X. Direct Elections

APPROVAL AUTHORITY: Elections Committee
REQUIRED VOTE: Simple Majority

SECONDARY APPROVAL AUTHORITY: Senate
REQUIRED VOTE: Simple Majority

CHANGES TAKE EFFECT: January 1st of the following year.

The purpose of the Direct Elections Manual (herein the “Manual”) is to enumerate the processes, rules, and procedures for directly electing officers of the Student Government Association of Northeastern University (herein the “Association”). Every candidate for direct election, as prescribed in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association, must adhere to this Manual. This Manual shall be available to the University community.

A direct election is the process in which all full-time undergraduate students (herein “the student body”) take part in electing Association leadership. This serves to reinforce the mission of the Association, which is to be the general advocate on behalf of the student body and serve as the liaison between the student body and University faculty, staff, administration, and the general public.

The Elections Committee (herein the “Committee”) is a standing Association committee, and is responsible for overseeing, regulating, and conducting the Association’s elections. The Elections Committee is chaired by the Elections Committee Chair (herein the “Chair”).

The Senate may override rules prescribed in the manual by a two-thirds vote.

1. Nominations
   1. Intent to Run Forms and Slate Declarations Forms shall be made available three full academic weeks prior to the Full Body Senate at which candidates are nominated.
   1. Intent to Run Forms shall require signatures of two percent of the undergraduate student body at the time that the forms are released.
   2. Each candidate for office must submit his or her own Intent to Run Form to be qualified for nomination.
   2. At the time of a Full Body Senate called by the Executive Cabinet, each candidate will be nominated independently. The Committee must be notified within twenty-four hours if a Presidential candidate and an EVP candidate want to run on the same slate.
   1. A nomination shall be considered void if the Slate Declaration Form is not submitted to the Committee at least two hours prior to the Candidates’ Briefing.
   2. The Committee shall notify the slate of the status of its Slate Declaration Form after reviewing it at least one hour before the Candidates’ Briefing.
   3. Should the Committee reject any part of the Slate Declaration Form, the slate will be allowed to resubmit their form by the Candidates’ Briefing.
   3. Should any candidate be removed from the ballot during the campaign period, the Committee will decide by simple majority whether to accept emergency nominations. If so decided, the Committee shall accept emergency nominations for a period of twenty-four hours. At the conclusion of this period, the Senate shall be notified of all emergency nominations.
2. **Slates**

1. A candidate for President and a candidate for Executive Vice President must share a slate.
2. Voters must cast a ballot for exactly one slate or for “no confidence”. Voters are not given the option to vote for candidates from two or more different slates.
3. Each slate must fill out the “Slate Declaration Form” to be approved by a simple majority of the Committee. Slate Declaration Forms are due to the Chair at least two hours prior to the Candidates’ Briefing.
   1. The Slate Declaration Form may be rejected by simple majority vote of the Committee for the following reasons:
      1. A slate name is deemed inappropriate;
      2. Copyright infringement;
      3. An individual on the Slate Declaration Form is not a candidate;
      4. The Slate Declaration form is incomplete.
      5. Any other reason approved by two-thirds majority of the Committee.
   2. In all instances, rejections must be accompanied by the reason for rejection.

3. **Candidates’ Briefing**

1. Within seventy-two hours of the close of nominations, but not less than twenty-four hours after, the Committee will convene a single meeting with all candidates and a campaign worker from each campaign.
2. The purpose of the Candidates’ Briefing is to educate the candidates regarding election and campaigning policies. The Candidates’ Briefing will act as an informational session for all candidates. During the Candidate’s Briefing, this Manual shall be introduced, and all applicable information pertaining to elections shall be presented. The minutes and memoranda of formal agreements, if any, will be distributed to the campaigns and Committee members within twenty-four hours after the meeting.
3. The Committee may excuse a candidate under extenuating circumstances by a simple majority vote.
4. At the Candidates’ Briefing, the Chair shall notify all candidates of the places and times of all voting stations and any other specified areas of campus that are off-limits for campaigning.
5. Candidates shall advise all individuals assisting with their respective campaigns to adhere to this manual and any formal agreements made at the Candidates’ Briefing.

