**Penn State Berks Campus**

**Student Government Association**

**Election Codes**

Adopted: Draft

Ex officio member:

Teresa Sabatelli, Advisor

**Preamble**

The purpose of the Student Government Association Election Codes for spring of 2015, is to provide the Student Government Association of the Pennsylvania State University Berks Campus with the utmost reliability and security in the election process for all elected positions including President, Vice President, Financial Manager and University Faculty Senate Representative. These election codes shall be the primary rules and regulations in the absence of or unspecified manner in the SGA Constitution.

**ARTICLE I: Constitutional Requirements of Office**

Section A: Eligibility of the President and Vice President

1. Shall be a full-time student and have completed two full semester of

instruction at the Penn State Berks Campus.

2. Candidates must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50.

3. Candidates must be in good standing with University and cannot be on warning status

or academic probation

4. Shall be elected by the student body of PSU Berks

Section B: Eligibility of the Financial Manager and the University Faculty Senate Representative

1. Shall be a full-time student and have completed one full semester of

instruction at the Penn State Berks Campus.

2. Candidates must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50.

3. Candidates must be in good standing with University and cannot be on warning status

or academic probation

4. Shall be elected by the student body of PSU Berks

**ARTICLE II: Election Timeline**

Section A: Timeline for Elections

1. Individuals seeking Office may announce their candidacy as early as the third (3rd) week of the spring semester.  
 2. Elections Packets shall be turned into (1) SGA advisor in the Admissions Office or (2)

Campus Life staff by the Friday of the 5th week of the spring

semester.

3. Once nominating petitions are certified by the Chair of the Election Committee candidates may begin campaigning.

a. Campaigning shall begin at the certification of nominating petitions and continue until the end of the election process and announcement of new officers/ positions for the next academic year.

4. The Financial Manager and University Faculty Senate Representative debates shall be held on the (9th) week of the spring semester during the SGA meeting.

5. The President and Vice Presidential debates shall be held on the (10th) week of the spring semester, at either the SGA meeting or as an event hosted on campus.

6. Election Day(s) shall begin the (11th) week of the semester at 8:00 am on Monday and continue uninterrupted through 10:00 pm on Wednesday.

7. The Elections Committee shall meet with the SGA Advisor on the Thursday

immediately following the conclusion of the voting to discuss and disclose the results of the election.

8. All results of the election shall be released at the latest 5:00 pm on Thursday immediately following the meeting of the Elections Committee to the SGA General Business members and the campus.

9. Results of the election will be ceremonially announced at the next meeting of the SGA

General Assembly.

10. Only candidates with credibility may contest the election results, having one week beginning on the Thursday of the (11th) week of the semester and extending to the Thursday of the (12th) week the semester at 11.59 pm to have the election contestation, be resolved.

a. A candidate with credibility is defined as an individual who has successfully completed a petition for candidacy and is in acceptable standing with the elections committee.

11. Under the extraordinary circumstances the Elections Committee may extend the elections timetable with approval from the General Assembly.

**ARTICLE III: Preliminary Requirements of Office**

Section A: Announcement of Candidacy

1. Individuals may announce their candidacy for office as early as the third (3rd) week of the spring semester.

a. Individuals must announce their candidacy through verbal means during an SGA Assembly meeting.

b. President and Vice Presidential Candidates shall run on one ticket, which shall

consist of two individuals.

c. Candidates for Financial Manager shall run on one ticket, consisting of one

individual.

d. Candidates for University Faculty Senate Representative shall run on one

ticket, consisting of one individual

2. Once a candidate has announced his/her intention to run for an elected position  
 he/she may begin petitioning for that office.

Section B: Petitions

1. Petitions shall be completed by all tickets seeking an elected office.

a. Presidential, Vice Presidential, positions shall be

initiated by nominations in the form of a petition requiring the signatures of

300 eligible voters.

b. University Faculty Senate Representative and Financial Manager position shall be initiated by nominations in the form of a petition requiring the signatures of 100 eligible voters.

