

**ASSINIBOINE**  
**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**



**ELECTION POLICY**

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## 1. GENERAL

### 1.1 Definitions

In this policy, unless the context requires otherwise:

- (a) “ACCSA” means the Assiniboine Community College Students’ Association;
- (b) “Associate Members” means all Members based on all campuses except Victoria Avenue East, Adult Collegiate and North Hill;
- (c) “By-election” means any election where the Members have voting rights that is not the General Election or held at the Annual General Meeting;
- (d) “By-laws” means the by-laws of the ACCSA;
- (e) “Chair” means the Chair of the SAC;

- (f) “College” means the Assiniboine Community College;
- (g) “Committee” means a committee of the SAC;
- (h) “Days” means calendar days;
- (i) “Employee” means an individual hired by the ACCSA;
- (j) “Executive” means the President or Vice Presidents of the ACCSA;
- (k) “Full Members” means all Members based on the Victoria Avenue East, Adult Collegiate and North Hill campuses;
- (l) “Full time” means those students as defined by the College;
- (m) “G.P.A.” means Grade Point Average;
- (n) “General Election” means the principal elections held by the ACCSA in which the Members elect SAC members;
- (o) “General Manager” means the Employee hired by and reporting to the SAC to manage the office and staff members of the ACCSA;
- (p) “Member” means an individual who is admitted as a ACCSA Member according to the criteria as set out in the By-laws;
- (q) “Part time” means those students as defined by the College;
- (r) “President” means the President of the ACCSA;
- (s) “Referendum” means a general vote of the Members on a single question referred to them by the SAC for a direct decision;
- (t) “SAC” means the Students’ Administrative Council of the ACCSA;
- (u) “Simple majority” means a vote supported by fifty (50) percent plus one of those voting; and
- (v) “Vice President” means a Vice President of the ACCSA.

## 1.2 Gender and Case

- (a) Words importing the singular number include the plural and vice versa; and
- (b) Words importing gender include all genders;

### 1.3 Computation of Time

Where a given number of days' notice is required to be given, the day of posting of the notice shall not, unless it is otherwise provided, be counted in such number of days.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### 2.1 Purpose of the Elections Policy

This policy exists to outline the procedures that apply to all ACCSA General Elections, By-elections and Referenda, ensuring the fair and unbiased administration of these events.

### 2.2 Policy Amendment

The SAC shall conduct an annual review of this policy. Amendments may be proposed and shall be passed by a Simple majority vote of the SAC. Amendments shall not be retroactive (unless otherwise required by law) and shall take effect immediately.

## 3. ELECTION OFFICIALS

### 3.1 Qualifications

All election officials:

- (a) Must not be involved as a candidate or on a campaign team in any election which they administer; and
- (b) Must be objective and unbiased in fulfilling their duties.

### 3.2 Election Chair

The General Manager or designate Employee shall serve as the head administrator of ACCSA elections. The Election Chair shall:

- (a) Determine the dates of the nomination, campaign and voting periods;
- (b) Determine the elected positions to be contested, as set out in the By-laws;
- (c) Set and supervise the recruitment plan for nominees;
- (d) Prepare nomination packages;
- (e) Check the status of each candidate's G.P.A. with the College Registrar's Office;
- (f) Plan and conduct the election-related meetings;
- (g) Ensure that all candidates abide by the election policy during the nomination, campaign and voting periods;
- (h) Approve of all campaign materials;
- (i) Discipline all candidates found guilty of violating election policy;
- (j) Collect and approve of campaign expenses;
- (k) Obtain the voters list from the College Registrar or designate;

- (l) Consult with the body that runs the online voting system to ensure that the most up-to-date security measures are in place to protect the integrity of the online voting system;
- (m) Test the online voting system;
- (n) Ensure the proper set-up, staffing, resourcing, functioning and closing of polling stations;
- (o) Ensure the integrity of the vote counting and tallying process;
- (p) Announce final elections results;
- (q) Submit information and evidence in the event of a candidate disputing the validity of the election process and launching an appeal;
- (r) Destroy the ballots upon the finalization of elections results;
- (s) Present a post-election report to the SAC, outlining key lessons and recommendations for future elections; and
- (t) Fulfill any other relevant duties.

