

SGA/GSC Non-Constitutional Referendum Election Code

Section 1: General Provisions

- A) This code shall provide for the rules and conduct of all University of North Texas Non-Constitutional Referendum Elections, as allowed for by the Memorandum of Understanding on Student Body Referendum Process.
- B) This code shall apply to all aspects of the electoral process for Non-Constitutional Referendum Elections.
- C) This code is written under the assumption that both SGA & GSC are fully operational governing bodies, with the minimum necessary positions filled within their respective Election Boards and Supreme Courts. In the event that either Election Commissioner position is unfilled, or the majority of either Election Board positions are unfilled, or the majority of either Supreme Court positions are unfilled, the operational governing body will continue the process outlined in this code, and the MOU.
- D) This code is intended to provide fairness, equity, and efficiency of all Non-Constitutional Referendum elections with respect to referendum parties and voters. In the absence of established guidelines or provisions, rulings and interpretations concerning elections should be made with this principle in mind.
- E) These regulations for Referendum Parties are subject to interpretation only by the SGA/GSC Combined Election Board, interpretation of which is subject to review only by the SGA/GSC Combined Supreme Court.
- F) Referendum Parties may contact the SGA/GSC Election Commissioners for the purpose of consultation pertaining to the election.
- G) Any Referendum Party in a Non-Constitutional Referendum election seeking clarification may request a ruling on any part of the Election Code by submitting a request in writing to the SGA/GSC Election Commissioners. The Election Commissioners shall be contacted via UNT e-mail. They shall consult and will make reasonable attempts to respond within two (2) business days, distributing the ruling to all referendum parties by email.
- H) Ignorance of these regulations shall not be an acceptable defense in response to any violation in any election, either by the Referendum Parties themselves or by individuals campaigning on behalf of a Referendum Party.
- I) Failure to comply with the regulations of the Election Code may result in punitive action being taken by the SGA/GSC Combined Election Board. Any alleged Election Code violation could also be a University policy violation and may result in disciplinary action being taken by the Dean of Students office.
- J) Upon receiving a complaint, the SGA/GSC Election Commissioners will follow the procedure listed in the current version of the SGA/GSC Memorandum of Understanding. All complaints must be submitted in writing to the SGA/GSC Election Commissioners within

one (1) hour of the close of polling. Complaints shall include details of the presumed violation such as date, time, and name(s) of involved individuals. Evidence shall be provided when appropriate. After hearing all applicable evidence, the Election Board will deliberate on a ruling of violation. A majority vote of Election Board members present is required to render any decision. The Election Commissioners may vote only in the event of a tie.

- a. If an Election Code hearing cannot be scheduled before the release of the final election report, the election results affected by the complaint will be withheld until after the Election Board ruling. All other election results shall be published according to the Election Calendar.
- b. Election Code hearings are open to the SGA/GSC Combined Election Board, the SGA and GSC Election Board Advisors, and any invited parties regarding Election Code violations.

Section 2: Terms & Definitions

- A) Campaigning: any activity by a Referendum Party that is intended or likely to affect how a voter casts a ballot. This includes the placement of any signs or the like on display and the solicitation of the vote of any student at the University of North Texas.
- B) Referendum Parties: Opponents/Proponents for any referenda on the ballot.
- C) SGA/GSC Combined Election Board: A body made up of two (2) members of the GSC Election Board and three (3) members of the SGA Election Board. Quorum for meetings and hearings shall be no less than five (5) members of the combined SGA and GSC Election Boards, including the Election Commissioners.
- D) Social Media: any web-based or mobile-based applications that use highly accessible communication techniques for social interaction.
- E) SGA/GSC Combined Supreme Court: A body made up of four (4) members of the SGA Supreme Court and three (3) members of the GSC Supreme Court. Quorum for meetings and hearings shall be no less than five (5) members of the combined SGA and GSC Supreme Courts.

Section 3: Rules on Campaigning

- A) Referendum Parties shall take reasonable measures to ensure that every individual campaigning on behalf of or volunteering for the Referendum Party is aware of campaign regulations and guidelines. Referendum Parties may be liable for any Election Code infractions made by their campaign team members and volunteers even if the Referendum Parties themselves did not specifically direct the offending action.