2. Petitions signed under one office cannot be carried over to another office.

a. For example, a petition completed for the office of President of SGA cannot be counted towards signatures/petition for the office of Financial Manager.

b. There must be a second petition issued and filled out completely in order to be placed on the ballot for a different office as previously specified on the original petition.

c. A candidate may only be placed on the ballot for one elected office.

3. Once a candidate has obtained the required signatures, they must turn in the completed

petitions as well as the following documents:

1. Photocopy of Penn State ID Card
2. GPA consent form

3. Once petitions are turned into both (l) the SGA Advisor in the admissions office and

(2) Campus Life staff, the petition shall be approved and candidate(s) shall

immediately be placed on the ballot.

a. The SGA Advisor shall review each candidate for the GPA requirement once the petition is submitted and approved by the Elections Committee.

b. Once the SGA advisor and the elections committee have approved a petition,

the candidates may begin campaigning for office as outlined in Article IV:

Campaigning.

Section B: Election Day Procedures

1. Election Day(s) shall begin the eighth (8th) week of the Spring Semester at 8:00am and continue uninterrupted through 10:00pm on the Wednesday of the eighth (8th) week.  
 2. Effective 8:00am on Monday of the eighth (8th) week directly through Wednesday at 10:00pm no candidate(s) be permitted to campaign within a radius of ten (10) feet of a polling station.

a. A polling station shall be set up in the lobby of Tully’s cattycorner to the  
 Lion’s Den.

b. There shall be no campaign literature, signs, flyers, handouts, information candidate(s) etc... inside a radius of (10) feet from the polling station.

c. Candidates may not utilize the windows in Tulleys for campaigning materials

during the entire elections timeline.

3. Candidate(s) may be permitted to campaign throughout the entire Week of elections until the closing of polls.

**ARTICLE IV: Campaigning**

Section A: General Campaigning Guidelines

1. The Chair of the Elections Committee must approve all materials before their use in campaigning.

2. All appropriate campaigning materials are listed in subsections below.

3. If a candidate is using yard signs, flyer/handouts, or TV advertisements, they must be approved by campus life staff before being used in the campaign.

4. Any and all materials used in the campaign may not contain libel or falsified

information

a. This clarification and overall decision on what is appropriate lies with the  
 Chair of the Elections Committee.

5. Candidates may not defame other candidates with slanderous comments

a. This clarification and overall decision on what is appropriate lies with the  
 Chair of the Elections Committee.

6. If the Chair of the Elections Committee denies the use of any campaign materials the candidates may appeal to the Elections Committee.  
 7. All appeals must be decided within (2) days of denial by the Chair of the  
 Elections Committee.

a. The Elections Committee may overturn the Chair with a simple majority  
 Vote.  
 b. If the Elections Committee has not met or voted on the denied campaign  
 material in (2) days the campaign material under question shall pass due to  
 being tabled for (2) days.

Section B: Yard signs

1.Yard Signs may be placed:

a. At any location on campus that is not in direct violation of these elections  
 codes or maintenance installations.  
 b. At any of the following buildings or anywhere in between as long as it  
 does not violate Article IV, Section B, (1) (a):

1. Franco Building  
 2. Lueressen Building  
 3. Perkins Student Center  
 4. Beaver Community Center

5. Gaige Building

6. Thun Library

7. Hintz Bookstore

8. Residents Halls  
 9. Main entrance to Penn State Berks Campus  
 10. Primary or Secondary Commuter Parking Lots

5. All campaigns may use up to (20) yard signs as approved by the Chair of the  
 Elections Committee and Campus Life Staff member.  
 6. Yard signs must be properly disposed within (5) days of completion of the elections. To enforce this procedure the following policy will apply.  
 a. A fee of fifty dollars will be deducted from the 300 dollar

reimbursement fund noted in Article V, Section B, (l) if Signs are Still in place five days after the election.

Section B: Flyers/Handouts

1. All flyers and handouts must be have a seal/stamp of Campus Life approval visible.

2. These flyers and handouts may contain information that is pro-candidate and con- candidate, but must remain in appropriate language and decorum at all times pursuant to the office sought.

Section C: Angel

1 All pictures, text, video, podcasts etc... must abide by Penn State University  
 Rules and Codes pursuant to Angel policies as university policies.

