

trent central student association

ELECTIONS HANDBOOK

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Welcome!

In this handbook, you will find information about the processes and regulations of the TCSA Elections, as well as campaigning guidelines and budgeting for candidates and campaign team members. If you have any questions about Elections or your own campaign, please contact tcsaelections@trentu.ca and a member of the TCSA Elections Committee will be in touch.

Why You Should Get Involved

Running in the TCSA elections, for either an Executive position or a Commissioner position, is a great way to get involved on campus, gain leadership experience, meet new people, advocate for other students, introduce new ideas, events, and campaigns, help create change on campus, and much more. Our Board of Directors members:

- Run awareness campaigns or events
- Represent the interests and concerns of your constituency
- Provide student representation on university committees
- Assist in the development of Association policies and services
- Work with Canadian Federation of Students caucuses

Candidate Eligibility

Any undergraduate student enrolled in courses can run in TCSA elections. To run as a candidate, you must:

- Be a TCSA member (Trent undergraduate)
- Be at least 18 years of age on or before March 24, 2024
- Have not declared bankruptcy
- Be eligible to work in Canada (international students are eligible for work in Canada)

Elections Committee

The TCSA Elections Committee is responsible for executing any election or referenda held by the Association. This includes overseeing all candidates and campaigns, ensuring they follow procedures outlined in the TCSA policy book and this handbook. Its members include the Lead Electoral Officer and student leaders appointed from the TCSA Board of Directors:

Wendy Walker, Lead Electoral Officer
Lisa Ramsamy, Deputy Electoral Officer
Aimee Anctil, TCSA President
Noah Edwards, Lady Eaton College Cabinet Prime Minister
Emily Johnston, Gzowski College Cabinet President
Sofiat Olabimtan, TCSA BIPOC Student Organizer

Campaigning for Election

Campaigning is defined as any activity that is undertaken to promote a candidate in TCSA Elections. Candidates are encouraged to use a variety of creative measures to campaign, as long as the rules and time limits of elections are fully observed. Candidates must have all materials (printed, digital, or otherwise) approved by the Lead Electoral Officer (LEO) prior to distribution. Any campaign material found to be offensive or in violation of the policies will be brought to the attention of the Elections Committee for further determination.

Candidates should be aware that they are not permitted to make unrealistic or unreasonable promises at any time during the election period. Candidates who make promises that are considered to be beyond the scope of their powers will be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the Elections Committee.

Candidates and their campaign team members are required to demonstrate integrity, honesty, and goodwill expected of those seeking elected office. Any candidates or campaign team members who engage in unwarranted negative campaigning practices against a fellow candidate will be subject to disciplinary action.

Campaign Team

Campaign team members are defined as individuals who solicit for, or assist, a candidate in any way with respect to elections. Campaign team members must be identified to the Elections Committee prior to the start of the campaigning period. Candidates are responsible for the conduct of their campaign team members at all times. Campaign team members found not abiding by elections regulations will be subject to disciplinary action. Candidates will not be permitted to sign up campaign team members more than seventy-two (72) hours after the registration period has closed.

Monetary Limitations

Candidates are permitted to spend up to \$150 on campaign materials related to elections. Gifted materials will be assessed for a value and applied to the spending limit. However, expenses deemed gifts will not be reimbursed. Donations and outside funding are prohibited.

Candidates should keep a record of their election expenses with receipts (take a picture of a receipt if possible) and email all records to tcsaelections@trentu.ca no later than the last day of the campaign period or they will not be reimbursed. Candidates are strongly encouraged to keep a record of their expenses and receipts up-to-date and accessible to the LEO, who may ask to review these items at any time during the





elections process. Candidates will only be reimbursed for all expenses with proper documentation.

