



# **Elections Code of the Student Government Association of Spring Hill College**

**{REVISED February 25, 2018}**

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## **Preamble**

The purpose of the Student Government Association Elections Code is to provide guidelines for honest and fair elections for all parties involved and to provide for a systemic and reasonable process to conduct such elections.

## **Article I. General Provisions**

### **Section 1. Persons Held Responsible**

Every person that intends to run for office, approved candidates, and their campaign staff shall be responsible for reviewing and conducting their campaigns under the purview of this Election Code.

Campaign staff will be defined as any and all persons aiding a candidate in their campaign. Campaign staff is to follow the exact same rules as all candidates and candidates will be responsible for their actions.

### **Section 2. Power of the Regulations Board Chair**

The Chair of the Regulations Board shall have the power to interpret, apply and enforce this Elections Code. This power is provided under the authority of the SGA Constitution. The decisions made by the Chair must be made in consultation with the Regulations Board.

The Chair of the Regulations Board will be the Attorney General of the Student Government Association.

### **Section 3. Meetings**

The Regulations Board shall meet as needed and at reasonable times determined by the Chair of the Regulations Board.

### **Section 4. Prohibition Against Multiple Candidacies**

No person may be a candidate for more than one elected office elected under the authority of the Student Government Association Constitution during any single election. No person may be a candidate in a Presidential and Senatorial Election during the same year.

### **Section 5. Candidate Qualifications**

#### **Par 1. General Qualifications:**

A qualified student is any full time student who is not currently and who has not been under any form of Spring Hill College probation (academic or disciplinary) for the year preceding the election.

**Par 2.** Candidates for the Senate may only run for the class office indicated by their class ranking according to the Registrar's Office:

- a. Spring General Elections
  - Rising seniors—75 or more hours
  - Rising juniors— 48 to 74 hours
  - Rising sophomores—47 or fewer hours
- b. Fall Elections
  - Seniors—94 or more hours
  - Juniors—60 to 93 hours
  - Sophomores—30 to 59 hours
  - Freshmen—29 or fewer hours
- c. To vote in Freshman Fall Elections one must meet one or both of the following requirements
  - Classified as a first-time student at Spring Hill College
  - Have 29 or fewer hours of credit

**Par 3.** Special Circumstances:  
Regulations Board reserves the right to evaluate special circumstances regarding hour restrictions and make alternative classifications.

**Par 4.** Study Abroad Students  
Students who are currently studying abroad are not eligible to run in the Presidential/Vice Presidential Elections. However, study abroad students will be eligible to run in the Senate with several stipulations as follows:

- a. An elected study abroad senator is expected to propose an interim, non-voting candidate, who will be approved by the Center for Student Involvement and the SGA president. If the proposed senator's candidate declines, then the senate will be permitted to nominate a former sitting senator to fill the position until the return of the study abroad elected senator. If multiple former senators are nominated by the senate, the senate will hold a simple majority vote for the one candidate that they wish to ask to fill the position. If the proposed former senator declines, then the SGA president will be permitted to appoint a member who may or may not have previously been a part of SGA in any capacity. This interim position would then be terminated upon return of the study abroad senator. If no candidate accepts the appointment, the position will remain neutral until the study abroad senator returns.
- b. If a study abroad senator is elected, the senate voting quorum will not include that study abroad senator.

## **Article II. Election Timetable**

### **Section 1. Order of Events**

The order of events for any campus wide election, not including elections for consideration of any referendum or initiative to be presented before the student body shall be as follows:

- a. Selection of Election Timetable
- b. Announcement of Elections
- c. Filing Period
- d. Mandatory Information Meetings
- e. Qualifying
- f. Campaigning
- g. General Election
- h. General Election Results
- i. Run-off Election
- j. Run-off Election Results

## **Section 2. Selection of Election Timetable**

The Chair of the Regulations Board shall be in charge of determining the dates of any events pertaining to the elections process with the approval of the Regulations Board.

## **Section 3. Announcement of Elections**

**Par 1.** The Chair of the Regulations Board shall instruct the Press Secretary to advertise at least one week prior to the opening of the filing period for all elections.