4. **Elections Timetable**

1. The Campaign Period will commence at midnight following the Candidates' Briefing.
   1. This period, including the voting period, shall be no longer than three weeks and no less than two weeks.
   2. No campaign-related activities are permitted before this period.
      1. Campaign related activities include, but are not limited to any activity directly relating to obtaining votes in the election. Disseminating biographical information, qualifications and goals, upon request, does not constitute a campaign related activity.
      2. The procurement of campaign-related materials, by the candidates and their respective campaigns, also does not constitute a campaign related activity.
      3. No campaign-related materials may be released to the public before the commencement of the campaign period.
2. Online voting will occur during the last seven full days of the campaign period. Online voting will end on the last day of the campaign period.

5. **Campaign Finance**

1. The Direct Election Fund will provide each qualified slate with a sum of $1000 for campaign purposes. Slates may spend no more than the amount prescribed by the Committee. In the event that a slate does not spend the entirety of its allotted funds, the remaining funds shall be returned to the election fund.
2. All campaign material must identify the slate sponsoring the material. It shall read, "Paid for by the
3. All slates must disclose to the Committee all campaign spending and receipts with applicable forms, according to the financial disclosure timeline.
   1. The cumulative summary report is due at noon on each Monday during the campaign period.
   2. The final report is due at noon the day following the close of the election.
4. The Committee shall review and approve or disapprove slates' financial disclosure forms within three business days.
5. The Committee’s viewing of and deliberation on spending reports shall be held in Executive Session. Financial Disclosure Forms shall be kept confidential between each slate and the Committee members until the Committee’s final report on the election.

6. Campaign Rules
   1. A "Campaign Worker" is defined as a person who performs work, supplies services, or puts forth effort for the goal of electing a particular slate, at the behest or knowledge of a member of a slate or their designee. A campaign worker cannot be a voting member of the Committee.
   2. Candidates and campaign workers are subject to University policies at all times. Violations of University policy should be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
   3. Candidates shall respect other candidates' right to campaign and advertise.
   4. Candidates and campaign workers shall not enter students' rooms or suites for the purpose of campaigning or encouraging students to vote, unless expressly invited by the student.
   5. Candidates and campaign workers shall not enter classes in session for the purpose of campaigning or encouraging students to vote, unless permitted by the professor or instructor.
   6. Candidates and campaign workers shall not enter student group or organization meetings for the purpose of campaigning or encouraging students to vote, unless permitted or invited to by the organization.
   7. Candidates and campaign workers are prohibited from intimidating voters or directly facilitating voting.
   8. Candidates and campaign workers are prohibited from campaigning in the presence of a voting station.

7. Election Promotion
   1. Any giveaways used for voting incentives shall be determined and distributed by the Committee. All giveaways shall be awarded on a random basis.
   2. Candidates shall submit personal information to the Committee by noon the day following nominations. This information will be posted on the myNEU portal and the Association's website.
      1. Candidate information may also be distributed in other Association publications at the discretion of the Executive Cabinet.
      2. Information provided for voters will include each slate’s name, nominees’ names, graduation years, majors, minors, and descriptions of their Association experience (including committee membership, positions held, awards received, length of involvement in the Association, and a platform / personal statement no longer than 500 words).
      3. Candidates must submit a headshot of themselves for the ballot and various elections promotion purposes.
      4. The Committee shall be responsible for reviewing the submitted information and editing said information if deemed necessary.
   3. Candidates are allowed and encouraged to participate in speaking engagements, including sanctioned public debates, during the campaign period.
      1. The Committee shall be responsible for coordinating Association-sanctioned public debates and/or town hall meetings with Northeastern student media, student organizations, and Students-at-Large to be held following nominations and before the first day of voting.
      1. Only the Chair or his or her designees may declare an event to be a public debate. A public debate may only be declared a public debate prior to the start of the event.
1. Without the written consent of the Chair or his or her designees an event is not considered a public debate.
2. Public debates must be scheduled on the Student Life calendar via OrgSync no less than one week prior to the event.

2. Public debates must consist of all presidential candidates, all EVP candidates, or all candidates for both positions.

2. Student organizations officially recognized by the Center for Student Involvement, excluding the Association, and/or Students-at-Large may invite candidates to speak at private events anytime during the campaign period.

