



STUDENT GOVERNMENT SUPREME COURT  
THE UNIVERSITY TEXAS AT AUSTIN

**Advisory Opinion: Determining the Impact of COVID-19 on  
the 2021 First-Year Representative Election Cycle**

JUSTICE HASTINGS and JUSTICE JONNALAGADDA deliver the  
opinion. CHIEF JUSTICE JAMES joins.

**SUPREME COURT OF THE  
STUDENT GOVERNMENT OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**

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**No. Fall 2021 – 003**

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Delivered August 18, 2021

**Summary:** This Advisory Opinion seeks to outline changes to election regulations for the 2021 First-Year Elections due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Fall of 2020, the Court issued Advisory Opinion 004, outlining changes to the campaign requirements for the First Year Representative Election in response to challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. These alterations included online submission of candidate paperwork and changing campaigning regulations regarding proximity to polling stations. While the University plans to return in person this fall, student safety and the accessibility of student elections remain a paramount concern. Therefore, the following areas of the Student Government Specific Election Code (SGSEC) will be modified for First-Year Elections due to the increasing uncertainty of the Delta variant.



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## **I. Filing of Candidate Paperwork**

§3.12 of the SGSEC outlines the necessity of filing paperwork in the Student Government Office (WCP 2.102). For the 2021 First Year Representative Election, all necessary paperwork may be turned in through the SG Office **OR** the [utexasvote.org](http://utexasvote.org) website.

## **II. Candidate Seminar**

§7.9(b) of the Campus Wide Election Code (CWEC) states that “attendance at the candidate seminar is required of each candidate running in a race that is part of the Campus-Wide elections process.” The Fall 2021 candidate seminar will be hybrid, with candidates having the choice to attend the September 14th meeting in person or via Zoom.

## **III. Tabling**

Tentatively, students will be allowed to campaign in-person for the Fall 2021 First-Year Elections. More specifically, tabling will take place during the Fall 2021 semester in-person, but we advise students to follow all CDC protocols as the COVID-19 Delta situation evolves. Candidates will be required to adhere to institutional guidelines in the event that restrictions are placed on in-person activities.

## **IV. Going Forward**

It seems every week that we learn something new about the spread of COVID-19. We can also expect development with the University’s guidelines in response to the CDC’s changing protocols. As such, the instruction provided in this Opinion is subject to change, and the Court reserves the right to adjust policy for the Fall 2021 First-Year Elections as it sees necessary to safeguard student health.

It is so ordered.