

BOSTON UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT
2021 ELECTION RULES



STUDENT ELECTIONS COMMISSION

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to establish rules and procedures for the elections of the Boston University Student Government Executive Board and At-Large Senators for the Boston University Student Government Senate.

The Executive Board is composed of the President, the Executive Vice President, the Vice President of Finance, and the Vice President of Internal Affairs.

At-Large Senators are students who represent specific interests of the student body as a whole in the Senate, not representatives of any college within Boston University.

These rules have been determined by the Student Elections Commission (SEC) and the Senate Elections Oversight Committee (EOC). All provisions in this document have been reviewed and approved by the Student Government Judicial Commission in order to ensure a fair and constitutional elections process. Any questions related to the constitutionality of these rules may be directed to the Judicial Commission. The Boston University Student Government Constitution will prevail if any of these provisions are found to contradict it.

The SEC will enforce any and all regulations, rules, policies, and procedures relating to the Boston University Student Government elections, as outlined by this document. The SEC expects, and will ensure, a friendly competition between candidates for the betterment of the Boston University Student Government. In addition to these procedures and rules, it is expected that all candidates and campaigns will conduct their activities in accordance with all applicable University policies and procedures. All candidates, slates, and affiliated individuals shall be held accountable to the contents of these rules.

The Election Rules and Procedures are under the jurisdiction of the SEC and the Judicial Commission, which serve as hearing boards. All candidates and staffers must comply with university policy and local, state, and federal laws. If violated, the proper authorities will be contacted.

Article I - Eligibility of Candidates and Voters

Section I: Candidate Eligibility

1. All candidates for office must be full-time undergraduate students in good academic and judicial standing, which entails:
 - a. having a cumulative GPA above a 2.0
 - b. not having received one or more semesters on probation.
2. Candidates may run for only one executive board position during a given election cycle.
3. At- Large Candidates may run for only one party during a given election cycle.
4. Individuals may not serve as College Senators once elected as At-Large Senators for a given academic year.
5. Individual candidates may not file for more than one slate or party during a given election cycle.
6. Graduating seniors are not eligible to run for any position in the semester they intend to graduate.
7. Current members of the SEC, EOC, and the Judicial Commission may not run for any position in the Executive Board or Senate At-Large due to their role in elections.
8. The SEC will ensure all students no matter their Learn *From* Anywhere status will be able to run in Executive Board and At-Large elections and participate fully in SEC events.

Section II: Voter Eligibility

1. Eligible voters are all degree seeking undergraduate students of Boston University in good judicial and academic standing, including students studying abroad.

Article II - Election Timeline

1. The election shall be held annually during each spring semester and shall be run by the SEC.
2. The election period shall consist of events such as, but not limited to, meet and greet, debates, town hall, voting period, and the announcement dinner.
3. At-Large candidates and all members of a Slate must attend election events unless a valid excuse is approved by the SEC in advance.
4. The filing deadline for elections will be at least 6 days prior to the start of the campaign period.
5. At least one member of each slate and at least one representative from each party must be present at the SEC meeting held within 7 and 3 days prior to the start of campaigning. Failure to comply with this rule will result in immediate disqualification of the slate.
6. The campaign period will begin at midnight Eastern Standard Time on the date set by the SEC and conclude with the close of the voting period.
7. Voting period shall last for four days and end at 11:59pm Eastern Standard Time on the fourth day.
8. A transition meeting will be held prior to the end of the outgoing slate's term in office.

Article III – Candidate Registration

Section I: Filing with the SEC for Elections

1. All portions of the Slate or At-Large Intent Form must be filed with the SEC prior to the filing deadline, which includes:
 - a. At- Large or Slate's Intent Form, completed and submitted electronically.
 - b. Slate's group photograph, submitted electronically, to be used in voter information materials and on the SEC website. The photograph should depict only the candidates.

- c. Party's official logo, submitted electronically, to be used in voter information materials and on the SEC voting website.
 - d. Slates and At-Large Parties will also submit a brief (75 words) description of their platform to be used for SEC promotional materials.
2. An email confirmation will be sent to the Slate or Party once the SEC has received all portions of the Slate Intent Form. Forms will not be considered received and complete until the confirmation email has been sent.
3. The SEC will not accept slate applications with ineligible candidates.
4. A slate consists of four members to satisfy all four positions in the slate: Student Body President, Executive Vice President, Vice President of Finance and Vice President of Internal Affairs.
5. If a Slate or Party wishes to use the same name as an organization, it must receive written permission for such organization and submit it to the SEC.
 - a. If the SEC does not receive written permission, slates will be asked to change their name immediately.
 - b. Failure to change the name may result in disqualification
6. If a candidate, party, or slate chooses to withdraw from the ballot, they must do so in a written, signed statement submitted to the SEC.

