

## 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 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.

### Methods of Nomination and Election

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." It should be followed by a second motion and the nominated person should either accept or decline the nomination. Your election method should be determined by the Election Committee or outlined in your governing documents.

#### 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)

### Online Elections

Elections can take place in person and/or online. There are several online platforms capable of hosting student organization elections an online including HornsLink. The election 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. See our HornsLink Election Guide under the Student Organization Election heading on our site at <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sa/leading-successful-organizations.php>.

## Areas 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!