

# ***ELECTIONS***

# ***GUIDE 24-25***

**Recognized Student Organizations**  
Student Engagement

**VOTE  
HERE**



# OVERVIEW

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## Introduction

This election guide aims to assist Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) in conducting successful elections at Syracuse University. Elections play a crucial part in placing members into leadership roles that align with their capabilities and fulfill the organizations' needs. Moreover, effectively managed elections contribute to fostering a sense of empowerment among members, allowing them to feel heard and involved in the decision-making process.

Are you aware that elections can be held seamlessly through 'Cuse Activities? The "Elections" tab in the RSO toolbar enables you to maintain confidentiality while providing easy access for members. Whether you seek guidance on various types of elections, preparation and facilitation tips, or utilizing 'Cuse Activities effectively, this guide is tailored to meet your needs!

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# ***DEFINITIONS***

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**The following terms will be referenced multiple times throughout the guide.**

## **Election Facilitator(s)**

The Election Facilitator is a person or committee that is responsible for running the election. They are in charge of planning the timeline, preparing for the election, facilitating the voting, and revealing the results.

## **Nominations**

Nominations determine who will run for what position/who is interested in running for leadership positions.

## **Interest Meeting**

An Interest Meeting is a great way for general members to learn more about specific leadership positions and what they do. At an Interest Meeting, invite current members of your leadership team to join and give a brief presentation of their roles and responsibilities or let interested candidates ask questions.

## **Candidate Statements**

Candidate Statements allow candidates an opportunity to make a short statement or speech about why they are running for a position.

# VOTING SYSTEMS

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## One Vote

In a One-Vote Election, each member that meets all necessary qualifications is allowed one vote per each position and the candidate with the highest number of votes wins. In the event of a tie, whoever is facilitating the election could be the tie breaker.



## Ranking Vote

In a “Ranking” Election, members rank each candidate for a position in order of preference. For example, if there are three people running for president, a member would rank their first choice as “1,” second choice as “2” and so on. The candidate who receives the most number “1s” would receive the position. If there is a tie for the first number, the election facilitator would then see which candidate received the most “2s” and so on to determine the winner.

# ***PREPARE***

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## **1. Consider why you are holding the election and how you will elect the next leadership team.**

- When gearing up for an election, there are multiple things to consider.
  - Why is the organization holding an election at this time?
  - How will the selection of the next leadership team take place?

## **2. Decide who will be the Election Facilitator(s).**

- Next, your organization should consider the facilitation of the election. Some common methods include forming a committee to oversee the elections or entrusting the responsibility to one of the outgoing Executive members.

## **3. Determine Election Rules and Processes**

- Establishing the rules for the election is a crucial step. Below are key considerations for crafting comprehensive Election Rules and Processes:
  - Which type of Voting System will your organization use?
  - Who is eligible to vote?
  - How many positions will members be able to run for?
  - What qualifications will members need to meet in order to run for a leadership position?
  - Will you hold an Interest Meeting for members to learn more about various leadership positions and opportunities?
  - How will the Nominations process be conducted?
  - How will Candidate Statements be facilitated?
  - Will there be time during a meeting for candidates to make a short speech or statement?
  - Will any sort of campaigning be allowed?
  - How will the Election Facilitator(s) inform the candidates and organization of results?

# ***PREPARE***

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## **4. Establish an election timeline and communicate this and the rules to members**

- All elections must occur and be finalized by **April 1st** each year.
- Set meeting dates and times for explaining the process, an Interest Meeting, Nominations, Candidate Statements and the actual Election.
- When presenting the election timeline to your organization, ensure that all members have comprehensive knowledge of the elections process. Additionally, allocate dedicated time during a meeting for members to ask questions.

## **5. Prepare a ballot and figure out how you will collect votes.**

- Once you have a full list of candidates, prepare a ballot via 'Cuse Activities and determine how votes will be collected.

## **6. Ensure that all members of the organization have access to a full list candidates and what positions they are running for before the Election.**

- Distribute a complete list of candidates and the positions they are running for to ensure that your organization is well-informed and prepared for the upcoming election. This practice helps prevent surprises during the voting process.

## **7. Hold your election meeting OR Launch your online voting platform (after determining if your elections will take place in person or online):**

- Your Election Facilitator(s) should conduct this meeting or launch the voting process. Whether in-person or online, the chairperson should clearly outline voting rules and explain the voting process to all members.

## **8. Inform your organization and those who ran for positions of the results.**

- After the votes have been collected, the Election Facilitator(s) should establish a process for informing your organization about the results of the election.

# CHECKLIST

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- **Preparation Phase:**

- Establish Election Timeline
- Determine Eligibility Criteria
- Select Election Facilitator(s)
- Communicate Election Information

- **Nomination Phase:**

- Open and close the nomination period, specifying deadlines for submissions.
- Outline the procedures for nominating candidates, including self-nomination

- **Candidate Information Phase:**

- Compile List of Candidates
- Create ballots through Cuse Activities and input all candidate information
- Hold an Interest Meeting (Optional)

- **Voting Phase:**

- Communicate the rules of voting, including the method (online, in-person) and any specific procedures.
- Conduct Candidate Speeches or Statements (if applicable)
- Facilitate Voting Process
- Address Questions

- **Post-Election Phase:**

- Verify Votes
- Announce Results
- Facilitate a smooth transition for the newly elected leadership team, including any necessary training or handover processes.



# SAMPLE OUTLINE

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This outline is a guide for upcoming elections. We suggest reviewing and updating your current constitution to ensure clear and accurate election procedures.

1. **Officer Elections:** *The election shall occur in the spring semester, by April 1st.*
2. **Election Facilitator(s):** Select an unbiased facilitator/committee to supervise the elections, comprised of current officers not seeking re-election. This group should establish guidelines for the election meeting and absentee voting, filling in any gaps not covered in the club's charter/constitution.
  - a. A committee is recommended for organizations with more than 100 members.
3. **Nominations:** Nominations for officer positions start seven days before election day and conclude the day before. Any member can nominate themselves or another member.
4. **Ballots and Voting:** Voting will take place on 'Cuse Activities via an anonymous ballot. The Election Facilitator(s) will:
  - a. Prepare a ballot for each position listing the candidates' in alphabetical order by last name.
  - b. May include additional ballots for other internal positions in the club within the executive election.
  - c. Notify the club members when the voting period opens and closes and will provide a link to the ballots.
  - d. Notify RSO Consultant of the results, which will be verified by the Student Engagement office in 'Cuse Activities
5. **Voter Eligibility:**
  - a. Each RSO member is entitled to one (1) vote in the election of each position.
  - b. The voting period shall be at least twenty-four (24) hours to a maximum of forty-eight (48) hours in length.
  - c. Only members who joined the RSO prior to January 31st will be eligible to vote in Elections. This list may be obtained from the Student Engagement office.
  - d. A minimum of (4) RSO Executives shall be elected.
    - i. President
    - ii. Vice-President
    - iii. Fiscal Agent
    - iv. Secretary
6. **Results:** A simple majority vote is required to win an election. The results shall be announced as soon as possible after the election results are in.
  - a. If a candidate is running unopposed, at least 3 votes must be cast in their favor.
  - b. If there are more than two candidates running and no candidate receives a majority vote, there shall be a run-off vote between the top two vote recipients within 72 hours.
  - c. Fifteen percent (15%) of the organization's membership is required to vote in order to make the Election valid.