Applicable Elections & Trent University Policies

Anyone participating in TCSA Elections should familiarize themselves with the policies that apply to candidate (student) conduct. These include the TCSA's own policies but also those of Trent University:

- Trent University Discrimination and Harassment Policy: <https://www.trentu.ca/chrea/human-rights/discrimination-and-harassment-policy-faq>
- Trent University Charter of Students Rights and Responsibilities: <https://www.trentu.ca/currentstudents/policies-decision-making/student-conduct/student-charter-rights-and-responsibilities>

Due to the close relationship the TCSA maintains with the Trent University community, candidates are reminded that any disciplinary action regarding their conduct may extend beyond the jurisdiction of the Elections Committee. The committee may choose to remove a candidate from elections if a matter is deemed serious enough and/or further concerns about conduct are not adequately resolved. Please be mindful of The Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Charter is applicable to all student conduct that occurs:

- On property owned or leased by the University.
- At any municipal facility included in agreements between the Cities of Oshawa or Peterborough and Trent University.
- During a University-sanctioned activity that takes place off-campus (i.e. an event that is funded and/or approved by Trent University).
- When a student is acting as a designated representative of the University and/or of a student group.
- When using electronic communications under the name of Trent University, or using technology managed by the University (see policies established by the Information Technology department).
- When using social networking sites (while the University does not actively monitor student social networking, content that is brought to the attention of the University that reasonably suggests breach of this Charter or other university policies may be investigated and responded to by the University as appropriate).
- On any public transit services provided to Trent University.

Elections Procedures

The Association, including its members and all registered candidates and committees, shall adhere to the following procedures in all elections and referenda facilitated by the

Association.

- i) All parts of the Association's Elections shall be publicized widely throughout campus and online during the electoral period;
- ii) The means of distributing ballots to Association Members and counting all ballots cast during the voting period shall be decided by the Elections Committee, but is subject to review by the TCSA Board of Directors in the event of any complaint;
- iii) The Lead Electoral Officer shall compose the ballot before the start of the voting period in consultation with the Elections Committee after confirming the eligibility of each candidate;
- iv) Students are permitted to cast spoiled or declined ballots;
- v) Students wishing to vote in person shall:
 - Write in advance of the voting period to the Lead Electoral Officer indicating that they should be taken off the email distribution list;
 - Present themselves to the Lead Electoral Officer in the TCSA Office during office hours specified during the voting period;
 - Present a valid Trent ID card indicating active student status when they present themselves to vote;
 - Cast their ballot privately and place it in an envelope that shall be sealed with a sticker on the outside of the envelope. The sticker will include the date they cast their ballot, a reference number assigned by the Lead Electoral Officer, and the signature of the Lead Electoral Officer.

Elections Information

The following information shall be communicated to all candidates and referendum committees in writing and attached to their nomination/registration form:

- i) Copies of all elections by-laws, operating resolutions, and policies determined by the Elections Committee;
- ii) In the case of candidates, copies of all policies and by-laws pertaining to the duties of the position for which they are running;
- iii) A Code of Conduct;
- iv) Mention of the applicability of the Trent University and the Association's policies relating to Human Rights, Discrimination, Harassment, and Oppression and links to them for further context;
- v) The dates, times, and locations of all elections-related events;





vi) Registration forms for campaign team members.

vii) Contact information for each member of the Elections Committee.

Elections Marketing

To help promote awareness of candidates in Elections, the TCSA collects candidate headshots and platforms to be used for the TCSA's website and for distribution to local student media. In addition to these requirements for registrations, Candidates will also be expected to submit a short video introduction and will be offered further opportunities to be featured on the TCSA's official elections Instagram account and to participate in online electoral events that the TCSA will host on behalf of the membership.

All-Candidates Meeting

The All-Candidates Meeting shall take place shortly after the close of the registration period. All candidates or an authorized representative for each candidate (the candidate must confirm a delegate to act in this capacity) will attend the All-Candidates Meeting in its entirety or arrange to meet with the Lead Electoral Officer within seventy-two (72) hours of the close of the registration period.

i) It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain all information provided at the meeting through the authorized representative or from the Lead Electoral Officer. It is the responsibility of each candidate to understand all information provided at the All-Candidates Meeting.

ii) Any candidate who fails to attend or send an authorized representative to the All Candidates Meeting, or fails to meet with the Lead Electoral Officer, may be disqualified from the election;

iii) The topics at the All-Candidates Meeting shall include, but are not limited to:

- The election process established in the Association's By-laws, Operating Resolutions and Best Practices Manual.
- The Elections schedule.
- The duties and functions of the Elections Committee.

iv) Each candidate or authorized representative must agree to a code of conduct before campaigning that indicates they understand the rules and regulations governing the Association's elections.