Article IV – Campaign Staffers

Section I: Campaign Staffer Guidelines

1. All campaign staffers must be registered with the SEC.
2. Slates and At-Large candidates must send a list of their campaign staffers to the SEC, which will be shared with all other parties in their respective elections.
3. If a staffer does not register with the SEC or fails to comply with the election rules, both the staffer and the slate in question will be subject to a hearing as established in Article VIII.

4. Members of the Judicial Commission, the SEC, and EOC may not serve as campaign staffers due to their role in elections.
5. The current Executive Board, Cabinet Directors, and Executive Staff may not serve as campaign staffers for any Slate while holding their position.
6. Senators serving as campaign staffers for Slates may not use their capacity or title as representatives of Student Government to endorse specific slates. Senators must refrain from using their position as a part of any solicitation, campaign materials, or social media posts.
7. Senators and Executive Staff may serve as campaign staffers for At-Large campaigns while holding their positions.
8. Slates and Parties are responsible for the actions of campaign staffers.

Article V – Campaign Rules

1. At-Large candidates or Slates may not use any sort of voting booth during the elections period to protect the confidentiality of a student's vote.
2. Campaigning in close proximity to active voting booths is forbidden.
3. Offering or suggesting a completed ballot to potential voters is prohibited.
4. All campaigning is strictly limited to the campaign and voting period.
 - a. Any candidate who begins campaigning prior to the start of the campaign period will be deemed in violation of the Election Rules.
 - b. Passive forms of campaigning such as discussing candidates, campaigns, or election topics in a verbal manner are allowed outside of the campaign period.
 - c. Active campaigning is not allowed outside of the campaign period; this includes but is not limited to:
 - i. Formally promoting a platform.
 - ii. Marketing a campaign.
 - iii. Officially introducing slates and/or candidates.
 - iv. Promoting candidates during class time.

- v. Using, distributing, and/or wearing campaign materials, or featuring campaign materials in a Zoom background.
 - d. Any promotion utilizing physical and/or electronic media is prohibited until the start of the campaign period.
5. All campaign materials must:
- a. Not be physically damaging to others' personal property or grounds;
 - b. Not disparage or defame opponents or their campaigns;
 - c. Comply with Boston University posting guidelines;
 - d. Not use any Boston University or other trademarked logos;
 - e. Not violate local, state, or federal law.
 - f. Campaigning can include non-BU buildings, only if approved by the appropriate authorities.
6. The following restrictions apply to campaign zones:
- a. Libraries: Campaigning may only be done with printed materials on bulletin boards with written approval from Library Staff. Soliciting or disturbing students in any way in any University library is prohibited.
 - b. University Housing: Campaigning in Boston University Housing must comply with the rules, restrictions, and policies of Boston University Residence Life.
 - i. Ask for permission from the Residence Hall Director for any form of solicitation within any residential building.
 - ii. Slates must be able to present written confirmation from the Residence Hall Directors of Residence Areas in which they are campaigning.
 - c. Classrooms/Research Labs: Writing on a chalkboard or whiteboard is allowed. Campaigning during a class is only allowed with the permission of the professor or instructor of the class. Mounting promotional material in classrooms is prohibited. This includes Zoom classrooms, Zoom chat and background image, or name tag in Zoom.
7. Candidates may not host in-person campaign events outside of those hosted by the SEC.

8. The SEC reserves the right to issue a Cease and Desist Order to any campaign for any action that is deemed by the SEC or the Justices of the Judicial Branch to go against the spirit of a fair election or undermines the fairness of the election.
9. The current Executive Board may not use the student government communications, student government events, or any student government platform to publicize an endorsement or encourage support for a Slate or At-Large candidate.
10. Candidates may only obtain the contact information of students for campaigning purposes with their express consent.
11. Candidates must not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information that may undermine the fairness or integrity of the elections. This includes but is not limited to: falsifying endorsements, defaming other candidates, lying about relevant experience(s), or misleading students about SEC policies and decisions.
12. All members of a slate must attend every event planned by the SEC unless there is a scheduling conflict that cannot be avoided. Documentation must be provided to the SEC at least one week ahead of the event explaining why a candidate cannot attend said event, including the Announcement Dinner.
 - a. Acceptable reasons include but are not limited to: tests, class, family events, personal emergencies, etc.
 - b. If a member of a Slate fails to attend an SEC event, the slate will be subject to punishments as outlined by Article VIII, Section IV.
 - c. If an emergency were to occur within 1 week of the event, the slate must notify the SEC immediately in order to avoid punishments.

