

# SOCS Elections & Referendum

## Standard Operating Procedures



### 1. Purpose:

**1.1** To ensure that the Society of Off-Campus Students (SOCS) Executive Election, herein referred to as the Election, is carried out in a fair and equitable manner. Failure to adhere to these procedures may result in disqualification from the election and/or loss of membership.

**1.2** To elect candidates to the positions of:

- 1.2.1. President
- 1.2.2. Vice President Administration
- 1.2.3. Vice President Athletics
- 1.2.4. Vice President Education and Community
- 1.2.5. Vice President Finance
- 1.2.6. Vice President Promotions
- 1.2.7. Vice President Social

**1.3.** To outline procedures for referenda and special elections.

### 2. Timeline

**2.1.** The election must be held during the month of March.

**2.2.** Nomination forms must be made available at least five days prior to speeches.

**2.3.** After nomination forms are due, the campaign period will open for a minimum of two days and speeches must be scheduled on the next available Monday.

**2.4.** Once the campaign period closes, two voting days will occur.

**2.5.** At the close of the polls, ballots will be counted and results will be reported to the candidates by that night.

**2.6** The incoming executive shall assume power March 31st.

### 3. Candidacy

**3.1.** To be eligible, a candidate must:

3.1.1. Be a full member of the society in good standing.

3.1.2. Complete a SOCS Executive Nomination Form and collect the signature and student numbers of ten (10) members, and submit them during the nomination period.

3.1.3. Not have been disqualified from a past SOCS election.

3.1.4. Attend the 'all candidates meeting' prior to speeches.

3.2. All candidates are expected to adhere to these procedures as well as the McMaster University Student Code of Conduct.

#### **4. Speeches**

4.1. Speeches will occur on the first available Monday after the close of the nomination period.

4.2. The length of time allocated to each speech is:

4.2.1. President - five minutes

4.2.2. All other positions - two minutes

4.3. Following speeches, candidates will enter question period.

4.3.1. Questions:

4.3.1.1. Will be submitted anonymously by members.

4.3.1.2. Must be vetted by the VP Administration or equivalent.

4.3.1.3. May be addressed to all candidates, or to candidates of a specific position.

4.3.1.4. May not be addressed to specific candidates.

#### **5. Campaign and Voting Periods**

5.1. Campaign period starts with conclusion of the nomination period.

5.2. Candidates are allowed up to two posters in the MSU Clubspace and must adhere to MSU poster guidelines.

5.3. Candidates may use any form of campaigning that does not violate the SOCS Constitution, SOCS Operating Guidelines, MSU policy, or the Student Code of Conduct.

5.4. After a minimum of two days of campaigning, the voting period may open.

5.5. Once the voting period is open, candidates may not campaign within sight or earshot of the voting booth.

5.6. Voting period must be open for a minimum of two days.

5.7. Candidates may not be in the voting booth except when casting their votes.

5.8. Votes may not be counted until voting period has concluded.

#### **6. Balloting Procedure**

6.1. Balloting procedures will follow a preferential balloting system wherein members will rank the candidates numerically.

6.2. A member may choose to vote for only one candidate. They must do so by ranking them as their only choice with a 1 and not indicating any other choices.

6.3. Ranking a candidate as one indicates that a candidate is the primary choice of an individual.

6.4. Ascending numbers thereafter indicate the choice of 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.

**6.5.** An individual may also abstain from voting in any section of their choosing that is being voted upon.

**6.6.** An individual may also select a vote of non-confidence in any section of their choosing that is being voted upon.

**6.7.** When tallying the votes, the candidate with the least number of votes will be eliminated. The second choice votes from that ballot will be transferred to the next candidate, and the procedure will be repeated until two candidates are left.

**6.8.** Of those two candidates, the one with the highest number of votes will be declared the winner.

## **7. Role of the VP Administration and other Executive**

**7.1.** The entire election process shall be overseen and run by the Vice-President Administration.

**7.2.** They will set all dates, run the speeches, receive all reports of violations, and count the ballots in the presence of an impartial observer.

**7.3.** A candidate may appeal a decision of the VP Administration to the rest of the Executive, excluding any who are candidates.

7.3.1. If the decision was unanimous from the executive, no further appeal is possible.

7.3.2. If the decision was not unanimous among the executive, the candidate may choose to ask for a final appeal from the MSU VP Administration, Chief Returning Officer, or Deputy Returning Officer.

7.3.2.1. Their decision shall be final, and elections procedures will not pause while a candidate seeks this appeal. The VP Administration or other executive representative must be present for this meeting.

**7.4.** Should the VP Administration seek candidacy for any position, another member of the Executive not running in the election may take on their role.

**7.5.** All executive members who are not candidates are expected to help with the elections procedures and remain neutral. Should a member of the executive show bias in these proceedings, they will be asked to resign from their position.

## **8. Results**

**8.1.** Candidates will be informed of whether they won or lost via a phone call placed by the Vice President Administration.

**8.2.** After the candidates have been informed of their outcome, the results will be made public in the next newsletter of the society and on the website.

## **9. Referenda and Special Elections**

**9.1.** When polling must be completed outside of the set structure of executive elections, the following will be followed.

**9.2. Referenda:**

9.2.1. Once a referendum has been initiated by the processes outlined in the SOCS Constitution, Section 8: Referenda, the Vice President Administration shall provide at least ten (10) days notice of a referendum campaign to the General Membership. Referenda must be initiated and notice must be given during the regular university terms, which excludes mid-term recess, holidays, exam periods and the summer terms.

9.2.2. Following the notification period, a poll shall be granted within fourteen days. Polls must occur during the regular university terms.

9.2.3. Once a poll has been granted, the voting period must last for a minimum of two days.

9.2.4. Campaigning will start two days before the polls open.

9.2.4.1. No speeches will be organized, and no posters will be allowed.

9.2.4.2. Other means of campaigning that do not violate the SOCS Constitution, other SOCS Operating Guidelines, MSU policy, or the Code of Conduct are permissible.

9.2.4.3. Violations may result in loss of membership or nullification of the results of the referendum.

9.2.5. Procedures for a referendum shall be approved by the executive, and be in accordance with MSU referendum procedures.

9.2.6. Quorum for a referendum shall be five percent of the membership.

9.2.7. Votes are tallied by the VP Administration and an impartial observer.

9.2.7.1. The members who initiated the referendum may select one scrutineer to observe ballot counting, but may not handle the ballots or report the results.

9.2.7.2. Directives from the membership expressed in a quorate referendum shall be binding on the society.

9.2.8. Once a question has been considered in a quorate referendum, it shall not be considered again for one calendar year.

**9.3. By-Elections**

9.3.1. Any vacancy of elected office due to resignation, loss of full membership in the Society, or recall, shall be filled by a by-election of the Society within one month of the observed vacancy.

9.3.1.1. The only exception is the summer months, in which the election will be held within the first month of classes.

9.3.2. If an election cannot be called, the executive of the Society by a two-thirds majority vote can fill a vacancy on an interim basis by appointment.

Student