Referenda Meeting

A Referenda Meeting will be scheduled at the close of the registration period. All members of a referendum committee

must attend the Referenda Meeting or arrange to meet with the Lead Electoral Officer within seventy-two (72) hours of the meeting. A specific meeting for referendum groups may be combined with the All-Candidates Meeting at the discretion of the Lead Electoral Officer.

i) The topics of the Referenda Meeting shall include, but are not limited to:

- The elections process with regards to the Association By-laws, Operating Resolutions and Best Practices Manual.
- The elections schedule.
- The duties and functions of the Elections Committee.

ii) Each committee member campaigning on behalf of the referenda question will agree to a code of conduct and indicate they understand the rules and regulations governing the elections.

Candidates, Campaign Team Members, and Referendum Committees

All candidates, campaign team members, and members of referendum committees shall sign a code of conduct after understanding the following regulations:

i) All campaign staff members and all members of a referendum 'yes' or 'no' committee must be identified to the Elections Committee and abide by any agreements made on behalf of a specific campaign group.

ii) There may be no more than four (4) 'yes' or 'no' committees for any single referendum question. For election candidates, there may be a single 'no' committee. However, this may only occur if the candidate is running uncontested.

iii) All candidates and committees are permitted one scrutineer to be present during ballot counting. The name, and email address of the scrutineer must be given to the Lead Electoral Officer by noon on the last day of the voting period. If the requested information is not provided to the Lead Electoral Officer, the individual may not be permitted to act as a scrutineer.

iv) All candidates and committees must submit valid contact information, including telephone number and email address, for the duration of the election period.

v) All candidates and committees are required to submit an outline of their platform to the Elections Committee in advance of the beginning of the campaign period. Late platform submissions may be grounds for an infraction being issued by the Elections Committee.





Campaigning

i) All publicity materials must be approved by the Lead Electoral Officer or a representative of the Elections Committee and must bear a symbol of the Association prior to being produced.

ii) All publicity materials must be acceptable under the Trent University policy on Human Rights and the Association's policies surrounding Discrimination, Harassment, and Oppression.

iii) Email publicity is permitted but is subject to the following conditions:

- Emails must clearly state the date that the campaign period closes with the understanding that forwarding after that date is not permitted.
- Emails must be pre-approved by a representative of the Elections Committee before being sent.
- The Lead Electoral Officer must be 'cc:d' on any email publicity being sent by a candidate, campaign team member, or referendum committee member.
- Candidates and campaign team members are not permitted to use previously established distribution lists that may be available to them for the purposes of campaigning without the approval of the Elections Committee.
- Referendum committees shall be permitted to use distribution lists of the organizations that they represent for the purpose of contacting members after seeking approval from the Elections Committee.

iv) Other forms of online campaigning, such as social media, are permitted but are subject to the additional following conditions:

- All forms of social media campaigning must be pre-approved by a representative of the Elections Committee prior to being posted online.
- 'Reactions', 'Likes', 'Upvotes', and other equivalent forms of engagement shall not be considered to be promoting or advancing a candidate or referendum.
- 'Shares', 'Reposts', 'Retweets', and other equivalent forms of engagement that may be considered to be promoting or advancing a candidate or referendum, upon a ruling made by the Lead Electoral Officer.
- Candidates must not employ more than one account per social media platform to campaign. Members must report each account and username to the Lead Electoral Officer prior to being used as a campaigning tool.
- Patterns of engagement, such as abnormally large volumes of specific forms of engagement, may be considered to be promoting a candidate or referendum.
- Individual messages shall not be subject to approval by the Lead Electoral Officer; however, text used for mass dissemination to two (2) or more people must be provided to the Lead Electoral Officer in advance for their records.

