

The University Co-operative Society

Student Election Code

CHAPTER I: GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.01 This act shall be referred to and cited as the "University Co-op Student Election Code," or the "Co-op Election Code."

1.02 This Code shall apply to all aspects of student elections sponsored by The University Co-op.

1.03 References to the singular shall be construed to include the plural.

1.04 This Code shall become effective immediately after its passage by the University Co-op Board of Directors and shall supersede any and all previous Co-op election codes and rules.

1.05 All rules and regulations in this Code, and all rulings by the University Co-op **External Affairs Committee**, shall apply equally to campaigning on and off campus.

1.06 A copy of the Co-op Election Code shall be made available to each candidate, no later than the time of the candidate's filing to run for office. Any student may receive a full copy of the Co-op Election Code at any time.

CHAPTER II: DEFINITIONS

2.01 "Advisory Opinion" means a final decision reached by the **External Affairs Committee** concerning a specific issue.

2.02 "Co-op" refers to The University Co-operative Society.

2.03 "Student" means any person whose name appears on the current roster of the Registrar of The University of Texas at Austin. Only a student at the University of Texas at Austin, as defined by this Code, may seek a position as a Co-op Board Member.

2.04 "General Election" refers to the annual election of Student Board Members.

2.05 "Runoff Election" refers to all secondary elections held to resolve races not initially determined by a General Election.

2.06 "Executive Office" refers to the office of the President of the University Co-op, which acts as a liaison among the University Co-op **External Affairs Committee**, the Co-op Candidates, and the Office of the Dean of Students at The University of Texas at Austin.

2.07 "Co-op Candidate" refers to any student who has filed to run for office with the Co-op Executive Office.

2.08 "Campaign Materials" refers to all materials and literature concerning any candidate.

2.09 "Campaign" and "Campaigning" refer to any statement, literature, activity, or deliberate use of materials which has the effect of soliciting votes for an elective office. This includes the formation of any public group on a social networking site.

2.10 "Statement of Filing" refers to the document signed by the candidate that acknowledges the candidate is aware of and will adhere to the Student Election Code and the University Co-op Bylaws.

CHAPTER III: THE UNIVERSITY CO-OP EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

3.01 The University Co-op **External Affairs Committee** consists of current student members of the Co-op Board of Directors and shall be responsible for governing and overseeing the election process as well as reviewing election disputes concerning Co-op Candidates.

3.02 The **External Affairs Committee** shall interpret, execute, and enforce all election rules provided in this Code in a manner consistent with Co-op Election Code and the University Co-op By-Laws. The **External Affairs Committee** shall review and revise, as necessary, the Co-op Election Code annually.

3.03 The **External Affairs Committee** shall assess and execute the remedies and sanctions provided in this Code if it finds violation of any provision of this Code or **External Affairs Committee** rulings. The **External Affairs Committee** decisions and rulings are final.

3.04 The **External Affairs Committee** shall issue "Advisory Opinions" concerning any matter affecting the Co-op Election that may not be included within the language of the Election Code.

CHAPTER IV: CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY, RIGHTS, AND DUTIES

SUBCHAPTER A: Eligibility and Filing Process

4.01 An eligible undergraduate student candidate must have completed, by the time of applying to be a candidate, a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours credit in residence and have at least a 3.2000 grade point average (GPA).

4.02 Graduate student candidates must have completed, by the time of applying to be a candidate, a minimum of twelve (12) hours credit in residence.

4.03 An eligible candidate must be a full-time student working toward a degree and enrolled in the University of Texas at Austin. An undergraduate student must be registered for a minimum of 12 hours and a graduate student must be registered for a minimum of 9 hours, except that if the school or department defines a "full-time" student as requiring a greater number of hours, that greater number shall control. However, a student who has been granted a reduced course load accommodation from the Services for Students with Disabilities is considered a full-time student.

