



## **Elections Bylaws of Graduate Student Organization**

### ***Article I. Elections Committee Bylaws and Elections Procedures***

#### ***Section 1. Eligibility***

General eligibility requirements for running for the GSO office are outlined in the Constitution, Article IV.E.a. Apart from that the following eligibility criteria must hold:

- A. A candidate for GSO office must be an enrolled graduate student at Stony Brook University who will have been a member of the GSO at least two semesters prior to taking office.
- B. No candidate running for office can be a member of the Elections committee.
- C. If the current Secretary wishes to run as a candidate for office, a new Elections Committee Chair who will not be seeking office in the current elections must be appointed following the same procedure as in Article II Section B of the Standing Committee Bylaws prior the beginning of the elections process.
- D. No member of the Elections Committee (including the Chair) may run as a candidate for office if they have not resigned by February 15<sup>th</sup> in accordance with the rules for committee resignation as outlined by Article II section A.8.
- E. The chair of the Elections Committee shall reach out to verify continued membership of the committee during the first week of February.

#### ***Section 2. Election Deadlines***

- A. The elections committee must meet at least once during the spring semester before the call for nominations.
- B. Call for nominations must be made at least one week before the March Senate meeting.
- C. The Elections Committee is responsible for setting and extending the deadlines for submitting the nomination forms, candidate statements, and creating materials for publicity including but not limited to Official GSO Elections Guide to be distributed during the elections.

#### ***Section 3. Nomination Procedure***

Prospective candidates for GSO office must submit a petition of 25 graduate student signatures supporting their bid for office by a deadline to be established by the Elections Committee. Petition forms are to be made available by the GSO office and website. Signatures are subject to validation by the Elections Committee. Once a candidate has successfully completed the nomination procedure, her/his email should be added to the GSO Senate list serve.

#### ***Section 4. Campaigning***

A. No GSO list serve or website may be used by or on behalf of candidates to disseminate campaign material; no organizations who receive graduate student money may disseminate campaign material by or on behalf of candidates for GSO elections.

B. In person campaigning by either a candidate or a representative is prohibited at polling station.

C. The candidates statements and the ballot (defined in Article V) are not considered as a part of the Campaigning and must be made available on the GSO Website and the Official GSO Elections Guide.

### **Section 5. Elections**

Elections will be held electronically, using the university s SOLAR system or another electronic system.

A. The system must allow for verification of the voter s identification and graduate student status.

B. The electronic voting system must be accessible to all eligible graduate students via the Internet.

C. The electronic voting system will only allow voting one time per person.

D. The electronic ballot must be available for voting for a minimum of five-business days.

### **Section 6. Ballots**

The ballot should consist of the following:

A. The statement: *“Please read the statements from the candidates and vote for one person for each position, or write the name of a current graduate student. Also, read the description of the referenda, and select one of the two positions. Thank you for your participation in this important manner.”*

B. Any referenda or constitutional amendments to be voted upon.

C. The list of candidates for office.

D. A space for a writein candidate for each office. A writein candidate for GSO office must be a member of the GSO.

E. Statements of the candidates must be limited to 200 words, and must not refer to any other running candidate.

F. The ballot must be submitted to the Department of Instructional Technology at least 5 business days prior to the opening of elections. All deadlines must be set before the submittal.

### **Section 7. Paper Ballots**

The senate of the GSO has the power to authorize elections using paper ballots. This must be authorized by a two thirds vote of the senate at a regular senate meeting before Election Day. The elections must be conducted in accordance with the guidelines given in the following sections.

#### **A. Polling Stations**

- i. Polling stations must be easily accessible to all graduate students. Multiple stations must be open for at least three hours each day over a two day period, in order to ensure adequate access to all students. Each polling station is to be managed by two graduate students (and/or NYPIRG representatives). The Elections Committee will be responsible for determining if polling station attendees have any conflict of interest, which compromises their ability to manage the station.

- ii. All polling people must be both verbally instructed and provided with written instructions on the proper procedures of voting prior to managing the polling stations.
- iii. The polling people are responsible for the setup of the station, including the removal of candidate specific election flyers within 15 yards/13 meters or within sight of the station prior to the election, removal of all election materials, and carrying of all materials, including all completed ballots, to the GSO office following the end of the Election Day.
- iv. All polling stations will include copies of all candidate statements, sheets explaining all referenda, a copy of the GSO constitution, a copy of the Election Bylaws, a specific statement explaining Elections procedure including the process of separating ballots from envelopes to ensure anonymity, a sample ballot (not candidate specific) showing how a properly completed ballot appears, and a box for completed ballots.
- v. Polling station people must check each voter's SBU ID card, and make sure that each envelope is legible and with all the required information is present.