- Candidates will not interact with other accounts in a way that may be perceived as irritating or annoying by the recipient. This includes repeated direct messages or follow requests and mass message distributions.
- Candidates shall not run paid promotional ads on social media.
- Any URL made specifically for a campaign must be taken offline by the date and time that the campaign period closes.

v) Upon a recommendation by the Lead Electoral Officer, the Elections Committee may vote to suspend or terminate the use of social media by some or all members participating in an election if community standards are not being upheld.

vi) Campaigning may only be conducted within online spaces that could reasonably be accessed by any TCSA member, and may not be conducted in private or hidden online groups or accounts that cannot be observed by the Lead Electoral Officer.

- This section need not apply to private messages or team management, such as campaign team group chats or other non-public communications.

vii) New technologies may, from time to time, pose logistical challenges to the administration and execution of elections. In consultation with the Elections Committee, the Lead Electoral Officer shall be empowered to issue rulings which clarify how certain technologies may be used.

viii) For any and all campaign materials, they must be original, legible, accessible and high-contrast where applicable, and made available in English.

ix) All campaign materials must have been created for the purpose of the election they are to be used in, and must not have been created for a separate purpose, such as a different election, campaign, or activity.

x) Discussion of other candidates must be limited to the public record or easily verifiable information. Defamation or slander of opponents or other candidates may result in disciplinary procedures.

xi) No part of any campaigning shall undermine or attempt to undermine the authority and the ability of the Lead Electoral Officer and the Elections Committee to perform their duties, including the voting process.

xii) No part of any campaigning shall disrupt or interfere with the operations or policies of locations and facilities where campaigning is conducted. Any and all spaces where campaigning is conducted shall be treated with respect.





xiii) All publicity material must be taken down, and campaigning ceased by the end of the electoral period. Any publicity material found outside of this time period may be grounds for disciplinary procedures that are beyond the authority of the Elections Committee.

Campaign Spending

i) A campaign spending limit of \$150 for election candidates and \$150 for each referenda committee shall be set.

ii) No outside donations, funding, or other unauthorized assistance may be obtained for the purpose of a campaign. All spending and resource management must be directly conducted by the candidate or referendum committee and under the supervision of the Lead Electoral Officer.

iii) The campaign expense form, accompanied by all receipts for campaign materials must be submitted to the Lead Electoral Officer by the time indicated on that form.

ix) Materials that are either donations or owned by the candidate or referenda committee prior to the elections will be assigned a dollar value based on fair market value by the Lead Electoral Officer and shall be calculated as campaign expenses but will not be considered in the calculation of a refund for campaign expenditures.

x) All expenses must be documented and reported by each candidate to the Lead Electoral Officer. Evidence of incomplete reporting, overspending, or solicitation of external funding will be investigated at the direction of the Lead Electoral Officer.

Restricted Areas and Campaign Conduct

i) No part of any campaigning shall take place within student residences other than open lobbies and foyers; academic spaces, including Bata Library, lecture halls, seminar rooms and labs; Food Services or Chartwells spaces, including the Ceilie; private spaces which are not open to the general public; events being operated by the TCSA (with the exception of TCSA Election specific events) or campus groups; any additional space in which the Lead Electoral Officer has ruled forbidding its use; or the TCSA office.

ii) Any candidate, campaign team member, or referendum committee member who is found directly or indirectly tampering or disfiguring the publicity of another candidate or committee will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

iii) All candidates, campaign team members, or referendum committee members shall not provide personal electronic devices to voters to conduct voting or linger in any area that may be perceived as tampering with the fairness of elections.

iv) No candidate or campaigner may collect any credentials or private information from members that could be used to vote on behalf of a member, identify the vote of a member, or otherwise compromise the rights and independence of any member.

v) There shall be no slates or mutual organization of any kind between candidates seeking elected office.

vi) No candidate may solicit votes or political support (endorsements) from campus clubs, campus-affiliated groups, or external organizations, including Trent University levy groups.

