

Student Supreme Court of Texas State University

Election Operating Memorandum for Prospective Candidates

Effective Date: January 15, 2025

Issue date: November 18, 2024

Overview

Under the powers vested to it by Article 6 of the Student Government constitution, the Student Government Code of Laws, the Supreme Court is hereby issuing an election operating memorandum for the 2024-2025 Student Government elections. This memorandum provides detailed instructions, procedures, and rules for all prospective candidates for Texas State University Student Government 2025 elections. This document, issued by the Supreme Court, is grounded in the **Student Government Election Code (SGEC)**, found in the **Student Government Code of Laws**, and serves to maintain integrity, transparency, and fairness throughout the election process. Adherence to the SGEC and the ethical standards of Texas State University is mandatory for all participants.

Jurisdiction

Student Government Election Code, Chapter 101, Article II, Section 1: “The Supreme Court governs all elections.”

1. Eligibility and Filing Requirements

- **Eligibility Confirmation:** The Office of Student Involvement and Engagement and the Supreme Court must verify each candidate’s eligibility within 5 business days after the end of the filing period. (SGEC, Article III, §1).
- **Student Status Requirement:** Only currently enrolled students listed on the official university registrar’s roster may seek office or vote in campus-wide elections (SGEC, Article III, §2).
- **Filing Window:** Filing opens on January 13, 2025 (first class day of the spring semester) and closes on February 28, 2025, at 5:00 PM (SGEC, Article II, Filing, §1).
- **Alliance:** Candidates forming an alliance must each file individually and select their alliance or independent status. Alliance members must independently indicate their association with other alliance members on their filing form.

- **Campus-Wide Elections Filing Agreement:** Candidates must sign this document, which confirms their understanding of and commitment to following SGEC guidelines (SGEC, Article II, Definitions, §11). This will be done at the rules reading seminar.
- **Mandatory Rules Reading:** Candidates are required to attend one Rules Reading session, scheduled on **March 3, 2025**, or **March 7, 2025**. Failure to attend may result in disqualification (SGEC, Article III, Administrative, §4).
- **Individuals involved in campaigning:** Each candidate must submit a list of campaign agents and workers they have authorized for their campaign. This submission must be made to the Supreme Court on or before the final rules reading day, **March 7, 2025**. (SGEC, Article III, Administrative, §§3 and 4)

2. Election Dates and Campaign Schedule

- **Campaigning Period: March 17, 2025, through March 26, 2025.** Campaigning is only allowed during this designated period, and early campaigning is strictly prohibited (SGEC, Article IV, Campaigning Regulations, §3).
- **Official Debate:** The official candidate debate will be held on **March 24, 2025**. Candidates are encouraged to participate to engage with voters and clarify their platforms.
- **Voting Days:** Voting will occur on **March 27 and March 28, 2025**, from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM each day (SGEC, Article VIII, Elections, §1).
- **Run-Off Elections:** If necessary, run-off elections will be held on **April 3 and April 4, 2025**, to resolve any undecided races (SGEC, Article VIII, §3).

3. Campaigning Rules and Regulations

3.1 Campaign Conduct

- **Permissible Campaign Zones:** Campaigning is not allowed within a 25-foot radius of any academic building. Campaigning is only permitted in areas specifically designated by the Supreme Court. (SGEC, Article IV, §1). **The Supreme Court is designating all areas at LBJ, the QUAD, and BOBCAT TRAIL, that are designated reservable spaces, as eligible campaigning locations.** Candidates are encouraged to refer to the campus access website for a comprehensive list of these spaces, and the rules and regulations set by the university. Any violation of those rules and regulations will be considered a violation of the election code.
- **Respect for Academic Buildings:** No campaign member may verbally solicit votes or distribute materials within the 25-foot radius of academic buildings.
- **Posted Campaign Material:** For campaign materials posted in buildings and other eligible zones, candidates must refer to UPPS 07.04.01 and the policies set forth by the

Office of Student Involvement. All postings must be stamped by the office of Student involvement.

