



Elections Rules & Regulations of the American University Residence Hall Association

The RHA Elections Rules & Regulations are outlined in Article 5 of the RHA Bylaws. They have been separated from the Bylaws to enhance accessibility and awareness, but should not be considered disassociated from them.

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Election Rules and Regulations

Section 1: Election Cycle

Subsection 5.1.1 Timeline

- a. An election cycle is defined as; the length of time from the first information session to the Announcement of election results. All election cycles shall consist of at least: (a) Two (2) information Sessions; (b) Declaration; (c) Campaigning; (d) Voting; (e) Announcement of Election Results.
- b. Prior to the commencement of an election cycle, the Elections Administrator will determine the schedule for elections with the consent of the Advisor and announce the following details: (a) The dates, times, and locations of all Information Sessions; (b) The

date, time, and location of declaration deadline; (c) The dates, times, and method of voting; and (d) The date, time, and location for the announcement of Election Results.

- c. Campaigning may continue during the voting period. Voting and Campaigning will conclude concurrently with the close of voting.
- d. An election cycle shall not be conducted in less than two (2) weeks or longer than four (4) weeks. An election cycle occurring in the Fall Semester must conclude by the end of the first week of October, in order to allow Hall representatives to begin their work. An election cycle occurring in the Spring Semester must conclude by the end of April, in order for the Executive Board transition.
- e. Special Elections shall confirm all election rules and regulations that are otherwise in place for a standard election.

Subsection 5.1.2 Requirements

- a. All Candidates must attend at least one Information Session. The Elections Administrator may create alternative formats and means for prospective candidates with scheduling conflicts.
- b. Candidates must be cleared with the Advisor to ensure compliance with all RHA membership eligibility requirements and University leadership position requirements. Failure to be cleared by the RHA Advisor will result in ineligibility for candidacy, and removal from the ballot.
- c. Candidates must complete the declaration form to be cleared for eligibility and be placed on the ballot.
- d. Candidates for President must have at least one semester of experience serving in the RHA to be eligible.

Subsection 5.1.2 Administration

- a. If the voting system has the capabilities, the method of tabulation will be ranked choice voting, where the candidate who receives a majority will be elected; Otherwise, first-past-the-post will be employed and the candidate who receives a plurality will be elected.
- b. All ballots must list all eligible candidates as well as an option for abstention votes. Votes cast as “abstain” shall only count towards the total number of votes in the selected race, but not for any candidate, nor shall they impact the outcome.
- c. In the event that two or more candidates for Executive Board receive an equal number of votes, the winner, from among the tied candidates, shall be determined by the Assembly of Hall Councils. The Assembly shall be called into special session no more than seven (7) days after the close of voting. In the session they shall hear from all candidates who received the same number of votes, question the candidates, debate, and vote. The

winner shall be the candidate who receives a simple majority vote of the Assembly. In the event that a current member of the Assembly is one of the candidates involved, they shall be automatically recused from any part of the session regarding the affected race.

Section 2: Campaigning Procedures

Subsection 5.2.1 Materials and Means

- a. Campaigning may only campaign in the designated campaign period. All campaign material must be removed within forty-eight (48) of the end of the election cycle.
- b. Campaigning in The University Library and Kay Spiritual Life Center is prohibited.
- c. Campaigning through the use of Canvas or other primarily academic software is prohibited.
- d. All postings must be approved by the RHA advisor in addition to being in compliance with all other University posting procedures.
- e. Campaigns must request and receive expressed consent to send emails to individuals.
- f. Campaigns are prohibited from knocking on Residence Hall doors.
- g. Campaigns are prohibited from tabling.
- h. Campaigns are not allowed to watch anyone cast their vote, interfere with the voting process, or in any way pressure someone on how to vote.
- i. In-hall campaigning may not interfere with the normal sleep, study, or relaxation of residents.
- j. Posters may only be hung on residence hall doors whose residents' consent to have the poster display.

