

The Election Code  
Of  
The Student Government Association

Prairie View A&M University  
Prairie View, Texas

Approved and Adopted:  
September 1, 2004

***Student Government Association***  
***Prairie View A&M University***  
**Election Code**

**Section I. Composition and Duties of the Election Commission and the Election Committee**

- A. The Election Commission shall coordinate all Student Government Association Elections.
1. The Election Commission Chair shall be a faculty member selected by the head of the Political Science Department.
  2. The Election Commission shall be composed of the Chair and five (5) additional members selected by the Chair and the Head of the Political Science Department.
  3. The Election Commission shall coordinate the counting of the ballots within twenty-four (24) hours of the election.
- B. The Election Committee shall work jointly with the Election Commission to ensure that the election process is done according to Student Government Regulations.
1. The Chair of the Rules and Administration Committee shall serve as the Chair of the Election Committee.
  2. Members of the Election Committee shall be made up of the members of the Rules and Administration Committee.
  3. No member of the Election Committee can participate in campaigning nor can (s)he file for any office. (S)He has the privilege of giving up his seat on the Election Committee.
- C. The Election Committee shall have the following duties and powers:
1. To enforce these regulations and impose sanctions up to disqualification for any violation.
  2. To inspect and/or audit the expenditures of any candidate.
  3. To ensure the efficient administration and operation of all elections.
  4. To supervise and coordinate all activities related to the election.
  5. To conduct a Mandatory Candidate meeting prior to any election for the purpose of explaining the Election Regulations and answering any questions prior to the campaigning of candidates.
  6. To publish vacant positions in *The Panther* a week before the opening of filing.
  7. To approve or disapprove of any campaign material to be distributed by the candidate prior to distribution.
  8. To patrol campaign areas and enforce all Election Regulations.
  9. To provide for the ordering, printing, and certifying of the ballots.
  10. To oversee the counting of the ballots.
  11. To submit to the Student Bodies official newspaper the names of all legitimate candidates and the names that will appear on the ballot at least one (1) week prior to the election.

12. To submit to the Executive Branch of the Student Government Association the official election results within thirty-six (36) hours after the election. The number of ballots cast in each election for each candidate and/or for each proposed constitutional amendment shall be made public.
13. To conduct a recount, upon the proper filing and request of the legitimate candidate, within forty-eight (48) hours of the posting of the election results. The recount shall be conducted by the Elections Committee in the presence of no more than two (2) representatives of each candidate of whom the candidate may be one, and such a recount must be concluded within the forty-eight (48) hours.
14. To set office hours and hours of availability for allowing candidates to ask questions.

D. Election Officials and Student Officials shall be present at each polling place throughout the official election time as defined by these regulations.

1. Election Officials shall be selected by the Director of Student Activities in conjunction with the Chair of the Election Committee.
  - a. The Director of Student Activities shall come up with the names of Election Officials at least two (2) weeks prior to the election date.
2. Student Officials shall be all members of the Student Government Association.
  - a. No Student Official shall be a candidate for office nor shall they campaign for any election.
3. Election Officials shall enforce these rules and regulations and the Student Government Constitution. The Election Official shall be responsible for operating the polling place and administering the ballots.
4. Should the situation arise in which a polling place would be left without one election official and one student official, the Election Committee Chair is empowered to close that polling place with the approval of the Student Government Advisor.

E. Candidates Filing For Office

1. The Election Committee shall provide to each candidate at filing a packet containing:
  - a. Candidate Information Sheet
  - b. 100 Signature Sheet
  - c. Organization Chart and Available Positions
  - d. Position Descriptions
  - e. Any additional information as deemed necessary by the Student Senate and the Election Committee Chair
2. Spring General Elections:
  - a. Filing for office shall begin at 12:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday in February.
  - b. Filing shall close at 12:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday in March.
  - c. Filing for Elections will occur in the Student Government Office.