**Par 2.** Advertisements shall convey the basic information needed by potential candidates, such as, but not limited to, the following items:

- a. Positions to be filled in the elections
- b. Dates for the opening and closing of filing
- c. Time and place that a person may file for office
- d. Dates of the general election or any Run-off elections
- e. Name and contact information of the Chair of the Regulations Board

## **Section 4. Filing Period**

**Par 1.** Any qualified student may file an official intention of candidacy with the Attorney General within a designated five-day class period opened no less than ten calendar days before the date of the election.

## **Section 5. Mandatory Information Meeting**

**Par 1.** The Regulations Board shall conduct at least two informational meetings at various times during filing periods. The purpose of these meetings is to inform candidates of the provisions of the Elections Code and to answer questions that candidates may have about the specific duties/responsibilities of each office. Candidates must attend at least one of these meetings to be eligible to run for a position. Both Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates must attend.

**Par 2.** In the event that a candidate is unable to attend one of the scheduled meetings, the candidate may request to schedule a private meeting with the Chair of the Regulations Board, who may provide such an opportunity at his or her discretion.

## **Section 6. Qualifying**

Shortly after the close of the filing period, the Office of Student Affairs will review candidate qualifications and shall release a list of qualified candidates to the Regulations Board Chair. In order to qualify, candidates must be in good behavioral standing with the school and must have and maintain a minimum cumulative 2.5 GPA.

## **Section 7. General Election**

The Chair of the Regulations Board determine the dates for elections in each academic year with the approval of the Regulations Board. Freshmen Senate Elections will be held within the first month of classes in the Fall Semester while rising Sophomore, Junior, Senior and Presidential Elections will be held in the Spring Semester.

Executive and Legislative Elections can be held on the same or different days upon the discretion of the Chair of the Regulations Board and approval of the Regulations Board. All eligible voters in Student Government Elections will have one vote per their respective class's senatorial election as well as one vote in the presidential election.

## **Section 8. General Election Results**

### **Par 1.** Tabulation:

The tabulation of votes shall be overseen by the Chair of the Regulations Board with the assistance of the Regulations Board and the oversight of the Office of Student Affairs. The Regulations Board Chair shall post the official results of the General Election in a public location after the votes have been tabulated.

### **Par 2.** Majority Vote and Formula:

- a. The candidates on a ticket for President and Vice President receiving a simple majority (greater than 50%) of votes in the General Election shall be declared the winner.
- b. When electing the Senate, the four candidates with the most votes shall be declared Senators. The candidate receiving the greatest number of votes shall be declared the corresponding class' Senator President.

### **Par 3.** Posting of Results:

The Regulations Board Chair shall post the official results of the General Election in a public location after the votes have been tabulated.

### **Par 4.** Contest:

There is a forty-eight hour period after the posting of the election results in which the election can be contested. After forty-eight hours, the results of the election are



final.

## **Section 9. Run-off Election**

**Par 1.** A No Majority Run-off Election:

Except as otherwise provided in this Elections Code, if no ticket in the General Election for President/Vice-President receives a simple majority (greater than 50%) of the votes cast for a particular office, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes in said election shall participate in a Run-off election.

**Par 2.** Tie Vote Run-off Election:

If there are only two tickets in the General Election and the election results in a tie, then a Run-off Election shall be held. If there are more than two tickets and there is a tie for second place and if a Run-off Election is otherwise needed, then the first place ticket and the ticket tied for second shall participate in the Run-off election.

**Par 3.** Winner of a Run-off Election:

The candidate who receives the most votes in the Run-off shall be the winner, regardless of whether he or she receives a majority of the votes cast. If a Run-off Election results in a tie, then the tied candidate who received the most votes in the General Election shall be the winner.

**Par 4.** Tie Vote of a Run-off Election:

If a Run-off Election results in a tie and the tied candidates received the same number of votes in the General Election then, if the election is before the student body, the Regulations Board shall conduct a second Run-off Election between the tied candidates.

**Par 5.** Run-off Election Schedule:

If the election is any other election than the Student Government Association, the Senate shall determine a winner from the candidates at its regularly scheduled meeting or at a special session. The Run-off Election shall be held within ten class days after the General Election.

