

SGA Election Policy

Preamble

This election policy represents the firm conviction of the Student Government Association (SGA) that student involvement in their civic community is essential to the distinctive undergraduate experience at UMBC. We believe that active participation in student government elections is a manifestation of a healthy civic community. Policies and regulations should not be a hindrance to the implementation of creative, innovative election strategies that engage students to participate in their civic community.

With this in mind, and with the understanding SGA is beholden to the student body of UMBC, we affirm the following two objectives of this election policy:

1. Maximize voter turnout: SGA's mission is to both serve as the voice of all UMBC undergraduates and empower students to shape their own unique UMBC experiences. High voter turnout confirms SGA's success in achieving this mission and demonstrates to all audiences that students are engaged as civic contributors.
2. Maximize fairness and equity for candidates and voters: For students to get and remain engaged, they must have confidence that the elections are not corrupt, arbitrary or biased. Every legally cast vote must count.

Any interpretation of this election policy should uphold these two objectives.

Election Board

All SGA campus-wide elections and referendums shall be conducted by a neutral student Election Board. Decisions of a majority of the Election Board regarding SGA elections shall be binding on the candidates and SGA. However, decisions of the Election Board may be appealed to the SGA Supreme Court. The decision of the SGA Supreme Court is final.

The Election Board shall be comprised of an Election Board Chair, appointed by the SGA President with confirmation by both legislative bodies, who will serve until he or she graduates, resigns, is impeached or removed. The Chair shall have the power to appoint and remove all other members of the election board, who will serve two-year terms, with confirmation from both legislative bodies. The Chair is also charged with the duty of reviewing and seeking amendment of all university policies to the extent that they conflict with the two objectives of this policy.

The Election Board Chair must comply with the following requirements in the running of elections in addition to the two objectives stated above:

- Certify and maintain the records of all candidates regarding eligibility and acknowledgement to abide by all election regulations
- Select publicly accessible polling locations and secure ballots during the elections and tabulation of results after the close of polling
- Advertise SGA elections including polling locations, times, and registered candidates in advance of the elections
- Publicly display a tabulation of candidates for each office before the candidate-filing deadline.
- Represent the SGA in any judicial proceeding regarding SGA elections
- Publicly display election results, and certify results as legally binding after giving a minimum of 24 hours (from posting results) for appeals and hearing all appeals

All election board members, including the Chair, are impeachable on the following grounds: Intentional or reckless behavior that violates the objectives and provisions of this policy or brings dishonor or disgrace upon the Election Board or the SGA. The impeachment process shall be conducted in a manner established by SGA's guiding documents. Furthermore, all election board members, including the chair, may be removed at any time for any reason by a legislative vote of "no confidence." A vote of "no confidence" shall take the form of joint legislation by the House of Organization and the Senate and require a 2/3 vote of the membership present to pass.

Elections

Election candidates must meet the requirements of their particular offices as established by the SGA governing documents. Additionally, all candidates must demonstrate their understanding and agreement to abide by all SGA guiding documents, university policies, and state and federal law prior to formal campaigning.

Campaigning

Campaigning must follow these following guidelines and the Election Board must maintain full compliance with these guidelines:

- Applications for elections shall be available at least six weeks before the elections
- At its discretion the Election Board can set the date when candidates may start campaigning as long as that date is at least two weeks prior to elections
- Electioneering within 15 feet of any polling station is prohibited
- All candidates must adhere to the requirements set forth in all SGA governing documents
- No Election Board member may be a candidate for office
- SGA funds may not be used for campaigning, unless allocated in a fair and equity manner through SGA legislation

Any violation of SGA or UMBC policies, state laws and federal laws shall result in penalties as determined by the Election Board (subject appeal to the Supreme Court). Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to:

- Falsifying any information transmitted to the Election Board and the SGA Supreme Court
- Disobeying any Election Board order
- Destroying other candidates' campaign materials
- Intentionally or negligently making false and damaging statements about another candidate

Ambiguities

In the event that SGA or UMBC policies, state laws or federal laws are ambiguous in their application to a candidate or election issue, the Election Board shall resolve the ambiguity, subject to appeal.

Adoption and Amendment

This Election Policy, and any amendments thereto, shall be adopted by 2/3 vote of the entire membership in both the SGA Senate and House of Organizations.