- Furthermore, no candidate may solicit votes or political support from individuals or organizations in exchange for any form of promised or implied resources, promotion, or other benefit upon election to the TCSA.

Disciplinary Procedures

If any part of the rules outlined herein are reported to be violated by a candidate, a campaign team member, or a referendum committee member, the Elections Committee may choose to initiate the following disciplinary process:

i) Investigation

The Elections Committee shall request a meeting with those involved to discuss the alleged infraction for the purpose of the action taken by the Elections Committee. Meetings to discuss alleged infractions should be held within 48 hours of the time the infraction was reported. In the event that the infraction has been reported by someone other than a member of the Elections Committee, it will be the responsibility of the Elections Committee to investigate the allegation prior to setting up a meeting of those involved.

ii) Discipline

If the Elections Committee determines that an infraction has taken place, the infraction will be noted next to the candidate's or committee's platform on the Association's website as a notice to members. Candidates and referendum committees will have 48 hours to appeal an infraction from the time the notice was sent. Appeals must provide an explanation as to why the ruling of the Lead Electoral Officer was incorrect, as well as a desired outcome or remedy. Once received, the Elections Committee shall have 48 hours to convene, consider the merits of the appeal and provide a response. Rulings of the Elections Committee shall remain final. All complaints may not be anonymous; however, the identity of members who submit complaints shall not be published. The indication of the infraction may not appear on the ballot.

iii) Infractions and Penalties

Penalties may be imposed on a candidate upon a ruling made





by the Lead Electoral Officer or the Elections Committee and may come in the form of demerit points, disqualification, or financial penalties. Candidates shall be disqualified upon receiving twenty (20) demerit points, regardless of the number of infractions incurred.

Demerit points will be issued in increments of 5, depending on the severity of the infraction and any potential unfair advantage, to candidates and campaign teams by the Lead Electoral Officer or the Elections Committee according to the following schedule:

Violation/Cause for Complaint	Potential Penalty
Non-compliance: management & finance	Up to 15 demerit points per offence
Pre-campaigning	Disqualification
Failure to take a leave of absence	Up to 5 demerit points
Unauthorized campaign materials	Up to 15 demerit points per offence
Failure to report or submit records to Lead Electoral Officer	Up to 10 demerit points per offence
Non-compliance: social media & online	Up to 10 demerit points per offence
Unauthorized campaign team members	Up to 10 demerit points per offence
Non-compliance: restricted areas & conduct	Up to 10 demerit points per offence
Unauthorized/vigilante enforcement of rules	Up to 10 demerit points per offence
Frivolous, vexatious, baseless complaints/appeals	Up to 15 demerit points per offence
Mutual organization, cross-campaigning, or slates	Disqualification
Endorsements	Disqualification
Violation of law, property damage, grievous harm	Disqualification & possible financial penalty
Egregious violations of fair play/spirit of elections	Disqualification

Furthermore, if a candidate or committee has engaged in behaviours or actions in violation of Trent University and the Association’s policies related to Human Rights, Discrimination, Harassment and Oppression, they will forthwith be removed from the elections process regardless of the number of demerit points incurred.

Security

i) The Lead Electoral Officer shall be the only person with access

to the voting mechanism unless the Elections Committee otherwise approves another individual(s);

ii) Whenever possible, the Association Eligibility List and any ballots shall be secured separately from the voting mechanism;

iii.) The Lead Electoral Officer shall request the Association Eligibility List from the Office of Student Affairs and Trent Finance in time for the beginning of the nomination period and shall keep this digital information confidential in the following ways:

- Ensure the Association Eligibility List and any copies are kept password protected.
- Access to student information will be kept secure by the Lead Electoral Officer and/or any other individuals that the Elections Committee designates.