**Par 6.** Posting of Results:

The Regulations Board Chair shall post the official results of any and every Run-off Election in a public location after the votes have been tabulated.

**Par 7.** Contest:

There is a twenty-four hour period after the posting of the election results in which the election can be contested. After twenty-four hours, the results of the election are final.

**Par 8.** Spending:

In the event of a runoff election, candidates are allowed to utilize an additional 100 dollars for their campaign.

## **Article III: Campaigning Practices**

### **Section 1. Definition**

Campaigning is any activity by a person during an election process, which is intended to, or likely to, affect how a voter votes during an upcoming election. Campaigning may be done publicly or privately. Candidates will be held responsible for any campaigning done publicly or privately.

### **Section 2. Dates**

Campaigning starts one academic week prior to elections and runs through the day of elections. There shall be no campaigning before the start of, or after, the end of campaign period. Campaigning is allowed on Election Day.

Early campaigning is defined as campaigning before the start of the campaign period.

Campaigning includes but is not limited to asking for endorsements, seeking votes, and encouraging support. If a candidate or a candidate's supporters are found to be campaigning early, their campaign will be suspended for the number of days they campaigned early as well as a 10% vote reduction.

### **Section 3. Rules and Regulations**

Par 1. Campaigning on campus must be conducted in compliance with all Spring Hill College Posting Policy Rules.

Par 2. The candidate is responsible for campaign debris remaining after the polls have closed; this includes all signs. This debris must be removed within two class days to avoid election sanctions.

Par 3. The Regulations Board reserves the right to issue fines and/or other sanctions, up to and including disqualification, to any candidate or person in violation of any rules contained in this code. Rules are subject to change and all will be notified within a reasonable time.

### **Section 4. Prohibited Methods**

Prohibited Campaigning methods include any method that would be disruptive to the orderly functioning of the institution in any manner or anything done in poor taste per our College Mission Statement, per the sole discretion of the regulations Board Chair, including but not limited to:

- a. Aircraft, motorcades, or parades.
- b. Loudspeakers, sirens, or other noisemakers.
- c. Advertising on commercial radio or television, excluding the College radio station or newspaper or television.



- a. Any campaign that releases a video must have signed consent forms from each and every student or individual featured in said video. If an individual is featured in multiple videos, multiple release forms must be signed.
- d. Decorating any car or other vehicle without the written consent of the owner.
- e. The employment of any sitting Student Government Association member to assist in campaign. The employment of a sitting SGA member will initiate the impeachment process for that member.
- f. Distribution of alcoholic beverages or other illicit materials.
- g. Proxy voting or the employment of tactics that may facilitate fraud of any kind.
- h. Sabotage of any kind.
- i. Stickers of any type.

## **Section 5. Endorsements**

### **Par 1. Definition of Endorsements:**

An endorsement includes but is not limited to: On Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or any other social media platform: liking, retweeting, favoriting, etc. a status post; liking, retweeting, favoriting, etc. a political campaign page; liking, retweeting, favoriting, etc. a political campaign related picture/video; liking, retweeting, favoriting, etc. any other media form; sharing any form of political campaign propaganda; creating a new post about a political campaign or creating a new shared post about a political campaign; delivering any type of speech in public to a crowd (e.g. in the caf during common hour) that indicates that a particular person or organization supports a candidate; creating any type of paraphernalia/signage in favor of a candidate; posting via text message, GroupMe, email thread, Snapchat, Vimeo or other mass communication tool in favor of a candidate; superfluous, deliberate, and repeated verbal support for a candidate to multiple people in public or private on behalf of a person or organization.

### **Par 2. Faculty, Staff or Administration:**

No employees of the College (faculty, staff, and administration) may in any capacity campaign for any candidate. Violation will result in disqualification upon the determination of the Regulations Board.