### 3.3 Election Assistant

The President (or designate in the event that the President is contesting in the election) shall serve as the Election Assistant. The Election Assistant shall:

- (a) Assume the role of Election Chair during any absences or vacancies;
- (b) Recruit, schedule and train the required number of poll clerks;
- (c) Ensure that polling stations are adequately supplied with all necessary materials;
- (d) Assist poll clerks in their duties where necessary;
- (e) Promote the election to Members; and
- (f) Fulfill any other relevant duties as determined by the Election Chair.

### 3.5 Polling Clerks

The Election Assistant shall recruit the required number of polling clerks to staff polling stations during the voting period. Polling clerks shall:

- (a) Supervise voting activities at their designated polling stations;
- (b) In an unbiased manner, invite Members to cast their vote;
- (c) Ensure that students wishing to vote meet the eligibility requirements before issuing a voting ballot; and
- (d) Fulfill any other relevant duties as determined by the Election Chair or Election Assistant.

## 4. CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY

### 4.1 General Eligibility

Any Full Member may be nominated to run for a SAC position, except:

- (a) Any Member who has been removed from the SAC within the preceding twelve (12) months;
- (b) Any Member who has previously served two (2) consecutive election terms in SAC;
- (c) Any Member who has previously lost a 'Yes/No' vote and is again running uncontested for the same position they lost;
- (d) Any Member who does not intent to remain in the SAC position, if elected, for the entirety of the term of office;
- (e) Any Member who has been found to have violated the ACCSA or College code of conduct;
- (f) Any Member with a G.P.A. below 2.5;
- (g) Any Member who has previously filed for bankruptcy;
- (h) Any Member below eighteen (18) years of age on the first day of voting for the election in which they are running; and
- (i) Any Member who holds an official position within an external student association not sanctioned by the ACCSA.

### 4.2 Academic Representatives

In addition to section 4.01, Members may only run for a position for the division in which they are enrolled in as a student.

### 4.3 ACCAC

In addition to section 4.01, the student representative from the ACCAC must be a Full time student registered in the current academic year of ACCAC.

# 5. NOMINATION

## 5.1 Pre-Nomination

- (a) At least ten (10) days prior to the nomination period, the SAC shall review and approve the election policy; and
- (b) Prior to the nomination period, the Election Chair shall publicize the following election information on the ACCSA website, in the student paper and through all other appropriate channels:
  - 1. The election calendar;
  - 2. Contested positions;
  - 3. Nomination requirements; and
  - 4. The election policy.

## 5.2 Nomination Period

- (a) The nomination period for the SAC Executive General Election shall run for a minimum of five (5) consecutive business days during the month of January, February or March;
- (b) The nomination period for the SAC non-Executive General Election shall run for a minimum of five (5) consecutive business days during the month of September; and
- (c) The nomination period for By-elections shall run for a minimum of five (5) consecutive business days.

## 5.3 Nomination Packages

Nomination packages shall be available for download on the ACCSA website or pick up at the ACCSA head office prior to the start of the nomination period and shall contain:

- (a) A nomination form;
- (b) A candidate information sheet;

- (c) An election calendar;
- (d) An academic information release form;
- (e) A job description of the contested position;
- (f) A link to the ACCSA and College code of conduct;
- (g) A set of candidate questions;
- (h) A link to the election policy; and
- (i) Additional resources as determined by the Election Chair.

#### 5.4 Nominations Signatures

In order to be nominated for the following positions, candidates must attain the following:

- (a) Printed full names, student numbers and signatures from eight (8) Full time, base budge students (Members running for academic representative positions must get these from students in their division); and
- (b) Printed full names and signatures from two (2) instructors.