### **B. Ballots**

The ballot should consist of the following:

- i. The statement: *"Please read the statements from the candidates and vote for one person for each position, or write the name of a current graduate student. Also, read the description of the referenda, and check one of the two positions. Please seal your ballot in order to protect your anonymity, place the ballot inside an envelope with your name, department, and the last four digits of your SBU ID number, and then place the completed ballot inside the ballot box. Thank your for your participation in this important manner."*
- ii. Any referenda or constitutional amendments to be voted upon.
- iii. The list of candidates for office.
- iv. A space for a writein candidate for each office. A writein candidate for GSO office must be a member of the GSO

### **C3. Storage and Counting of Ballots**

- i. Following the election, the ballot boxes should be sealed by a member of the Elections Committee and locked in a secure area such that the Chair of Elections Committee is the only person having the key. Ballots must be counted within 3 working days.
- ii. Each candidate is entitled to select one representative (who is not a candidate) to observe the Elections Committee while counting ballots. They cannot participate in the process.
- iii. At least four Elections Committee members must be present during the validating and opening of the ballots.
- iv. All verifiable envelopes containing ballots must be identified and cleared for counting prior to beginning to unseal the ballots and tally the results. In order to clear a ballot for counting, the ballot envelope must be identified as being the sole ballot submitted from a registered graduate student who pays the student activity fee. Ballots that are not easily identified by name or ID number should be verified by calling the department on the envelope. If the individual is not known in the department, or the person is determined
- v. to not be a valid voter, the ballot should be labeled as invalid, and destroyed prior to opening.
- vi. Following the validation process, all labeled envelopes should be opened, and the sealed ballots taken out and collected. All envelopes containing personal

information should be shredded. Following this, all unlabeled ballots should be opened and tabulated. Observers should oversee the tabulation process in order to ensure that no error occurs. If any office or referendum results are within 3% of the total votes counted, a recount should be performed.

vii. Results should be posted on both the web and on the Senate list serve as soon as all necessary recounts are performed.

### **Section 8. Reporting of Election Results**

Within ten days of the end of elections, copies of election results, signed by the members of the Elections Committee, will be sent to the Graduate School and placed on file at the GSO office.

### **Section 9. Disputes**

If any of the concerned parties dispute the results of an election within one week of the tallying of the ballots they may request a recount. The Elections Committee under the observation of representatives of the candidates and the GSO Executive Committee shall conduct the recount.

## **Article II. Bylaws for the Election of Departmental Senators**

### **Section 1. Eligibility**

A Senator must be a registered graduate student for the entire period he/she will hold the position. In addition, the Senator must be a member of the department she/he wishes to represent. The criteria for determination of affiliation will be the same as that used by the Graduate School.

### **Section 2. Procedure**

According to the Constitution, the Senators can be elected either (1) by voting or (2) by collecting signatures. The Constitution states that the Senator must be elected through informed consent of the constituency. Any form of election must be held on or after the first day of classes for the election year in question.

A. You have decided to hold an election in your department.

- a. Election in a meeting. The meeting has to be advertised several days in advance. Sufficient evidence must be submitted to the Elections Committee that the meeting took place and the senator was elected. The minutes of the meeting and the list of attendees are considered sufficient. The minutes should clearly state when and where the meeting took place. The Secretary would expect at least 10% of the students to attend the meeting otherwise the meeting was certainly not sufficiently advertised. The election will require three business days for validation after the minutes and the list were presented to the Elections Committee.

b. Election by mail (through ballots).

The same set of rules applies as to the GSO Executive election. Namely, if the ballot is secret, the ballots must be submitted in sealed envelopes. The envelopes must have:

- i. Voter's name,
- ii. 4 last digits of voter's USB ID
- iii. Voter's department and
- iv. Signature.

Omission of any of these fields will disqualify the ballot. If the ballot is open, the ballot itself has to carry the above information. In either case the ballot must be as close as possible to the following form:

### **GSO Senate Election YYYY**

- i. Candidate's name: John Doe
- ii. Department: Anthropology
- iii. Last day of the election: 09/31/02
- iv. I vote for the above candidate to represent "Anthropology" at the GSO
- v. Senate (Yes/No)
- vi. Type of the election (GSO Senate)
- vii. Term (Sep YYYY – May YYYY+1)

#### **B. You have decided to collect signatures.**

The fact of petitioning for a Senator must be advertised within your department. The caption of the signature list should have the following fields:

- i. Type of the election: (GSO Senate)
- ii. Term (YYYY)
- iii. Department
- iv. Candidate s name
- v. Statement of consent (Such as: "By signing this petition I give my consent to John Doe representing the Department of Anthropology in the GSO Senate").

The list itself has to include

- i. Name of the student (readably printed or typed)
- ii. His/Her signature
- iii. Optional Telephone number or email address.

Omission of any (except the phone number) of the fields for a signature will disqualify the signature (but not the whole list). Validation of the signatures will take three business days. The number of signatures needed is detailed in the Constitution of the GSO. The candidate can sign his own list as well. If you can provide the name and phone number of your graduate secretary, the number of days required for validation will be cut to 1 business day.

### **Section 3. General**

Evidence that the election/petitioning was not sufficiently advertised can and will serve as a ground for declaring the elections invalid. The ballot must be submitted to the Elections Committee either by mail or through an Elections Committee member (as defined by the Elections Committee Bylaws). Ballots submitted in any other way will be disqualified. The signature list, in addition, can be submitted by the candidate him/herself. Note that under no circumstances, without any exceptions, will it be possible to submit the ballots/signature list on the day of the Senate meeting and be able to vote on that meeting.

*Approved by the GSO Senate, November 7, 2010*