- d. Within two (2) class days of the close of filing, the Student Government Advisor in conjunction with the Director of Student Activities shall provide the Election Committee with certification of each candidate's academic eligibility and good standing with the University.
    3. Fall Class Elections
      - a. Filing for office shall begin at 12:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday in September.
      - b. Filing shall close no later than 12:00 p.m. on the Tuesday, following the census in September.
      - c. Filing for Elections will occur in the Student Government Office.
      - d. Within two (2) class days of the close of filing, the Student Government Advisor in conjunction with the Director of Student Activities shall provide the Election Committee with certification of each candidate's academic eligibility and good standing with the University.
  - F. Mandatory Candidate Meeting
    1. The mandatory candidate meeting must be held no more than one week following the close of filing.
    2. At the mandatory candidate meeting, the Election Committee Chair will explain the Election Regulations, answer any questions, and announce any interpretations of the Election Regulations that differ from previous elections.
    3. The Chair will also announce all dates and times important to the election.
    4. Failure to attend this meeting results in disqualification unless the Election Committee Chair has been notified and been rendered a valid excuse.

## **Section II. Judicial Action**

- A. A student who wishes to report an alleged violation of the Election Regulations may do so by filing a written account of the alleged violation with the Election Committee Chair within twenty-four (24) hours of the alleged violation. (Action, making reference to removal from office, disqualification, re-counting of votes, etc.)
- B. No action shall be taken by any legislative, administrative, judicial body, or student of Prairie View A&M University to disqualify a candidate in any student election for any reason unless the action is filed in the proper form no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the closing of the election.
- C. A candidate may contest an election no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the results are posted by filing an appeal in writing with the Election Committee Chair stating the basis on which the election is contested.
- D. The Judicial Court is the last means of an appeal if a candidate feels that the ruling handed down from the Election Committee is unjust.

- E. If prior to the Judicial Court certification, it is discovered that the winning candidate was not qualified because of an error in the certification provided by the Student Government Advisor, the Student Body President will declare the post vacant.

### **Section III. The Election Process**

#### **A. Polling Places**

1. The official polling places will be:
  - a. At the discretion of the Election Committee Chair for the Spring General Elections,
  - b. At the discretion of the Election Committee Chair for the Fall General Elections,
  - c. At the discretion of the Election Committee Chair or by instructions from the Student Senate for all other elections.
2. Polling places shall be declared open 9:00 a.m. and closed no earlier than 6:00 p.m. on Election Day. The Election Official's watch will be the official timepiece for the opening and closing of each polling place.

#### **B. Voting**

1. Election will be conducted by secret electronic ballot. Ballots shall be marked in a manner determined by the Election Committee. Students may vote only once and with their own ID Card.

#### **C. Voter Qualifications**

1. A voter must be an enrolled student at Prairie View A&M University.
2. A voter must have a valid Prairie View ID Card or a valid Identification Card at the time (s)he votes.

#### **D. Ballots**

1. Ballot positions for the sample ballot will be determined according to the order in which the candidates filed for election. The sample ballot will not be used for any voting. It will only be used for a candidate to verify that their name has been properly recorded for the election process and for other administrative purposes as needed by the Election Committee.
2. If a candidate withdraws from an election following the Mandatory Candidate Meeting, their name will be withdrawn from all ballots.
3. No phrases or slogans may be attached to a candidate's name on the ballot. The name that will appear on the ballot must be the name for which the student is registered under Prairie View A&M University.
4. The Committee will post the sample ballot for the purpose of correcting five (5) class days prior to the first day of the election. If a candidate does not appeal any error on the sample ballot by 5:00 p.m. two (2) class days prior to the first day of elections (s)he loses his/her right to appeal on this issue.

5. The Election Committee will post the final sample ballot for any election at least five (5) class days prior to the election and shall also submit a copy of the final sample ballot to *The Panther* at the time.
6. Ballot order in run-off elections shall be determined by the number of votes each candidate received in the general election, with the candidate having the higher number of votes in the general election receiving the first ballot position. In the event of a tie, ballot order for those tied shall be determined by ballot order in the general election, with the candidate having the higher ballot position according to the final sample ballot receiving the higher ballot position in the run-off.

#### E. Election Dates

1. The Spring General Election shall be held on the first Tuesday of April of each school year.
2. The Fall General Election shall be set by the Election Committee Chair.
3. Run-off elections shall be conducted on the Tuesday following the initial election.
4. A candidate may not campaign until the time and date specified by the Election Committee, which should be no more than ten (10) class days prior to the election date.
5. The Election Committee Chair has the authority to change the date of an election if unforeseen circumstances arise that would warrant such a change.

