STUDENT ORGANIZATION ELECTIONS

The election of officers can be a difficult process for organizations especially if past elections have been cluttered with bias, disorganization, or a lack of consistent rules and procedures. Depending on the size of your organization, you may want to create an Election Committee, Commission, or Agency to administer the process. In addition, you should have WRITTEN policies and procedures for your election process. These policies/procedures should be reevaluated on a regular basis (prior to election time) to determine needed changes.

Elections via HornsLink

Student organizations have the ability to host elections via their HornsLink page. This tool is an effective resource with many features including the ability to: create ballots and control who can vote; using single vote, multiple choice, and even ranking formats; automatically calculate winners; have an instant run-off and more. To be effective, the student organization should update their HornsLink rosters with all current voting members.

To set up an online election for members of your student organization roster on HornsLink. Visit Creating an Organization Election for details and review “related articles” at the bottom of the screen for guidance on other features.

Robert's Rules of Order provides the following guidelines for nominations and elections:

A nomination is a motion that proposes that a person be elected to fill specific position - "I nominate Jane Doe for Vice President of Club ABC."

Methods of NOMINATION

By the Chair
more common for chair to nominate to fill committee instead of an office.

From the Floor
any member may nominate - often called open nominations

By a Committee
nominating committee (chosen in advance) submits nominations

By Ballot
nominating ballot is conducted in same manner as election ballot; everyone who receives a vote is nominated

By Petition
member shall become a nominee upon the petition of a specified number of members

Methods of ELECTION

Ballot election (two options)
a) Nominations for all offices are taken and one ballot with all offices is distributed
b) Separate ballots for each office are distributed

Viva Voce election
Candidates are voted on in order of nomination; when one candidate receives a majority vote, no more votes are taken on the remaining nominees

Roll Call election
member, when called upon, declares vote for each office

Cumulative voting
for positions held by more than one individual (ie., three directors), voter may choose more than one candidate (in this case, voter may pick one, two or three)
Here are some of the areas you might want to include in your election process:

**Election Committee**: scope of power; membership (selection and removal process); responsibilities

**Election Schedule**: timeline for nominations, filing, election, runoff

**Offices Available**: number and descriptions of positions

**Candidates**: qualifications for office; nomination/filing procedure

**Ballots**: order of candidate names

**Polls/Voting Sites**: when/where does voting take place (at a specified meeting or site); eligibility of voters (who is qualified to vote)

**Campaign Activities and Materials**: What, where, when and how; *UT Institutional Rules*

**Vote Tabulation**: who counts; how votes are counted (winner- majority, simple majority, and runoffs)

**Certification and Authority**: when and who certifies election results

**Enforcement of Election Rules**: violations and complaints; process for deciding if violation has occurred; penalties

**Appeals**: who to appeal to and by when

**Replacement of Vacant Seats**: process if a seat becomes vacant (appointment or election)

**Special points to consider**:Elections Committee members must be IMPARTIAL! They must not endorse any candidate by attending campaign functions, wearing buttons, or campaigning. They cannot publicly denounce any candidate. They are not to discuss with anyone, especially candidates, the confidential information discussed at committee meetings until that information is provided to all candidates or the general public. It is extremely important that the committee is unbiased.

It is important to develop a process for conducting a new election if tampering of the results has occurred. Reasons for annulment of an election must be serious, as should the penalty for those involved in the tampering.

It is important that your rules be clear and fair to all involved in the election. Remember the key words are IMPARTIAL, FAIR, CONSISTENT, AND ORGANIZED!