of all campaign

materials used or obtained by any candidate in their campaign and any fines incurred by the candidate. To be considered valid, a receipt must have all of the following qualities:

- (1) Vendor with contact information (website or phone number preferred)
- (2) Date of Purchase
- (3) Verification of amount being paid in full
- (4) Itemized list of purchases

(ii) Actual cost is defined as the cost as enumerated on an official sales receipt including cost of tax.

(iii) Fair market value is defined as the cost available locally to any given student within the Bryan/College Station area. Possible prices available over the internet to a student within Bryan/College Station are not considerable when determining fair market value unless approved by the Election Commissioner.

(1) Tax shall not be included in the fair market values assessed by the Election Commission, but it must be applied at a rate of 8.25% on the finance report.

(2) Items purchased over the internet which do not have fair market equivalents in the Bryan/College Station area must be expensed at cost, including any taxes paid.

(iv) The term "campaign materials" shall be defined by Article III Section III Subsection a.

(v) Shipping and handling costs need not be expensed for any item.

(vi) Resources specific to the position for which a candidate is seeking election, if they are an incumbent in that position or its relevant governing organization, must be expensed if used or worn by the candidate during campaigning in any way. This includes uniforms, polos, t-shirts, badges, nametags, mailing lists, and other resources that were provided to the candidate during their incumbency or association with the organization.

(b) Candidates must use the following system when determining the expensed cost of materials:

- (i) All campaign materials must be expensed at actual cost.
- (ii) Any purchases made over the internet from companies not based in Bryan/College Station are considered outside purchases and should be treated as if they were purchased outside Bryan/College Station.
- (iii) All donated materials are to be expensed at fair market value, regardless of quality.

(c) It is the responsibility of the candidate to assess a fair market value for any donated campaign materials or campaign materials used without any proof of payment. This shall be done by filling out the Fair Market Value Assessment Form provided by the Election Commissioner. Fair Market Values must be assessed using a minimum of two (2) vendors. If a candidate lists less than the required amount of acceptable vendors, the candidate shall receive a minor violation. This form shall serve as the receipt for donated items and must be included in the submitted finance report.

(d) Candidates must list the entire cost of each individual expense that results in campaign material that in any way suggests support for their candidacy. There shall be no prorating of costs to account for unused campaign items which were purchased.

(e) Budgets from two (2) or more candidates may not be combined in any way. Any campaign material bearing the name of more than one (1) candidate must be expensed in full at actual cost or fair market value, depending on the appropriate circumstances, by each candidate named.

(f) Receipts for such expenditures must be submitted by each candidate separately. For final expense reports, candidates may not submit photocopied receipts without the prior consent of the Election Commissioner.

- (i) In the case of campaign materials bearing the name of more than one candidate, one candidate must submit the original receipt and the additional candidates must submit photocopies.

- (g) No candidate shall be held responsible for any expense of an unused campaign item purchased before the mandatory candidates' meeting.
- (h) Candidates running in more than one (1) race in any one election cycle shall be identified as a separate candidate per race therefore submit an expense report for each race.

Section II. Budget

- (a) Any candidate who exceeds their allotted budget shall be disqualified.
- (b) All candidates filed under the Student Body President race will have a budget of \$500.

Section III. Campaign Reporting

- (a) Finance Reports are due the second to last day of voting at 5:00 p.m. to a location specified by the Election Commissioner. Candidates failing to comply shall be disqualified.
- (b) The Election Commission shall notify the candidates forty-eight (48) hours prior to the expense report deadline.
- (c) If no campaign spending has occurred, the candidate must submit a Null Expenditure Statement in place of a finance report.

Article VII. Auditing

Section I. Auditing

- (a) The Election Commission shall audit all expense reports to determine compliance with necessary and applicable regulations.
- (b) Items that have been used in campaigning in any way, or have been purchased with the intent to use in any way unless it is an unused campaign item purchased before the mandatory candidates' meeting, shall be considered necessary for expensing and such items shall be included in audit procedures.
- (c) Items to be expensed shall include, but not be limited to, items that fit the following criteria:

- (i) The item meets the description of campaign material as defined in Article III Section III Subsection a.
- (ii) The item cannot be accessed for free by the regular student.

Section II. Transparency

- (a) The Election Commission shall make all candidates' expense reports publicly available on the Graduate and Professional Student Government website before 12:00 p.m. on the last day of voting.
- (b) Inaccuracies or omissions suspected in campaign budgets may be reported to the Election Commission in the same way that violations are reported. The complainant must include material or photographic clear and convincing evidence of the error in order for it to be considered by the Election Commission.

