



# Constitution and Bylaws of the COMMITTEE ON STUDENT ELECTIONS

*Revised by the Committee, February 2024*

## **ARTICLE I: AUTHORITY**

1. In accordance with the powers and obligations delegated by the Constitution of the Johns Hopkins University Student Government Association (SGA), the Committee on Student Elections (CSE) shall conduct and regulate all SGA elections.
2. The SGA Constitution authorizes the CSE to operate independently of the rest of the SGA during election periods.
3. The CSE is explicitly authorized to set all election procedures and officer qualifications.
4. Should a candidate object to a decision made by the CSE, they are entitled to file an appeal with the Judiciary.
  - 4.1. Decisions rendered by the Judiciary are binding. However, the CSE reserves the right to escalate Judiciary decisions to the Director of Leadership Engagement and Experiential Development (LEED), whose arbitrations are binding and final.
5. Any undergraduate student who interferes with the procedures of a given election, regardless of candidacy, shall be referred by the CSE to the proper authorities for appropriate disciplinary action.

## **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

1. The CSE shall consist of members, led by a Chair, appointed with the advice and consent of the incumbent Chair and a majority vote of the SGA Senate.
  - 1.1. If no incumbent Chair exists, the SGA Executive President must appoint one with the advice and consent of a majority vote of the Senate.
  - 1.2. Only undergraduate students in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences or the Whiting School of Engineering may serve on the CSE.
  - 1.3. Incumbent members of the SGA and/or Class Officers are barred from CSE membership.
2. Members of the CSE shall serve one-year terms, beginning on September 1 and ending on August 31.
  - 2.1. Members are permitted to serve up to four consecutive terms.
3. The CSE shall elect, by a simple majority under ordinary circumstances, a *Chair* to serve as both the presiding officer of the committee and the chief liaison with the SGA Senate and the Leadership Engagement and Experiential Development (LEED) Office.
4. The CSE shall elect, by a simple majority, a *Vice Chair* to serve as a second-in-command of the committee and assist the Chair with assorted administrivia, in addition to serving as an interim Chair should the presiding Chair be unable to exercise their duties.

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5. The CSE shall elect, by a simple majority, a *Financial Officer* to serve as a liaison between the Department of Student Life and the Leadership Engagement and Experiential Development (LEED) Office with respect to the committee's fiscal prerogatives.
6. The CSE shall elect, by a simple majority, a *Secretary* to take minutes during committee meetings, log relevant events into Hopkins Groups, maintain the CSE website, update the CSE calendar, and liaise with the Scheduling and Event Services Office.
7. Elections specified in Article II §§ 3, 4, 5, and 6 must occur no later than September.
  - 7.1. In the event of a vacancy, it is within the prerogative of the Chair, with the advice and consent of a simple majority of the CSE, to designate *pro tempore* positions.
8. A CSE member may have their membership revoked only by a simple majority vote of the CSE. This process may be initiated at the discretion of the Chair upon evaluation of a formal complaint to the Chair by a member of the CSE or SGA.
9. Quorum shall consist of a minimum of 60% of active CSE members, including the Chair. Should the Chair or Vice Chair be unable to attend, the CSE reserves the right to designate a *Chair pro tempore* (elected by a simple majority vote of present CSE members) to exercise the duties of the Chair until strictly necessary.

### **ARTICLE III: ELECTION PROCEDURES**

1. There shall be a total of five elections per academic year: the SGA Freshman Class Council Elections, the SGA Executive Board Elections, the SGA Senate Elections, the SGA Class Programming Council Elections, and the HOP Elections.
2. Election Timeline
  - 2.1. SGA Freshman Class Council Elections must occur before the end of October.
  - 2.2. SGA Executive Board Elections, SGA Senate Elections, SGA Class Programming Council Elections, and the HOP Elections must occur before the end of April.
  - 2.3. Given extenuating circumstances, election timelines are subject to change at the sole discretion of the CSE.
3. Types of Candidates
  - 3.1. *Individual Candidate*: a candidate who meets all the requirements of candidacy and whose name appears on the election ballot.
  - 3.2. *Ticket*: a group of students who campaign as a team and publicly endorse one another for their respective offices. The names of ticket members appear individually on the ballot.
  - 3.3. *Write-In Candidate*: a candidate whose name does not appear on the ballot, but for whom constituents vote nonetheless by entering their name into the write-in section of the ballot.
4. Eligibility
  - 4.1. Potential officeholders must be available to attend SGA General Body meetings, which occur every Tuesday at 7:00PM.
  - 4.2. Candidates must not be current members of the CSE.

