GSS ELECTIONS GUIDELINES FOR OFFICERS

The intent of the guidelines is to encourage fair and open campaigning and elections on a level playing field by: (1) specifying permitted and prohibited election related activities, (2) fostering opportunities for candidates to educate their colleagues about issues affecting graduate students, (3) informing voters about candidate experiences and views, and (4) maintaining dignified and courteous conduct appropriate to the image of a professional. Candidates are to state their own positions on issues and their own plans for the Graduate Student Senate directly and positively but may not make personal attacks against their opponents. Third party organization endorsements in campaign communications are not allowed.

Campaigning, hereafter to mean working “in an organized and active way towards being elected,” including written or verbal solicitation of votes or support, is not permitted until after the close of the nomination period. Members should withhold commitments of their final support or votes until after all candidates are announced. Candidate information will be posted on the GSS website.

The members of the Elections Committee, in accepting a nomination to the committee, agree to all the rights, duties, and responsibilities of the position as outlined in the GSS Constitution and Bylaws.

I. GENERAL GUIDELINES

A. Compliance:

Each candidate will receive an email of these guidelines and must reply to that email in order to: certify that they have read the guidelines; promise to abide by them; agree to immediately report any deviations of which they becomes aware to the Elections Committee; and agree to notify and try to correct any supporter upon learning of an actual or potential deviation. Candidates are to inform members they ask for support about the guidelines by sending a copy or calling attention to the guidelines posted on GSS website. No person will be a candidate unless they have read and agreed to uphold these guidelines.

When candidates or their supporters are unclear about whether an intended taking campaign action is permitted, they should seek the opinion of the Elections Committee before action. The Elections Committee will respond with a ruling (within 48 hours
concerning the proper interpretation of the guidelines and inform all candidates in order to maintain a level playing field.

B. Guidelines for Use of Electronic Media

1. E-mail:
There are no limits on the number of campaign messages sent by e-mail. E-mail used for campaign purposes must comply with the intent of the guidelines with regard to content and must start with the words “GSS Campaigning” in the subject line. The use of e-mail listservs - with the exception of the GSS listserv - are allowed.

In order to promote reasonable access for all candidates, all emails from candidates sent through mass email lists must include the following disclaimer: "This email represents the campaign of one candidate running for a Graduate Student Senate position. For information on the full list of candidates, please go to the GSS elections webpage."

2. GSS Website:

GSS will post information about all candidates (the photos, biographies, and statements) and on the election itself (campaign guidelines, voting information, etc) on its website. Candidates are encouraged to take full advantage of communicating with members through statements to be published by the GSS. Candidates are reminded that most forms of communications are in the public domain. Therefore, in all discussions and communications, a professional tone will reflect positively on the GSS and on the candidate.

C. Guidelines for Use of Campaign Flyers and Signs

All flyers and signs should be submitted via email to the Election Committee for approval (see Candidate Code of Conduct below). The Committee will respond to the candidate regarding submitted materials usually within 48 hours.

Flyers and signs must only be placed in authorized posting places based on individual building policies (example: student bulletin boards) Flyers can’t be posted anywhere in the Campus Center. Each candidate is responsible for the removal and disposal of all signs. No campaign materials are to be affixed to bus kiosks, trees, telephone poles, or lamp posts.

Candidates may not tamper with or deface the signs of any other candidate. Offenses of this nature are considered serious and may result in disqualification as a candidate in the election.
II. VOTING AND BALLOT COUNTING

A. Voting

Voting procedures for the election will be stated on the GSS website prior to the beginning of the election.

B. The Count

Ballots will be counted electronically and the results reported to the election committee.

C. Tie Vote

1. In the event of a tie vote for an office in a general election, the following procedure shall be used to fill the position.
   a. Unless one of the candidates objects, a run-off election will be held at the Senate meeting immediately following the election.
   b. A candidate may object to delay the run-off election to a senate meeting happening within 30 days of the initial presentation of the election results.

2. Procedure for Run-Off:
   a. All candidates involved in the tie shall be the only candidates in the run-off election.
   b. Each candidate may give a "reminder" speech limited to two minutes in length.
   c. All senators present at the meeting will be eligible to vote in the run-off election.
   d. The voting shall be by closed ballot.
   e. The Chair of the Elections Committee shall preside over the runoff election.
   f. The count will happen during the meeting, and be approved by the Senate.

D. The Election Report

1. Upon receipt of the results, the person receiving a plurality of the votes cast shall be declared the winner(s), pending ratification by the GSS. The Chair of the Elections Committee shall send an informal notification to all the candidates in the election telling them of the election results, as soon as possible following the end of the voting period.

2. Within 24 hours of the end of the recount grade period, the Elections Committee shall submit to the Executive Committee the Election Report, which shall appear as a Special Order on the agenda of the next scheduled Senate meeting, and shall include the information prescribed herein:
a. The complete numerical tabulation of the results.

b. Any formal complaints made to the Elections Committee and the act taken thereupon.

c. The signatures of the members of the Elections Committee.

3. If the Senate shall have failed to ratify a General or Special Election within 30 days of said Election, the Elections Committee shall call a Special Election.

III. CANDIDATE CODE OF CONDUCT

All candidates must abide by the following code of conduct:

1. No person who is not a candidate, as defined above, shall campaign.

2. No person(s) shall appropriate funds for the purpose of campaigning. Candidates may not pay anyone to campaign on their behalf and/or vote for them.

3. No candidate shall wrongfully represent any campaign material as being the material of any other candidate.

4. No candidate shall violate the University Code of Student Conduct; for more information please see http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/

5. No candidate shall corruptly give, offer or promise to any GSS member any pecuniary or other benefit not authorized by the Campaign Guidelines, Candidate Code of Conduct, which is intended to influence the vote(s) of GSS member.

6. No candidate shall be physically present nor shall influence GSS members’ choice when he/she is voting online.

7. Under no circumstances should a candidate attempt to use any GSS resources. This includes, but is not limited to, GSS office space, printer, paper or Facebook Groups.
IV. ADDITIONAL RULINGS

A. DUTIES OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The GSS Elections Committee is charged with interpreting the elections guidelines and elections related content within the bylaws. Campaigning and election issues that are not explicitly covered within these documents are within the purview of the GSS Elections Committee to decide.

B. FAILURE TO COMPLY

The Elections Committee may, upon a two-thirds vote of its membership in attendance at a meeting, and up to (30) calendar days following an election, take any of the actions prescribed herein for violations of the GSS Elections Guidelines:

1. Order to cease - A written statement to a candidate ordering the cessation of any activity which is in violation of the Guidelines, or their candidacy shall be suspended or invalidated.

2. Suspension - A written statement to a candidate ordering the suspension of all campaigning for a prescribed period of calendar time.

3. Invalidation - A written statement to a candidate declaring their candidacy to be invalid and stricken from the ballot (if before the election). After the election, a candidate may still be invalidated.

4. Nullification - A public announcement to the GSS membership declaring an Election nullified and calling a Special Election to re-cast the ballots.