



Students' Representative Council

OPERATING POLICIES

Section 1: Governance and Elections

ELECTIONS POLICY

I. General:

- a. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with, and is subject to, the provisions of the General and Specific Bylaws relating to elections.
- b. This Policy is not alterable by the BSR from the beginning of a nomination period until the posting of the final results of that election.
- c. If there is an SRC Secretary General, any references to the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) in this Policy shall be deemed to refer to the Secretary General.
- d. A temporary exception to alter this Policy can only be made by the Elections Appeals Committee (EAC) upon appeal by the CRO and/or Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) only if it is determined that the integrity of the SRC, and its election process, is deemed to be at risk. An exception must be approved by the EAC via majority vote.
- e. Upon completion of the election where conflicts occurred, the EAC shall make recommendations to the BSR in order to safeguard against similar cases in the future.
- f. The CRO may delegate the tasks listed in this policy to the DRO. In that event, or in the event of the absence of the CRO, any references to the CRO shall apply to the DRO.

2. Definitions and Rules:

- a. "Campaigning" is defined as any activity that, in and of itself, serves to publicize or promote an individual, organization, or team's candidacy in an SRC election or referendum. Campaigning includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. use of booked rooms for public gatherings, public appearance;
 - ii. issue of policy statements;
 - iii. distribution of promotional materials or candidate information;
 - iv. paid advertising in campus media;
 - v. online material including social media, websites, etc.
- b. Word of mouth shall not be defined as campaigning unless the Candidate or Party is implicitly or explicitly soliciting a vote.
- c. "Campaign materials" are defined as any items that, in and of themselves, publicize or promote an individual's or organization's position.
- d. "Major offences" include, but are not limited to:
 - i. actively campaigning around voting booths on Election Day as set up by the CRO and/or DRO;
 - ii. repetition of minor offences;
 - iii. slander (verbal defamation of character not based on proven fact);
 - iv. libel (written defamation of character not based on proven fact);
 - v. abuse of Candidate's position; and
 - vi. use of Official Mailing Lists of the BUSRC and Bishop's University.
- e. "Minor offences" include, but are not limited to:
 - i. promotional material violations;
 - ii. campaigning violations;
 - iii. distribution of unapproved campaign material.
- f. "Official Mailing Lists" shall, in addition to the university mailing lists (notices@lists.ubishops.ca and students@lists.ubishops.ca or their successors), also include the SRC website (busrc.com), the Bishop's University website (ubishops.ca), SRC Facebook groups or any other university information databases

3. Election Dates for the various elections:

- a. The CRO shall notify the BSR as soon as is practicable of the proposed schedule for SRC referenda and elections to held within an academic year.

- b. Election of the elected positions on the Executive Council shall normally be held annually in either February. (“Executive Elections”)
 - c. The election period of all other elected members of the BSR is to be held annually, following the election period of the Executive Council, normally in March. (“General Elections”)
 - d. The General Councillors, the On-Campus Student Representative and First-Year Student Representative, as well as any necessary byelections, shall be elected no later than the final business day in September. (“Fall Elections”)
4. General Rules of the Election:
- a. At the discretion of the CRO, in consultation with the DRO, a warning will be imposed on candidates for behaviour in violation of election bylaw and policies, as defined by the Returning Officers and the Constitution of the SRC.
 - b. A candidate receiving a second warning will be disqualified and barred from running for any position in the current election.
 - c. Minor offences will result in a candidate incurring a single warning and a major offence will result in a candidate’s immediate disqualification.
 - d. Slanderous remarks and libelous content about any candidate will not be tolerated. It is expected that all candidates will run a positive campaign.
 - e. The official campaign period is subsidized, and only materials produced during this period will be reimbursed, there is a maximum subsidy of \$30, all receipts must be provided to the CRO.
 - f. It shall be the responsibility of the CRO, in consultation with the Manager of Communications and Marketing, to advertise upcoming elections and referenda including the positions available, deadlines for nomination and other pertinent information in campus media, well in advance of any deadlines, specifically outlining the following:
 - i. the positions that may be contested, and/or the referenda questions on the ballot;
 - ii. the dates and times of the nomination period;
 - iii. where elections or referenda material can be obtained and deposited; and
 - iv. the dates of the vote.
 - g. All candidates shall refrain from endorsing, supporting, or campaigning on behalf of another candidate running for a different position.
 - h. No SRC employees shall display campaign materials while fulfilling their duties as an employee.
 - i. Each candidate will be required to remove all campaign material produced on their behalf, for the purposes of the election, near physical voting stations by 8:00 p.m. before the first day of voting.
 - j. No party may try to influence voters in the vicinity of the polling stations.
 - k. If, in the opinion of the EAC, a position conveys an unfair advantage to the candidate, or establishes/implies a conflict of interest, a candidate who holds an SRC position may be required to assume altered responsibilities or take a leave of absence. All leaves of absence shall last for the duration of the campaign period.
 - l. BSR council officers (the Chair and Recording Secretary) and the Manager of Communication and Marketing shall remain neutral at all times. They may not publicly support any individual candidate while fulfilling their duties unless they themselves are a candidate in the election, in which case such restriction shall apply to anyone performing the duties of said position during the election period.
 - m. SRC offices, email addresses and other office resources shall not be used for any purpose relating to an individual campaign.

