

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
STUDENT ELECTIONS BOARD ELECTIONS MANUAL**

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
STUDENT ELECTIONS BOARD ELECTIONS MANUAL

The primary purpose of the Student Government Elections Manual of The University of Alabama is to provide guidelines to ensure honest, fair, open elections for all who are involved. In upholding its responsibility to the Student Body, the Elections Board will endeavor to hold candidates to the highest level of accountability for their actions or actions on their behalf, using the Elections Manual as a guide. All candidates and their volunteers shall be responsible for knowing its contents. Any questions concerning this Manual shall be addressed directly to a member of the Elections Board or the Elections Board Chair. The Elections Board has sole discretion within the SGA to interpret the language of this Elections Manual.

Candidates are reminded of the Capstone Creed and must adhere to the letter and spirit of the Creed in their campaigns:

As a member of The University of Alabama community, I will pursue knowledge, act with fairness, integrity and respect; promote equity and inclusion; foster individual and civic responsibility; and strive for excellence in all I do.

I. ELECTION TIMELINE

The Homecoming and Fall Election shall be held the Tuesday before Homecoming with a run-off election, if necessary, occurring on Wednesday of that same week. The General Election for the SGA Executive offices and SGA Senate shall be held during the month of March at the discretion of the Elections Board.

The Elections Board shall be in charge of setting all dates of the election-related events listed in this section, subject to any further provisions of the Elections Manual. All deadlines and dates that are relative to filing, campaigning, and election days for the Fall and Spring Student Government and Homecoming Queen Elections shall be declared by the Chair of the Elections Board. Once the dates have been set, the Chair of the Elections Board will immediately deliver this information to the *Crimson White*, the SGA President, the Student Senate, and the Student Judicial Board.

The Elections Board shall issue a Press Release at least seven (7) class days¹ prior to the opening of the filing period for Fall and Spring Elections; and issue appropriate widespread campus wide announcements, including, but not limited to, in the *Crimson White* and notice in UA Student News. The announcement shall include the following: positions to be filled in the election, dates for the opening and closing of the filing period, time & place that a person may file for office, dates of the Election and any run-off, and name & contact information for the Chair of the Elections Board.

Once an Election Day is determined, the following guidelines will be used to set the election schedule:

- Twenty (20) days prior to Election Day—Election Timeline posted
- Seven (7) days before filing period opens—Elections Board announces upcoming elections
- Weekly, after declaring intent—Candidates submit financial disclosures

¹ Unless specifically noted otherwise (e.g., “class day”), all references to “days” are to be construed as calendar days that run consecutively. Class day is defined as Monday through Friday when classes are in session. Similarly, all times noted herein are Central.

- Two (2) days after each disclosure is received—Elections Board posts financial disclosure statements
- Eight (8) days prior to Election Day at 8:00 a.m.—Public campaign period begins. Students may begin distributing campaign materials.
- Six (6) class days prior to Election Day
 - 9:00 a.m.—Elections Board posts sample candidate list
 - 5:00 p.m.—Candidates must correct any errors on list
- Five (5) class days prior to Election Day—Last day for candidates to withdraw
- Three (3) days prior to Election Day—Elections Board posts final candidate listing and sends to *Crimson White*
- Day after Election Day by 4:30 p.m.—Unofficial results released
- Two (2) class days after unofficial results are released—Results are final (if no complaints or appeals are still pending)

Elections Board determines reasonable dates for the following:

- Candidate informational meetings
- Debate/Forum sponsorship deadlines
- Official Campaign Period Start
- Candidate debates and forums (recommended timeline in Elections Manual)
- Specific deadlines for campaign finance disclosure forms (once per week from each candidate)
- Run-off election (recommended timeline in Elections Manual)

II. STUDENT ELECTIONS BOARD

As mandated in [Article VIII](#) of the University of Alabama Student Government Association Constitution, the Student Elections Board oversees all SGA elections. The composition and selection of the Board is outlined in [Article VIII](#) of the SGA Constitution. There shall be four undergraduate students, two graduate or law school students, one voting faculty member, and one non-voting staff member.