- **Respect for Residential Buildings:** The Supreme court is prohibiting any campaigning activity in residential buildings.
- **Social Media Campaigning:** Campaigning via social media is permitted only during the official campaign period, beginning March 17, 2025. (SGEC, Article IV, §3). The Supreme Court is applying this restriction in lieu of the power that digital media holds in election campaigns. The Court acknowledges this medium of campaigning and is including it as an official campaigning tool. Therefore, the court is allowing campaigning via social media within the campaigning period only.

3.2 Use of University Resources

- **University Asset Prohibitions:** Campaigns cannot use university-funded facilities, equipment, or services that are not available to all students. Prohibited locations include student organization offices, administrative offices, and residence hall workspaces (SGEC, Article IV, §2).
- **Resource Compliance:** Candidates may only use their personal resources or university resources accessible to all students. Misuse of resources will result in penalties as determined by the Supreme Court.

3.3 Campaign Publicity and Materials

- **Publicity Removal:** All campaign materials must be removed no later than April 4, 2025, one week after the election concludes. Each candidate is responsible for the removal and proper disposal of their campaign materials (SGEC, Article III, Campaigning Publicity Regulations, §1).
- **Endorsement Statements:** Any registered campus organizations endorsing candidates must ensure that endorsement communications are unbiased and do not exert undue influence (SGEC, Article II, Definitions, §11).
- **Prohibition of Vandalism:** Acts of vandalism, including the removal or defacement of other candidates' materials, are classified as Class B offenses (SGEC, Article III, Campaigning Publicity Regulations, §2).

4. Financial Regulations and Reporting

- **Spending Limits:**
 - **Presidential/Vice Presidential Candidates:** Maximum allowable expenditure is \$1000 per campaign.

- **Senatorial/Representative Candidates:** Maximum allowable expenditure is \$300 per campaign.
- **Alliance Campaigns:** Campaigns with alliances, consisting of up to five candidates, may spend up to \$3500 collectively (SGEC, Article V, Campaign Spending, §§2-4).
- **Run-Off Budget Adjustments:** For run-offs, additional funds are permitted, with a limit of \$400 for Presidential/Vice Presidential candidates, \$350 for Senatorial candidates, and \$350 for Representatives (SGEC, Article V, §5).
- **Financial Disclosure:** All candidates must submit an itemized financial report, with receipts and bank records, within 72 hours of election results being posted. The Supreme Court reserves the right to audit these reports as necessary (SGEC, Article V, §6).

5. Complaint Procedures and Violations

5.1 Filing and Adjudicating Complaints

- **Complaint Eligibility:** Any enrolled student, except Supreme Court Justices, may file a complaint if they observe or experience a violation of the SGEC (SGEC, Chapter 101, Article I, §1).
- **Complaint Submission Deadline:** Complaints must be filed within 60 business days of the incident (SGEC, Chapter 101, Article I, §2).
- **Review Process:** Upon receiving a complaint, the Supreme Court will decide whether to accept or dismiss it within two business days. If accepted, a hearing is scheduled, typically within two business days, but not less than 24 hours after notice is provided (SGEC, Chapter 101, Article I, §§3-4).

5.2 Violation Categories and Penalties

Class C Violations (Minor Infractions)

- **Description:** Minor infractions include small-scale violations that do not impact the fairness of the election but do contravene the SGEC.
- **Examples:**
 - Unauthorized early endorsement reposts on social media (SGEC, Article IV, §3).
 - Display of unapproved campaign literature in non-designated areas (SGEC, Article III, §3).
- **Penalties:**
 - First offense: Warning.

- Repeat offenses (three or more): Up to a 12-hour suspension from campaigning and removal of any infringing materials (SGEC, Article VI, §8).

Class B Violations (Moderate Infractions)

- **Description:** Moderate infractions that may impact fair competition but are not severe enough for disqualification.
- **Examples:**
 - Campaigning within restricted academic areas (SGEC, Article IV, §1).
 - Unauthorized use of restricted university resources such as club offices or administration spaces (SGEC, Article IV, §2).
- **Penalties:**
 - Removal of offending materials, up to a 24-hour suspension from campaigning, and potential restriction from campus areas.
 - Repeat Class B offenses may lead to additional sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Supreme Court (SGEC, Article VI, §9).

