

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Student Association

*ELECTIONS
MANUAL*

ARTICLE I - ELECTIONS PROCESS AND PROCEDURE:

Section 1 – The purpose of this manual is to provide the guidelines necessary to ensure fair and efficient SA Elections with maximum voter participation. Likewise, it shall ensure that honesty and integrity are preserved in the electoral process.

Section 2 – The following SA Elections shall be elected for one year:

1. The President.
2. The Executive Vice-President.
3. The Vice-President for Social Activities.

Section 3 – Any and all SA Elections (excluding SA Senate elections) shall be overseen by the SA Senate Bylaws Committee, per Article III, Section 2.3-4.

Section 4 – SA Senate Elections:

1. The SA Senate Elections must be held within the first four weeks of the school year with exact dates to be specified by the SA Executive Vice President, in cooperation with the SA Faculty Coordinator.
2. A qualifying period of three days must be observed before the start of the SA Senate Elections candidates' campaigns.
3. Precincts which SA Senatorial candidates wish to represent will be divided in accordance with the guidelines specified by Article VI, Section 2, of the Constitution.
4. In order to gain approval for running in the SA Elections, all SA candidates must meet the following requirements as well as those listed, per Article XII, Section 5 Bylaws other changes sub section 3B, IV lower case:
 - A. Be a member of the SA General Assembly.
 - B. Be approved by the University Student Affairs Committee.
 - C. Submit a petition for candidacy signed by at least 20 members from the Legislative Precinct he/she wishes to represent.
 - D. Must have completed a minimum of three academic hours completed on the campus of the University or have completed a minimum of six academic hours at another college and/ or university.

Section 5 – SA General Elections:

1. The SA General Elections must be held during the second month of the winter semester. The purpose of the SA General Elections is to elect the three SA Officers for the following academic school year, per Article XII, Section 2.
2. The officiating body for the SA General Elections shall be the SA Senate Bylaws Committee, per Article X, Section 2. All decisions made by the SA Senate Bylaws Committee shall be final, unless overturned by a two-thirds majority vote of the SA Senate. The Senate Bylaws Committee shall rule in the situations deemed necessary by the SA Faculty Coordinator. Both opposing campaigns must agree to stand by the final ruling of the SA Senate Bylaws Committee.

3. Prior to Christmas break the permanent membership of the SA Senate Bylaws Committee shall set dates and deadlines of the SA General Elections campaign in accordance with the following schedule:
 - A. The SA General Elections session shall start the Sunday prior to the scheduled speeches assembly.
 - B. SA Candidates shall then have at least one week to pick up petitions for office, and return them, along with a platform, and a minimum of 50 signatures, to a place designated by the SA Senate Bylaws Committee. After the announced deadline, if no individual is slated for a particular SA Office, then the SA Senate shall attempt to find any qualified individual willing to enter the race. Upon filing, individuals must meet the following general qualifications to be certified as official SA Candidates:
 - (I) Be a member of the SA General Assembly.
 - (II) Be approved by the University Student Services Committee.
 - (III) Have a cumulative GPA of 2.25 or GPA of 2.5 for the previous semester
 - (IV) Must have attended Southern Adventist University as a full-time student for at least one full academic semester.
 - (V) The first three above-stated qualifications also apply to the SA Senators, and the SA Editors and Producer.
 - C. The qualifying SA Candidates will be briefed by the Senate Bylaws Committee as to the general operative policies and procedures of the SA General Elections.
 - D. A list of qualifying SA Candidates will be publicly posted on the morning of the first school day following the briefing. The SA General Election candidates public campaigning may begin at this time.
 - E. All SA Candidates will be required to participate in a general press conference to be held during the SA General Elections.
 - F. All SA Candidates will be required to participate, in person, in a general speeches assembly to be held during the SA General Elections.
 - G. A primary election will be held, if necessary, on the Thursday of the scheduled speeches assembly. The SA General Elections will end the Thursday of the following week posting top two candidates in percentage form.
 - H. At the conclusion of the SA General Elections, the SA candidates with the majority of the votes shall be declared the winners. A report of votes cast and a percentage distribution will be posted twelve hours after the SA General Elections have ended.
 - I. All SA Candidates shall have their platforms printed in the *Southern Accent*.
 - J. Any *Southern Accent* staff member that chooses to become involved in the SA election shall take a leave of absence from the *Southern Accent*.
 - K. The *Southern Accent* shall strive to follow all ethical guidelines and standards in its coverage of the SA General Elections.
 - L. The *Southern Accent* shall only sell equal advertising space for all candidates.