Article VIII. Voting

Section I. General

- (a) Elections shall be conducted online using a secure and private method. Ballots shall be organized and marked in a manner designated by the Election Commission. Students may vote only once and only with their own Net ID and password. Duplicate ballots and those not complying with these requirements shall be voided.
- (b) Students voting fraudulently may be subject to sanctions by the Election Commission, the university, and state and federal law.
- (c) The Election Commission shall make every attempt to conduct voting in a way free from coercion or pressure. Those obstructing the free and fair nature of the voting process, by which voters may cast a ballot by free choice, are in violation of these regulations and the Aggie Honor Code.

Section II. Voter Qualifications

- (a) A voter must be an enrolled graduate and professional student at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas A&M University in Qatar, Texas A&M

University in Galveston, Bush School DC, Law School, Health Science Center, School of Dentistry or College of Pharmacy.

(b) A voter must have a valid Texas A&M University ID number for the current year.

(c) A voter must be enrolled under a classification of G, D, L, M, P, or V for the semester of the election; OR

(d) Any currently enrolled dual program student who has completed more than half of the graduate coursework required by the program and or a student who is starting their 5th academic and physical year at Texas A&M University will be able to vote; whichever academic scenario occurs first.

Section III. Ballots

(a) The Election Commission shall post the sample ballot for the purpose of correcting errors on or before the Friday following the mandatory candidates' meeting by 9:00 a.m.. If a candidate does not appeal any error on the sample ballot by 5:00 p.m. that day, they lose their right to appeal on this issue.

(b) The sample ballot shall not be used for any voting. It shall only be used for a candidate to verify that their name and caucus has been properly recorded for the election process, and for other administrative purposes as needed by the Election Commission.

(c) The Election Commission shall post the final sample ballot for any election at least four (4) class days prior to the election onto the Graduate and Professional Student Government website.

(d) Candidates who are disqualified at least seven (7) days prior to the start of voting may appeal that disqualification to the Graduate and Professional Student Government advisors immediately. The Election Commission shall remove all such disqualified candidates who fail to do so from the final sample ballot.

Candidates who are disqualified after that time shall not be removed from the ballot under any circumstances, and the disqualification shall not be publicized by the Election Commission until the announcement of unofficial results after voting has taken place. The Election Commission may privately notify any candidate of

the grounds of their disqualification immediately after that decision is reached by the Election Commission.

(i) Candidates may withdraw from the election at any time in writing via email to the Election Commissioner. Withdrawal from the election may not be rescinded by a candidate once submitted. The Election Commission may only remove a candidate from the ballot within seven (7) days prior to voting opening upon receiving an emailed request for withdrawal from the candidate. Candidates who withdrew will be marked as “withdrawn” in the final results and will be eliminated following the conclusion of voting.

(e) No phrases or slogans may be attached to a candidate’s name on the ballot. The name that will appear on the ballot. The name that will appear on the ballot must be the name for which the candidate is normally known in a professional or academic setting.

(f) An employee of the Division of Student Affairs shall maintain the online ballot.

Section IV. Election Dates

(a) Voting shall occur for 4 consecutive class days anytime between the last full week of March and first full week of April.

(b) Voting will begin at 8:00 a.m. on the first day and end at 12:00 p.m. on the last day.

(c) All election dates shall be announced via campus-wide email at least one (1) week before the start of filing and again on the day that filing is open.

Section V. Changes

(a) The Election Commissioner, in consultation with members of the Election Commission and GPSG Advisor(s), shall have the authority to amend the time and place of the election should unforeseen circumstances arise.

(b) Should the time and place of the election be amended, the Election Commissioner must notify the GPSG Senate and GPSG Governance board as well as all candidates of the decision and new time and place of the election.

(i) Revised dates will be posted to GPSG website and social media pages.

(ii) Circumstances for the amended election timeline detailed in an email to all candidates.

Section VI. Instant Runoff Voting

(a) Instant Runoff Voting is a method of voting in which voters rank candidates from most-preferred to least-preferred in the general election. Losing candidates are eliminated one by one in rounds, and ballots cast for them are reassigned to their voters's next choice, until the final number of winners is reached.

(i) The following definitions shall be ascribed to these terms in this subsection:

(1) Ballot: A ranking of any or all candidates cast by a voter in one race. During any given round, each ballot shall be counted as a vote for the candidate or candidates ranked highest on that ballot, who is neither disqualified nor eliminated.

(2) Round: Any count of ballots cast.

(3) Elimination: Occurs when a candidate is most-preferred by the fewest voters in a round. This is not the same as disqualification, but prevents a candidate from being counted in future rounds in that race.

(4) Exhausted Ballot: A ballot in which all candidates ranked are either disqualified or previously eliminated. Exhausted ballots shall not be counted in any given round. This will not occur on any voter's ballot if that voter assigns a ranking to all candidates in a race.