4. The Committee may set up voting stations to encourage students to vote.
   1. The Committee must administer the voting stations.
   2. Computer screens in voting stations must be concealed.
   3. The Committee will provide candidate information at the election booth. No candidate shall be given preferential treatment.
   4. Candidates and campaign workers may not campaign in the vicinity of the voting station, as determined by the Committee.

5. The Committee, and The Committee only, may facilitate mobile voting stations within Northeastern University residence halls.
   1. The Committee must administer the mobile voting stations.
   2. Mobile voting stations must be concealed.
   3. The Committee will provide candidate information at the mobile voting station. No candidate shall be given preferential treatment.
   4. Candidates and campaign workers may not campaign in the residence hall during The Committee’s presence.

8. Voting Procedure
1. Each full-time undergraduate student enrolled at the beginning of the campaign period has one vote.
2. Each eligible student may cast his or her vote for all directly elected positions via the myNEU portal.
3. All votes cast are final.
4. In the case that there are more than two slates running, Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), a derivative of preferential voting, will be used.
5. The Committee, at a time up to twelve hours before the end of the scheduled voting period, pending Informational Technology Services constrains, may extend the voting period by no more than five days, with a maximum of one possible extension, by a simple majority vote.
6. A minimum of twenty percent of the student body must cast ballots in order to validate the results of the election. If this threshold is not met, the Full Body Senate determines the winner of the election from the slates previously presented on the ballot by a simple majority vote.
7. If there is a tie, the Full Body Senate determines the winner of the election from the slates previously presented on the ballot by a simple majority vote.

9. Election Results
1. Election results shall be confidential until their official announcement, with the exception of the total number of votes cast released publicly on the Association’s website.
2. At the close of the voting period, a meeting shall take place for the purpose of verifying the results of the election. At this meeting all records shall be turned over to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee. In attendance shall also be a Senior Leadership Team Member, or designee, and the University Vice President for Information Services, or designee.
3. The Chair will work with the Executive Cabinet to coordinate the announcement of the results of the election, upon verification of the slates’ campaign financial disclosure materials and verification of the election results.
4. All vote count information shall be made public upon announcement of the election results.
10. Grievances

1. A grievance is an allegation that a candidate, a slate, or a slate’s associated campaign worker(s) have violated the Manual.

2. A grievance may be filed by any current Northeastern student, faculty, or staff and shall be submitted to the Committee via a grievance form (available on the Association’s website or in the Association office) within seventy-two hours of the alleged violation. This limitation may be overturned by a two-thirds vote of the Committee. Grievances will not be accepted after the public announcement of the election results.

3. A grievance shall be anonymous if submitted as such. The filer shall submit a complete grievance form save their name and university email address. The Northeastern University ID number shall be subject to verification by the university administration.

4. If a grievance is filed, the Chair shall inform the slate in question of the grievance within twenty-four hours with at least one additional voting member of the Committee as a witness.

5. Provided the Chair finds the grievance complete and with merit, the Committee will convene a hearing within no less than twenty-four hours, and no more than seventy-two hours of notification. The date, time, location and the agenda shall be specified by the Chair.

6. The results of the election shall not be publicly announced if any meritorious grievance is pending against any slate.

7. The hearing shall be held in accordance with the Grievance Hearing Script outlined in Appendix A of this Manual.

8. If a candidate, a slate, or a slate’s associated campaign worker(s) is found to be in violation of the Manual, per the filed grievance, the slate will be subject to sanctions. The Committee will have the following sanctions at its disposal during the election period:
   1. Assignment of demerit points to a slate.
      1. Each slate is limited to three demerit points. Any subsequent demerit points will result in disqualification of the slate.
      2. Whole demerit points shall be assigned based on the severity of the infraction. The Committee shall only assign whole demerit points.
   2. Placing holds on reimbursements to the slate from the election fund.
   3. Mandating the removal or alteration of slate’s offending campaign material in any medium.
   4. Adjusting of applicable tainted votes for each slate.
   5. Disqualifying a slate.

8. If multiple violations are brought forth to the Committee in one grievance, the Committee shall consider each violation separately.

9. The Committee will immediately announce a decision, with sanctions if applicable, at the conclusion of the deliberation.