#### F. Election Results

1. Results of all elections must be approved by a majority of the Election Committee in order to be valid.
2. Approved results of all elections must be certified by a majority of the Judicial Court in order to be valid. This certification may occur no earlier than forty-eight (48) hours after the election results are announced.
3. Results of all elections shall be announced and posted by the Election Commission within forty-eight (48) hours after the closing of the election. Results are not official until certification by the Judicial Court. Results shall also be submitted to *The Panther* for publication.

#### G. Votes Required To Win

1. The counting of votes shall be under the supervision of the Election Committee and coordinated by the Election Commission.
2. The basis for decisions in all elections shall be as follows: (providing one vote has been cast for the position)
  - a. The Executive Board offices shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast for the office. If none of the candidates for a particular office achieves a majority, the two (2) candidates with the greatest number of votes shall enter into a run-off election.

- b. The Student Senate offices shall be elected by a plurality vote. If there is a tie for that position those candidate shall enter into a run-off election.

#### H. Recounts

1. Should a candidate wish to call for a recount of the ballots, (s) he must file the correct paper work within twenty-four (24) hours of the posting of the results.

#### I. Run-Off Elections

1. Run-off elections shall be conducted in the same manner as General Elections.
2. In the event of an exact tie in a run-off election, the election shall be decided by a coin toss to be held in the presence of the Chair of the Election Committee, the SGA Advisor, and the Chief Justice. The Election Commission Chair shall administer the coin toss. The coin toss shall be two (2) out of three (3) with the candidate of higher ballot positioning calling the coin first.
3. Candidates participating in a run-off election shall have a budget that is 50% (fifty percent) of the budget allowed in the General Election.

### **Section IV. Duties of the Candidates**

#### A. General Qualifications For Office

1. All candidates must meet the qualifications for their respective offices as set forth in the Prairie View A&M University Rules and Regulations and the Constitution of the Student Government Association.
2. Undergraduate Students may be classified as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors according to the starting date of their undergraduate studies or, if the candidate requests, according to the number of credit hours they have completed if that places them ahead of their class year. Graduate Students are considered to be their own classification.
3. The Election Committee has the power and reserves the right to disqualify a candidate if (s)he does not meet the qualifications and requirements for office.
4. Graduate Students are exempted from having 60 semester hours, however a Graduate Candidate must have attended Prairie View A&M University (2) two semesters prior to assuming office and must have a minimum of one fiscal year of active experience in Student Government Association the year prior to assuming office.

#### B. Position Specific Requirements

1. Student Government President and Executive Vice-President
  - a. A candidate for President and Executive Vice-President must be a student of Prairie View A&M University and have completed at least sixty (45) semester hours in residence at Prairie View A&M University and a minimum of one fiscal year active experience in

Student Government Association the year prior to assuming office. Candidates for President and Executive Vice-President must be full-time students, have at least a 2.70 grade point average from the previous semester prior to assuming office and a 2.50 cumulative grade point average. While holding office the President and Executive Vice-President must maintain at least a 2.50 cumulative grade point average, a 2.50 semester grade point average, must not be on disciplinary or scholastic probation, and must be in good standing (academic, fiscal, and moral conduct) with the University.

2. Executive Board

- a. The Executive Branch voting members must be a student of Prairie View A & M University and have completed at least thirty (30) semester hours in residence at Prairie View A & M University prior to assuming office. Members of the Executive Branch must be full-time students, have at least a 2.50 grade point average from the previous semester prior to assuming office and must have a 2.50 cumulative grade point average. While holding office Executive Branch voting members must maintain at least a 2.50 cumulative grade point average, a 2.50 semester grade point average, must not be on disciplinary or scholastic probation, and must be in good standing (academic, fiscal, and moral conduct) with the University.

3. Senate

- a. The Legislative Branch Member must be a student of Prairie View A&M University and have completed at least thirty (30) semester hours in residence at Prairie View A&M University prior to assuming office with the exception of the Freshman Class President. Legislative Branch members must be full-time student, have at least a 2.50 cumulative grade point average prior to assuming office. While holding office they must maintain at least a 2.50 cumulative grade point average, must not be on disciplinary or scholastic probation, and must be in good standing (academically, financially, and morally) with the university.