Section D: Social Media/Websites

1. No one but the candidates themselves may be present as members of the Facebook/Myspace group/page until the Chair of the Elections Committee has approved the content.

Section E: Word of Mouth Campaigning

1. There will be absolutely no slander, libel or defamation of any candidate(s) character.

Section F: Campus TV Monitors

1. Candidates may design, construct and use campaign ads in the form of PowerPoint

slides.

2. Completed slides must be sent to campus life in order for them to appear on the

campus TV monitors

Section J: Stickers, Apparel etcetera

1. All candidate(s) may use stickers, apparel, key chains etcetera in their  
 campaigning.

Section L: Assistance from Administrator and Staff

l. All Campus Life/Student Affairs staff will be required to remain un-bias  
 through the election. Help from staff is not to be given unless all candidates are receiving that same amount of help/assistance.

2. The Elections Committee will determine as to whether or not there has  
 been unfair favorability by any staff member to any candidates and, with conjunction and communication with the Director of Student Life (Dean of Students), will determine an appropriate course of action.

**ARTICLE V: Campaign Funding**

Section A: Fundraising

1. All candidates may seek to fundraise money, through all legal means as established by the U.S. Federal Elections Commission and any other applicable Penn State or SGA policies.

2. All tickets must include a Disclosure of Funds Report which is provided by the Chair  
 of the Elections Committee.

a. A Disclosure of Funds Report requires all tickets to list all income,  
 expenditures, overheads, and revenue for their campaign.

3. All Campaigns may not exceed $500 including fundraising for an elected office.

Section B: Reimbursement

1. All Campaigns who are on the ballot may be reimbursed for costs of the campaign up to $25 of un-fundraised monies.  
 2. In order to receive this reimbursement of funds the ticket(s) must a Disclosure  
 of Funds Report to the Chair of the Elections Committee.

3. This section has been voted out and does not apply for the 2015 elections as per

approval from the general assembly

**ARTICLE VI: Write-ins**

Section A: Definition

1. A write-in vote will be considered a vote for a Berks Campus student that is not on the ballot as a ticket.

2. The write-in vote is provide students the opportunity to express their opinions through voting.

2. A write-in vote must be cast without the knowledge of the student being voted for.

3. Any person that solicits write-in votes through any means shall not be considered legitimate and those votes will not be tallied.

Section B: Voting

1. Only write-in votes for full time degree-seeking Berks Campus students that meet the

requirements for the office will be considered.

**ARTICLE VII: Voting**

Section A: Ballots

1. Candidate’s names on the ballot shall be listed in random order. Once an eligible student has been placed on a ballot his/her name may not be removed from the ballot. If a candidate disqualifies as a candidate his/her name shall appear on the ballot as “disqualified” and students are unable to vote for them.

2. After the listing of declared candidates, there shall be a means to cast a write in vote for each office.

3. Write-in votes shall be aggregated based on reasonable assurance of voter intent.

a. A write-in vote shall only count once per ballot for each office, regardless of the number of times that name is written in on a single ballot.

4. If the voter fails to vote for enough candidates to fill all available seats for a specific Office, then the votes cast shall be counted, but the votes not cast shall be forfeited.

5. Voters may cast as many votes for candidates as there are positions to be filled.

6. Voters shall not be able to cast more than one ballot. Voters found to have cast more than one ballot shall have none of their ballots counted.

7. The University Faculty Senate Representative position cannot be uncontested; i.e. two

candidates must run against each other in order for the election to be valid.

8. Candidates shall be elected by a plurality vote of the student body attending Penn State

Berks

**ARTICLE VIII: Debates**

Section A: Debating Procedures for All Candidates

1. All debates shall be held on the specified time as listed above in Article II.

2. All candidates involved in debates shall:

a. Refrain from slandering, or falsifying information regarding his/her  
 opponent(s).  
 b. Be allowed to state pro and con arguments for his/her own campaign as  
 well their opponent(s) campaign.  
 c. Follow all rules set forth by the Election Code, or President of SGA who are

directly involved with debating procedures.  
 d. Be allowed to address their opponent in open debate, while maintaining an appropriate decorum.