Article VI – Campaign Finances

1. The Boston University Student Government shall be the primary provider of funding for campaign expenses. Slates and At-Large parties are permitted to spend personal funds on campaigning with a limit of \$400.

2. Slates and At-Large candidates may seek outside donations from current undergraduate students not directly related to any member of the slate or senate candidate.
 - a. Monetary donations shall have a limit of \$550.
 - b. Non-monetary donations shall have a limit of \$800.
 - c. Slates must notify the SEC within 48 hours of receiving a donation of any type.
 - d. Failure to comply will result in a punishment as outlined by Article VIII.
3. The SEC shall provide equal funding between each of the registered Slates and At-Large parties.
4. Candidates will be reimbursed for expenses incurred purchasing ads on social media. Records of these purchases, including a receipt and bank statement, must be submitted to the SEC when the SEC requests them.
5. Slates and At-Large parties must submit evidence of expenditures and donations of any kind to the SEC for record purposes.
 - a. Campaign expenses must be cataloged, along with a receipt image, within 48 hours of purchase in the online Election Finances form.

Article VII – Voting Procedures

Section I: General Voting Guidelines

1. Elections governed by the SEC will be conducted online through the student link.
2. Only eligible voters may cast a vote, as outlined in Article I, Section II.
 - a. Voters will be required to verify their identity online via their University username and Kerberos password to verify their eligibility to vote and ensure that individual students only vote once.
 - b. Votes will be recorded anonymously, and no information linking students to candidates will ever be kept.
3. Students may vote at any time during the voting period
 - a. Votes may not be cast after the end of the voting period, without exception.

4. Once a vote has been submitted, it may not be canceled or altered by the voter.

Section II: E-Board Voting Guidelines

1. The winning Slate is determined by a simple majority, in accordance with the Single Transferable Voting system.
2. In the event of a tie for first place, a revote shall occur between the slates that have tied for first place.
 - a. The SEC will establish and publish the timeline for the revote.

Section III: At-Large Voting Guidelines

1. Parties will run on the ballot each spring to obtain a proportional amount from 10 available At-Large representative seats.
2. The number of At-Large senate seats allocated for a registered party will be proportional to the percentage of the vote the party receives, rounded to the nearest whole.
3. Parties that did not meet the minimum rounding threshold can form coalitions.
 - a. A coalition can obtain a seat if the sum of the party's individual percentage of the vote meets the minimum threshold.
 - b. Coalitions must be finalized before the end of the academic year.

Article VIII – Election Rules Violations and Consequences

Section I: Filing an Alleged Election Rule Violation Report

1. Any degree seeking undergraduate student at Boston University may file an Alleged Election Rule Violation Report.
2. The report must be submitted via the online Election Rule Violation form within 24 hours of gaining reasonable knowledge that a violation has occurred.
3. The SEC will notify the accused party of the report submitted against them and will set a date to discuss the incident with all parties involved.

4. After the SEC has received the relevant information, it will arrange and conduct a hearing to assess the violation(s) and the punishment(s).
5. The SEC shall decide the case with a simple majority vote.
6. The SEC may use its discretion to ascertain all relevant facts of a complaint to ensure a fair hearing.
7. Slates, At-Large Campaigns, and individuals will be held accountable for violations of university policy, as well as local, state, and federal law as deemed appropriate by the pertinent authorities.

Section II: Original Hearings

1. The SEC has original jurisdiction to adjudicate election complaints.
2. The Judicial Commission shall exercise original jurisdiction over cases for which the SEC requests a hearing.
3. When a complaint that requires a Judicial hearing is filed, the SEC must request the Judicial Commission to schedule a hearing as soon as possible.