Class A Violations (Severe Infractions)

- **Description:** Serious violations that compromise election integrity or severely disrupt the electoral process.
- **Examples:**
 - Bribery, offering monetary incentives, or other forms of value in exchange for votes (SGEC, Article II, Definitions, §4).
 - Acts of voter intimidation, including threats or coercive tactics (SGEC, Article II, Definitions, §24).
 - Financial misconduct, such as significantly exceeding spending limits or failing to report large campaign contributions (SGEC, Article V, §6).
- **Penalties:**
 - Disqualification from the current election.
 - A potential 10-month or longer ban from running in any future elections.
 - In extreme cases, permanent disqualification from holding student government office may be considered (SGEC, Article VI, §§12-13).

The Supreme Court reserves the right to evaluate each violation on a case-by-case basis and determine the appropriate penalties in alignment with the SGEC. Decisions will take into account the circumstances and severity of the infraction to ensure fair and consistent rulings.

6. Ethics and Conduct Standards

- **Ethical Campaigning:** Candidates are expected to maintain the integrity of the election, avoiding any form of false claims, discriminatory practices, or defamatory statements based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, or affiliations (SGEC, Code of Ethics, §3).
- **Accountability for Team Actions:** Candidates are responsible for the actions of their campaign teams, agents, and supporters. Violations committed by these individuals may result in penalties for the candidate (SGEC, Article VI, §13).
- **Honesty and Transparency:** All campaign communications must be truthful, with factual endorsements and claims (SGEC, Code of Ethics, Preamble).

7. Polling Regulations and Election Day Rules

- **Polling Access:** Campaigning is strictly prohibited within 25 feet of polling stations. Campaign representatives may not distribute materials or solicit votes near polling locations (SGEC, Article VII, Polling Places, §§1-2).
- **No Campaigning on Election Days:** Campaign activities, including distribution of materials, are prohibited on March 27 and 28, 2025, to maintain a neutral environment for voters (SGEC, Article VIII, §1).

8. Recounts, Protests, and Appeals

- **Protest Submission:** Protests regarding election procedures must be submitted within three university working days after the election, by April 2, 2025. All protests are reviewed by the Supreme Court (SGEC, Article IX, Recounts and Protests, §1).
- **Recount Requests:** Candidates may request a recount within two business days of results announcement (SGEC, Article IX, §2).
- **Appeals Process:** Appeals following a protest ruling must be filed within two business days and will be reviewed by the Supreme Court and Student Success Office (SGEC, Article IX, §5).

9. Communication and Publication of Rulings

- **Public Access:** All Supreme Court rulings, advisory opinions, and decisions will be published on the Student Government website and communicated directly to candidates (SGEC, Chapter 101, Article I, §9).

- **Transparency in Deliberations:** Hearings, aside from deliberations, are open to the public for transparency and accountability (SGEC, Article III, Administrative, §3).

10. Student Government Election Code

All candidates are reminded that a comprehensive list of rules and regulations can be found enshrined in the Student Government Election Code, found in the Student Government Code of Laws. The Supreme Court wants to ensure each student is informed about the existence of this document.

By reading this document, the Court holds that each candidate is aware of Article IV, Section 7 of the SGEC: “Ignorance of the Election Code will not be an acceptable defense in response to any offense committed in any election under this code; either by the candidates themselves, their agents or workers, or the election regulatory bodies, as defined by this code.”

Important Dates and Deadlines

Event	Date
Operating Memorandum Effective from	January 15, 2025
Election Filing Period	Start: 08:00 am, January 13, 2025. End: 05:00 pm, February 28, 2025.
Rules Reading Seminars	1. March 03, 2025. 2. March 07, 2025.
Campaign Period	Start: 08:00 am, March 17, 2025. End: 05:00 pm, March 26, 2025.
Debate Date	March 24, 2025.
Voting Period	Start: 08:00 am, March 27, 2025. End: 08:00 pm, March 28, 2025.

Conclusion

This memorandum ensures a structured, fair, and ethical election process. The Supreme Court encourages all candidates and campaign teams to familiarize themselves thoroughly with these guidelines, to avoid infractions and to contribute to a positive election experience for all.