#### 5.5 Nomination Procedure

- (a) The Election Chair shall make available nomination packages in the ACCSA head office and on the ACCSA website;
- (b) Members running for a position shall:
  1. Obtain the nomination package;
  2. Read and understand its contents;
  3. Return their completed nomination package contents to the ACCSA head office in a sealed envelope; and
  4. Be interviewed by the Election Chair.
- (c) The ACCSA employee receiving the nomination package shall mark it with the date and time of receipt, along with their signature; and

- (d) The Election Chair or Assistant shall store the nomination forms and any other confidential election material in a secure location to which only the Election Chair or Assistant have access.

#### 5.6 Eligibility Approval

The Election Chair shall start the verification of all nomination form information upon receipt, and complete the verification process within forty-eight (48) hours of the close of the nomination period:

- (a) Members who return the nomination form after the end of the nomination period shall not be considered for candidacy;
- (b) A nomination form will not be invalid as a result of a failure by any ACCSA employee;
- (c) The Election Chair shall immediately notify any Member with an invalid nomination form and provide a twenty-four (24) hour period to submit a valid nomination form;
- (d) Upon completion of the verification process, the Election Chair shall determine the eligible candidates to run for election; and
- (e) No appeals will be granted to any candidate who is ruled ineligible to run for a position.

#### 5.7 Campaigning

- (a) Any meeting held by a prospective candidate that includes more than one (1) other individual shall be considered campaigning; and
- (b) A prospective candidate may meet with one (1) individual at a time for the purposes of assembling a campaign team during the nomination period.

#### 5.8 Promotion

Nominees are required to have their picture taken by the ACCSA for promotional purposes.

## **6. CAMPAIGNING**

#### 6.1 Candidate List

A list of all election candidates and the positions they are running for shall be posted:

- (a) On the ACCSA website;
- (b) On ACCSA social media platforms; and
- (c) In the ACCSA head office.

## 6.2 Campaign Period

The campaign period:

- (a) May begin upon approval of the completed candidate nomination package, and interview with the election chair; and
- (b) Must end before the voting day.

## 6.3 Campaign Guidelines

- (a) Campaigning is any activity or message that serves to promote a candidate.
- (b) Candidates may use a variety of methods to campaign, within the guidelines of the election policy;
- (c) Candidates are expected to conduct their respective campaigns in the spirit of integrity and fairness;
- (d) Only candidates and their campaign team members may engage in campaigning;
- (e) Candidates may not engage with media outlets without the prior authorization of the Election Chair;
- (f) Candidates may not campaign in the ACCSA head office;
- (g) Executives who are seeking re-election shall temporarily suspend their employment for the duration of the campaign period and voting day, with the exception of emergency affairs and financial approval responsibilities;

- (h) Executives who are seeking re-election shall refrain from wearing ACCSA branded clothing and accessories for the duration of the campaign and voting periods;
- (i) All Executives and Employees are not permitted to be part of any campaign team;
- (j) Any campaigning that threatens the integrity of the elections process will be subject to disciplinary action by the Election Chair; and
- (k) Candidates making outrageous campaign promises, engaging in negative campaign tactics, acting dishonestly or otherwise violating the guidelines of the election policy will be subject to disciplinary action by the Election Chair.

#### 6.4 Campaign Teams

- (a) Campaign team members are College students who assist a candidate in any way with respect to running in an election;
- (b) Candidates must submit the full names and signatures of their campaign team to the Election Chair before the start of the campaign period;
- (c) Candidates must notify the Election Chair prior to adding or removing a student from their campaign team;
- (d) Candidates shall be responsible for the conduct of their campaign team members at all times; and
- (e) Acts or omissions of campaign team members shall be regarded as acts or omissions of the candidate.

#### 6.5 Affiliation

Candidates may not affiliate with each other in the form of a team, party, loose coalition or slate.

#### 6.6 Campaign Materials

- (a) Campaign materials refer to all items and messages pertaining to a candidate, including:

1. Hung or posted items such as posters, stickers and banners;
2. Distributed items such as flyers, food, beverages and other goods; and
3. Communications delivered in person, via broadcast, on social media platforms, and through other relevant methods.