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- 4.3. If running for either Executive Board or Sophomore, Junior, or Senior Class Council, a candidate must be in their first, second, or third year—as defined by the Registrar’s Office—at Johns Hopkins, respectively.
- 4.4. If running for Freshman Class Council, a candidate must be in their first year at Johns Hopkins, as defined by the Registrar’s Office.
- 4.5. Should an extenuating circumstance emerge, it is within the purview of the CSE to modify the definitions listed in Article III §§ 4.3 and 4.4.
5. Write-In Candidates
  - 5.1. With the exception of Article IV, § 1.1, write-in candidates are bound by all rules and regulations stipulated in this Constitution and are subject to having their candidacy invalidated should they violate any of said rules.

### **ARTICLE IV: ELECTION RULES AND REGULATIONS**

1. An election cycle is defined as the period between the beginning of the first information session and the announcement of the results of the election *or* the conclusion of any dispute proceedings, whichever is later.
2. Rules on Attendance
  - 2.1. Candidates must attend the following in order to be considered a candidate:
    - 2.1.1. One of three mandatory information sessions
    - 2.1.2. Any candidate “meet-and-greet” socials
    - 2.1.3. Executive Board debates
  - 2.2. The CSE shall inform the student body of the respective information sessions and socials at least a week in advance.
  - 2.3. Candidates will not be placed on the election ballot if they fail to submit the Candidate Agreement Form and the GPA Verification Form by the deadline imposed by the CSE.
3. Individuals not contesting an election but nonetheless aiding a candidate as part of their “campaign team” are also subject to the below-mentioned regulations.
  - 3.1. A campaign team consists of anyone, candidate or not, who is campaigning for a particular candidate.
    - 3.1.1. Individuals who post messages in favor of a given candidate on their social media are explicitly considered to be part of a candidate’s campaign team and thus, all restrictions delineated below apply to their conduct.
    - 3.1.2. Posts made on behalf of a particular candidate by a member of their team must be explicitly endorsed by the candidate; endorsements must be public knowledge (i.e. included on any post) and prominently displayed.
  - 3.2. Violations of Article IV by non-candidate campaign team members will be considered by the CSE as committed under the auspices of the candidate in question.

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3.2.1. While the CSE reserves the right to examine infractions on a case-by-case basis, candidates should reasonably expect to be subjected to disciplinary action based on the actions of campaign team members.

3.2.2. In circumstances involving deliberate sabotage, where an individual's adherence to this stipulation is being deliberately and demonstrably undermined by an opposing candidate or their campaign team, the opposing candidate will be held accountable as if the violation were their own.

### 4. Rules on Campaign Finance

4.1. No candidate for any election shall spend more than US\$200.00 on their individual campaign.

4.2. If candidates campaign on a ticket, they may combine funds so long as all of their names appear on any jointly-purchased promotional material.

4.3. Any funds used with the objective of soliciting votes will be considered as funds spent on one's campaign, regardless of the benefactor.

4.4. All candidates must maintain and, at the terminus of the election, produce a Campaign Spending Report, which documents each instance of financial investment by a candidate into their campaign.

4.4.1. Should they win a given election, write-in candidates must submit a viable Campaign Spending Report before assuming office.

4.4.2. For election purposes, each black and white U.S. Letter-size flyer is assumed to cost US\$0.07 per side, and each color flyer of similar size is assumed to cost US\$0.20 per side, regardless of how said flyers were produced.

4.5. The Candidate Spending Report must be submitted by the deadline specified by the CSE. Late Candidate Spending Reports will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but the CSE reserves the right to censure or disqualify candidates based on lateness.

### 5. Rules on Flyers

5.1. Candidates may only post flyers after receiving confirmation of candidacy and during the CSE-specified campaigning and voting periods.

5.2. Candidates may post flyers on the property of others only after acquiring their consent.

5.2.1. All applicable Johns Hopkins policies and Baltimore City ordinances relating to the posting of flyers are binding to candidates. Failure to respect these policies and ordinances may result in disciplinary and legal measures at the discretion of the CSE, the University, and the City of Baltimore.

### 6. Rules on Proper Campaigning

6.1. Campaigning is defined as the direct or indirect utilization of personal or public services in order to solicit votes.

