



SGA General Election Procedures Guide

I. Election Commissioner (s)

The Election Commissioners will be responsible for ensuring that each candidate governs themselves within the rules established within this guide and is responsible for ensuring that the entire process is executed fairly. The Commissioners will be selected after an interview conducted by two non-returning Council of Student Leaders (SGA) members and the advisor to the Council of Student Leaders. The positions are open to any full-time Winthrop student in good academic and judicial standing. The position must be filled by mid-February. The Commissioner will receive a \$200 stipend. The duties of the Election Commissioners include but are not limited to the following:

- Constructing and implementing the Elections Calendar alongside the advisor
- Constructing a plan for advertising and works with the necessary committees to carry out that plan
- Nominating the 2 non-SGA students that will serve on the Complaints Committee if one is required
- Facilitating the Interest Meetings and updating the presentation material
- Coordinating with the Associate VP for Information Technology to set up the electronic voting system
- Meeting with SGA Advisor weekly for updates
- Communicating with Candidates on subjects such as eligibility, procedure, etc....
- Moderating the Candidate Speech Forums

II. Announcements/Advertising

The Election Commissioner, with the assistance of the SGA public relations committee and other SGA members selected, will be responsible for advertising to the entire student body for the upcoming election cycle. At a minimum this should include:

- A. All-student email, electronic and paper signage, and announcements by the representatives of SGA. This should begin no later than the last full week of February and continue until the election is completed.
- B. The announcement should include the full calendar of the cycle, requirements, and expectations of potential candidates.

III. Eligibility

Each candidate for Student Body President and Vice President must go through a mandatory application process and meet the following requirements:

- A. Be a full-time student who has earned a minimum of 12 Winthrop credit hours
- B. Hold a minimum of 3.000 cumulative GPA
- C. Attend one interest meeting
- D. Have a running mate so that a candidate for Student Body President and a candidate for Student Body Vice President make up a ticket
- E. Submit all application materials received at the interest meeting which include a Candidate Release form, personal information, a resume, a platform statement and Leadership Portfolio
 - 1. The platform statement should discuss long and short-term goals for the Winthrop student body.
 - 2. Complete answers to questions on the application.
 - 3. Application materials must be submitted by each candidate by the date specified on the Election Calendar
- F. Not currently on disciplinary probation
- G. Ability to serve both fall and spring of the same academic year.

Candidates for SGA elected representative positions must go through a mandatory application process and meet the following requirements:

- A. Be a full-time student who has earned a minimum of 12 Winthrop credit hours
- B. Hold a minimum of 2.5 cumulative GPA
- C. Attend one interest meeting
- D. Submit all application materials received at the interest meeting which include a Candidate Release form, personal information, a resume, and application questions.
 - 1. Application materials must be submitted by each candidate by the date specified on the Election Calendar
- E. Must be in good standing (not on disciplinary probation or academic probation)
- F. Candidates for a representative role must match and maintain their status within that group or population (for example, the commuter representative must be a commuter student)

IV. Certification of Eligibility

Each candidate who returns all application materials by the specified date and time must be certified and approved to run. The certification process will go as follows:

- A. Application materials will be reviewed by the Election Commissioner and the Council's Advisor.
- B. Official Winthrop University transcripts will be reviewed by the SGA Advisor in order to verify the given GPA.

- C. The application materials will be posted on the SGA website, and made available in the SGA Office, so that students will be able to review each candidate's eligibility and goals for the student body.

V. Election Process

The student body election process will follow the election cycle calendar as communicated to SGA and will conclude no later than the third Friday of April. The ticket of candidates who obtain a majority (50%+1) of votes cast will be declared the winners of the election.

- A. There will be \$1000 allotted for candidates to use for campaigning purposes for the Student Body President and Vice President tickets only. This allotment will be divisible amongst each ticket with no ticket receiving more than \$200. Candidates will not be permitted to spend additional funds and must submit receipts for every purchase made in order to be eligible for reimbursement and to verify that the limit was not exceeded.

1. No candidate shall pool campaign expenses with another candidate, other than the running mate, in an effort to achieve a greater sum of expenditures than they are allotted individually.
2. Campaign contributions of any kind, including goods and services, are not acceptable or permissible.
3. The Election Commissioner will verify all expenses before notifying the winner.
4. In the event that expenses cannot be verified, the Complaint Committee will review the materials and decide as to whether the ticket should be disqualified.

- B. Candidates for elected representative positions

1. There will be no SGA campaign funds designated for general elected representative positions. Candidates are permitted to spend personal funds up to \$50.

- C. Campaigning will begin 10 days before the ballot opens and end after the voting closes. Voting lasts 3 days and begins and ends at midnight according to the approved election calendar.