(b) All campaign materials must be:

1. Approved by the Election Chair or Assistant;
2. Approved by the professor or teaching aid where the material is used in a class setting;
3. Free from any direct or indirect reference to an opposing candidate; and
4. Free from any content that denigrates the spirit of a fair and peaceful democratic election.

(c) All campaign materials must not:

1. Be created or distributed in the ACCSA head office;
2. Be hung or posted in College classrooms, lecture halls and seminar rooms;
3. Overlap or be attached to any hung or posted campaign material of another candidate;
4. Cover clocks, emergency signs and other such important signage;
5. Block an individual's vision through glass doors;
6. Be hung, posted, handed out, discarded or otherwise distributed in areas set out for polling stations locations;
7. Include or incorporate the ACCSA logo; and
8. Denigrates the spirit of a fair and peaceful democratic election.

- (d) Alcohol, drugs and illegal substances may not be used as campaign material;
- (e) No campaigning may take place where alcohol or drugs are being used or served within the confines of a licensed establishment, whether on or off campus;
- (f) All campaigning via email or social media communication sent to a managed list of more than one (1) person must be approved in advance by the list administrator;
- (g) Candidates shall be held responsible for any damage caused to College or ACCSA property if they have not demonstrated caution in the distribution and affixing of campaign material;
- (h) Approval of campaign materials by the Election Chair or Assistant shall be in the form of:
  - 1. The official stamp of the ACCSA;
  - 2. The signature and initials of the Election Chair or Assistant;  
or
  - 3. A letter signed or stamped by the Election Chair or Assistant.
- (i) Candidates are limited to:
  - 1. No more than five (5) hung or posted materials that are larger than two (2) feet in any direction, within a limit of twenty (20) square feet total;
  - 2. No more than fifty (50) hung or posted materials in total;
  - 3. No more than two hundred (200) flyers; and
  - 4. No more than five hundred (500) non-paper items.
- (j) Candidates shall be responsible for removing all their physical campaign materials from around the College by 5:00PM on voting day; and
- (k) Candidates who do not comply with section 6.06 (j) may be subject to reduced campaign expenditure reimbursement or alternate disciplinary action, at the discretion of the Election Chair.

# 7. VOTING

## 7.1 Eligible Voters

Only Full Members are eligible to vote in ACCSA elections and by-elections.

## 7.2 Candidate Guidelines

- (a) Candidates and campaign team members must allow Members to vote without any undue pressure, influence or coercion; and
- (b) The Election Chair may immediately disqualify any candidate found to be participating in voter misconduct.

## 7.3 Voting Period

- (a) Voting shall take place on two (2) designated voting days;
- (b) The voting day shall be held after the campaign period ends; and
- (c) On the day before the voting day, the Election Chair shall send out an email alerting all Members of locations of all polling stations.

## 7.4 Online Voting System

- (a) Voting shall take place through a secure online voting system where appropriate; and
- (b) Where a Member who is eligible to vote faces an issue that prevents them from voting using the online voting system, the Election Officials may authorize a paper ballot for that Member upon presentation of their student identification card.

## 7.5 Polling Stations

Polling stations shall be:

- (a) Opened no later than 11:00AM and closed no earlier than 4:00PM during the voting period;
- (b) Constructed to allow privacy for the voter in the casting of his vote;

- (c) Staffed by at least one (1) election official;
- (d) Located in spaces that are free from any campaign material for the entire campaign and voting periods; and
- (e) Located in prominent areas around the College campuses.

#### 7.6 Paper Ballots

- (a) Ballots shall contain a designated marking area in front of each candidate's name;
- (b) Each candidate's name shall be listed on the ballot in alphabetical order by last name;
- (c) Elections involving voting for division representatives will have different ballots for each division;
- (d) Each ballot shall contain a "Decline to vote" option listed below the candidates' names;
- (e) In the event of a candidate withdrawing from the elections after the ballots have been prepared, their name shall be crossed off the ballot before it is given to each voter, and a notice of the candidate withdrawal shall be clearly posted at each polling station; and
- (f) In the event that there is only one (1) candidate running for a position, the position shall be acclaimed.