6.2. All candidates, whether on the ballot or write-in, must represent themselves in a respectful manner.

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- 6.2.1. The CSE reserves the right to determine what does and does not constitute respectful behavior.
- 6.2.2. Candidates found to be in contravention of this stipulation may be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the CSE.
- 6.3. Candidates are forbidden from attacking, in any capacity, any other candidate. Attacking includes, but is not limited to, slander, libel, and verbal/online excoriation.
- 6.4. All campaign correspondence, including (but not limited to) emails, letters, text messages, and social media posts and private messages must be conducted in a non-disruptive manner.
  - 6.4.1. Disruptive behavior is defined as activities that impede or obstruct the ability either of other candidates to campaign or the student body not to be harassed or otherwise inconvenienced.
  - 6.4.2. The use of campus listservs and/or mail merges for the purpose of mass email distribution is strictly disallowed under all circumstances.
  - 6.4.3. Letters may not be placed under doors in university housing, but may be sent to or placed in mailboxes.
- 6.5. The use of social networking sites is allowed, provided the following are true:
  - 6.5.1. Any form of social media used to campaign must be made public through the entire election cycle.
  - 6.5.2. Social media is allowed for the purposes of campaigning. Any form of online dating or dating apps (for instance, Tinder) are disallowed for campaign use under all circumstances. These definitions are subject to expansion or qualification at the discretion of the CSE.
  - 6.5.3. Posts may not attack in any capacity other candidates running for office. Failure to respect other candidates may result in disciplinary action.
  - 6.5.4. Posts inside private Facebook groups and group chats (i.e. GroupMe) are permitted, subject to the following:
    - 6.5.4.1. The link to vote may not be posted in any private group. The CSE views this as a form of voter coercion and thus will take disciplinary action in the event the voting link is posted by a candidate into a private group.
    - 6.5.4.2. Posts in official Johns Hopkins class groups, including but not limited to class Facebook pages and FYM group chats, are disallowed. Posts into student group Facebook pages and group chats (for instance, those relating to or underneath LEED, CSC, FSL, athletic groups, etc.) are permissible, subject to the above restrictions.
- 6.6. "Dormstorming," defined as the act of petitioning or campaigning door-to-door in university housing or apartment buildings, is against University policy and therefore forbidden under all circumstances.
- 6.7. Material incentives (including but not limited to drugs, alcohol, and confections), sexual offers or favors, and actions that breach federal, state, or local laws may not be used to solicit votes.

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- 6.7.1. This regulation and associated definitions can and will be expanded at the full discretion of the CSE.
- 6.7.2. Stickers, buttons, shirts, and pins are allowed.
- 7. Rules on Extenuating Circumstances and Vacancies
  - 7.1. Given extenuating circumstances, the CSE may hold a vote to temporarily alter or suspend sections of this Constitution. This motion requires the unanimous consent of the CSE.
    - 7.1.1. Temporary measures passed by the CSE under Article IV § 8.1 expire at the end of the election cycle during which they were implemented, unless otherwise extended by the CSE through a simple majority vote.
  - 7.2. If any of the following three circumstances arise, a special election must be held within two (2) weeks of an initial election:
    - 7.2.1. Vacancies remain for a position or a set of positions;
    - 7.2.2. Candidates who run for a position are disqualified and there exists no viable alternative;
    - 7.2.3. No write-in candidate reaches the minimum threshold for election to a position.
  - 7.3. Special elections must only be held for positions that remain vacant after the end of the initial election period for a given position.
    - 7.3.1. Vacancies that occur through resignation shall be filled at the discretion of the SGA Senate.
    - 7.3.2. The CSE reserves the right to reject requests from the Senate for special elections.

### **ARTICLE V: COMPLAINTS, VIOLATIONS, AND DISQUALIFICATION PROCEDURES**

- 1. Violations of Article IV must be reported immediately to the CSE at [cse@jhu.edu](mailto:cse@jhu.edu).
  - 1.1. Reports not filed within twenty-four (24) hours of discovery will be considered both frivolous and dilatory and will be disregarded summarily.
- 2. Accusations made to the CSE must be accompanied with concrete and verifiable evidence of the alleged violation. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, photographs and copies of letters.
- 3. When a formal complaint is filed, the CSE will vote on whether or not to proceed with disciplinary action. The motion to proceed requires a simple majority of CSE members taken in a voice vote.
  - 3.1. The CSE has forty-eight (48) hours to respond to any formally-filed complaint.
  - 3.2. If the CSE votes to proceed with disciplinary action, the Chair of the CSE will contact all relevant parties via email with notice of the decision to pursue action and the results of the investigation.
  - 3.3. If the CSE votes not to proceed with disciplinary action, the Chair of the CSE will contact the accusing party via email with notice of the decision not to pursue action.
- 4. If a candidate is dissatisfied with the decision of the CSE, they are entitled to file an appeal with the Judiciary within twenty-four (24) hours of the CSE's judgment.
  - 4.1. Candidates are obligated to notify the CSE immediately upon the initiation of the appellate process.