- B) Referendum Parties may only begin publicizing their campaigns on the date set forth by the Election Calendar. If Referendum Parties are found publicizing their campaigns in any way before the above date, it is grounds for disqualification.
- C) Referendum Parties shall abide by all University policies, which supersede Election Board mandates and Election Code regulations.
- D) Referendum Parties shall not damage any University property and shall be responsible for any damage caused by their campaign materials or by members of their campaign team.
- E) Referendum Parties shall not unduly disrupt the normal activities of the University or interfere with students' education. This includes but is not limited to the posting of campaign signs and/or posters in classrooms, and writing on chalkboards or similar devices.
- F) Referendum Parties shall assume responsibility for the accuracy and truthfulness of their statements and campaign materials.
- G) Referendum Parties shall be limited to spending no more than \$850 in state or student fee funds for campaign purposes. Referendum Parties must keep record of any and all expenses for their campaign in the event that the Election Commissioners or Election Board request such information.
- H) Referendum Parties must prepare the names of members on their campaign teams in the event that the Election Commissioner or Election Board requests such information.
- I) Campaigning includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Distributing campaign materials (other than private distribution to campaign team members and affiliated staff) to potential voters;
 - b. Seeking endorsement or voter support for a campaign at an official meeting of a registered student organization;
 - c. Wearing accessories such as buttons, stickers, and/or similar items explicitly reflecting an affiliation with referendum party;
 - d. Posting signage;
 - e. Disseminating any campaign material via social media.
- J) Restrictions of Campaign Materials are as follows:
 - a. All campaign materials must follow university policy. All posters and signs must be placed in accordance with University policy and may not exceed 24x36 inches.
 - b. No more than 30 ground signs may be placed on campus, but other campaign materials are not limited in quantity.
 - c. No Referendum Party may make, wear, or distribute T-shirts that promote their campaign.
- K) Each Referendum Party shall be responsible for the removal of their campaign materials from public areas and buildings by the Monday following the final election report. Failure to remove their materials may result in a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

L) Restrictions on Special Buildings and Areas are as follows:

- a. Referendum Parties shall not campaign or display in any manner campaign material within fifty (50) feet of restricted zones. The following areas and buildings are off limits to during campaigning;
 - i. The SGA/GSC Office--any materials that are campaign related may not be stored or left in the SGA/GSC Office.
 - ii. Campus Housing-- Door-to-door campaigning shall not be permitted under any circumstances. Beyond that, all campaigning and campaign material in or on the property of UNT Housing requires the expressed consent of the Director of UNT Housing & Residence life or designee, and must abide by UNT Housing policies.
 - iii. All UNT Libraries
 - iv. The 4th floor of the Union
 - v. Any UNT Restroom
 - vi. Off Campus Bars
- b. The Election Board reserves the right to add any other restricted zones they see fit during any given election period. Any additional areas must be presented to all Referendum Parties along with the aforementioned areas and buildings.

M) Other Campaigning Regulations are as follows:

- a. Campaigning does not include reporting by any media outlets.
- b. LISTSERVs and E-Mails
 - i. Before and during campaigning, members of a private campaign LISTSERV run by campaign staff, including and limited to staff and volunteers, are considered willful participants and therefore may receive any email concerning election or campaign information.
- c. During campaigning, presidents of any registered student organization may be contacted by any referendum party for the sole purpose of requesting to speak at that organization's meeting to seek its endorsement or garner support.
- d. No Referendum Party may send out an Eagle Mail to any UNT student.
- e. Social media may be used by any campaign.

Section 4: SGA/GSC Combined Election Board Regulations

- A) In the interest of increasing student engagement and voter turnout, the SGA/GSC Combined Election Board may produce campaign materials or host campaign events to be promoted via SGA/GSC marketing channels.
 - a. Such materials or events shall not endorse any one item on the ballot, but shall give unbiased information about the election and referenda.
 - b. Such events and materials may include, but are not limited to debates, town halls, forums, and election guides.

B) Responsibilities of the SGA/GSC Combined Election Board are as follows:

- a. To govern and facilitate all Non-Constitutional Referendum elections;
 - i. The SGA/GSC Combined Election Board shall have the power to rule in matters pertaining to elections including but not limited to, interpretations and violations of the Election Code, Referendum Party complaints and concerns, and the certification of any election results.
- b. To remain neutral and unbiased in all elections, no member of the Election Board shall help, assist, serve on, endorse, or campaign for any item on the ballot.
- c. To reach out to students to raise awareness on elections.

C) Responsibilities of the Election Commissioners are as follows:

- a. To serve as the chairs of the Election Board, supervise all election personnel, and uphold the Election Code by executing all decisions of the Election Board;
- b. To remain impartial to any Referendum Parties participating in any election;
- c. To execute all provisions of this Election Code;
- d. To be a liaison between the Election Board and other entities on campus, representing the Election Board in any public situation;
- e. To plan Election Board-sponsored events, maintain contact with Referendum Parties, and coordinate other duties that may arise;
- f. To draft the final election report;
 - i. At the close of polling, the Election Commissioners will create a final election report. The report shall be certified by the signatures of the Election Commissioners, every member of the Election Board present at the election certification meeting, and the SGA and GSC Election Board Advisors. The final election report shall be considered official one (1) hour after being certified. The report shall include:
 - 1. The total number of consenting and dissenting votes in any referenda and whether they passed or failed;
 - 2. Any written rulings issued by the Election Commissioners;
 - 3. The minutes of any Election Code hearings;
 - 4. Information about any election irregularities or problems reported to date; and
 - 5. Any other appropriate information deemed necessary by the Election Commissioners
- g. Unofficial results shall not be released to any party, under any conditions.
- h. To ensure that the Board presents a defense if any of their decisions are appealed or if a complaint is filed against the Board.
- i. To oversee Election Code hearings.
- j. The Election Commissioners have the right to solicit the names of all members of a campaign from the Referendum Party.