10. All sanctions will immediately be made public.

11. Appeals

1. An appeal may only be based upon the following criteria:
   1. Established policies and procedures were not followed, and/or
   2. The Committee’s decision was arbitrary or capricious, and /or
   3. The severity of the assigned demerit points was unnecessarily harsh in nature compared to the severity of the infraction.

2. A slate must submit a written appeal request to the Student Body President within two days of the decision including but not limited to the following, when applicable:
   1. All decision memos
   2. All supporting materials presented or provided to the Committee
3. The Parliamentarian will receive the appeal and determine if the appeal has merit based on criteria established in this Manual. An appeal that has been found to have merit will be considered by the Operational Appeals Board within three days of receipt.
4. The decision of the Operational Appeals Board is final.

12. **Post-Election Report**
The Committee Chair shall prepare a report evaluating elections performance, and policies within this Manual, following each Direct Election. The report may also include any recommendations for amendments to this Manual. The initial report shall be submitted to the Senate no later than June 30th. Any addenda to the report shall be submitted no later than September 15th. The final report, including addenda, shall be made available on the Association website no later than the end of September,
Appendix A: Grievance Hearing Procedure

1. Definitions
A.1.1 The Complainant is the party filing grievance charges against a campaign, limited to three representatives, one of which shall be delegated as speaker.
A.2.2 The Campaign is the campaign accused of violating the Manual, limited to three representatives, one of which shall be delegated as speaker.
A.2.3 Witnesses are individuals who are not members of the Complainant or the Campaign.

2. Inherent Rights
A.2.1 The Committee reserves the right to require a party to restate, change, or terminate a given question if it is deemed irrelevant, argumentative, or otherwise inappropriate.
A.2.2 The Committee shall reserve the right to declare a party in contempt should an action warrant such reprimand. If so, a party may be subject to a loss of right to participate in the hearing process.
A.2.3 Parties shall have only the right to call points of parliamentary inquiry (i.e. to ask the Chair a question regarding the parliamentary rules governing the hearing), and points of personal privilege (i.e. a request related to personal comfort or safety).

3. Procedure
A.3.1 The Chair shall state the charges brought against the Campaign.
A.3.2 The Complainant, then Campaign, shall present opening statements, and declare all witnesses.
A.3.2.1 The statements shall be considered testimony and their respective sides of the story.
A.3.2.2 Any evidentiary materials must be disclosed during testimony of parties.
A.3.2.3 No new evidence shall be allowed after this point unless at the request or permission of the Committee.
A.3.3 Each witness shall give testimony and be examined exclusive of all other witnesses.
A.3.3.1 Witnesses may only address evidentiary materials that were disclosed in opening testimony.
A.3.3.2 A witness is excused from the hearing after the conclusion of his or her examination. Should a witness wish to be present, he or she may not in any capacity interact with either party.
A.3.3.3 The Complainant shall call their witnesses first, followed by the witnesses of the Campaign.
A.3.3.4 For each witness, the party calling the witness shall first question their witness.
A.3.3.5 The remaining party shall question the witness.
A.3.3.6 The Committee shall question the witness.
A.3.4 Complainant and Campaign Examination
A.3.4.1 The Complainant may question the Campaign.
A.3.4.2 The Committee may question the Campaign.
A.3.4.3 The Campaign may question the Complainant.
A.3.4.4 The Committee may question the Complainant.
A.3.4.5 The Committee may question both parties.
A.3.5 The Complainant and Campaign shall each have two minutes for a closing statement.
A.3.6 The Committee shall deliberate in executive session.
Appendix B: Glossary

This glossary is a comprehensive set of definitions for terms used in the Direct Elections Manual and throughout the elections process. The Elections Committee reserves the right to define any term not listed below.