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- 4.2. Decisions rendered by the Judiciary are binding. However, the CSE reserves the right to escalate Judiciary decisions to the Director of Leadership Engagement and Experiential Development (LEED), whose arbitrations are binding and final per Article I § 4.1.
5. Disciplinary and Disqualification Procedures
  - 5.1. There are three levels of disciplinary action: Level 1 (Warning); Level 2 (Mandatory Hearing); and Level 3 (Automatic Disqualification). The CSE reserves the right to issue a resolution concerning which types of offenses trigger which level of disciplinary action. Repeated Level 1 or Level 2 offenses may trigger automatic disqualification at the discretion of the CSE.

### **ARTICLE VI: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ELECTORAL RESULT**

1. To be elected to any office, a candidate must receive at least fifty (50) votes.
  - 1.1. Minimum ten (10) votes for write-in candidates if no one is running in that position
2. Senate elections will operate according to a plurality vote.
  - 2.1. Members of the electorate shall have one (1) vote to select a presidential candidate and four (4) votes to select graduating class senatorial candidates
    - 2.1.1. The individual that commands the greatest number of votes of the presidential poll shall be elected to the Presidency of their class.
      - 2.1.1.1. Should there be a tie for first place, the CSE shall determine via a unanimous vote whether to trigger a class-wide runoff or, given significant time constraints, consult a supermajority of the Senate to decide the winner. Candidates involved in the tie will have equal opportunity to state the case of their candidacy to the Senate, after which the Senate shall conduct a vote to elect the next Class President.
    - 2.1.2. The four individuals that command the greatest number of votes of the senatorial poll shall be elected as Senators of their class.
      - 2.1.2.1. Should there be a tie for fourth place, the CSE shall determine via a unanimous vote whether to trigger a class-wide runoff or, given significant time constraints, consult a supermajority of the Senate to decide the winner. Candidates involved in the tie will have equal opportunity to state the case of their candidacy to the Senate, after which the Senate shall conduct a vote to elect the next Senator.
  - 2.2. Members of the electorate with their primary major in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences shall have seven (7) votes to select academic school senatorial candidates. Members of the electorate with their primary major in the Whiting School of Engineering shall have five (5) votes to select academic school senatorial candidates.
  - 2.3. Members of the electorate shall have nine (9) votes to select RSO category senatorial candidates and seven (7) votes to select minority group senatorial candidates
3. Executive Board Election Procedures
  - 3.1. Elections for Executive President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Programming Chair shall be conducted, in effect, identically to those of the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior

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Class Presidencies, with the caveat that the electorate encompasses all undergraduate students attending this University.

4. If the result of any election is closer than 1.00% or ten (10) votes, a recount will automatically be triggered, to be executed by the CSE.
  - 4.1. Candidates are entitled to file a request with the CSE for a recount, but may do so only within the twenty-four (24) hours following the publication of election results.
5. The CSE will announce and publicize the results of the election in an email to the student body within 48 hours after the end of voting or the conclusion of any disciplinary actions, whichever is later.
  - 5.1. The CSE must conduct any recount within forty-eight (48) hours of the initial publication of election results. Candidates or their campaign teams reserve the right to send a one-member delegation to observe the recount proceedings.
  - 5.2. If a recount is held and yields a different result than the initial tabulation, the CSE must announce and publicize the new data within thirty-six (36) hours of the recount.
  - 5.3. Should a candidate violate this Constitution sufficiently that the CSE recommends disqualification, the candidate with the next-greatest percentage of votes (should the nominal number of votes accrued exceed 49) will assume office instead.

### **ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS AND INTERPRETATION**

1. Permanent amendments to this Constitution must first be confirmed by a supermajority of the CSE and then by a simple majority of the Senate.
  - 1.1. Amendments shall enter into full effect immediately after receiving the requisite approval of the Senate.
  - 1.2. The Judiciary must then confirm that the proposed changes are constitutional with respect to the SGA Constitution.
2. The CSE shall operate according to the principles of a common law system. All decisions reached by the CSE during a given election cycle, provided they are judged to be constitutional, are binding henceforth and shall be made publicly available on the CSE website for consultation by all candidates.
  - 2.1. The Secretary of the CSE is responsible for drafting such releases.
3. The Judiciary holds the authority to interpret the Constitution of the CSE. The CSE also reserves the right to consult the Leadership Engagement and Experiential Development (LEED) Office on matters of constitutionality.
  - 3.1. Should any section of this Constitution be ruled incompatible with the SGA Constitution, such part shall be considered severable, and the rest of this Constitution shall remain valid and enforceable.