**ELECTIONS POLICY OF THE DALHOUSIE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**

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**Note - All terms will hold the same definition as outlined in the Dalhousie Student**

**Union Constitution**

1) SCOPE

a) The provisions of this Policy shall apply to Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students Elections and by-elections.

2) DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Section,

a) Brightspace – refers to the official learning management platform of Dalhousie University.

b) Candidate – any individual who declares themselves to be running for any of the

positions listed in Section 4 and has successfully completed all necessary

documentation and submitted it by the deadline set by the Chief Returning Officer in

each academic year.

d) Campaign – refers to a coordinated effort to elect any candidate or to pass or defeat

any referenda during the Union’s elections.

e) Campaigning: advertising by any campus medium (including class talks) or the

distribution and/or posting of any material including but not limited to social media

platforms designed to influence voters.

f) Campaign worker – a person who has been asked by a candidate or referendum

campaign and has agreed to assist that candidate or campaign with campaigning in

any capacity.

g) Chief Returning Officer. A DAGS member who is not seeking election and is appointed by the DAGS Council in accordance with the society’s by-laws.

h) Resource – any material or asset that provides a benefit to a person or organization.

i) Business Hours – shall refer to the hours between 8:00am - 8:00pm Atlantic

Standard Time

3) MEMBERS’ ELIGIBILITY:

a) Any enrolled graduate student member may run for office. It is the responsibility of the Chief Returning

Officer to authenticate student status and candidate eligibility with the Registrar’s Office or Faculty of Graduate Studies Program Officer.

4) NOMINATIONS

a) Application for Nominations

i) Nominations for each position shall be made by the completion of the nominations forms as developed by the Board each year and in accordance with policies.

ii) Nominations of all candidates shall be effective only if the required nomination forms have been submitted completely and accurately and have been verified by the Chief Returning Officer.

iv) Appeals regarding the validity of a nomination shall be made in writing to the CRO no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the close of nominations, once a list of the names all candidates has been posted online. The DAGS Board will render a decision before the beginning of the campaign period.

v) The Chief Returning Officer shall post a nomination form and questionnaire on the DAGS Website

website no later than two weeks before the beginning of the nomination period containing questions relating to the candidate’s platform and experience.

vi) Candidates must submit a completed questionnaire to the Chief Returning Officer no later than the close of nominations.

vii) The Chief Returning Officer shall post the completed questionnaires on the DAGS website before the start of campaigning.

a) Nominations for Faculty Representatives

i) The By-laws of DAGS provide for 4 Director positions relating to specific faculties:

(1) Director of Science and Computer Science

(2) Director of Arts and Social Sciences, Law, Management, and Journalism

(3) Director of Engineering, Architecture, and Planning

(4) Director of Health and Medical Sciences

ii) Eligibility to run for these seats is based on the student’s membership in a given faculty.

iii) No one member is permitted to hold or run for more than one position at any given time.

iii) Representatives are responsible to the general faculty constituency they are elected to serve, and are required to consult with the constituency-level society on a regular basis.

c) Nominations for Constituent Societies

i) The By-laws of DAGS provide for constituency seats for specific program societies

ii) These positions are put forward by the respective constituent society in accordance with that society’s constitution. No one member is permitted to hold or run for more than one position at any given time.

iii) Representatives are responsible to the general constituency they are elected to serve, and are required to consult with the constituency-level society on a regular basis.

d) Withdrawl of Nominations

i) Until such a time that the ballots are officially created, a candidate may withdraw his/her nomination form and have their name removed from the election. Upon declaration of their intent to withdraw, a candidate must immediately and at the first possible opportunity meet with the CRO to sign a declaration of withdrawal in their presence. The CRO retains the right to remove a candidate's name from the

ballot once that candidate has confirmed their intent to withdraw.

ii) A person who, before or during an election, for the purpose of preventing the election of a candidate, knowingly publishes a false statement of withdrawal of another candidate at the election is guilty of an offence as defined by the offenses section of these policies.