- n. Candidates shall not misrepresent the character or policies of other candidates, nor shall they interfere in any manner with the campaign materials of other candidates, nor make statements that they know are untrue.
5. The responsibility of the CRO and DRO to the candidates shall be:
- a. ensure that the posters follow the guidelines set out in the Poster Policy
 - b. determine where posters may be placed and the numbers of posters used during an election campaign;
 - c. set guidelines for hand-billing, rallies and any other forms of campaigning, including where on campus campaigning may take place;
 - d. ensure that no posters or campaign materials are in the vicinity of the polling station, as defined by the CRO;
 - e. ensure that no party in the vicinity of the polling station seeks to influence eligible voters by any means, including, but not limited to:
 - i. distributing campaign literature;
 - ii. offering unsolicited opinion or advice relating to any particular candidate or candidates, by any means;
 - iii. ensure that only eligible students vote;
 - iv. have complete charge over the electoral software.
 - f. publish by the first day of the campaign period any rules pertaining to the election period not already established by this policy;
 - g. setting the election dates, campaigning dates and the date for Speakers' Night and providing candidates with a schedule.
6. Nominations and Candidate Eligibility
- a. The nomination period is purely for fulfilling the requirements for the nomination; no campaigning shall occur during the nomination period.
 - b. Nomination forms shall contain the following information:
 - i. the position(s) contested;
 - ii. a Nomination Form signature sheet;
 - iii. the number of signatures required;
 - iv. any other information that may be deemed pertinent.
 - c. If paper nominations forms are used, they shall be made available in or near the SRC offices at the start of the nomination period, and a designated drop-off point will be indicated. The CRO shall also send an electronic version of the nomination form to all students and/or cause it to be posted on the SRC website.
 - d. If an electronic nomination form is used, the method for accessing the form shall be communicated to all students at the start of the nomination period, and the form shall include the method of submission.
 - e. Nomination forms shall include the candidate's name (and how they wish to be referred to on the ballot) and the position they are running for and must list each nominator's name, Bishop's email, and signature. For a signature to be valid, all fields must be completed correctly according to the student list provided to the CRO by the University administration.
 - f. Each candidate shall be nominated as follows:
 - i. for candidates for any position on the Executive Cabinet, at least twenty (20) signatures of students in good standing,
 - ii. for all other candidates, at least two (2) signatures of students in good standing from their respective constituencies. Constituencies are as defined in the bylaw establishing each position.

- g. No student may nominate more candidates than the number of positions to be filled. (i.e. a student may only nominate one Presidential candidate, but may nominate up to two¹ General Councillor candidates)
- h. No candidate may run for more than one BSR position during the same election.
- i. All candidates running for positions on the BSR must provide a waiver to the CRO, which allows them to determine whether they are in good academic standing at the University. Upon submission of the form, the CRO will confirm that the student is in good academic standing.
- j. Candidates shall take a leave of absence during the campaign period from all extracurricular activities that, in the judgement of the CRO convey unfair advantage, or establish or imply a conflict of interest.
- k. If there is a problem with a nomination, the CRO will return the nomination as soon as possible to the candidate for them to correct. A candidate must resolve any issues with nominations prior to the beginning of the campaign period.
- l. Individuals holding SRC salaried positions shall not be prevented from running for any elected office. However, insofar as this is likely to result in a conflict of time and/or interest, the SRC shall protect the best interests of the organization by applying the following stipulations:
 - i. the individual shall announce their intention to run in an election as early as possible;
 - ii. where necessary, the individual shall ensure that their responsibilities will be adequately covered during the election period without inflicting excessive stress or workload on others;
 - iii. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Executive Council to ensure that responsibilities are adequately met during an election period;
- m. The CRO shall organize a mandatory all-candidates meeting before the beginning of the campaign.
 - i. At the meeting, candidates shall be given information related to the campaign, including but not limited to, the following:
 - 1. SRC Elections Policy;
 - 2. relevant sections of the SRC governing documents;
 - 3. SRC election officials contact information;
 - 4. a campaign expense form and information on reimbursement procedures.
 - ii. Should a candidate miss the all-candidates meeting, the EAC may permit them to schedule a meeting with the CRO or DRO to review the material covered in the meeting.
 - iii. If, for whatever reason, the date, time or location is not mentioned in the 'Nominations Package' or if, for whatever reason, the date, time or location of the All-Candidates Meeting must be changed, all candidates must be notified of the All-Candidates Meeting at least 72 hours in advance.
 - iv. The CRO may, at their discretion, elect to conduct the All-Candidates Meeting virtually. Other than at the Executive Elections, the CRO may elect to forgo the meeting in favour of sending the relevant information by email.
- n. At the close of nominations, should there be any position for which no nominations have been received; the CRO may re-open nominations for a period of up to 48 hours for that position only.²