### **Par 3. Student Organizations:**

Presidential-Vice Presidential Elections

Student organizations are able to endorse one (and only one) ticket for the SGA

Presidential-Vice Presidential election by abiding by the following regulations:

- a. There is a physical paper form in the Center for Student Involvement that both the SGA Presidential candidate and the president, captain, or other member of highest rank of the endorsing organization must complete and sign. This means that the president, captain, or other member of highest rank of the organization is then responsible for representing their organization for any endorsement misconduct. The Attorney General and the regulations board will review the form and either approve or deny the ability of an organization to endorse their indicated candidate. They will then notify the SGA Presidential Candidate and the organization president, captain, or other member of highest rank of the approval or denial. An organization may not endorse a candidate until they have been

approved to do so, and a candidate may not claim endorsements from an organization until the organization has been approved to endorse.

**Par 4. Senate Elections**

Student organizations are able to endorse any number of candidates for the class senate elections by abiding by the following regulations:

- a. There is a physical paper form in the Center for Student Involvement that both the SGA senate candidate and the president, captain, or other member of highest rank of the endorsing organization must complete and sign. This means that the president, captain, or other member of highest rank of the organization is then responsible for representing their organization for any endorsement misconduct. The Attorney General and the regulations board will review the form and either approve or deny the ability of an organization to endorse their indicated candidate. They will then notify the senate candidate and the organization president, captain, or other member of highest rank of the approval or denial. An organization may not endorse a candidate until they have been approved to do so, and a candidate may not claim endorsements from an organization until the organization has been approved to endorse.

**Par 5. Repercussions**

If a violation of the endorsement policy is reported or discovered, there will be a meeting of the organization president, captain, or other member of highest rank and/or the specific offender and/or the endorsed candidate with the regulations board at the discretion of the regulations board. There will be an initial warning given for any endorsement misconduct. At that time, the organization will have 24 hours to correct their violations (correction procedures will be determined by the regulations board). If after 24 hours, their violations are not corrected, the regulations board will deliberate on appropriate sanctions that can include but are not limited to revoking endorsement rights for the current election and/or revoking endorsement rights for future elections.

**Par 6. Neutrality Clause**

No student running for office of any kind may endorse another candidate. Students running for office do not include those students who have been nominated for Executive Cabinet positions, unless they too are running for office of any kind or if they currently hold an SGA position. If a proposed Executive Cabinet member does endorse a ticket, and their ticket loses, the proposed Executive Cabinet member is permitted to run in any subsequent SGA elections. Breach of the neutrality clause, as determined by the regulations board, will result in the disqualification of the student who broke the neutrality clause. Sitting Student Government Association members, both of the Executive and Legislative levels, are not to provide any advice, assistance or support, publicly or privately, that endorses a candidate. If this should happen, as determined by the regulations board, the impeachment process will be initiated against the SGA member.

**Section 6. Social Media**

Candidates may employ social media sites as means of campaigning. Candidates are responsible for everything displayed

## **Section 7. Destruction of Materials**

Destruction of campaign materials shall be a direct violation of this Code for any candidate or agents thereof who willfully destroy, deface, move, or remove signs or campaign literature of any other candidate.

## **Article IV: Campaign Spending Limits**

### **Section 1. Monetary Limitations**

There will be a \$250.00 limit on spending for a senatorial campaign and a \$300.00 limit for an executive campaign, including fair market value of donations and coordinated expenditures from groups outside the campaign.

### **Section 2. Expenditure Scope**

A candidate's total expenditure shall include all goods and services purchased by or donated to candidates or any supporter for use in the election or in any way furthering that candidate's campaign or detracting from the campaign of any or all of that candidate's opponents.

### **Section 3. Expenditure Reports**

All candidates are required to submit expenditure reports to the Chair. Candidates shall sign their reports and certify that they are accurate and complete under penalty of disqualification. Reports shall be typed, shall include receipts or copies of receipts, and shall be turned into the Election Board Chair the day prior to the election. The board reserves the right to revalue a good or service that has not been reported at its fair market value.

## **Article V: Administration of Elections**

### **Section 1. Regulations Board Chair**

The Regulations Board Chair shall be the Attorney General of the Student Government Association as set forth by the Constitution and Bylaws of this organization.