C. Candidates Filing For Office

1. By filing, the candidate agrees to abide by these Election Regulations.
2. Candidates for President and Vice-President have the option of running on the same ticket
3. All candidates for positions elected under the supervision of the Election Committee shall file their intention to run for office with the Election Committee. Filing shall be done in person by each candidate and in accordance with the guidelines set forth within these regulations. Each candidate is responsible for seeing that his/her filing is carried out completely and correctly.
4. A candidate must submit the following at the time of filing:
  - a. Candidate Information Sheet, 100 Signature Sheet

- b. A signed grade release statement enabling the Department of Student Activities to check academic, classification, and conduct qualifications of candidates.
  - c. Any other reasonable information required by the Election Committee.
  - d. A Platform stating their objectives for the year, not to exceed five-hundred (500) words. Such information should include the candidate's major, classification, and/or any organizational affiliation as deemed necessary.
5. Candidates for Executive offices shall be required to participate in a Debate scheduled by the Elections Committee.
  6. A student may not file for both the office of Student Body President and Student Senator in the same election.
  7. Any candidate who files for election and fails to comply with all filing requirements shall not be qualified for election to any office.

#### D. Mandatory Candidate Meetings

1. Any candidate who is unable to attend the Mandatory Candidate meeting must contact the Election Commission in writing at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting to report the reason for his/her absence as well as an agent to attend the meeting in the candidate's place. The agent must show verification from the candidate, identifying the person as an agent.
2. To be excused from attending the Mandatory Candidate Meeting, a candidate must submit a University excused absence that would have also prevented them from appointing an agent to attend the meeting in their absence to the Election Committee with twenty-four (24) hour of the meeting. All candidates failing to do so will be disqualified.
3. All candidates are responsible for all information covered at the Mandatory Candidate Meeting without exception.

#### E. Rulings Of The Election Committee

1. Candidates must adhere immediately to all rulings and directives issues by the Election Committee Chair. Failure to do so will place the candidate subject to disciplinary action by the Election Committee.

#### F. Payments Of Fines

1. Any elected candidate who fails to pay his/her fines within ten (10) class days of the time (s)he is elected will be removed from office. Any candidate who fails to pay his/her fine prior to the next election will be considered ineligible until his/her outstanding fines have been paid.

### **Section V. Campaign Finances**

#### A. General Expenditures

1. Each candidate for any office or position in an election governed by this code must compile and maintain a complete and accurate list of all

expenditures directly or indirectly used for the purpose of advancing his or her candidacy.

2. The term “expenditure” is defined as the fair market value or actual cost, depending on the appropriate circumstances, of all campaign materials used or obtained by any candidate in his/her campaign.
3. Such lists must be delivered to the Elections Committee within forty-eight (48) hours after requested.
4. Any materials produced by an organization for the purpose of soliciting votes outside that organization will be considered campaign materials and must be included on that candidate’s expenditure list. It is the candidate’s responsibility to maintain the integrity of contributions.
5. The Election Committee has the power and reserves the right to audit any candidate’s expenditures at any time during or after the elections. A candidate not complying with the expenditure rules can and will be declared ineligible for office.

#### B. Expenditure Limits by Office

1. All expenditures directly or indirectly associated with a campaign in any election governed by this code is limited to the guidelines in this code.
2. Each candidate for any Executive Board positions may expend a maximum of five hundred dollars (\$500.00).
3. Each candidate for any Student Senate positions may expend a maximum of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00).
4. Each candidate for the office of Class President may expend a maximum of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00).

### **Section VI. Rules of Campaigning**

#### A. Campaigning

1. The Election Committee Chair judges what constitutes campaigning.
2. No candidate shall state any qualifications to which the candidate is not entitled.
3. No candidate or his/her supporters may remove, deface, destroy, or obscure any campaign material of any candidate.
4. Signs shall be allowed inside and outside of buildings with permission of authorized personnel.
5. In the event that signs or flyers are posted in places that have not been designated to post flyer or signs, this violation should be reported. The Election Chair is the only official designated to remove flyers or posters.
6. There shall be no painting, stenciling or whitewashing on buildings, sidewalks, or any physical property, including trees of Prairie View A&M University
7. On the day of election, no campaigning or campaign materials will be allowed within the building of the designated election polls. Candidates are subject to disciplinary action if this occurs. This includes t-shirts, buttons, stickers, etc.