1. Campaign Period: The time between the Candidates’ Briefing and the close of voting.
2. Campaign-Related Activities: Any activity relating to obtaining votes in the election for certain candidates or slates.
3. Campaign-Related Material: Websites, chalking, posters, club cards or anything that promotes one campaign over another, including digital media.
4. Campaigning: Creating or distributing Campaign-Related Material, giving speeches, or advocating for any candidates or slates.
5. Campaign Worker: A person is a campaign worker if he or she performs work, supplies services, or puts forth effort for the goal of electing a particular slate, at the behest or knowledge of a member of that slate or his or her designee.
6. Candidates: Those running for President and Executive Vice President. They are nominated by Senators and affirmed by two percent of the undergraduate student body.
7. Demerit Points: Sanctions for minor violations of the manual. Each grievance that is sustained will be assessed demerit points that will be added to the total of that candidate. If there are more than three demerit points, a campaign will be disqualified.
8. Directly Facilitating Voting: Providing the means and opportunity for students to vote.
9. Disqualifying a Campaign: Not allowing a campaign to run due to lack of adherence to the rules.
10. Extenuating Circumstances: Illness, death in the family, serious prior academic engagement; all verified with a written notice.
11. Formal Agreement: A written and signed understanding between the slates at the Candidate’s Briefing regarding a certain aspect of the election not covered by this manual.
12. Instant Runoff Voting (IRV): Voters are told to rank slates in order of preference. If there is not a slate with a majority of the votes, the slate with the least number of votes is eliminated. If the eliminated slate was a voter’s first choice, then their vote gets cast for their second choice slate, and so on. IRV is only used in situations where more than two slates are on the ballot.
13. Intent to Run Forms: Forms filled out by each candidate that include the names, NUID numbers, email addresses, and written signatures of two percent of the undergraduate student body.
14. Intimidating Voters: Forcing voters to vote a certain way, or persuading them to vote for a particular candidate at the time the vote is cast.
15. No Confidence: When a voter does not wish to vote for any of the slates running, they may select no confidence.
16. Private Event: Anytime a candidate discusses his or her candidacy outside of his or her private residence with the intent of gaining votes. This event is not sponsored by SGA and does not require all candidates to be present.
17. Public Debate: Any event in which two or more candidates engage in the process of answering questions, and where the event has been publicized through any form of media or where the audience consists primarily of affiliates of any specific group (for example, student organizations).
18. Respect: Not defacing any of the other campaign’s campaign material or producing any negative material about another candidate or slate.
19. Sanctions: Levels of punishment according to the offense committed.
20. Slate: A slate consists of exactly one Presidential Candidate and exactly one Executive Vice Presidential Candidate running together.
21. Tainted Vote: Any vote deemed by the Committee to have been earned in a manner or situation in violation of this manual.
23. With Merit: Grievances that have been filled out completely and present significant evidence that a violation has occurred.
Appendix C: Center for Student Involvement Chalking Policy

The policy below is the most updated chalking policy approved by the Center for Student Involvement (4/2011). The Center for Student Involvement can update this policy at any time. Candidates are responsible for the most updated version at the time of the campaign. All violations of this policy should not be reported as a grievance, and should be reported to the Center for Student Involvement.

Candidates can purchase sidewalk chalk using money from the elections fund to be approved by the Director of the Center for Student Involvement, or a designee. Candidates may not use chalk provided by the Center for Student Involvement, purchased with the Student Activity Fee.

1. Who can chalk
   1. People or groups sponsored by recognized student organizations and university department
   2. These people or groups must promote and pertain to the general Northeastern community and interest

2. Content
   1. 15 words maximum
   2. Name of Event
   3. Place of Event
   4. Date of Event
   5. Time of Event
   6. Sponsor(s) of Event

3. Where chalking is prohibited
   1. Any step, stoop or vertical surface
   2. Pillars, risers, windows, steps

4. Where chalking is allowed
   1. Snell Library Quad
   2. Snell Engineering walkway, leading toward Forsyth Street
   3. Centennial Common (between Shillman and Ryder Halls, and Forsyth and Leon Streets)
   4. Sculpture Park and Robinson Quad to the Steps of Columbus Garage Bridge
   5. Stetson Quad from Speare Common to Opera Place and Forsyth Street
   6. World Series Way (between Forsyth Street and Hayden Hall)
   7. West Village Quad
   8. Bulfinch Pathway from Krentzman Quad to Snell Library Quad
   9. Walkway’s surrounding International Village (not to include Ruggles MBTA station steps and landings)
   10. Cabot Court Quadrangle
   11. Walkway from Hayden Hall to the steps of Snell Library/Snell Engineering