### **Section 2. Responsibilities and Powers of the Chair**

The Regulations Board Chair shall have the following responsibilities and powers:

- a. To serve as the head of the Regulations Board and all dealings that are a product of any affiliation with the Regulations Board
- b. To serve as the administrative head of the election process
- c. To have charge over all elections personnel
- d. To have authority to expend funds as approved by the Board for the use of elections
- e. To execute the provisions of the Student Government Association Constitution and Bylaws relative to elections and all other provisions of this Code
- f. To ensure that the Board presents a defense if any decision of the Board is appealed

- or if a complaint is filed against the Board
- g. To sponsor and preside over the debates for the Presidential and Executive Vice Presidential Candidates and the Senate Candidate Forum.

### **Section 3. Right of the Regulations Board**

The Regulations Board must be involved in the decision making process on all allegations brought forth. The Board may overturn any decision by a two-thirds majority vote.

### **Section 4. Selection**

There shall be a Regulations Board, chaired by the Attorney General of the Student Government Association, at least one member from each class, at least one cabinet member, and the Student Government Association President. No more than two Senator-Presidents may serve on the Regulations Board, and no more than three members of the same class may serve on the Board. The SGA advisor shall be a non-voting member of the Regulations Board.

### **Section 5. Elections Personnel**

The Regulations Board shall oversee all elections and, if necessary, appoint additional election personnel temporarily. These temporary members must be members of the Student Government Association.

### **Section 6. Quorum**

A quorum of the Regulations Board shall consist of the presence in person of three members and the Regulations Board Chair. The Board may not conduct business without a quorum present.

## **Article VI: Ballot**

### **Section 1. Order of Candidates**

Candidates shall appear on the General Election ballot in alphabetical order, spelled exactly as the candidate submits it on the grade release form. This order shall be reversed in the event of a Run-off election.

### **Section 2. Withdrawal**

If a candidate wishes to withdraw from an election, the candidate must do so by meeting with the Regulations Board Chair in person, and giving the Regulations Board Chair a written, signed statement of his/her withdrawal at least 24 hours before voting begins.

### **Section 3. Single Ticket Election**

In the event that upon the posting of the list of qualified candidates for the offices of Student Government Association President and Vice President there is only one qualified ticket to be placed on the ballot, the single ticket ballot shall be presented as is to the student body. The

ticket must then receive a simple majority, or one vote, in order to win the election for the executive offices.

**Par 1. Medium:**

All SGA sponsored elections shall be conducted through a manual or online ballot system, per the discretion of the Regulations Board. Preference will be for online voting if at all possible.

**Par 2. Time Compensation:**

In the event that the voting system fails, voting time shall be rescheduled altogether or extended by the approximate amount of time lost due to system malfunction, per the discretion of the Regulations Board Chair.

**Par 3. Proxy Voting:**

Proxy voting is strictly forbidden. Anyone found guilty of engaging in fraudulent practices shall be referred to the Office of Student Affairs for further disciplinary sanctions and may be disqualified from the election process.

**Par 4. Duration**

President/Vice President Elections will last 24 hours. Senatorial Elections will last 24 hours. The day that elections are held will be determined at the discretion of the Chair of the Regulations Board.

## **Article VIII: Appeals and Complaints Procedure**

### **Section 1. Procedure**

A complaint concerning alleged violations of Elections Code or the conducting of an election by the Regulations Board may be brought by any member of the Spring Hill College student body, faculty, staff or administration. This complaint must be filed, in writing, within no more than twenty-four hours after the alleged Elections Code violation, if known, or, if contesting the posted results of the election, within 24 hours of posting of the elections results. The written complaint must be filed with the Regulations Board Chair in person or electronically via email, with a copy simultaneously submitted to the SGA Advisor.

### **Section 2. Burden of Proof**

Any person making a complaint shall have the burden to prove the alleged violation. The complaint may be required to present their case before a meeting of the Regulations Board. If the Regulations Board requests the presence of that person at the hearing and the person fails to show up, the complaint shall be dismissed.



### **Section 3. New Election**

If the Regulations Board Chair determines that any election of itself, any person, or any organization has cast a reasonable doubt on the fair outcome of an election, it may order, in conjunction with the Regulations Board, that a particular election to be thrown out. If the Regulations Board Chair determines that the results of the particular election are true expressions of the desires of the constituents of the office involved, it shall deny the appeal and declare the results of that election official.