8. Each candidate shall be responsible for the removal and disposal of all displayed campaign materials within forty-eight (48) hours of the announcement of election results, with the exception that candidates proceeding to run-off elections have twenty-four (24) hours following the announcement of run-off election results. Penalty shall be \$5.00 per violation per day.
9. All candidates shall conduct themselves according to the Rules and Regulations of Prairie View A&M University. Any candidate or member of a candidate's staff who violates the rules shall be subject to disciplinary action by the Election Committee.

**B. Campaigning Staff**

1. A candidate may form a campaign staff prior to the campaign period in order to help the candidate prepare for the campaigning period.
2. The candidate will be held responsible for the actions taken by his/her supporters.

**C. Contacting The Election Committee Chair**

1. The Election Committee Chair shall set hours in which a candidate may contact him/her.
2. If there is any doubt about the integrity of campaign materials, a candidate should contact the Election Committee.

**Section VII. Position Description**

**A. Office Descriptions**

1. Are as outlined in the Student Government Association Constitution of Prairie View A&M University.

**B. Position to be elected in the Spring General Elections are as follows:**

1. Student Government President
2. Student Government Vice-President
3. Comptroller
4. Senators
  - a. External Affairs
  - b. Athletics
  - c. Health Services
  - d. Safety
  - e. International Students
  - f. Parking
  - g. Auxiliary Services
  - h. Career Services & Cluster
  - i. Alumni Affairs
  - j. Information Technology
  - k. Community Development
    - l. Memorial Student Center
  - m. Intramural Sports
  - n. Scholarships and Financial Aid
  - o. Professional and Departmental Organizations

- p. Parks and Recreation
- C. Positions to be elected in the Fall General Elections are as follows:
  - 1. Presidents
    - a. Freshmen Class
    - b. Sophomore Class
    - c. Junior Class
    - d. Senior Class
  
- D. Position to be elected or appointed by specific organizations, colleges or departments in the Fall
  - 1. Organizations
    - a. PALS
    - b. Campus Activities Board
    - c. Council of Student Organizations
    - d. PAN-Hellenic Council
    - e. Band
  - 2. Colleges and Departments
    - a. College of:
      - 1. College of Business I – Marketing
      - 2. College of Business II- Business
      - 3. College of Arts & Sciences I – Sciences
      - 4. College of Arts & Sciences II- Military Science and ROTC
      - 5. College of Arts & Sciences III-Music and drama
      - 6. College of Arts & Sciences IV-Social and behavioral science
      - 7. College of Arts & Sciences V- Communication and languages
      - 8. College of Education I- Human Performance
      - 9. College of Education II- Education
      - 10. College of Engineering I- Engineering
      - 11. College of Engineering II- Engineering Technology
      - 12. College of Engineering III-Computer Science
      - 13. College of Nursing I – Houston
      - 14. College of Nursing II- Prairie View
      - 15. College of Juvenile Justice I- Psychology
      - 16. College of Juvenile Justice II- Criminal and Juvenile Justice
      - 17. College of Agriculture
      - 18. School of Architecture
      - 19. Graduate School
      - 20. Housing I – University College
      - 21. Housing II - University Village
      - 22. Housing III – University Village North

**Section VIII. Amending the Election Code**

- A. Any changes to the code must be approved by a simple majority of the Student Senate and signed by the Student Government Association President or if vetoed by the Student Government President, the Student Senate has the power to override the veto by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Student Senate present and voting at an announced meeting.

- B. Any changes in the Election Code must be promulgated by the Student Senate prior to the first day of filing of any election, but before the regulations changed are to take effect, they must first be presented to the Elections Committee in writing and approved by the Chair of the Rules and Administration Committee.
- C. Any changes should be directed as amendment to the Election Code.

**Section IX. Enactment of the Election Code**

- A. The various sections, stipulations, and requirements of the Election Code, with the exception of those stipulations outlining the dates for elections, shall be in effect upon the approval of a simple majority of the Student Senate.
- B. The stipulations for the Election Code outlining the dates for elections shall be in effect upon its full approval by the Student Government Association.

**Section X. Certification**

A. This Student Government Association Election Code has been enacted with   20   members of the Student Senate voting for the enactment of the Code and   0   members of the Student Senate voting against the enactment of the Election Code.

This Student Government Association Election Code stands approved on:

September 1, 2004

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Date

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President of Student Senate

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President of Student Government

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Student Government Association Advisor

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University Vice-President of Student Affairs

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University President

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Certification Date