5) CAMPAIGN REGULATIONS

a) General Rules

i) No campaigning shall take place prior to the campaign period as established by the Chief Returning Officer.

ii) The foregoing shall not impede any officer or member of DAGS from carrying out all duties reasonably incident to their portfolio.

iii) Incumbent candidates running for executive positions shall delegate their responsibilities to other members of the DAGS Board for the duration of the campaigning period.

iv) Incumbents shall be permitted to carry out job duties internal to DAGS with the written permission of the Chief Returning Officer.

v) The facilities of the offices of the Dalhousie Student Union, DAGS, or any society under its jurisdiction and any resources or promotional materials owned by the Union and its societies are NOT to be made available to candidates for campaign purposes unless those resources are made available to all candidates as deemed by the Chief Returning Officer.

vii) The Chief Returning Officer shall set the date and time that campaigning is to cease and set the yearly parameters regulating post-campaigning.

viii) Candidates shall be responsible for the actions of their campaign workers and candidates shall be strictly liable for campaign violations.

ix) Candidates must submit the names of all campaign workers to the Chief Returning Officer no later than 12 pm on the day prior to the commencement of campaign period.

x) Under extenuating circumstances, if a person becomes or ceases to be a campaign worker after the deadline mentioned above, the CRO must be notified immediately via e-mail and a reasonable explanation, as determined by the Elections Committee, must be provided.

xi) There shall be no campaigning of any kind at any of the University Libraries, oncampus

bars or residences except where there is an official elections event.

xii) Campaigning shall be restricted to Dalhousie University campuses, only. Public sidewalks adjoining campus buildings are considered for the purposes of this policy to be part of the University.

xiii) Electronic balloting provides opportunities for abuse, intentioned or not, by voters, candidates and campaign workers. Abuse of electronic balloting includes, but is not limited to, the following types of action:

(1) efforts by voters to vote more than once

(2) efforts by candidates or their campaign workers to influence votes by holding parties or social events at which individuals are encouraged to vote on the premises.

(3) offering favors or gifts in exchange for votes

(4) pressuring individuals to vote in the presence of a candidate, campaign worker, or any other individual

(5) bringing the means of electronic voting to a voter

xiv) In determining whether abuse of electronic balloting has occurred, the Chief Returning Officer must consider potential abuses on a case-by-case basis. Abuse is not limited to the types of actions outlined above but must be interpreted in the spirit of this section and in the spirit of upholding the principle of

an anonymous, secret-ballot vote. The Chief Returning Officer shall exercise the right to determine whether abuse of electronic voting has taken place and shall have the discretion of imposing or recommending any and all punitive actions as necessary, including disqualification from the election or by-election.

b) Poster Regulations

i) Candidates choosing to create posters are responsible for ensuring posters are posted in accordance with University regulations and may only be posted on public boards.

c) Other Forms of Campaigning

i) All forms of media may be used during the campaign period except where explicitly prohibited by the CRO.

ii) Media restrictions on campaigning shall include:

(1) All emails and candidate campaign materials must include a link to the DAGS website as stated by the CRO

(2) The CRO shall, on a yearly basis set the guidelines for online campaigning that will be available to candidates and registered campaign teams before the beginning of the campaign period.

iii) The use of posters or campaign materials within the classroom is forbidden

v) Verbal campaigning within the classroom requires the express permission of the

presiding faculty member, permission must be given in advance of the in-class campaign and presented to the CRO.

vi) The use of Union or University facilities not available to all candidates and campaigns is forbidden.

vii) The use of Society resources by candidates and campaigns is forbidden. This includes, but is not limited to society funds, websites, e-mail accounts and distribution lists.

x) All candidates are obligated to follow University policy as well as municipal, provincial, and federal laws in the course of campaigning.

xi) No candidate shall engage in libel, nor distribute material which could be construed as slanderous towards an opponent.