Section III: The Hearings Process

1. The presiding officer shall call the meeting to order once all parties are present.
2. There shall be at least three SEC members present for a hearing to take place.
3. The presiding officer will explain the hearing process and answer any questions related to procedures.
4. All parties will be made aware of the complaint and answer clarifying questions which relate only to the facts presented in the complaint.
5. Hearings shall be recorded. All participants will be made aware of this before the hearing or recording begins. Recordings will be kept as records by the SEC and JAC.
 - a. Recordings will be available by request.

6. The complainant and the respondent may make an opening statement, which may not exceed five minutes each.
7. The complainant and respondent may present evidence and bring witnesses to support their case.
8. The SEC may ask clarifying and probing questions as they deem necessary, which may be directed to the complainant, the respondent, or any of the witnesses.
9. All questions by the SEC shall be made in good faith, and shall not intentionally favor the complainant or the respondent.
10. Once all evidence has been presented, the complainant and the respondent may make closing statements to summarize their arguments and evidence in their favor, which may not exceed five minutes each.
11. The presiding officer shall adjourn the meeting once closing statements have ended.
12. The SEC shall immediately deliberate in private until an agreement has been reached by a simple majority vote of the Commissioners present.
13. All decisions shall be made in writing, sent to all parties, and published on the SEC website, as well as submitted to the JAC for publication in the archives as soon as they are finished.

Section IV: Appellate Hearings

1. Candidates have 24 hours after a ruling is published to appeal an SEC ruling to the Judicial Commission.
2. The Judicial Commission shall exercise appellate jurisdiction over cases where a punishment imposed by the SEC is alleged to be inappropriate or unfair by one of the parties involved.
3. Appellate hearings will follow the same format as the original hearings to ensure fairness for all involved parties.

4. After an appellate hearing, the decision made by the Justices will include a ruling on the fairness of the punishment imposed by the SEC, as well as an appropriate punishment when necessary.
5. All decisions made by the Judicial Commission will be final and will not be subject to further appeals.

Section V: Punishments

1. Violations of the elections rules will be subject to punishments such as, but not limited to, digital suspension of their platforms, percentage fine of the remaining money allocated by the SEC, disqualification.
2. If the SEC finds an offense significant enough to have an impact on the outcome, integrity, or fairness of the election, or if a candidate is targeting a specific candidate or person, the SEC may give the offender a strike.
 - a. Three strikes will be grounds for disqualification of the party or slate.
 - b. Strikes may be earned by individuals, but are applied to an entire slate or party.
 - c. Strikes will be assessed in consultation with the Judicial Commission. The Justices will approve by a simple majority any SEC ruling that confers a strike.
 - d. The SEC will vote with a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority in order to assign a strike.
 - e. Failure to comply with an SEC ruling will automatically result in a strike.
 - f. The SEC shall determine whether the slate or party complied with a ruling.

Article IX – Key Terms

1. At-Large Senators: Senators who represent specific interests of the student body rather than a single college within Boston University.
2. Announcement Dinner: An event where the SEC announces the winners of the elections.
3. Candidate: A student who is eligible and approved to run in Boston University Student Government Elections.
4. Campaign Staffers: Student body members assisting a slate during a given election cycle. Staffers must be registered with the SEC. Staffers represent a slate, or at-large parties.
5. Debate: An official SEC event where slates and candidates debate specific questions and policy goals. The event is moderated by the SEC.
6. Defamation: Malicious act which degrades another's slate platform, image, and members through any spoken or written statements which include but are not limited to slander and libel.
7. Degree Seeking Students: Full-time students, and part time students who remain in good academic standing as approved by their advisor.
8. Intent Form: Form for prospective candidates to register their candidacy with the SEC.
9. Meet and Greet: An official SEC-run event where student body members are able to meet the candidates in a given election cycle.
10. Monetary donations: donations in the form of money or currency including, but not limited to, cash, transfer payments, and cash cards.
11. Non-monetary donations: Donations in a form other than cash.
12. Parties: groups or networks of students in the interest of a specific community or issue at Boston University. Parties may run for At-Large Senate seats.
13. Slate: A group of 4 candidates assigned to 4 different roles (Student Body President, Executive Vice President, Vice President of Finance, Vice President of Internal Affairs) who run together in Boston University Student Government Elections.
14. Town Hall: An official SEC-run event where Boston University press and student body get together to meet slate members and give them the opportunity to promote their platform.

15. Voters: A degree-seeking student who is eligible to vote in Boston University Student Government Elections.