¹ Changed from 4 to 2 to accurately reflect composition of BSR Membership on January 30, 2023

² Subsection (l) added on Feb. 23, 2020.

- i. After this nomination period has expired, the election for that position shall proceed according to the provisions of this policy, although the campaign period will be reduced accordingly.
 - ii. The lack of candidates for a position shall not affect the timing of the elections for other positions.
- 7. Social Media and Online Campaigning:
 - a. After nominations have closed, candidates will have at least one week to campaign.
 - b. Campaigning shall not commence until the beginning of the campaign period.
 - c. All campaign materials and promotions are subject to the SRC Elections Policies and Procedures and to the approval of the CRO.
 - i. All posters must be stamped with the SRC elections stamp to indicate approval.
 - d. Use of the Internet as a campaign tool is permitted, however no campaign material may be distributed using Bishop's webmail or any social media page identified as "within Bishop's University." The following restrictions shall apply:
 - i. All websites and social media accounts must be approved by the CRO prior to posting. All updates shall be closely monitored by the CRO;
 - ii. Candidates and groups are permitted to use social media platforms, as determined by the CRO, so long as the information presented on the platform does not violate the Bishop's University Code of Student Conduct;³
 - iii. The CRO must have access to all candidate(s) election related social media platforms;⁴
 - iv. Opportunities to use SRC media platforms may be granted under terms determined by the CRO. Any such opportunity shall be accorded to each candidate in a campaign on an equal basis. Other than as indicated in the paragraph, the use of official SRC media for campaigning is prohibited.
 - e. Candidates' conduct online shall be adjudicated in the same manner as if it was done offline.
- 8. Election Posters
 - a. Campaign posters shall be no larger than 11 inches by 17 inches.
 - b. There shall be an overall limit of 50 posters approved per candidate/referendum side and must be stamped with an SRC election stamp. No more than 25 posters may be on display at one time.
 - c. Should a campaign poster be torn down, the CRO may use their discretion to approve a new poster to replace it, so long as (b) remains adhered to.
 - d. Posters may not be affixed to painted areas, exposed bricks, doors, or glass. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that campaigning conforms to individual building policy.
 - e. Candidates must not remove or cover another candidate's posters and no candidate may damage another candidate's posters.
 - f. With the exception of posters on a resident's door, posters must be taken down within 24 hours of the end of voting.
 - g. Posters in Residence require an additional stamp, which is administered by the staff of the Paterson front desk. However, a resident may put a poster on their personal residence door without a stamp.
 - h. All campaigning in Residence must conform to Residence policies.
 - i. Candidates must book all table space for use during the campaign period through the CRO.