xii) Any new interpretation or clarification of election rules or policies by either the CRO shall be noticed to all candidates within 24 hours of being made. The decision will come into effect once all candidates have been notified.

d) Campaign Expenditures

i) The total cost of a candidate’s campaign shall have a value of no greater than

two hundred dollars ($200). Candidates are responsible for covering their own campaigning expenses.

ii) No candidate or campaign shall receive discounts that are not available to all

students.

iii) Any in-kind good or service given to a campaign will be assigned a ‘marketvalue’ price as determined by the CRO and included as part of the total campaign spending limit.

iv) Goods or professional skills belonging to the candidate are exempt from this

regulation.

v) An itemized account of all expenditures must be submitted to the Chief Returning Officer within twenty-four (24) hours after the closing of the polls, and these accounts must include a written receipt or bill for each separate item of campaign material;

ix) Any infractions of this Regulation by a candidate shall be investigated by the Chief Returning Officer, and candidates and/or their agents in violation of this regulation may be penalized according to the seriousness of the breach.

e) Harassment

All members of the Dalhousie Students Union are subject to the Dalhousie University Student Code of Conduct. Offences against persons and property as defined in the Code of Conduct are strictly prohibited. Candidates and their representatives are expected to adhere to the Code, and should be aware that the CRO reserves the right to sanction violators of the Code as is deemed appropriate, and may apply punishments ranging in severity up to and including expulsion from the election.

6) OFFENSES

a) Responsibilities of the CRO

i) Only the CRO and DAGS Board shall have the authority to enforce the provisions of this Policy.

ii) Charges of violation shall be submitted in writing to the Elections Committee who shall rule on the charge.

iii) The Elections Committee may also lay charges of violations of campaign rules on its own initiative.

iv) Charges of violation must be laid in writing within five (5) school days of the close of voting to the Chief Returning Officer.

iiv) Appeals of the CRO decisions are to be made to the DAGS Board in writing within 48 hours of the CRO’s decision.

b) Fines

i) Fines shall be assessed on the following basis:

(1) non-public campaigning displays (ex. posters)

(2) pre/post campaign period campaigning

(3) e-mail violations

(4) use of non-public resources

ii) Fines are to be included in the overall budget of each candidate. This budget may not exceed $200.00.

iii) The Chief Returning Officer must inform a candidate of any fines received via email within 24 hours of the decision. The candidate will be considered to have been informed, six (6) business hours after the email is sent. The email must inform the candidate of their right to appeal and the process to do so

c) Expulsion

i) Violations of the following nature will result in AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFICATION of the candidate:

(1) Tampering with the Elections Committee poster display;

(2) Spending over the maximum spending limit as outlined in this policy (including fines)

(3) Any attempted interference in the process of voting in an election carried out under this resolution;

(4) Any slanderous statements towards another candidate;

ii) Decisions to disqualify any candidate shall not be

made known to any party during the voting period. If a decision to disqualify is taken during the campaign period, the candidate will be notified immediately.

iii) In the event any candidate in the election is disqualified, the runner-up will take the place of the disqualified candidate.

d) Appeals

i) A candidate is deemed to be informed of a CRO decision six (6) business hours after the decision is

emailed.

ii) Appeals regarding decisions made and/or sanctions levied by the Chief Returning Officer within forty-eight (48) hours of the candidate being informed of the decision.

iii) Appeals from an CRO decision shall be made in writing to the DAGS Board only after an appeal to the Elections Committee has been made. Appeals to the DAGS Board shall be made in writing within five (5) days of being informed of the results of their appeal to the Elections Committee. The DAGS Board shall then investigate.

iv) Appeals of a DAGS Board Decision may be brought to the DSU Society Review Committee (SRC).

6) CAMPAIGN PERIOD

i) The campaign period shall begin no less than two school days following the announcement of the election at 8 a.m. and end at 8 p.m. the day preceding voting.

ii) The campaign period shall include at least five (5) school days.

iii) The campaign period shall begin no less than two school days following the announcement of the election at 8 a.m. and end at 8 p.m. the day preceding voting.

