Amendment to Bylaws: SEN-5-01-2011A

TITLE: Arnowitz-Esten Fair Elections Act of 2011
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The Student Government Association amends the electoral bylaws, effective from June 1, 2011, as follows. The Elections Council is directed to comply with these changes during all SGA elections.

Section I
Section III, Article 4, Lines 1 and 2 of the Bylaws are hereby repealed. The Ahmed Elections Verification Amendment of 2002 is hereby repealed.

Section II: Elections Council
The Elections Council should be comprised as follows:
1. Four members at-large, appointed by the President and subject to the approval of the Senate
2. A chairperson, appointed by the President and subject to the approval of the Senate. However, if the incumbent President is a candidate in the election, the Chair of the Elections Council should be chosen by the consensus appointment of the two senior class senators at least one month prior to the election.

Section III: Electorate
The electorate shall be defined as follows:
1. For President of SGA and Student Chair of Community Council (SCOCC), all current and enrolled students, including students abroad and graduating seniors.
2. For commons senators, all current and enrolled students, including students abroad and graduating seniors, who are members of the relevant commons.
3. For class senators, all current and enrolled students, including students abroad, who have the academic standing of the relevant class.

Section IV: Duties of the Chair of the Election Council
The Chair of the Elections Council will carry out the following duties, in addition to those already stipulated in the constitution and bylaws as amended:
1. No less than three weeks prior to the elections, solicit candidacy from the student body via email. The email should detail the duties of an SGA senator, president or SCOCC. Interested students should be provided with petition forms in order to obtain the required signatures, as specified in Amendment III, Section 4.
2. No less than two weeks prior to the elections, hold a meeting with declared candidates, ensuring that candidates are cognizant of all the rules of campaigning, and request written statements of intent of 100-400 words, due one week prior to the elections.
3. Three days prior to elections, email submitted statements of intent to the student body, or to the relevant electorate, and explain online voting procedures.
4. Host and publicize at least one candidate forum, during the week of elections but prior to the voting period, for candidates for President of SGA and SCOCC.
5. Coordinate with the technical director to post statements of intent to SGA’s website.
6. Hold voting for a twenty-four hour period (during the school week) online, in concert with LIS.
7. Elections should be conducted using a ranked ballot for the purposes of conducting an instant run-off election. In the case that no candidate receives a majority of #1 votes, the votes of those who selected the bottom candidate should be distributed according to those voters’ #2 preferences. This process should be repeated until one candidate receives a majority. The conversion to ranked balloting is pending the approval of LIS.

8. At the opening of polls, send an email to the student body detailing election procedures, and including statements of intent.

9. If there is a complaint of violation of electoral or campaign rules after voting has begun, a hearing of the Elections Council, and if so referred the Senate, has authority to suspend a candidacy or an election, or to repeat a particular election if necessary.

10. At the close of polls, LIS should verify the election results and inform the Chair of the Elections Council of the results as soon as feasibly possible. The Chair of the Elections Council must send emails including vote totals to all candidates and to The Campus within two hours.

11. Send a general email to the student body announcing the election results, without vote totals, to the entire student body within four hours of receiving the verified electoral totals from LIS, and simultaneously post results to the SGA website.

12. Whenever possible, the election for President and SCOCC should be held before the election of senators.

Section V: Special Circumstances

1. At the beginning of the fall semester, freshman senate seats and other vacant seats may be filled on a shorter timeline. However, the same procedures should be followed as much as is feasible.

2. If a vacancy occurs, a special election should be held as soon as possible using the rules outlined in Section IV above.

3. If there is no candidate for a Senate seat, the President (with the advice and consent of the Senate) will appoint a student as senator until a special election is held during regular elections the following semester. The appointee is eligible to run in this election. The appointee must be eligible for the particular seat to which he is named.

Section VI: Campaign rules

Campaigns should be conducted according to the following rules.

1. Campaigning for any elected office is not permitted before the date specified by the Elections Council. Candidates for the presidency and SCOCC may spend no more than $300 per ticket on any campaign activity.

2. This shall include $200 from the student activities fee. Gifts and donations shall be considered campaign spending.

3. Candidates for commons or class senator may spend no more than $50 per ticket on any campaign activity, not to come from the student activities fee.

4. Candidates may only campaign during the official campaign period, which will begin immediately after the meeting of declared candidates, and which will end at the beginning of the voting period.

5. Campaigning is defined as soliciting votes or support verbally, in written form, in graphic form, or on the internet.

6. From one week prior to the elections until the end of the voting period, the use of pre-permissioned email lists (all-students, all-class, all-commons) is embargoed. However, such emails may be sent if their text is previewed and cleared by the Press Secretary.
7. Failure to follow these rules, as determined by 2/3 vote of the Elections Council or the Senate, may result in disqualification to appear on the ballot.

Section VII

The changes proscribed in this bill will be in the SGA bylaws and shall apply to all SGA elections, beginning June 1, 2011. All current rules and bylaws in conflict with this Act are declared null and void.

Respectfully Submitted,

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LEGISLATIVE ACTION
*Originally proposed.*