³ Title of university policy corrected by BSR on January 30, 2023

⁴ Section removed by BSR on January 30, 2023

9. Voting

- a. Polls shall be accessible through an online voting system during the voting period.
- b. Students shall receive access to this system via information sent to their Bishop's email account when the vote opens.
- c. Voting will occur over a 48 hour period from 12:01 AM eastern time on the first day to 11:59 PM on the second day. Voting days shall adhere to the following:
 - i. must be on university business days and cannot take place on days when classes are not in session;
 - ii. Any changes in polling days, as ordered by the CRO/DCRO, shall be made known at least twenty-four (24) hours before the time normally scheduled for the opening of polls.
- d. The CRO shall prepare the online ballot for the Election following the procedures and deadlines in accordance with the online voting system.
- e. The electronic ballot shall be formatted, in general, as follows:
 - i. The ballot shall be divided into separate sections for distinct categories of questions being asked of the voter;
 - ii. The ballot shall list the Candidates for the respective position;
 - iii. Candidates shall appear on the ballot in random order and the names that appear on the ballot shall be copied from the Nomination Forms. Any questions regarding how a candidate's name is shown on the ballot shall be determined by the CRO;
 - iv. Candidates will have a photo of them next to their name, to be taken by election officials at the all-candidates meeting. In the event that an in-person All-Candidates Meeting is not held, the CRO shall set the parameters for the submission of photos by candidates;
 - v. A statement / platform, submitted by the candidate and not to exceed 200 words, will be showed automatically next to the candidate's photo and name. Bios must be submitted to the DRO seventy-two (72) hours prior to the opening of the polls;
 - vi. The ballot shall state any referendum questions according to the regulations outlined in this policy;
 - vii. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- f. A candidate for a position for which they are the only candidate, shall be subject to ratification by the eligible voters.
 - i. This ratification shall consist of a "yes/no" vote and the candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast in order to be ratified.
 - ii. Voters must choose between the two options, or the ballot will be declared spoiled
 - iii. If a candidate is not ratified, the position will be deemed vacant, and will be filled according to the relevant provisions of the Specific Bylaws.
- g. If there are less than or equal to the number of candidates than positions available for multi-member positions, then each candidate shall individually be subject to ratification by the eligible voters, as per the regulations set out in this policy.
- h. If three or more candidates contest a single member position, the ballot and counting procedures shall be designed to allow voters to abstain from voting for the candidates, or rank candidates in order from highest preference to lowest preference in the following fashion:
 - i. 1 shall be accepted as the mark for the voter's highest preference.
 - ii. 2 shall be accepted as the mark for the second highest preference.
 - iii. This pattern shall continue in accordance with the number of candidates.

10. Counting

- a. The counting procedures will be as follows, through the process of instant runoff voting (IRV):
 - i. Votes shall be counted according to the highest preference marked on a ballot. If a candidate receives a majority of the first preferences cast, they shall be declared the winner.
 - ii. If no candidate receives a majority of first preferences, then a second round of counting shall occur.
 - iii. The candidate with the fewest number of first preferences will be eliminated, and each ballot counted for the candidate shall be counted for the candidate next in the order of the voter's preference.
 - iv. If two or more candidates tie for the least number of first preferences in the first round of counting, then they shall both be eliminated – provided that at least one candidate remains - and their ballots redistributed according to their second preferences.
 - v. If two or more candidates tie for the lowest number of high preferences being considered in a second or subsequent counting round, then the candidate that had the fewest first preferences will be eliminated.
 - vi. The procedure from (ii) to (v) shall be repeated until one candidate achieves a simple majority of the ballots cast, at which point this candidate shall be declared the winner.
 - vii. Voters are not required to rank all candidates. If, after the elimination of a candidate, a ballot has no further preferences remaining, the ballot is considered “exhausted” and will be excluded from any subsequent rounds of counting. However, that ballot shall be counted in determining the validity of an election.
- b. If the number of candidates exceed the number of seats available in a multi-member position, the ballot and counting procedures shall be designed to allow voters to abstain from voting for the candidates, or rank candidates in order from highest preference to lowest preference in the following fashion:
 - i. 1 shall be accepted as the mark for highest preference.
 - ii. 2 shall be accepted as the mark for next highest preference.
 - iii. This pattern shall continue in accordance with the number of candidates.
- c. The counting procedures will be as follows, through the process of Single Transferable Vote (STV):
 - i. The total number of valid votes is then found and the quota calculated. Any candidates who have at least a quota of first preference votes are deemed elected at this stage.
 - ii. Each subsequent stage of the count is concerned either with the transfer of surplus votes of a candidate whose vote exceeds the quota, or with the exclusion of one or more candidates with the fewest votes.
 - iii. This procedure continues until either sufficient candidates have reached the quota to fill all the seats, or there is the same number of candidates left as unfilled seats.
- d. The following general provisions shall apply
 - i. Each elector shall have as many votes as there are positions for which they are eligible to vote;
 - ii. No elector shall cast more than one ballot for each position;
 - iii. Double majors may vote for Senators in both divisions, Graduate Students may vote only for the Graduate Student Senator;
 - iv. No write-in candidates shall be accepted on any ballot;

- v. Ballots not conforming to these regulations shall be declared spoiled. The CRO and DRO will act as the judges of all spoiled ballots.
- vi. In the event of a tie, a coin toss or drawing of lots conducted by the CRO shall determine the winner.
- e. For a given election to be valid, a minimum of 10% of all members of the SRC must cast ballots. The minimum number shall be determined by dividing the total number of students who cast ballots by the total number of students eligible to vote
- f. Blank ballots shall not count as a vote for or against a candidate or referendum question but shall be included in voter turnout.