4.04 An eligible candidate must be able to serve for two years while maintaining full-time student status, as defined in sections 4.01 and 4.02, throughout the term starting May 1st of the current year. However, an undergraduate enrolled in at least six hours of coursework in his or her semester of expected graduation is considered a full-time student. No student shall run for Co-op Board without a good faith intention to complete his/her full term of two years.

4.05 Eligible students must be in residence at The University of Texas at Austin for his/her full term of two years. "In residence" is defined as the ability to attend board meetings and subcommittee meetings in person.

4.06 The two candidates with the highest vote count are elected, regardless of the colleges/schools in which they are enrolled.

4.07 No candidate shall be allowed to run if they hold an executive board position in Student Government, comprised of President and Vice President, Chief of Staff, Communications Director, Financial Director, Advocacy Director, and Administrative Director. No candidate shall be allowed to run if they hold a legislative branch elected position in Student Government. No candidate shall be allowed to run if they serve on the Texas Union Board of Directors.

4.08 Any Co-op Candidate who files his/her candidacy with the Election Board of the Student Government and/or the Texas Union Board of Directors for any existing or proposed office other than the Co-op Board of Directors position will have until 4:45 PM the day before the start of Co-op Elections campaign to withdraw and provide written evidence of his/her withdrawal from the Student Government and/or Texas Union Board of Directors to remain eligible for Co-op elections.

4.09 The **External Affairs Committee** and the Executive Office shall set and advertise the dates for filing in the student newspaper of the University and on the Co-op website. The filing deadline shall be no later than two (2) weeks prior to the first day of the election. All candidates seeking to run for Co-op Board must file the appropriate documents, as outlined in this Code, no later than the filing deadline. In the event that no one files to run for the position, the **External Affairs Committee** may extend the filing deadline.

4.10 The appropriate documents that all candidates seeking to run for Co-op Board must file in the Executive Office are:

- (a) a Statement of Filing;
- (b) a UT Academic Summary from the Office of the Registrar;
- (c) a personal statement relating to the candidate's interest in this position;
- (d) a resume;
- (e) a letter of intent detailing the candidate's eligibility to run and his/her good faith to stay a full-time student in residence for the full term of two years.

CHAPTER IV: CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY, RIGHTS, AND DUTIES (CONTINUED)

SUBCHAPTER A: Eligibility and Filing Process (CONTINUED)

4.11 At the time of filing, candidates shall be informed of the required Candidate Orientation and the ability to provide an agent if the candidate is unable to attend the Candidate Orientation.

4.12 At the time of filing, candidates shall each be entitled to one copy of this Code, Co-op By-Laws, and the Election Timetable.

4.13 Any candidate wishing to withdraw from the Co-op election may do so by turning in a written request no later than four (4) class days before the election.

SUBCHAPTER B: The Candidate Orientation

4.14 The Candidate Orientation shall be held on the same day as the filing deadline. The exact time and place of the orientation shall be set by the **External Affairs Committee** no later than

the beginning of the filing period.

4.15 The **External Affairs Committee** shall set the agenda for the Candidate Orientation. The agenda must include the assignment of ballot positions in accordance with this Code and may include explanations of this Code, review of the Election Timetable, and answering of candidate questions. Failure to attend the orientation shall put the absent candidate at a disadvantage over present candidates with respect to ballot positions as set forth below.

4.16 Ballot positions for all candidates shall be decided during the Candidate Orientation by blind drawing or other satisfactory, secret, random method devised by the **External Affairs Committee**. After all ballot positions are determined for those present, the same process shall be used to determine ballot position for the absent candidates.

4.17 No absent candidate may receive a ballot position above a candidate who was present at the Candidate Orientation. The first ballot position available to absent candidates shall be after the last position assigned to a candidate who was present.

4.18 The **External Affairs Committee** will certify each candidate's eligibility prior to the Candidate Orientation. Candidates who fail to meet eligibility requirements will be disqualified immediately and notified of this action in writing.