### **Section 3. Notification of the Plaintiff**

After a complaint has been ruled on, the Regulations Board Chair should take immediate action to notify the plaintiff and the accused of the Regulations Board's ruling.

## **Article IX: Appeal to the Regulations Board**

### **Section 1. Right to Appeal**

Any student claiming to be unjustly injured by an act or ruling of the Regulations Board Chair may appeal to the Student Government Association Regulations Board by filing a written complaint with the Regulations Board Chair in person or electronically via email, with a copy simultaneously submitted to the SGA Advisor.

### **Section 2. Procedure**

The party appealing any Regulations Board Chair's decision shall present its case before the Regulations Board. The Regulations Board Chair shall present his or her case in this hearing. The Regulations Board shall rule on facts presented in the dispute, and if it finds that the Regulations Board Chair has acted in a manner contrary to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Student Government Association or the Elections Code, a recession order forcing the Regulations Board Chair to alter or rescind such an act or ruling as the Regulations Board directs shall be imposed.

## **Article X: Penalties for Violation**

### **Section 1. Campaigning Spending Limits**

Any candidate failing to file a typed and signed report of campaign expenditures required by this Code shall be disqualified. Any candidate exceeding the limit on campaign expenditures set by this Code shall be disqualified. Any candidate found lying on their campaign expenditure report will be disqualified.

### **Section 2. Failure to Attend an Informational Meeting**



Any candidate failing to attend the mandatory informational meetings as determined by the Elections Code and by the Regulations Board Chair will be disqualified unless the candidate had made a special provision to meet personally with the Regulations Board, or the Regulations Board has approved the candidate's absence due to extraordinary circumstances.

### **Section 3. Candidates**

If a candidate or any campaign staff members of a candidate are found guilty of violating this Elections Code, the Regulations Board Chair and/or Regulations Board as a whole, may take action to resolve the matter in the manner best deemed appropriate, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Private censure, reserved for only unusually minor offenses
- b. Public censure, the general minimum sanction
- c. Fines
- d. Restriction of the candidate and any campaign staff members from campaigning for a fixed period of time in such a manner as the Board feels appropriate
- e. Disqualification

### **Section 4. Others**

If a person who is not a candidate or if an organization is found guilty of violating this Code, the Regulations Board Chair and/or Regulations Board as a whole, may take action to resolve the matter in the manner best deemed appropriate, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Private censure, reserved for only unusually minor cases
- b. Public censure, the general minimum sanction
- c. Fines
- d. Restriction of the person or organization from campaigning for a fixed period of time and in such a manner as the Board feels appropriate
- e. Referral to the Vice President of Student Affairs

### **Section 5. Other Measures**

The Regulations Board Chair or the Regulations Board may order any person or organization found in violation of the Elections Code to take such steps as are necessary to cease the violation. Failure to comply with such an order is a violation of the Elections Code and is subject to the terms of the Regulations Board Chair, with the consent of the Regulations Board.

### **Section 6. Report with Office of Student Affairs**

If, in the opinion of the Regulations Board, the violation warrants it, the Regulations Board may direct the Regulations Board Chair to file a report with the Office of Student Affairs with recommendation that Vice President for Student Affairs has the authority to prosecute

the offending person or organization under the provisions of the *Student Handbook* or other appropriate Spring Hill College rules.

## **Article XI: Referendums and Initiatives**

### **Section 1. Authority**

The Regulations Board shall govern any movement of referendum or initiative to be presented to the student body and shall as appropriate set forth all rules, dates, procedure, and all other matters pertinent to such events according to the Student Government Association Constitution and Bylaws.

## **Article XII: Elections Specified by this Code**

### **Section 1. Disputed Elections**

For any election, which shall result out of disputed election, the Regulations Board Chair shall be the sole determiner of the rules, dates, procedures, and all other matters pertinent to such elections.

### **Section 2. Special Elections**

For any election not specified within this Code, the Regulations Board Chair shall be the sole determiner of the rules, dates, procedures and all other matters pertinent to such elections.

## **Article XIII: Revision**

Any changes of this Elections Code must be ratified by a three-fourths approval of the Senate. Following Senate approve, a simple majority vote of ratification by the entire student body is required. Upon revision of this code, all previous versions shall become null and void.