11. Results:

- a. The CRO shall only publicly announce the election results after each candidate or group has been informed. The SRC membership must be informed as soon as practicable after the closing of the polls.
- b. Such results will include the vote totals received by each candidates or, in the case of a ratification vote, the number of yes and no votes the candidate received.
- c. Any SRC member requesting clarification about the election results must do so by submitting a formal written request to the CRO within 48 hours of the release of the results.
- d. The CRO shall compile a recording of the results of the election to be made available to the BSR and to be published on the SRC website.

12. Policies Specific to Referenda:

- a. The placement of questions on the ballot shall be subject to the following general policy on referenda though each type of question may have additional stipulations or requirements.
- b. Referenda shall be held with the purpose of asking the following types of questions:
 - i. To establish, alter or continue student activity fees;
 - ii. Binding non-fee related questions.
- c. To have a student fee question placed on the ballot, the campaign organization shall be required to complete the following:
 - i. Submission of the question to be included on the referendum ballot in accordance with the SRC election policy
 - ii. Submission of a written description of the group or organization seeking the fee and the specific purpose(s) for which the fee revenue will be used. This description shall not exceed 300 words.
- d. To have a non-fee related referendum question placed on the ballot, an SRC member must submit to the CRO or chair of the BSR:
 - i. proof that the validator is a current SA member;
 - ii. the exact wording of the question;
 - iii. contact information for the campaign organization;
 - iv. a 200 word statement in support of the position.
- e. Non-fee related referendum questions shall be indicated on the ballot and it shall be made clear on the ballot that the question is binding.
- f. Referenda questions require BSR approval to be placed on the ballot.
- g. the BSR shall not have the authority to reject or fundamentally change the substance of a non-fee related referendum question. Exemptions can be made for the following reasons:
 - i. the question itself constitutes, or otherwise suggests, or endorses a violation of the mission or operating statement of the SRC;
 - ii. a violation of law;
 - iii. a violation of contractual, financial or other obligations undertaken by the SRC;

- iv. pose a clear, well-defined and significant threat to the best interests of the SRC and the welfare of the Bishop's University student body; or
 - v. should the BSR believe that the referendum is not in the best interest of the SA.
 - h. Referenda initiated by a petition of ten per cent (10%) of the members in good standing of the SRC are not subject to BSR approval.
 - i. A petition of ten per cent (10%) of the members in good standing of the Students' Association can override a BSR decision of not allowing an item go to referendum.
 - i. The CRO shall have the authority to remove or amend misleading statements or extraneous promotional content; correct errors of fact; and edit technical errors of spelling and grammar.
 - j. Equal opportunity in regards to social media, online campaigning and e-mails shall be given to parties of the 'yes' and 'no' campaign, including, but not limited to, the SRC's social media platforms.
 - k. Participation in referendum campaigns by non-members shall be strongly discouraged, in order to ensure referendum issues are decided by the Bishop's student community in an environment free from external influence.
 - i. External participation is permitted only at the CRO's discretion, provided that all actions of the external organization adheres to the Election Policies.
 - l. Each ballot shall include the following:
 - i. The exact wording of the referendum question as approved by the BSR which must include:
 - 1. date of implementation,
 - 2. specific information as to which members it applies to,
 - 3. any associated costs and inflationary costs,
 - 4. how the fee is to be applied,
 - 5. any applicable information specifically regarding former referendum questions of a similar nature,
 - ii. the words "Yes" and "No" with boxes accompanying them clearly,
 - iii. the option to abstain.
 - m. Student fee questions shall take the following formats:
 - i. There shall be a standard format for any question asking for a fee increase or decrease. The format is: "*Do you agree to an increase/decrease in the _____ fee (mandatory fee/subject to individual opt-out) from \$__ to \$__, an increase/decrease of \$__?*" and shall be preceded by a preamble of up to 200 words explaining the question in a neutral manner.
 - ii. There will be a standard question for the establishment of a student interest fee. The format is: "*Do you agree to the establishment of a \$__ fee (mandatory fee/subject to individual opt-out) to support the _____?*" and shall be preceded by a preamble of up to 200 words explaining the question in a neutral manner.
 - n. Non-fee related questions shall begin with "Do you agree that..." and shall be preceded by a preamble of up to 200 words explaining the question in a neutral manner.
 - o. Any ballot that is spoiled or rejected, including a blank ballot and abstentions, shall not be considered in the total number of ballots cast.
 - p. Where multiple questions appear on a ballot, each question shall be considered as a separate ballot.
- q. Disqualification of a question due to election violations may entail the removal of the question from the ballot or a decision to not count/publish the vote.