M. The *Southern Accent* columnists shall be allowed to express their opinions in relationship to the SA General Elections.

Section 6 – Even if three or more candidates run for a given elected SA office, voting will take place on the day of speeches.

1. The candidate receiving more than 50% of the votes will be declared the winner, and no further voting will occur the following week.
2. However, if no candidate receives more than 50% of the votes, the two SA candidates receiving the highest vote percentage shall proceed to the SA General Elections the following Thursday.
3. Voting results shall be posted per Article XII, Section 5(3H).

Section 7 – SA Election Policies:

1. *Notification:* Once the SA Senate Bylaws Committee has set the final dates of the campaign, per Article XII, Section 5(3). Notification of these dates and the general qualifications for such SA positions will be posted in the following ways:
 - A. Published in the *Southern Accent*.
 - B. Posted in the lobby of Talge Hall.
 - C. Posted in the lobby of Thatcher Hall.
 - D. Posted in the lobby of Thatcher South.
 - E. Posted on the bulletin boards in Southern Village.
 - F. Posted on the bulletin board in the Student Center.
 - G. Posted on the SA bulletin board on the Promenade.
 - H. Posted in other locations and announced in other venues deemed necessary.
2. *Candidate Campaign Conduct:* SA Candidates should conduct their campaigns in the spirit of good ethical conduct. Campaign misconduct may subject SA Candidates to the immediate and final disqualification.
3. *Running Unopposed:* A SA Candidate who is slated to run unopposed must receive a “yes” vote (on a yes/no ballot) of at least 50.1 percent in order to win the SA Office in question. If such a percentage is not achieved, the SA Senate shall hold an emergency meeting to elect someone.
4. *Posters:* No posters may be attached to wood, glass, or drywall. Only double-sided tape may be used. The SA Senate Bylaws Committee shall yearly designate specific areas for campaign posters and release such information to all SA Candidates one week before campaigning begins. The use of paint, ink, chalk, or other permanent markings shall be limited to posters. All posters not meeting these standards shall be discarded. All posters must be removed within twenty-four hours of the end of SA Elections.
5. *Voting:* Voting in any SA Election shall take place through the use of an online medium, such as Survey Monkey
6. *Ballot Counts:* A simple majority of the Bylaws Committee members shall be present to confirm the results of the elections, along with the current SA president, the Accent Editor, and the Vice President for Student Development.

7. *Ballot Re-counts*: Ballot re-counts shall only be done at the request of a SA Candidate, whose margin of loss was by 20 votes or less.
8. *Candidate Identity*: While voting on the Survey Monkey, voters shall be provided with the pictorial identity of each SA Candidate, along with the candidate's platform if requested.
9. *Proxy Votes*: No proxy votes shall be allowed, per Article V, Section 2.
10. *Election Campaign Neutrality*: Members of the SA Senate Bylaws Committee shall maintain neutrality while performing their official duties, per Article X, Section 2. Those individuals that violate the standards set forth by Article X, Section 2 (4) shall be subjected to disciplinary action by the University Student Services Committee on the advice of the SA Faculty Coordinator.
11. The SA Faculty Coordinator shall review and sanction any part of any SA Election he/she deems necessary. Likewise, the University Student Services Committee shall void any SA Election as deemed necessary.
12. The *Southern Accent* shall maintain neutrality, excluding editorial comments, during the duration of the SA Elections.