Ballot Reporting Procedures

i) Counting ballots and reporting of unofficial results shall be conducted within twenty-four (24) hours of the close of voting;

ii) Counting shall occur in the TCSA Office;

iii) In the event of a change of location for counting ballots, all candidates, campaign team members, and referendum committee members shall be notified at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the new location where possible;

iv) Final ballot numbers that are presented to scrutineers shall be reported as the unofficial results to the Board of Directors for ratification;

v) Counting shall be conducted by a minimum of three (3) members of the Elections Committee, including the Lead Electoral Officer, in the presence of all registered scrutineers;

vi) Any envelopes containing ballots shall not be opened by anyone other than the Elections Committee when they gather to count ballots.

Ratification

With the exception of quorum in the case of referenda, the only due cause for elections and/or referendum results not being ratified shall be a breach of the processes and duties outlined in the policies and by-laws of the Association due to an unreasonable or irreconcilable error by the Elections Committee.

Restrictions on Physical Campaign Materials

For physical campaign materials, the following restrictions





apply:

- i) Material size shall not exceed 29.7cm x 42cm (11" x 17").
- ii) Materials shall not exceed the quantities specified below:
 - Up to 50 posters not exceeding 29.7cm x 42cm (11" x 17").
 - Up to 150 handouts not exceeding 22cm x 28cm (8.5" x 11").
 - Up to 300 handouts not exceeding 10.16cm x 15.24cm (4" x 6").
- iii) All materials must be entirely recyclable and not printed with laminate.
- iv) No material may block, cover, or otherwise obstruct existing material that has already been posted, and shall not be posted where not expressly permitted.
- v) No stickers or decals.
- vi) All materials must be spaced at least one (1) meter (3.3') apart in all directions. Groups of smaller materials, cumulatively not exceeding a size of 29.7cm x 42cm (11" x 17"), may be considered a single material.
- vii) All materials must be removed as soon as possible following the conclusion of an election.
- viii) Any materials under 10.16cm x 15.24cm (4" x 6"), such as business cards, should be handed directly to students and must not be scattered on tables or floors.

TCSA Campus Poster & Chalk Policy

Posters:

Trent University campus has designated boards throughout its various buildings, both inside and outside, for postering. These areas may have specific restrictions and limitations concerning posters, banners, or similar materials. These materials can be placed around the main campus, but the following rules should be observed when putting materials on display:

1. Absolutely no stickers.
2. All materials must comply with the Trent University Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.
3. No materials can be posted on glass surfaces, windows in doors, tables or chairs.
4. No materials can be posted in the Célilie or Chartwell's spaces.
5. No materials can be posted inside academic spaces (Classrooms, Bata Library, Lecture Halls, etc.).
6. All colleges cabinets should be consulted about any materials being put up .

7. If a bulletin board belongs to a particular office of department, seek permission first.
8. Only chalking is allowed on Faryon Bridge. NO POSTERS.
9. Do not post on dedicated Trent University bulletin boards (Senior Tutors, College Office, etc.).
10. Duct tape and clear packing tape is prohibited.
11. Painter tape should be used when putting posters on painted walls.
12. Limit one (1) poster per board. No identical posters in the same space.
13. No posting on TCSA bulletin boards without permission.
14. Posters related to specific dates are to be taken down by the related party after the time in which the date has passed.

All posters must adhere to the aforementioned policies. If these policies are not followed, they will result in an infraction or more serious consequences for the related parties.

Chalk

Many surfaces around the university are suitable for the use of chalk. Due to the importance of the timely removal of any public messaging, anyone using chalk is advised to select surfaces that will be cleansed by rainfall. Anyone using chalk on campus should also be aware of the following rules:

1. Spray chalk, or any other aerosol sprays used for messaging, are strictly prohibited due to their ability to make full contact with porous concrete, which makes for difficult removal.
2. Any chalk messages that linger on campus should be identified for removal by their originators.
3. If messages persist, the physical resources department may be engaged to remove messages at a cost to the group or individual who is responsible for them.

Consequences of any violations of the Poster and Chalk Policy may include:

- Permission to poster on Trent University Campus will be rescinded
- Posters will be taken down
- Cleanup costs being assessed to those responsible
- Legal action may be taken

Please ease the burden on Trent's Physical Resources Department and clean up your materials in due course after they have served their purpose.



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