

## **MCSG Election Code**

Macalester College Student Government (MCSG) Room 235, Ruth Stricker  
Dayton Campus Center Phone: (651) 696 6485

email: [mcs@macalester.edu](mailto:mcs@macalester.edu)

Revised and approved by Legislative Body: September 29th, 2015

### **Table of Contents**

**Section 1. Purpose.**

**Section 2. Candidacy.**

**Section 3. Right to Vote.**

**Section 4. Campaigning.**

**Section 5. Balloting.**

**Section 6. Candidates' Debate and Forum.**

**Section 7. First-Year Representatives Committee Elections.**

**Section 8. Elections for Program Board and Financial Affairs Committee Chair.**

**Section 9. Student Body Referendums.**

**Section 10. Interpretations and Violations.**

## **ELECTION CODE**

### **Section 1. Purpose.**

1. This election code shall govern all elections for all elected offices and student body referendums within the Macalester College Student Government (MCSG).
2. The members of the Election Procedures Commission (EPC) shall be nominated by the Dean of Students or their designee through an application process in the Spring Semester prior to the year of appointment similar to the Campus Committee's process outlined in the MCSG Bylaws. Preference should be made to include all class years on the commission, if possible. All nominations must be approved by a majority vote in the Legislative Body.
  - a. Voting members of the EPC will be comprised of four current students. The Dean of Students or their designee will advise the EPC to ensure consistency and fairness in running the elections process.
  - b. The MCSG President will serve as the chair of the EPC.
  - c. No candidate for any position may serve on the EPC during their election.
  - d. In the event of a resignation from the EPC, the Dean of Students or their designee will present their new EPC nominations to the Legislative Body within at least three (3) weeks.
  - e. EPC will work with the Legislative Body and community members in promoting the election process.

### **Section 2. Candidacy.**

1. Any person classified as being enrolled by the College Registrar and who has paid all of the student activity fee shall be eligible for office.
  - a. In the event that a Representative Committee seat becomes vacant (e.g. if someone resigns or is recalled), the MCSG President will work in cooperation with the EPC to hold a special election unless it is within two (2) month of the end of the academic year. All decisions regarding special election arrangements and rules will be communicated to EPC members for review.
  - b. If an Executive Board position is vacated, the EPC will hold a special election within three (3) weeks.

- c. If a student is running for Representative Committee seat and is planning on not serving for one semester, they must run with another student who is planning to serve the opposite semester. They will be considered to be one candidate in terms of campaigning and balloting procedures.
2. Additional restrictions applying to all offices governed by this document:
  - a. No person may seek candidacy for more than one position at one time.
  - b. Candidates wishing to withdraw from candidacy after filing may do so by informing any member of the EPC.
  - c. No seat will be filled with less than two months left in the academic year.
3. Filing for Candidacy
  - a. Timeline
    - i. A candidates meeting shall take place on a Monday. Campaigning may not begin until the candidates meeting concludes.
      1. The candidates meeting for PB Chair and FAC Chair shall take place on the second Monday of spring semester.
      2. The candidates meeting for President, Vice President, SOC Chair, and AAC Chair shall take place the Monday following spring break.
      3. The candidates meeting for non-first year class representative committee elections shall take place four weeks after first Monday after spring break.
    - ii. The EPC shall send out a filing form to the office's constituency seven (7) days prior to the candidates meeting. All filings must be received by 11:59 p.m. the night before the candidates meeting.
    - iii. Campaigning shall begin immediately following the candidates meeting. The campaigning period shall end at the end of the sixth day, a Sunday.
    - iv. The ballot shall be sent out seven (7) days after the candidates meeting. The election period shall be at least two full days.
  - b. The EPC will include the MCSG Election Code bylaws in the initial communication with the filing form, and direct any and all candidates to refer to said bylaws immediately after filing.
  - c. The EPC should make it clear that by completing the Filing for Candidacy documents, the prospective candidate assumes all responsibility to abide by the Election Code bylaws.
  - d. The Filing for Candidacy document submissions must be publicly accessible for the Student Body and interested parties to view seven (7) days before the filing period ends.

- e. Before the election period begins, the chair of the EPC will send the list of prospective candidates to the Registrar's office, who will then determine which students are eligible to participate in accordance with college policy.

### **Section 3. Right to Vote.**

1. Campus-wide Offices
  - a. All registered students shall be eligible to vote for these offices.
  - b. Exceptions to this can be made by the EPC on a case-by-case basis.
  - c. The EPC will send a list of approved exceptions to the Registrar's office when the official ballot is sent out.
2. Representative Offices
  - a. Only students directly represented by the position in question may vote.