Section 8 – The SA Senate Bylaws Committee shall review all reported SA campaign activities that are in violation of the SA Election Policies. Results of the SA Senate Bylaws Committee's ensuing actions shall be rendered in writing for the public. The University Student Services Committee shall take disciplinary action against those individuals who are found to have committed deliberate and aggressive violations of the SA Election Policies.

Section 9 – The terms of the elected SA Officers, the SA Editors and Producer, and the SA Executive Appointees shall be from noon on the day of spring commencement to noon on the day of the next spring commencement.

Section 10 - No person may run for more than one SA Office simultaneously.

Section 11 – If an elected SA Office is vacated, the SA President shall appoint a replacement confirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the SA Senate to serve out the remainder of the term, per Article VII, Section 6.

Section 12 – The University Student Services Committee shall remove any SA Officer-elect, if deemed necessary, for the following reasons:

1. The said SA Officer-elect fails to meet the general academic and/or citizenship requirements set by the University.
2. The said SA Officer-elect fails to display the abilities to fulfill the duties of his/her position.

Section 13 – The SA Faculty Coordinator, as empowered by the University Administration, reserves the right to intervene in the SA Election process as deemed necessary.

ARTICLE II- REMOVAL FROM OFFICE:

Section 1 – Vote of No Confidence:

1. Any elected SA Officer or SA Senator may be removed from office by a simple majority vote of no confidence by his/her voting constituents.
2. A vote of no confidence is called when one of the following situations occurs:
 - A. A petition for a vote of no confidence is signed by ten percent of the voting constituents and presented to the SA Faculty Coordinator.
 - B. The SA Senate calls for a vote of *no confidence* by a simple majority vote.
 - C. The University Student Services Committee deems such actions necessary.

Section 2 – Reasons for Removal from Office:

The following criteria shall set the standards for any votes of no confidence and the resulting removal from the office actions. These criteria shall apply to all the SA Branches. Though excluding the SA Judicial Branch, for which the University Student Services Committee shall determine specific actions for specific cases.

The criteria are as follows:

1. Violations of the standards and regulations as set forth by the Constitution.
2. Violations of any city, county, state, or federal laws (excluding traffic violations).
3. Violations of the University rules and standards
4. Abuse of the powers of the SA office in question.
5. Failure to fulfill the duties of the SA office in question
6. Failure to abide by any other standards and regulations set forth by the Constitution.
7. Misuse of SA funds.
8. Failure to keep grades at academic standards listed in the **Article I, Section 5.3B III**

Section 3 – Recall Procedures:

1. The intent to circulate a recall petition must be registered with the SA Faculty Coordinator. The petition is then given to the petitioner, and seven days are allowed to acquire signatures from at least ten percent of the elected SA Officer's / SA Senators constituents. If these conditions are met, a vote of *no confidence* is then called for. The SA Senate may call for a vote of *no confidence* by a simple majority vote or simply choose to censure such individuals as deemed necessary. The vote of no confidence must be held within one week after the petition has been returned or the SA Senate has voted. A vote of *no confidence* resulting from a simple majority vote of the constituency in question will result in the position being vacated.

Section 4 – SA Cabinet Appointments and SA Directorate Appointments maybe revoked by the SA president. The power does not extend to SA Judiciary Council Appointments, SA Legislative Appointments, and SA Special Appointments.

Section 5 – If there is substantial proof that an SA Candidate obtained his/her post through violations of any of the standards and regulations set forth by Article XII, he/she shall be removed from his/her office immediately by the SA Faculty

Section 6 – The University Student Services Committee, on the advice of the SA Faculty Coordinator, shall remove any SA Official from his/her position. Such actions may only be overturned by the University Faculty Senate with a majority vote.

Section 7 – The order of succession to the SA Office of the Presidency shall be the following:

1. The SA Executive Vice President.
2. The SA Vice- President for Social Activities.
3. The SA Interim President, who shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the SA Senate and shall serve out the remainder of the academic school year.
4. If the SA Senate is unable to select a SA Interim President, the highest- ranking (appointed) member of the SA Cabinet shall serve as the SA Acting President until the end of the academic school year.

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