#### 7.7 Polling Station Voting Procedure

- (a) Voters must present their valid student ID to the polling clerks;
- (b) Voters shall receive a ballot and shall be given the right of privacy in casting their vote; and
- (c) The name of each voter shall be crossed off the voter's list after he votes.

#### 7.8 Voting Irregularities

The Election Chair shall determine the best course of action in the event of voting irregularities at any or all polling stations.

## **8. ELECTION RESULTS**

### 8.1 Election Method

The candidate with the highest number of votes for a contested position shall be declared the winner of that contested position.

### 8.2 Unofficial Results

Unofficial election results will be released within twenty-four (24) hours of the close of the voting period.

### 8.3 Official Results

Official election results will be released within fourteen (14) days of the close of the voting period.

### 8.4 Recount

A one-time automatic recount will occur in the event that an election results in a less than one percent (0.5%) difference between the votes received for the winner and the runner up.

### 8.5 Ties

- (a) In the event of a tie, a run-off election between the tied candidates will take place on one (1) voting day within seven (7) days of the close of the voting period;
- (b) The tied candidates shall be permitted to campaign following the announcement of the run-off election by the Election Chair, until the end of the day before the run-off election; and
- (c) Should the re-vote result in another tie, the election shall be resolved by way of a coin toss performed by the Election Chair.

## **9. CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES**

### 9.1 Expense Reimbursement

Candidates will be reimbursed for their allowable election expenses, provided that they:

- (a) Collect all expense receipts; and
- (b) Submit all these items to the Election Chair within forty-eight (48) hours of the close of voting on voting day.

## 9.2 Expense Limits

Candidates have a campaign expense limit of fifteen (15) dollars;

## 9.3 Expenditure Exceptions

No expense shall be assigned to the use of computers, phones, tablets and other similar items that confer no special advantage to a candidate.

## 9.4 Reimbursement Guidelines

- (a) Failure to submit all expense items will result in the candidate's reimbursement being withheld;
- (b) Failure to remove hung or posted campaign materials will result in the candidate's reimbursement being withheld until all materials are properly discarded of;
- (c) The Election Chair may refuse to pay any submitted expense that is unrelated to the candidate's election campaign; and
- (d) All submitted receipts must include a company name, address, contact details, in addition to the date of purchase, the price of each item purchased and the total purchase amount.

# 10. COMPLAINTS & PENALTIES

## 10.1 Submitting Complaints

- (a) A Member may issue a complaint to the Election Chair relating to matters governed by this policy; and
- (b) The complaint shall be made in writing, be signed by the Member and include that Member's contact information and student number.

## 10.2 Investigating Complaints

- (a) The Election Chair shall decide whether or not to investigate a complaint;
- (b) When the Election Chair decides to not investigate a complaint, the complainant shall be advised of this decision within forty-eight (48) hours of the complaint submission;
- (c) When the Election Chair does decide to investigate a complaint, an acknowledgment of the receipt of the complaint will be sent to the complainant within forty-eight (48) hours of the complaint submission;
- (d) When the Election Chair does decide to investigate a complaint, a summary of the complaint shall be sent to the candidate against whom the complaint is made within forty-eight (48) hours of the complain submission;
- (e) Where a complaint has been received or is being investigated, the Election Chair may not publicly acknowledge the fact of a complaint to anyone other than the complainant or the candidate named in the complaint until the investigation into the complaint has been concluded; and
- (f) If the Election Chair rules that a candidate has failed to comply with this policy based on a submitted complaint, the Election Chair shall make a final decision on the appropriate course of action.

## 10.3 Authority

The Election Chair shall have sole authority to issue penalties to candidates.