Subsection 5.2.2 Finance

- a. All expenditures must be for the express purpose of providing information about the candidate.
- b. Campaign expenditures include all goods and services used in a campaign regardless of if they were purchased with that intent. The value of all campaign materials used may not exceed no more than thirty dollars (\$30.00). Goods and services all students reasonably have access to are not required to be reported.
- c. Campaigns are required to disclose all spending to the Elections Administrator within twenty-four (24) hours.
- d. Giveaways of food, t-shirts, and other non-informational materials are prohibited

Subsection 5.2.3 Ethics

- a. Members of the Public and Campus Organizations, excluding governance groups and their officials acting within their official capacities, may offer endorsements to candidates.
- b. Members of the RHA are prohibited from offering endorsements in their official capacity. The RHA and all its subsidiary bodies are expressly precluded from offering endorsements.
- c. Campaigning in a physically intimidating, coercive, or threatening fashion which is intentional or persistent is prohibited
- d. Removal or alteration of campaign materials may only be done by the campaign which posted the materials, the Elections Administrator, or University Officials.
- e. The RHA intends to hold positive elections that highlight the best ideas, proposals, and qualities of student leaders seeking elected office, as such, negative or abusive campaigning is prohibited, and candidates must actively prevent campaign staff and supporters from using negative campaign tactics. Negative campaigning infractions shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Section 3: Enforcement

Subsection 5.3.1 Governance

- a. All students who are currently running for elected office, work for a campaign, or make an overt act of campaigning, shall be considered temporary members of the Association and be subject to the rules and regulations of elections.
- b. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they and their campaign staff are in compliance with all the rules and regulations set forth. Candidates assume all liability for actions taken on their behalf by campaign staff, regardless of whether the staff is acting explicitly at the behest of the campaign or candidate.
- c. No Candidate, Campaign Manager, or campaign staff member shall attempt to manipulate, mislead, sway, or lie to the Elections Administrator.
- d. Election policy violations shall be adjudicated until all valid complaints have been addressed, regardless if the election cycle has been completed.
- e. If a complaint will likely affect the outcome of a race the results of said race shall not be released until the complaint has been fully adjudicated.

Subsection 5.3.2 Reporting

- a. Complaints must deal strictly with RHA election policy for further action.

- b. Complaints should at minimum contain the name of the submitter(s), the person(s) submitted against, a summary of the events, potential evidence if possible, and potential RHA policies violated if possible.
- c. The Elections Administrator may also originate alleged election violations.
- d. The Elections Administrator shall consult with the Advisor to ensure the alleged violation deals strictly with RHA policy. If not rising to the level of a violation but still does not concern University Policy, the Administrator and Advisor shall consult with the parties to remedy the situation.
- e. All election complaints must be submitted by the release of the election results.

Subsection 5.3.3 Adjudication

- a. The Elections Administrator shall be the primary adjudicator of election violations.
- b. Once aware of an alleged violation, the Elections Administrator shall report the violation to the candidate. The Elections Administrator shall allow the candidate or campaign twelve (12) hours to respond and resolve the issue.

Subsection 5.3.4 Sanctions

- a. If the issue has not been resolved or the response is not adequate they may issue an appropriate sanction in consultation with the Advisor.
- b. For a first or minor violation, sanctions shall include the following or a combination thereof:
 - i. Censure
 - ii. Removal of Campaign Materials
 - iii. Restriction on Campaigning and Restriction of Campaign Funds
- c. For a second or major violation, sanctions shall include the following or a combination thereof:
 - i. Censure
 - ii. Removal of Campaign Materials
 - iii. Restriction on Campaigning and Restriction of Campaign Funds
 - iv. Suspension from Campaigning
- d. For a third or severe violation, sanctions shall include the following or a combination thereof:
 - i. Censure

- ii. Removal of Campaign Materials
- iii. Restriction on Campaigning and Restriction of Campaign Funds
- iv. Suspension from Campaigning
- v. Suspension from Campaigning pending disqualification decision

Subsection 5.3.5 Election Appeals Body

- a. For Fall Hall Councils elections, the Executive Board shall serve as the Election Appeals Body. For Spring Executive Board elections, the Joint Tribunal on Discipline shall serve as the Election Appeals Body. In the case of special elections, if the Hall Delegation has been seated they shall serve as the Election Appeals Body, otherwise, the Executive Board shall fulfill that responsibility.
- b. A candidate may appeal a sanction by submitting their written appeal to the Election Appeals Body. The Body may request the presence of the candidate at their discretion.
- c. The Elections Administrator may submit a request for disqualification to the Elections Appeal Body. The candidate shall be notified of this request and may submit their response to the body for review. The Body may request the presence of the candidate at their discretion.
- d. A decision to disqualify may be appealed to the Advisor.