The Elections Board shall remain politically neutral and shall be removed, in whole or part, if they express any form of support for a particular candidate at any time. The Elections Board shall at all times avoid bias or even the appearance of any bias. Any Elections Board member with a conflict of interest, real or perceived, will be expected to recuse themselves from any decisions where such a conflict might arise. Members shall not be a currently elected official within the Student Government Association or a member of the Student Judicial Board. Members of the Elections Board that wish to seek any elected position (e.g. Homecoming Queen, SGA Exec or SGA Senate) must resign immediately.

The jurisdiction of the Elections Board is stated in the SGA Constitution as follows:

The Student Elections Board shall regulate SGA elections and campaigns. All rules and regulations of the Student Elections Board shall reside in the Elections Manual, which shall be pursuant to only this Constitution. The Student Elections Board shall hear election and campaign violation cases and issue decisions.

1. The Student Elections Board shall issue decisions in accordance with this Constitution and any rules or regulations created by the Student Elections Board that reside in the Student Elections Board Elections Manual.

2. The Senate, the Executive Council, or both bodies shall have the power to review the rules and regulations of the Student Elections Board and may request an opinion from the Attorney General on the constitutionality of those rules and regulations.
3. Rulings and regulations of the Student Elections Board may be appealed to the Judicial Board by any student at The University of Alabama. If the Judicial Board finds rulings or regulations of the Student Elections Board not in accordance with provisions of this Constitution or the Elections Manual, then the Judicial Board shall declare such rulings or regulations unconstitutional.
4. A ruling or regulation of the Student Elections Board that has been ruled unconstitutional by the Judicial Board shall be revised so that the ruling or regulation is in accordance with this Constitution.
5. The Student Elections Board shall forward hearings of election and campaign violations that have issues pertaining to the Code of Student Conduct at The University of Alabama to the Judicial Board.

To conduct business, a quorum of the Elections Board shall be present. A quorum shall consist of the presence of a majority of the members.

III. QUALIFICATION OF CANDIDATES

Candidates for elected SGA office shall be full-time students at The University of Alabama, meeting established qualifications before the Election Day. A qualified student will be in good academic and disciplinary standing (defined as no academic or disciplinary probation in force) and meets the following requirements. All credit hour requirements are completed hours, not including currently enrolled hours.

Executive Branch Candidate Requirements

Undergraduate candidates for Executive Council positions must have at least a 2.30 GPA on a 4.0 scale (University of Alabama points only) and have earned 36 credit hours from The University of Alabama.

Graduate student candidates for Executive Council position must have at least a 3.00 GPA on a 4.0 scale (University of Alabama points only) and have earned 9 credit hours from The University of Alabama.

Law School candidates for Executive Council positions must have at least a 2.50 GPA on a 4.0 scale (University of Alabama points only) and have earned 12 credit hours from The University of Alabama.

A Graduate or Law School candidate may forego the credit hour requirement if his or her undergraduate degree was earned at the University of Alabama, provided his or her undergraduate GPA was a 2.30 on a 4.00 scale (University of Alabama points only)

Legislative Branch Candidate Requirements

Undergraduate candidates for legislative seats must have at least a 2.30 GPA on a 4.0 scale (University of Alabama points only) and have earned 12 credit hours from The University of Alabama.

Graduate student candidates for legislative seats must have at least a 3.00 GPA on a 4.0 scale (University of Alabama points only) and have earned 9 credit hours from The University of Alabama.

Law School candidates for legislative seats must have at least a 2.50 GPA on a 4.0 scale (University of Alabama points only) and have earned 12 credit hours from The University of Alabama.

A Graduate or Law School candidate may forego the credit hour requirement if his or her undergraduate degree was earned at the University of Alabama, provided his or her undergraduate GPA was a 2.30 on a 4.00 scale (University of Alabama points only)

Write-in Candidate Requirements

Write-in candidates must meet the minimum qualifications set for candidates whose names appear on the ballot. If write-in candidates advertise or otherwise spend money on a campaign, they must also comply with requirements of submitting weekly financial reports to the Student Elections Board.

Homecoming Queen Requirements

Candidates for Homecoming Queen must have at least a 2.50 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale and have earned 48 credit hours with at least 24 of those hours earned at UA. The candidate must be sponsored by a UA registered student organization.

Appeals pertaining to academics and discipline should be addressed to the Office of the Dean of Students. All other appeals should be made to the Chair of the Elections Board.

IV. DECLARING CANDIDACY

Interested students must submit an online application to declare their intent to run for a position. The application includes the following:

1. Preliminary Budget – An initial comprehensive list of all expected expenses for the campaign period. This will be required at the time of candidate application submittal.
2. Campaign Manager – Campaign manager for the purpose of the SGA Elections shall be defined as the chief spokesperson who coordinates, organizes, and is responsible for the actions of the candidate’s campaign.
3. Campaign Top Five – Campaign Top Five are the group of five people directly under a candidate helping with the campaign. This group, which includes the Campaign Manager, will be in direct contact with the SGA Elections Board at times and will be seen as official representatives of the candidate.
4. Statement of Intent – A statement that is a maximum of 250 words (Senate candidates) and 350 words (Executive candidates), which will be posted as a candidate profiles on vote.ua.edu and the myBama voting page during Election Day. The statement must answer these three questions:
 - a. Who are you? (This includes basic information, campus involvement, etc.)
 - b. Why are you running?
 - c. What is your platform?

All candidates shall only be permitted to run for one elected position in the SGA per election period. Once a student has filed for an office, they may not change to any other office.

V. WITHDRAWAL FROM CAMPAIGN

If a candidate wishes to withdraw from an election, they must do so by meeting with the Chair of the Elections Board, in person, presenting a valid picture ID, and giving a written signed statement of their withdrawal. No person may withdraw from an election less than five (5) class days prior to an election. Should a withdrawn candidate’s name be inadvertently placed on the ballot, they shall be considered to

still have withdrawn and to be thus ineligible to win the election. Votes for this candidate will not be counted or considered when determining the winning candidate under the terms of this Manual.

VI. CANDIDATE MEETINGS

The Elections Board shall hold an Informational Meeting before Candidate Applications are due to provide the candidates with the Elections Manual, along with a simple explanation of basic campaigning guidelines, and a general election timeline. This meeting is optional for all students/potential candidates.

All candidates (including those running for re-election) and the Campaign Top Five staff members must attend one mandatory meeting appropriate to the office they are pursuing. These meetings are for the explicit purpose of informing the candidates of their potential duties, responsibilities, and expectations.

If candidates are unable to attend one of the mandatory meetings, the candidate must notify and provide an explanation of the absence to the Chair of the Elections Board (sgaelections@sa.ua.edu) before each mandatory meeting. If excused, the candidate will work with the Elections Board to determine alternate arrangements.

If a candidate does not attend their appropriate meeting and is not excused, they will be disqualified from the race.

Official candidate headshots for use in candidate profiles in official marketing materials for SGA election will be taken at these meetings. Candidates are permitted to use their own photos for campaign purposes. Photo sessions and associated costs are exempt from campaign finance disclosure calculations.

VII. DEBATE AND FORUM

A presidential candidate debate is to take place during the campaign term and is recommended to take place 1-2 nights before Election Day.

All other executive and senate candidates can participate in a separate forum each election cycle. Date and time will be posted in the election timeline.

Any UA registered organization interested in becoming a sponsor/host of the Presidential Debate or Executive/Senate debate must apply to the Student Elections Board by the date stated in the election timeline. Organizations selected as hosts will be contacted by the Chair of the board to request further details into the type of debate format, questions, hosts, panel, etc.

VIII. CAMPAIGNING

Campaigning for the purposes of the Student Government Association Elections is defined as, but not limited to, any written statement, speaking engagement, display, or distribution of any campaign material and/or activity that is intended to promote an individual candidate or group of candidates. The candidate is responsible for communicating campaign guidelines to their campaign team. Should any person campaigning for a particular candidate be found in violation of any campaigning guideline, the candidate may be held responsible. Campaigning does not include reporting by media outlets on any candidate, referendum, petition, or constitutional amendment.

Campaign Organization and Preparation

Candidates may begin preparation in advance of the established public campaign period. The initial, organizational stages of a campaign includes selection of Campaign Manager, Campaign Top Five, and campaign team. Campaign preparation also includes any work done outside public eye to prepare for announcement of candidacy. This includes, but is not limited to, forming group messages for members of the campaign team, building social media platforms (not to be set to public until campaigning period begins), working and/or purchasing any campaign materials and photos, etc.

Candidates are allowed to formally announce to groups in which they are a member that they are running for any position before the established public campaign period begins, for the sole purpose of recruiting for their campaign team. Candidates are prohibited from “campaigning” in the sense of asking members of organizations to vote for them until the public campaign period begins.

Campaign Materials

Campaign materials for the purposes of the SGA Elections shall be defined as any paraphernalia bearing the name, logo, mark, or likeness of a candidate, including, but not limited to, flyers, literature, pamphlets, buttons, clothing, and table tents advertisements as well as communication via Social and Electronic media as discussed in this Elections Manual.

No UA emblems, logos, or trademarked materials can be used on campaign materials. Students may be featured in photos that include trademarked materials such as a T-shirt with “Bama” on it.

Campaigning On-Campus

Campaigns must be considerate of academic classes and other activities taking place on campus. Except as otherwise allowed herein, no campaigning shall be allowed inside any University building or within twenty-five (25) feet of any entrance to a University building. Specifically exempt are candidate organizational meetings and meetings of registered student organizations and the Ferguson Center and Plaza. The SGA offices and all SGA functions shall be considered neutral ground and campaigning is strictly forbidden (Code of Laws Chapter 702.4). Posting of campaign signs and/or posters in classrooms or hallways, and writing on chalkboards/whiteboards or similar devices is strictly forbidden.

Campaign materials for posting where allowed may not exceed 8.5 x 14 inches in size. Political signs that can be staked into the ground will be allowed in specified areas in accordance with an approved Grounds Use Permit. Any types of self-adhesive materials (stickers, etc.) are strictly prohibited as campaign material. No campaign materials are to be taped to the campus grounds or structures. No chalking is allowed.

Banners of any kind or size are strictly prohibited on campus. The date, time, and location of a campaign stop that involves amplified sound, structures/tables or food must have prior approval from the Office of the Dean of Students and must conform to guidelines for campus demonstrations as listed in the Campus Grounds Use policy. A campus Grounds Use Permit may be required for a campaign stop. A campaign stop shall be defined as any public activity on the part of candidates that demonstrates involvement in the election process, disseminates the views and platforms of a particular candidate, and/or actively solicits votes or support from members of the student body. A campaign stop may feature the use of campaign material so long as it conforms to guidelines pertaining to the content and location of said materials as outlined elsewhere in the Election Rules and Procedures.

Campaigning in Residence Halls

The involvement of residence halls in the Student Government Association elections shall proceed with the goal of providing opportunities for residents to involve themselves in political campaign activities while preserving the rights to privacy of those who choose not to participate.

Contacts for speaking engagements must be made through the appropriate Area Coordinator. Guest speakers may only speak in the common areas of residence halls and only with proper invite from a resident and approval from the Area Coordinator as to time.

Door-to-door solicitation for business, political, or other purposes is strictly prohibited in residence halls.

Without proper prior approval, solicitation and posting is prohibited within the residence hall lobbies, and common areas. If a party or group is interested in posting items in the residence halls, follow this link for procedural information: <https://housing.sa.ua.edu/about/advertising-policies/>

Candidates living in residence halls must observe the privacy of their roommates and suitemates by following the prescribed noise, visitation, and escort policies.

University Residential Communities staff reserve the right to stop inappropriate campaigning in their respective halls, including removing improperly posted campaign materials.

Campaigning Off-Campus

Banners off campus may not exceed 4 ft. wide by 8 ft. long and must be included in campaign financial disclosures. Posting of banners must follow Tuscaloosa city ordinances for political signage. Candidates campaigning off campus should do so with caution due to potential violations of city and county laws. Violation of solicitation policies of apartment complexes, condominiums, businesses, etc. could result in prosecution.

Social and Electronic Media

Only free social media platforms are allowed. The use of sponsored or boosted posts on any free social media platform is strictly prohibited. Campaigning on BlackBoard or use of myBama email accounts to send unsolicited mail messages are prohibited. The use of candidate websites is prohibited.

The University of Alabama computer network, equipment, and resources are owned by the University and are provided primarily to support the academic and administrative functions of the University. The use of these computer resources is governed by federal and state law and University policies.

IX. CAMPAIGN ETHICS

Candidates are expected to conduct themselves in an ethically appropriate manner in accordance with Student Government Association documents and the Code of Student Conduct. A violation of this Manual may also be a violation of the Code of Student Conduct or other University policy.

A candidate or volunteer may under no circumstances intentionally interfere with the campaign of another candidate in any way.

X. ELECTION FRAUD

Election fraud shall be defined as any willful act, deed, or conspiracy that violates the integrity of the electoral process before, during, or after actual voting occurs. Elections fraud shall include, but not be limited to, the following acts:

1. Attempting, with or without success, to vote or voting for a particular candidate in place of another;
2. Attempting, with or without success, to coerce or procure votes for a particular candidate by the payment, delivery, or promise of money or other article of value;
3. Attempting, with or without success, to coerce or procure votes for a particular candidate by the use of threats or intimidation;
4. Retaliation for reporting election violations;
5. Making a statement about a particular candidate or campaign with knowledge that it contains falsehoods or with reckless disregard for the truth, and with intent to impact their ability to succeed in the election;
6. Tampering or interfering with a campus election or a student's right to vote for a particular candidate in such an election, including, but not limited to, requiring someone to provide evidence of voting for a particular candidate in an election.

Any potential instance of election fraud may be addressed under the terms of this Manual or, in the discretion of the Elections Board, referred to the Office of Student Conduct for further investigation and, if appropriate, sanctions.

XI. ENDORSEMENTS

Only UA students eligible to vote in an SGA election or groups comprised exclusively of UA students eligible to vote may, with prior approval of the candidate, publicly endorse a candidate.

Candidates may be contacted by any University of Alabama registered organization for the purposes of speaking at meetings to seek endorsements. Any public endorsement on behalf of a group of students must include the disclaimer statement below:

(Organization name) endorses (candidate name) for (insert position). Our members' votes are their own and they have the right to choose whether to vote and whom to vote for. We encourage all voters to research any and all candidates and to decide for themselves.

Endorsements from groups, organizations, or individuals outside the campus and its population is strictly prohibited. Members of the faculty are discouraged from engaging in campaigning on behalf of students or making statements in support of selected candidates in the classroom.

XII. SPENDING LIMITS

Compliance with the spending limit is mandatory, and it is the responsibility of every candidate on the ballot to comply. The campaign spending limits shall be as follows:

General Elections

- SGA President: \$1,000
- Executive Vice President: \$800
- Executive Secretary: \$800
- Vice President, Academic Affairs: \$800

Vice President, External Affairs: \$800
Vice President, Financial Affairs: \$800
Vice President, Student Life: \$800
Senate Candidates: \$300
Homecoming Queen: \$350

Run-off Elections

Executive Office: \$75
Senate: \$25

All write-in candidates who campaign, advertise, or otherwise have expenses related to a campaign must comply with the same election regulations, spending limits, and financial disclosure reports as registered candidates

XIII. CAMPAIGN FINANCES

All candidates shall maintain records showing the amount and source of campaign contributions as well as the amount and recipient of any expenditure or expenditures. Candidates shall file a report with the Student Elections Board listing campaign contributions and expenditures once a week, each week, from the date they announce candidacy and ending the morning of Election Day. The Student Elections Board shall make the weekly campaign contribution and expenditure form available publicly on the elections website within two (2) class days of receiving the weekly campaign contribution and expenditure form.

The Elections Board is responsible for validating and approving the records of all candidates. All financial information of the candidates is public record, and the Elections Board will take caution that all reasonable confidentiality is protected regarding credit card and account numbers.

A candidate's total expenditures shall include all goods and services purchased by or donated (including monetary or in-kind contributions) to a candidate or campaign for use in the election or use in any way furthering that candidate's campaign. Candidates must provide all receipts and estimates, in addition to all contact information for all services provided. A candidate is allowed to accept a discount for materials and/or services. If the discount is not available to the general public, it must be recorded at its undiscounted value.

An in-kind contribution shall be regarded as anything contributed to a candidate other than money, excluding campaign volunteers. In-kind contributions for the use of campaign fundraising or printing of campaign paraphernalia must be reported and will count toward the maximum expenditure a candidate may spend. Receipts for these contributions must be submitted with expenditure reports.

The fair market value of a donated item or in-kind contribution shall be the value recorded on the final expenditure report. Fair market value of a donated item or in-kind contribution is determined by the candidate securing two price estimates of the exact item to be used on the campaign, the average of which is to be included on the expenditure report. Both estimates must contain the name, address, and phone number of the entities furnishing the estimated. Barring a reasonable doubt, the Board will recognize the retail value paid for a good or service at its fair market value. The Board reserves the right to reassign value to a good or service in response to a complaint that the good or service is not reported at its fair market value. The Elections Board must submit three reasonable price references from vendors in estimating the value of any contested reported price.

XIV. BALLOT

Write-in votes shall be permitted in any SGA election. A designated area on the electronic ballot must allow voters to be able to type in the first name and last name of their preferred candidate into the electronic voting system.

The candidate's first name and last name shall be the only thing to appear on the ballot. The name that will appear on the ballot must be the same as submitted on the Statement of Intent.

The Elections Board will post a sample candidate listing on the <http://vote.ua.edu> site for the purpose of correcting errors by 9:00 a.m., six (6) class days prior to Election Day. If a candidate does not appeal any error before the final listing, they lose their right to appeal on this issue.

The Elections Board will post the final candidate listing outside the SGA office and on the <http://vote.ua.edu> site and provide the listing to the *Crimson White* at least three (3) class days prior to Election Day.

XV. VOTING

Any student currently enrolled at The University of Alabama may vote in SGA elections. Students may cast one vote for the Senate in their primary college of enrollment. Students may vote once for each elected executive office or Homecoming Queen candidate.

All SGA elections shall be conducted by secret ballot using an electronic ballot system. Authentication for the electronic ballot shall be through the myBama portal. Because a ballot can be accessed anywhere there is an internet connection, absentee ballots shall not be permitted in any SGA election. In the case of an abnormality with the electronic ballot, if deemed feasible with the Office of Information Technology and appropriate by the Elections Board, the voting period may be extended to make up a period of time lost due to the abnormality.

Candidates or organizations may not set up or organize mobile stations, laptops, or polling locations around campus for voting purposes.

XVI. DETERMINATION OF WINNER

Executive Candidates

Qualified candidates for any executive shall be elected by a majority of votes cast. A majority of votes cast is equal to fifty percent of the votes cast plus one additional vote. In the event that candidates for any executive office fail to receive a majority of votes cast, then a run-off election shall be conducted preferably one week later, but no later than twenty (20) class days after Election Day, for the two candidates that receive the largest percentage of votes cast.

Senate Candidates

Qualified candidates for Senate in each school or college shall be ranked in order of votes received from highest to lowest. Based upon this ranking, candidates for Senate receiving the most votes shall be elected to represent their school or college. The number chosen shall be equal to the apportioned senate seats for each school or college as defined in [Article III](#), Section 2 of the SGA Constitution. In the event of a tie in the number of votes received by candidates for Senate seats that results in a school or college surpassing the apportioned seats for that school or college, a tie will be broken by a run-off election that shall be on a date determined by the Student Elections Board.

Regardless of filed complaints or appeals, the unofficial results of any SGA election will be released by the Elections Board no later than 4:30 p.m. on the day after Election Day. During the Spring 2018 Election, the Elections Board will be broadcasting the unofficial results via Facebook Live on the official SGA Facebook page. The results will also be posted to the SGA webpage thereafter.

All election results that are not subject to contest or a run-off shall be deemed final two (2) class days after the unofficial election results are released.

XVII. CONTESTING ELECTION

Any student wishing to contest the results of an SGA election shall file a petition in writing with the Executive Secretary of the SGA within three (3) day after the unofficial elections results are released. Thereafter, the Executive Secretary must notify the Student Judicial Board and the Student Elections Board within two (2) class days that a petition contesting the results of an SGA election has been filed. The hearing must be conducted by the Student Elections Board and appeals should be made in writing to the Student Judicial Board.

The following shall be grounds for contesting election results:

1. Misconduct, fraud, or irregularity by any election official sufficient to change or place in doubt the result of a SGA election;
2. Ineligibility of any person elected to the office in dispute;
3. Receipt of illegal votes or rejection of legal votes in an amount sufficient to change or place in doubt the result of a SGA election;
4. An error in the counting of votes or in the declaration of the result of an election sufficient to change or place in doubt the result of a SGA election;
5. Any other cause sufficient to change or place in doubt the result of a SGA election.

XVIII. VIOLATIONS

Any member of the University of Alabama community shall have the right to file a complaint about a potential violation of this Elections Manual. Complaints must be timely filed in writing on the [SGA Elections Violation Complaint Form](#) found on the [SGA Elections](#) webpage. Oral complaints will not be accepted.

Complaints must contain the following:

1. Name of the candidate and/or individual(s) who committed the alleged violation
2. A brief description of the alleged violation, including the date and time of the incident and reference to the relevant provision(s) of the Elections Manual
3. Any applicable evidence, including, among other things, a list of individuals who may have knowledge of the alleged violation
4. The full name and contact information (i.e., cell phone & e-mail) of the person filing the complaint

No anonymous complaints will be reviewed. Complaints must be filed within twenty-four (24) hours of the violation or within twenty-four (24) hours of when the violation is first discovered by the individual(s) submitting the complaint. No complaints can be filed more than two (2) class days after the unofficial results of the race involving the accused candidate or individuals are released. The Elections Board will have discretion on whether to conduct an investigation into any submitted complaint. With that, the Elections Board has the discretion to dismiss a complaint without informing the respondent(s)

to the complaint about it. **Knowingly filing a frivolous or bad faith complaint may result in the individual or campaign filing the complaint being subject to sanctions under this Manual and/or referral to the Office of Student Conduct.**

Assuming the Elections Board finds the complaint to potentially be viable or worthy of further consideration, the respondent to the complaint will be notified of the asserted complaint within two (2) class days of the Election Boards' receipt of the complaint. That notification should include a summary of all available information related to the alleged violation. The respondent will have twenty-four (24) hours from notification to submit a response to the alleged violation(s).

Unless further inquiry is deemed necessary, the Elections Board shall review all complaints within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving all materials it deems relevant, including the response from the respondent. The Board, applying a preponderance of evidence standard, may decide by a majority vote that respondent is responsible or not responsible for the alleged violation or, alternatively, may determine that the complaint merits a hearing and a hearing shall be scheduled within two (2) class days. In the hearing, the person or persons filing the complaint shall carry the burden of proof and the respondent will have the opportunity to present evidence in support of their position. Attendance of any individuals at the hearing and use of witnesses during any such hearing is at the sole discretion of the Chair of the Elections Board.

If the Elections Board decides to hear a complaint, a member of the board will inform all involved individuals of both the charges they face and a summary of the evidence. The respondent may have an opportunity, upon request, to review and inspect evidence available to the Elections Board at least twenty-four (24) hours before the scheduled hearing.

If the Elections Board determines a responsible finding by a majority vote applying the preponderance of evidence standard, the Board has the discretion to impose a penalty. The Board maintains the right to publicly disclose the findings of any proceedings occurring under this Manual on the SGA website.

After notification of an Elections Board ruling, the responsible individual(s) will have twenty-four (24) hours from the delivery of the finding to appeal the ruling. Appeals of Elections Board findings are heard by the Student Judicial Board. The Judicial Board may uphold, overturn, or modify a decision or sanction of the Elections Board.

XIX. CLASSIFICATION OF VIOLATIONS

Minor Violations (3 points per infraction) – Clear violations against the Elections Manual, but do not appear to significantly impact the outcome of the election. Examples include:

1. Use of unsolicited bulk mail messages
2. Use of prohibited social media
3. Misuse of political signs
4. Use of self-adhesive material
5. Campaign materials taped to campus grounds
6. Use of unauthorized UA emblems, logos, or copy written material
7. Chalking
8. Exceeding campaign material size restrictions
9. Posting on non-designated public bulletin boards in residence halls
10. Failure to post endorsement disclaimer

Intermediate Violations (5 points per infraction) – Violations against the Elections Manual of which flagrant or intentional basis may not be determinable, but have the potential to impact the outcome of the election. Examples include:

1. Misuse of UA's computer network, equipment, and resources
2. Interference with educational life of the University
3. Early campaigning
4. Campaigning in SGA office or at SGA functions
5. Use of banners on campus
6. Residence hall door-to-door solicitation
7. Posting anything in residence hall windows
8. Failure to comply with off campus campaigning rules
9. Non-campus public endorsement
10. Intentional littering
11. Campaign spending limits
12. Failure to report/accurately report in-kind donations

Major Violations (7 points per infraction) – Violations that are flagrant or intentional and directly impact the outcome of the election. Examples include:

1. Election fraud
2. Campaign ethics
3. Failure to file financial disclosure and budget forms
4. Failure to attend mandatory meeting

A finding at any level that a violation of this Elections Manual has occurred may subject the individual or group to sanctions, including, but not limited to:

1. Restricting a candidate or campaign staff from campaigning in certain locations or for specified time periods;
2. Levying a monetary fine on the campaign in violation;
3. Assigning community service hours; and/or
4. Disqualify the candidate from the election.

The Elections Board also retains the discretion to refer potential violations for further review and findings to the Office of Student Conduct, which maintains control of the Judicial Board for issues relating to handling potential violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

Accumulation of fifteen (15) points or conviction of a Major Violation allows the Elections Board to consider disqualification. A disqualification is automatically sent to the Vice President for Student Life (or designee) for review and, at that level, may be overturned, upheld, or modified.

XX. SPECIAL ELECTIONS

A special election to fill a vacant Senate seat will be held in the college or school where the vacancy occurred; procedures for voting and identifying the successor senator will be those utilized in regular elections as specified in [Article III](#) of the SGA Constitution. Special elections for Senate vacancies will be held every twenty (20) full class days beginning from the first day of the fall semester until forty class days prior to spring SGA elections. At forty (40) class days prior to the Spring SGA elections, vacant Senate seats will remain unfilled and shall only be filled by candidates that qualify to run in the regular spring SGA election as specified in [Article III](#) of the SGA Constitution.

XXI. REFERENDA OR AMENDMENTS

The full text of the amendment(s) to be voted on shall be published by the Executive Secretary online at the website of the Student Government Association at least two weeks prior to the referendum. The full text of the amendment(s) shall also be published in the *Crimson White*.

Each amendment must be ratified by two-thirds of the students voting on the amendments.

XXII. AMENDMENTS TO ELECTIONS MANUAL

Amendments to this Elections Manual and their effective dates may be made as specified in the Student Government Constitution.

Although the policies contained herein are intended to reflect current rules and policies of the University, users are cautioned that changes or additions may have become effective since the publication of this material. In the event of a conflict, current statements of Board policy contained in the Bylaws, Rules, official minutes, and other pronouncements of the Board or Chancellor, or superseding law, shall prevail.