**ARTICLE IX: Penalties for Violations**

Section A: Election Code Violations

1. The Elections Committee may dock votes from a candidate for each violation of  
 the Elections Code.

a. Each violation of Election Code procedures will result in a docking of  
 votes for the Candidate(s) who violated the code.  
 b. Each violation of the Elections Code may result in docking of (3-7) votes  
 pertaining to the severity of the infraction.

i. The Elections Committee, as a whole, will be the decider in the  
 number of votes docked per ticket.  
 ii. The Chair of the Elections Committee through the advice of the  
 Elections Committee will issue the docking of votes.  
 iii. The Elections Committee may overturn the Chair with a 3% vote of the Elections Committee.

2. In the event or circumstance that such an egregious act is committed by a candidate for election, the elections committee has the right to suspend the election and review the case. Upon completion of investigation information may be disclosed at the next scheduled SGA meeting for a vote to be taken to decide the outcome of the election and any action that may need to be taken.

**ARTICLE X: Contestation**

Section A: Election Contestation

1. Only Credible Candidate(s) may contest the results of an election.  
 2. Candidates may only contest the results of an election if the following step is met:

a. The Chair of the Elections Committee or a simple majority of the  
 Elections Committee deem that one or more candidate(s) ticket(s) violated the Elections Codes.

**ARTICLE XI: Equal Effect on all Candidates**

Section A: Circumstances affecting all candidates

1. In the event that an unpredictable occurrence takes place that equally  
 affects all candidates and their campaigns, no additional time will be added to the elections timetable.

a. Example: During voting week, if the online voting system is to go down, no additional time will be added to the elections timetable because all candidates will have been equally affected.

**ARTICLE XII: Updates and Revisions to the Election Codes**

Section A: Updates and Revisions

1. The Elections Committee may update or revise the Election Codes at any time.  
 2. All candidates who are running for office must be notified within (6) hours of revisions

or updates.

**ARTICLE XIII: Unprecedented Occurrences**

Section A: Unprecedented Occurrences within the Election

1. If any unprecedented occurrence happens within the elections which does not a clear

courses of action within these election codes or in the Constitution of the SGA, the

elections committee will meet with SGA advisor and discuss a solution

**Article XIV: The Elections Committee**

Section A: Committee Structure

1. The Elections Committee shall consist of (2) voting members of the General Assembly

in good standing with the SGA and (2) staff members of the SGA.

2. The members of the committee must be approved by the General Assembly.

3. The Elections Committee Chair shall be the chairperson of the committee who reports

on the actions and decisions of the committee.

4. The Chief of Staff of the SGA shall be the acting Elections Committee Chair. In the

event that the Chief of Staff is running in the election, the general assembly shall elect

another SGA staff member who is not running to chair the committee.

Section B: Committee Tasks

1. The Elections committee shall approve or deny campaign materials based on the

guidelines listed in Article IV.

2. The Elections Committee shall certify that all signatures on the candidate’s petitions

are valid, are not duplicated, and are the correct number.

3. Decide if a candidate has violated the elections code and apply the appropriate penalty

as described in Article IX.

4. Schedule debates as outlined in Article II.

5. Run the polling station on the day of the election.

6. Handle reimbursement requests in a timely fashion as outlined in Article V

7. Additional tasks as delegated by the General Assembly and the President of SGA

Section C: Expected Confidential Compliance to the Committee

1. All members of the Elections Committee are expected to keep any information  
 discussed in meetings confidential. If this policy is broken the following action(s)  
 may be taken:

a. Members may be ejected from the committee upon a majority vote from  
 the committee.

Section D: Bias Protection

1. All members of the Elections Committee are expected to keep their personal  
 views of the elections to themselves. Any member expressing views of the election inside or outside of the committee will be in violation of this policy and the following action(s) may be taken:

a. Members may be ejected from the committee upon a majority vote from  
 the committee.

Section E: Committee Authority

1. The Chair of the Elections Committee and the Elections Committee members have

authority over the election.

2. If any candidates feel as though they are being treated unfairly, they may appeal their

case to the general assembly for a final ruling.

Revisions 2015 A Harakel