### **Section 4. Campaigning.**

1. Campaigning shall be defined as:
  - a. The distribution and/or publication of any type of written, printed, drawn on any surface, or electronic material by a candidate or their proxy.
  - b. Any formal discussions, debates, speeches, or advertising by any candidate.
  - c. Be it noted that all posters, and chalking, so long as they are completed prior to the end of the campaigning period, are allowed to remain during the voting period.
2. Campaigning Period
  - a. The campaigning period cannot begin until after a candidate's meeting organized by the EPC.
3. Spending.
  - a. No more than \$75 may be spent on any individual campaign.
  - b. If requested at the discretion of the EPC, an accurate report of all campaign spending must be submitted to the EPC.
4. Responsibility.
  - a. Candidates shall be responsible for all activities relating to their campaign.
  - b. The candidates shall observe all building regulations. Candidates should especially be aware of Residential Life policies regarding posting in dorms.
  - c. Candidates shall not damage, cover, or deface others' campaign material.

- d. No statements shall be made by candidates, verbal or nonverbal, that grossly distort statements, proposals, or actions made by themselves, another candidate, or other students.
  - e. If the candidate is not currently studying on campus during the election process, they may appoint only one (1) official proxy that must be directly communicated to the EPC via the Dean of Students or their designee before the filing period ends.
  - f. Candidates shall be responsible for the accuracy and truthfulness of their campaign statements.
  - g. Violations of campaign responsibilities should be reported directed to the EPC for review.
5. Restrictions
- a. MCSG Staff, MCSG Executive Board members, and EPC members are prohibited from publicly endorsing any candidates, which includes serving as a proxy in a debate.
  - b. All faculty and staff shall not be contacted or ask to participate in any way in the campaigning and/or the elections process.
  - c. Candidates may not host voting booths while the ballot is out.
6. Candidate Information Sheet
- a. All candidates running for both Representative Committee and Executive Board positions will be required to submit a brief personal statement and platform description, the length of which will be determined by the EPC.
  - b. The EPC will collect and format these statements and make them widely available to the student body.
7. Election Process Summary
- a. The EPC will produce the election code, the student handbook, important dates, and any other relevant information about entire election process to be distributed to all candidates running for office and/or their proxies for candidates not currently studying on campus

## **Section 5. Balloting.**

1. Contents of the ballot must contain the following items:
  - a. The classification (general, special, delayed runoff, etc.), season, and year of the election.
  - b. Clear Instructions for using the ballot.
  - c. The names of all candidates who have filed with the EPC grouped by the office, which they seek.

- d. Names of candidates in alphabetical order by last name.
  - e. A write in provision for each seat that is up for election.
  - f. Any ballot measures (i.e. referendums) if the appropriate petition is submitted within twenty-one (21) days of an election period.
  - g. The EPC will determine the most appropriate method (e.g. Google Documents) for conducting voting and implement it consistently across all elections it conducts.
  - h. For Representative Committee elections, each voter will be able to vote for up to five (5) candidates.
  - i. For Executive Board elections, each voter will be able to designate their top three (3) ranked choices.
2. Hours of Voting
    - a. The Chair of the EPC will email the ballots to the appropriate constituencies immediately when the election period begins; the emails will be approved for distribution promptly in the morning by the moderator of the list servs.
    - b. The period of voting must last for forty-eight (48) hours.
3. Study Away Voting Considerations
    - a. Voting will be open to those studying abroad/away at least two (2) days before the election date.
    - b. The EPC will communicate with those studying abroad/away this window of voting at least seven (7) days prior to the election day.
4. Additional Polling Places: In addition to conducting the election through email, the EPC will set up computers in a convenient location in the Campus Center to encourage voting. The polling place will be run in the following manner:
    - a. Hours of operation
      - i. The polling place shall be open for at least Cafe Mac meal hours.
    - b. Supervision
      - i. The polling place shall be supervised at all times by at least two (2) persons who are not directly involved in the election.
5. Voter Validation
    - a. The Registrar's office will verify the voter eligibility and any votes determined to be ineligible will be removed by the Registrar's office.
6. Declaring a Winner
    - a. Ballots for Executive Board elections will be counted using ranked choice voting methods.
    - b. In a Legislative Body Representative election, the five candidates who receive the most votes will be the winners.

## **Section 6. Candidates' Debate and Forum.**

### **1. Executive Candidates' