Homecoming Election Rules and Regulations

2017

Homecoming Director of Homecoming Court Activities
Election Rules and Regulations

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CAMPAIGNING PRACTICES

A. Definition of Campaigning

1. Campaigning is defined as “any activity by a candidate that is intended or likely to encourage or discourage a voter to cast a vote or to affect how he/she votes.”

2. Campaigning includes but is not limited to verbal and/or electronic solicitation of votes and the following: Distributing campaign materials other than private distribution to immediate campaign staff and candidates; Announcing or discussing potential candidacy and/or party name in print, digital, broadcast, public forum, or any other media.; Seeking endorsement (including financial contributions) or voter support for a campaign at an official meeting of a registered student organization; Posting any campaign materials; and wearing apparel, buttons, stickers, and/or similar items explicitly reflecting an affiliation with a candidate. All campaign material including social media websites are subject to registration and approval by the Director of Court Activities.

B. Campaigning Rules and Regulations

1. The campaigning period shall begin no later than the Monday one week prior to the first day of voting as established by the election chairman.

2. Campaigning is not permitted in the residence halls. Personal posting of written material such as flyer, posters, and all literature posters shall be an exception. They must be relegated to personal use and be in line with posting policies of Student Housing and Residential Life. Postings shall not distributed in common areas. (ie: posting a flyer on your room door)

3. All campaign activities that shall occur during classroom instruction hours with the consent of the professor must be pre-approved by the Director of Court Activities.

4. On Election Day, there shall be no campaigning whatsoever within fifty (50) feet of any polling location.

5. Candidates may contact the leader of any student organization registered with the University for the purpose of requesting to speak at that organization’s meeting or to seek its endorsement.

6. Candidates are prohibited from disparaging another candidates in their campaign materials.

7. The following methods of campaigning are strictly prohibited:
   i. Aircraft
   ii. Loudbspeakers, sirens, or noisemakers,
   iii. Decorating any car without the expressed consent of the owner,
   iv. Any method that violates university or state policy concerning mass e-mail, sending potential voters unsolicited electronic messages at any time,
   v. Any method that interferes with a person using a voting apparatus, or setting up any polling station,
   vi. Door to door campaigning in residence halls,
vii. And campaigning during scheduled classroom hours without express permission from the presiding professor.

C. Approved Campaign Materials
1. Campaign materials shall be defined as “any supplies used by a candidate or candidate’s staff, which have the primary purpose of furthering the candidate’s likelihood of being elected.”
2. All literature posters, advertisements, websites (including social media groups), or other election materials that will be used or distributed during the campaign must receive certification by the Director of Court Activities prior to distribution. A sample of each piece of election material must be provided to the Homecoming Board prior to use at the candidates expense.
   i. The criteria for certification are as follows:
      • The material must be accompanied by the name of the individual responsible for its production and distribution
      • The material shall not be in violation or posted in violation of the Homecoming Board Constitution, Code, Student Life Policies, Student Housing and Residential Life policies, or any other University of Houston Outdoor or Freedom of Expression policy.
3. Handbills or other campaign literature distributed or posted in classrooms must receive pre-approval by the Director of Court Activities and applicable faculty/staff.
4. All campaign material must be submitted for approval at least twenty-four (24) hours before posting to be considered for certification.
5. All campaign material must contain the Homecoming Theme logo on it.
6. All campaign materials must be removed within five (5) class days after elections or sooner depending on university outdoor signage policies.

D. Endorsements
1. Candidates must register all endorsements with the Director of Court Activities prior to any public announcements of the endorsement.
2. Any student organization that is registered with the University may publicly endorse any candidate providing that the organization is not on any type of probationary or provisionary status with the University and has prior approval of the candidate being endorsed.
3. Any individual organization or business outside of the University may be allowed to endorse a candidate.

E. Campaign Ethics
1. Members of the Homecoming Board, may not campaign nor publicly verbalize their support for a particular candidate or candidates.
2. Candidates are expected to conduct themselves in an ethically appropriate manner in accordance with the Homecoming Board Constitution and Bylaws, Homecoming Election Code and the Student Code of Conduct.
3. A candidate or volunteer may under no circumstances intentionally interfere with the campaign of another candidate in any way, including but not limited to the destruction of campaign materials.

4. No person shall offer anything tangible of value or make any physical, emotional, or verbal threats to any voter to affect the student's vote. The term anything tangible of value is up to the discretion of the Homecoming Board.

VOTING

A. Voter Eligibility

1. Each member of the University of Houston Student Body shall be entitled to vote in each race for which the applicable rules entitles him/her to vote.

2. An eligible voter must agree to the UH computer use policy and Student Code of Conduct in order to access the voting application upon login.

B. Popular Vote

1. All polls shall open after the public announcement of the Homecoming Court and shall run until October 28th at 11:59 pm.

2. The Homecoming King & Queen shall be chosen from the Homecoming Court by a combination of popular votes in the Homecoming King and Queen Election and “personal candidate interview” scores that were conducted by the Homecoming Candidate Screening Committee. If there are no adequate candidates that could comprise Homecoming Court, the Homecoming Candidate Screening Committee shall choose candidates that represent the University of Houston in a professional and respectful manner, even if it does not represent the ten highest totals.

3. Final selection of the Homecoming King and Queen will be calculated by adding the total scores of the Homecoming Candidate Interview, Application(50% Essay response, 50% Involvement resume), Academic Success(multiplied by 5), Popular Vote, - Homecoming King and Queen Selection Formula.

4. Homecoming King and Queen Selection Formula
   i. \[ P + I + R + E + A = S \]
      • \( P \) = Popular vote
      • \( I \) = Interview score
      • \( R \) = Involvement Resume
      • \( E \) = Essay responses
      • \( A \) = Academic Success
      • \( S \) = Total score
   ii. **Step 1:** Create a table with the following column headings:
      • Name of candidate
      • Popular vote
      • Interview Score
      • Popular Vote
      • Academic Success
      • Involvement Resume/Essay Responses
• Total Score

iii. **Step 2:** Upon the completion of the student election, each candidate will be listed on the form in decreasing order of votes (Column 1 and 2)

iv. **Step 3:** Upon completion of the interview, enter the interview score into the table (Column 3)

v. **Step 4:** A conversion factor will be calculated to set the popular vote and interview scores equal. This conversion factor will be derived by dividing the highest popular vote by the highest interview score. All interview scores are then multiplied by this factor and entered into the table (Column 4)

vi. **Step 5:** Multiply the popular vote by fifty percent (50%) and enter the new amount into the table (Column 5)

vii. **Step 6:** Multiple the converted interview scores by fifty percent (50%) and enter new amount into the table (Column 6)

viii. **Step 7:** Add together Column 5 and 6 to obtain the final score for each candidate (Column 7). The candidate with the highest final score shall be the Homecoming King and Queen. The candidates with the next four (4) highest totals shall constitute the Homecoming Court.

5. The popular vote shall be used to break any tie under Sec. B.4, either for Homecoming King and/or Queen. In any tie, the candidate with the highest popular vote shall be named to the position.

6. **The results of the Homecoming election will be decided approximately three (3) hours prior to the Homecoming football game by giving the Homecoming Chair a letter containing the results of the election. The Homecoming King and Queen shall be named at the Homecoming football game.**

C. Election Dates

1. Any eligible University of Houston student can vote for a candidate for the Queen and King position from October 22 through October 28.

D. General Election Results

1. If a candidate is disqualified after the ballots are finalized, any vote cast for that candidate will still be tallied in the total votes used to determine the percentage majority.

2. If no complains or appeals are registered within (2) class days of the announcement of election results, all election results shall be deemed final.

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

A. Expenditures

1. Candidates shall not make expenditures totaling more than five hundred ($500.00) dollars.

B. Financial Disclosure
1. Each candidate for court is required to keep accurate and up-to-date records of all campaign receipts and expenditures.
2. Each candidate’s financial records shall display the name and monetary amount of each expenditure. Donated items shall be reported at market value and included in total campaign expenditures.
3. The Director of Court Activities shall require each candidate to file a Financial Disclosure Statement bi-weekly from the beginning of the campaigning period up until two (2) class days after the validation of the election results. The candidates may file their financial records after their purchased service or items to ensure records are filed the week after the purchased services are completed.
4. These reports shall be public record after a 24-hour review period. Candidates must sign their reports and certify that they are accurate and complete.
5. No candidate or authorized agent shall knowingly falsify any entry on a Financial Disclosure Statement or in his or her financial records associated with the campaign.
6. Candidates sharing benefits of joint receipts or expenditures shall declare them in the appropriate portions of the Financial Disclosure Statement. Each candidate jointly benefiting from receipts or expenditures shall claim an equal share.

**VIOLATIONS**

A. Complaints and Reporting

1. Complaints must be filed to report violations of the Homecoming Constitution, Bylaws, Election Rules and Regulations, and any other University policies. Such complaints must be filed based on violations that were clearly intended by the person who is being accused and the burden of proving mens rea shall always rest with the accuser. Complaints must always be filed via a candidate or third party unassociated with the committee.
2. Any University of Houston student or faculty/staff member may file a complaint subject to the restrictions enumerated above.
3. An official complaint must be first filed with the Homecoming Board Chair. The Homecoming Chair and Advisor will investigate said complaint and decide its merit. The Homecoming Chair and Advisor must review the compliant carefully to determine validity before proceeding. A written review by the Homecoming Chair must be submitted to the Homecoming Board Advisor no more than one day (24 hours) after the Homecoming Chair receives the complaint.
4. The Homecoming Board shall make a decision pertaining to the merit of the complaint, and provide substantive reasoning based on the Election Rules & Regulations, Homecoming Constitution, Bylaws, Student Code of Conduct, and/or any other University policies.
5. The Homecoming Chair shall decide within two (2) class days whether a complaint has merit. The Homecoming Chair must also receive written agreement
from the Advisor before being able proceed. If the complaint is deemed legitimate he/she shall instruct the Homecoming Board Vice-Chair to pursue penalties against the alleged violator before the Homecoming Board. The Homecoming Chair shall promptly notify the candidate(s)/individuals against whom the complaint has been filed.

6. Any filed complaints shall be made available to the public by the Homecoming Chair immediately after they are filed and decisions regarding the legitimacy of complaints shall be made public within one (1) class day.

B. Classification of Violations and Penalties

1. Violations are classified as follows: list shall never be constructed to be an exhaustive list of all violations, and the Homecoming Board Vice-Chair may bring charges before the Homecoming Board to their best judgment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class A Violations (Major Offense)</th>
<th>Class A Penalties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any violation of the Student Coded of Conduct and/or local, state, and/or federal laws; Election fraud; falsified campaign documents; identify theft.</td>
<td>Disqualification and automatic referral to the Dean of Student’s Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class B Violations</th>
<th>Class B Penalties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliberately defacing, altering, or destroying the campaign material of another candidate without that candidate’s explicit written permission (each poster or sign counts as a separate violation); the obstruction of the Homecoming Board in the discharge of their official duties; exceeding campaign spending limits; failure to appear before the Homecoming Board for trials and/or hearings.</td>
<td>Temporary suspension of campaigning (time period at the discretion of the Homecoming Board) Two Class B violations shall constitute a Class A violation is subject to Class A penalties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class C Violations (Minor Offense)</th>
<th>Class C Penalties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-campaigning, failure to submit required campaign documents to the Director of Court Activities, failure to attend mandatory meetings.</td>
<td>Written warning. 24-Hour suspension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three Class C Violations shall constitute a Class B violation and is subject to Class B penalties.
The Homecoming Board shall have jurisdiction to decide whether or not it is necessary to penalize the candidate for a violation of their staff/volunteer member.

C. Election Fraud

1. Candidates shall refrain from knowingly participating in deceptive campaign activities, hereinafter referred to as “election fraud”, defined as the unauthorized tampering, altering, or abuse of the voting process.