7) VOTING

a) General Procedures

i) Voting shall be done using a secret, online ballot.

ii) Online voting should not be done in a group setting or in the presence of persons who might influence the direction of a member’s vote.

iv) The Online Voting system (Brightspace) shall be in operation continuously from the start of the

election until closing of the polls on the final day of voting.

v) The methods of voting for all Board positions shall be as follows:

(1) Candidates’ names on the ballots shall be their surname and one or all of their given or chosen names. The names of all candidates shall be placed on each ballot in alphabetical order by last name.

(2) There shall be an option to “spoil ballot”

(3) Each voter shall indicate one choice for each ballot

(4) For positions with one candidate, the voting options shall be “yes”, “no”, and “spoil ballot”

vi) The voting period shall be at least two (2) school days.

vii) Each candidate and registered campaign is entitled to see a the official results from the voting software.

viii) There shall be no voting by proxy.

ix) The CRO is responsible for setting up the voter list by requesting the NetIDs for all DAGS members (i.e. enrolled part-time and full-time graduate students, excluding the MBA program)

x) In the event that a member with a disability requires assistance to use the online voting software, they should seek it from Dalhousie’s Accessibility Services to ensure impartial assistance.

8) ELECTION OFFICIALS

a) The Chief Returning Officer:

i) Shall be autonomous from the DAGS Board.

ii) Shall be appointed by the Council no later than January 31st of each year. In the case of a By-Election, a CRO must be appointed within 60 days of the start of the intended nomination period

iii) Shall not seek election for any position

iv) Be an enrolled graduate student for duration of their term

v) Shall not be permitted to vote in elections

vi) Has the authority to interpret election policies and/or rules where necessary.

vii) In addition, the CRO shall:

(1) Authorize all official notices and elections publicity;

(2) Set up the elections schedule, subject to the provisions in DAGS By-laws and this policy;

(3) Set up the voting page on Brightspace and act as a “facilitator” of the page.

(4) Set up the voting poll and ballots, including requesting voter list from the University Registrar’s Office;

(5) Receive and publish the official election results from the official voting software;

(6) Issue official election results to candidates and spokespersons, Council and the media for the society;

(7) Submit an electronic copy of a post-election report to the DAGS Board. The Chief Returning Officer shall not be paid until this report has been submitted.

 (8) Set and administer any elections events and monitor the conduct of the candidates at such forums;

(9) Work with the DAGS VP Student Life and Office Coordinator to arrange event logistics.

(10) Authenticate member eligibility before the campaign period.

(12) Send out an email to all eligible voters on the first day of elections that highlights all candidates and where to find out information about candidates and elections (ex. DAGS Website and Social Media). Email must be sent during business hours (8am-8pm Atlantic Time)

(14) Send out one campus wide email on the last day of campaign period notifying members when the voting period will open and how they can vote. Email must be sent during business hours (8am-8pm Atlantic Time)

(15) Send out voting reminder emails on each day of the voting period detailing how to vote. Email must be sent during business hours (8am-8pm Atlantic Time)

viii)

(16) Ensure the secure collection and destruction of personal identification materials, whether virtual or physical.

10) APPEALS OF ELECTION RESULTS

a) Any student may challenge the validity of an election result in a written submission to

the CRO within two (2) school days after the close of voting.

b) Written submissions appealing election or recount results shall contain the appellant's name, student number, telephone number and address, as well as a detailed explanation of the reason(s) for challenging the results.

c) The CRO shall investigate the appeal and decide on the appropriate action.

d) The CRO will render a decision within two school days. Appeals of this decision may be brought to the DAGS Board by the appellant within 48 hours of the CRO’s decision. Appeals to the DAGS Board decision are brought to the DSU Society Review Committee.

e) No record of vote shall be destroyed until thirty (30) days after the close of voting.