1. All campaign literature to be posted must abide by the Winthrop University Posting Policy
 - a. Failure to follow the Posting Policy shall result in their removal and possibly a candidate's disqualification.
 - b. Candidates are encouraged to pursue "green" means of campaigning, including but not limited to text blasts, e-mails, Facebook, etc.
2. During the campaigning cycle, social gatherings and tabling must be held on campus and a valid space request submitted.
3. Candidates will be required to attend the candidate forum hosted by SGA.
4. Candidates shall not violate the Winthrop University Student Code of Conduct and will be expected to uphold the Dedication for Excellence.
5. All questions not outlined within these guidelines will be brought to the attention of the Election Commissioner before action is taken.

- D. Members of SGA must remain an unbiased group in order to promote the campaign as a whole and not only promote one ticket.
 - 1. An exception is granted for any member of the Council who is running for a respective position themselves.

VI. Voting

Voting will take place using a virtual voting system prepared by the Winthrop University Office of Computing and Information Technology. Students may vote at any time during the advertised voting window.

- A. There shall be no campaigning inside of Ida Jane Dacus Library, in any Winthrop computer lab, or in any academic classes in order to avoid disrupting the learning environment.
 - 1. Campaigning in Residence Halls will be up to the discretion of the respective Residential Success Coordinator(s) and/or the Office of Residence Life.
- B. Candidates may not coordinate the use of personal computers, iPads, cell phones, or any other personal devices as polling sites.
 - 1. This includes having QR codes displayed on any of the candidates' devices.
- C. For Student Body President & Vice President – a ticket shall be declared the winner of the election by meeting the following criteria:
 - 1. A ticket, containing a Student Body Presidential and Vice Presidential candidate, must receive a majority plus one of the votes cast.
 - 2. The Vice President for Student Affairs and the SGA Advisor shall work with the Office of Computing and Information Technology (IT) to certify the election results once the polls have closed.
 - 3. Election results, including the number of votes that each ticket receives, shall be posted online, and any petitions shall remain on file for one month in the event of a contestation.
- D. For individual contests for elected representative positions, a winner shall be declared by meeting the following criteria:
 - 1. The individual candidate must receive a majority plus one of the votes cast for that position.
 - 2. The Vice President for Student Affairs and the SGA Advisor shall work with the Office of Computing and Information Technology (IT) to certify the election results once the polls have closed.
 - 3. Election results, including the number of votes that each ticket receives, shall be posted online, and any petitions shall remain on file for one month in the event of a contestation.
 - 4.

VII. Contestations

- A. Any candidate may contest the election by submitting to the SGA Advisor a written statement requesting an investigation and specifying alleged irregularities. The written statement must be submitted within 36 hours following the closure of voting. The complaint will be reviewed by the Election Complaints Committee.

1. The Election Complaints Committee will consist of the SGA Advisor, Faculty Advisor to the Council of Student Leaders, the Election Commissioner, and two students not currently serving on the Council.
 2. The two non-Council members will be nominated by the Election Commissioner and approved by the Council of Student Leaders.
 3. Written statements should include as much information regarding alleged election misconduct or alleged irregularities as possible. This may include, but is not limited to, time, date, location, witnesses, and/or quantities of allegations brought up.
 4. It is the responsibility of the Complaints Committee to review allegations brought against a ticket.
- B. If insufficient evidence exists, the election will stand.
- C. All records of contested elections shall be kept on file in the Office of Student Activities. Complaint records shall not become a part of the involved parties' permanent records, unless the party is guilty of violating the Student Code of Conduct.

VIII. Run Off Elections

- A. In case no ticket receives 50% plus one vote, a run-off between the two tickets receiving the most votes will be held.
- B. The new election will allow the weekend and two additional days for campaigning following the notification of the candidates.
- C. Each President/Vice President ticket will be allotted an additional \$50 for campaigning purposes.
1. The same certification criteria and stipulations regarding money will apply.
- D. The winning ticket will still need 50% plus one of the votes cast to be declared the winner.

Appendix I

Write-In Candidates

If students wish to become candidates for Student Body President and Vice President after the application deadline, they may do so as write-in candidates

- A. To qualify, a ticket of candidates must submit all of the application materials specified above along with a petition signed by a minimum of 200 current Winthrop students on the given form.
 - 1. The petition of 200 current Winthrop students will be used to certify any two candidates wishing to run together as a ticket.
- B. Documentation should be submitted to the Election Commissioner no later than 5pm one week before campaigning begins.
- C. Before potential candidates are added to the ballot, signatures must be confirmed as valid. Upon confirmation, all documents submitted will be posted to the SGA website.
- D. If approved, the write-in ticket will be eligible for the same \$200 to be used for campaigning purposes but will not receive any more than any of the other tickets.
- E. Write-in candidates may campaign only after they have been approved and notified.

Appendix II

Document Review

This document will be reviewed by The Election Commissioner and the Council Advisor annually. Any substantial changes will be brought to and approved by The Council.