## 10.4 Causes for Penalty

Penalties shall be issued to candidates for the following actions:

- (a) Failure to comply with the spirit and purpose of the election;
- (b) Bullying or improper coercion of voters;
- (c) Improper use, display or distribution of campaign materials;

- (d) Improper campaign materials;
- (e) Campaigning in an unauthorized area;
- (f) Campaigning outside of the campaign period;
- (g) Misrepresentation of facts; and
- (h) Breaking of any municipal, provincial or federal law.

### 10.5 Types of Penalties

The Election Chair may issue the following penalties to candidates:

- (a) Restrictions on future campaigning;
- (b) Restrictions on future campaign expenditures;
- (c) Loss of part or entire refund for campaign expenditures;
- (d) Loss of privileges pertaining to the use of the ACCSA property and resources for candidates who are SAC members or Employees;
- (e) Disqualification; and
- (f) Any combination of these penalties.

### 10.6 Notification

Notification of issued penalties shall be made via phone, in person or through the posting of the penalty decision on a designated election space in the ACCSA head office.

## **11. APPEALS**

### 11.1 Appeals Body

- (a) All appeals shall be heard by an appeals Committee formed by the SAC, consisting of three (3) Members; and
- (b) All members of the appeals Committee shall not have any involvement in campaign activities and must be impartial to election results.

## 11.2 Appeals of Election Chair Penalties

Penalties handed out by the Election Chair may not be appealed.

## 11.3 Appeals of Election Results

- (a) Any candidate may challenge the validity of the elections results in a written submission to the appeals Committee within twenty-four (24) hours of the publication of unofficial election results;
- (b) Written submissions appealing election results shall contain the appellant's name, student number, contact details and a detailed explanation of the reason for challenging the results;
- (c) The ACCSA Employee receiving the appeal submission shall sign and date it before forwarding it onto the appeals Committee; and
- (d) The appeals Committee shall investigate the appeal and decide on the appropriate course of action within forty-eight (48) hours of the receipt of a written appeal.

## 11.4 Reversal

If, at any time, the appellant wishes to retract their appeal, they may do so by submitting a letter to that effect, addressed to the appeals Committee.

# 12. REFERENDA

## 12.1 Purpose

A referendum may be conducted in an attempt to determine the opinions of Members regarding a particular issue or series of issues, either related to independent of each other.

## 12.2 Powers

The results of any referendum shall be binding on the ACCSA, unless:

- (a) The results affect the ACCSA Letters Patent;
- (b) Implementing the directive of the referendum would result in the SAC breaching its fiduciary responsibilities; and

- (c) Less than ten percent (10%) of the total Membership on the day of the referendum votes.

### 12.3 Member-Initiated Referendum

- (a) Any Member may present a petition to the SAC requesting that a referendum be held on a particular matter, except for matters pertaining to fees passed on to ACCSA clubs, societies and other similar subsidiary entities;
- (b) The submitted petition must include:
  - a. The full names, student numbers and signatures of at least ten percent (10%) of the total current Membership; and
  - b. A clear description of the issue to be addressed during the referendum, including the question that will be posed during the referendum.
- (c) The SAC shall assess the validity of the petition and provide any recommendations for editing of the petition;
- (d) The SAC shall forward all the financial and legal ramifications of the petition to the Election Chair;
- (e) If the petition is found to be valid, the Election Chair shall draft a referendum summary, outlining:
  - a. The proposed referendum question;
  - b. The financial and legal ramifications of the proposed referendum; and
  - c. The name of the petitioner and the number of student signatures on the petition.

### 12.4 SAC-Initiated Referendum

The SAC may initiate a referendum through a motion of the SAC, duly passed by a Simple majority vote at a SAC meeting.

### 12.5 Referendum Process

- (a) Any Member or group of Members may register with the Election Chair in order to campaign on behalf of any side in a referendum;
- (b) The referendum campaign, voting and counting process shall be conducted in line with the spirit and guidelines of this election policy;
- (c) Referenda must be comprised of one 'Yes' or 'No' question;
- (d) Questions included in a referendum must be worded in a positive sense; and
- (e) All referenda shall be conducted at the same time as the ACCSA General Elections.