5. What chalk may be used
   1. Chalk made available by the Center for Student Involvement
   2. Any other chalk or writing done with other chalk will be considered vandalism and is subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Any cleaning charges as a result of using non-approved chalk will be billed to the student organization and individual.
Appendix D: Sample Intent to Run Form

Intent to Run forms will be made available on the Association Website. Intent to Run Form for Student Body President or Executive Vice President

This nomination form requires:

Signatures from 2% of the undergraduate student body at Northeastern University

A candidate profile to be posted on the myNEU website during the voting period, in accordance with Direct Elections Policies Manual, Section 7.2: include name, graduation year, major(s), minor(s), and a description of your Association experience (including committee membership, positions held, awards received, how long you have been involved in the Association, and a platform/personal statement no longer than 500 words)

This form is due to the Chair prior to the Full Body Senate for Nominations. Please note that all candidates are required to run on a shared slate (Please refer to the Direct Elections Manual Section 2). Any questions can be directed to the Chair.

Sample Intent to Run Form:

Intent to Run Form:
Student Body President or Executive Vice President

This nomination form requires:

- **Signatures from 2% of the undergraduate student body at Northeastern University** (345 students)
- **A candidate profile to be posted on the myNEU website during the voting period, in accordance with Direct Elections Policies Manual, Section 7.2**: include name, graduation year, major(s), minor(s), and a description of your Association experience (including committee membership, positions held, awards received, how long you have been involved in the Association, and a platform/personal statement no longer than 500 words)

This form is due to the Chair of Elections Committee prior to the Full Body Senate for Nominations.

Candidate Information

Name: ________________________________________________________________

NUID #: ____________________________________________________________

E-Mail Address: ______________________________________________________
By signing below, I attest that I meet the following requirement as prescribed by the Association’s Bylaws:

- President: Association membership for 25 weeks (not including intersessions or time spent on the inactive roster)
- Executive Vice President: Senatorial membership for 25 weeks (not including intercessions or time spent on the inactive roster)

Signature: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

By signing below, I am supporting ________________________’s nomination for Student Body President or Executive Vice President. I understand that a signature is not an endorsement or vote. I understand that my email address and information will not be given out, but may be used for communication from SGA.

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Appendix E: Grievance Report Form

Grievance Report Forms will be available in the Association office and on the Association website.

GRIEVANCE REPORT FORM

This form is to be used to file a grievance against a candidate for office based on violation(s) you have personally witnessed during the course of the campaign period. The Direct Elections Policies Manual defines a grievance as an “allegation that a candidate and/or his or her campaign workers have knowingly violated the Association’s governing documents (including this manual).”

For any grievance report to be found with merit and/or considered, it must be submitted prior to the certification of election results.

Submitter’s Information

Name(s): ________________________________

NU ID Number(s): ____________________________

Email(s): _________________________________

Phone Number(s): __________________________

Please Note: If you would like to submit this grievance anonymously, please omit all information except your NU ID number. This will be used to verify your student status by a member of the Northeastern administration. Your identity will not be shared with any member of the Elections Committee or partied of this grievance. By submitting this grievance anonymously you are forfeiting your right to represent yourself at a hearing or any subsequent appeals.

Violation Information

Name of Slate: ______________________________

If applicable, name of Candidate: ______________________________

Date of Violation: ____________________________

Time of Violation: ____________________________

Location of Violation: _________________________

Please provide a full description of the violation(s) you witnessed, including any and all relevant evidence. You may attach additional sheets of paper, documents, photographs, etc.
By signing and dating below, I confirm that all information written on this form and/or attached to this form is accurate and truthful.

Signature Date
Please return (in a sealed envelope) to the SGA office, addressed: GRIEVANCE CLAIM

ATTN: Elections Committee, Chair

--- or ---

Email a scanned copy to the Chair.
Appendix F: Slate Declaration Form

Slate Declaration Forms will be available in the Association office and on the Association website.

Sample Slate Declaration Form:

Slate Declaration Form

This form is to be filled out by each slate, including slates that only have one candidate, and turned in to the Chair at least two hours prior to the Candidates’ Briefing.

Name of Slate ________________________________

Candidate for President __________________________

Candidate for Executive Vice President __________________________

Signed,

______________________________
Candidate for President, Date

______________________________
Candidate for Executive Vice President, Date