SUBCHAPTER C: Financial Disclosure

4.19 Each candidate for Co-op elections must keep accurate and up-to-date records of all campaign receipts and expenditures.

4.20 Receipts must be provided for all campaign expenditures.

4.21 Contributions to a candidate by individuals or organizations are not allowed.

4.22 No candidate is allowed to financially contribute to another candidate's campaign. Sharing of campaign money and resources is strictly prohibited.

4.23 Each candidate's financial records must list identifying information (vendor, item, etc.) and amount of each expense. Expenditures of non-monetary assets or in-kind efforts must be listed and valued at their fair market value, as determined by the **External Affairs Committee**. Each financial disclosure statement must have all expenditure receipts attached. All expenses must be included in the financial disclosure report.

4.24 The **External Affairs Committee** shall provide standardized forms for the purposes of this Code by the filing deadline.

4.25 Financial disclosure statements shall be filed with the **External Affairs Committee** in the Executive Office four (4) days before the day of elections and within twenty-four (24) hours after any expenditure thereafter.

4.26 Each candidate's financial records shall be available for public inspection. Each candidate must submit a spreadsheet in digital or paper format summarizing his or her campaign expenditures to the **External Affairs Committee** for each disclosure required by Section 4.24.

4.27 Failure to file accurate financial disclosure statements by the deadlines listed in this section, or falsification of financial statements, shall qualify the candidate for disqualification by the **External Affairs Committee**.

CHAPTER V: CAMPAIGN PROVISIONS AND PROCEDURES

- 5.01 Candidates shall spend no more than \$300 dollars on their campaign. Campaign expenditures are the responsibility of the candidate and will not be reimbursed by the Co-op.
- 5.02 All candidates are required to submit copies of their campaign leaflets, flyers, or any other collateral used in their campaign to the Executive Office by the due date specified in the election timeline.
- 5.03 No campaigning will be allowed until the official campaign period has begun as determined by the Co-op **External Affairs Committee**.
- 5.04 Candidates and their supporters may make personal "appearances," personal telephone calls, or personal emails (no class-wide, school/college-wide, or university-wide mass emails), as long as no paid campaign workers are employed. Candidates can campaign anywhere, except within any University Co-op facility, physical or digital (i.e., Co-op Facebook/Twitter page).
- 5.05 Candidates are responsible for all actions and conduct of their representatives.
- 5.06 All candidates, and their representatives, shall be responsible for following all applicable University Co-op and University of Texas policies and regulations.
- 5.07 No candidate or representative shall remove, obscure, or damage any other candidate's election materials, which is in compliance with the posting policies of that locale. Any evidence of doing so will result in immediate disqualification.
- 5.08 Candidates shall refrain from knowingly deceptive or misleading campaign activities, including any act or statement reasonably calculated to injure or compromise the rights or interests of any student, faculty, or staff member.
- 5.09 Candidates shall not engage in campaigning activities that subject any student, faculty, or staff member to demeaning verbal harassment as determined by the **External Affairs Committee**.
- 5.10 No Co-op Board member may endorse any candidate on behalf of the Co-op Board of Directors.
- 5.11 Candidates are permitted to use the internet, including social networking sites, to campaign. Candidates shall abide by the same rules of conduct online as offline.
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CHAPTER VI: ELECTION TIMETABLE AND PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

- 6.01 No changes to the Election Rules may be enacted within four (4) weeks of the General Election.
- 6.02 The University Co-op shall advertise in the student newspaper of the University the following information for each candidate: name, position sought, major(s), and a statement of no more than 150 words. The **External Affairs Committee** shall be able to restrict any untrue information.
- 6.03 No candidate running for Co-op Board position shall participate in vote tabulation.

6.04 Complaints regarding the Co-op Board election or allegations of election fraud must be directed to the Co-op **External Affairs Committee** immediately.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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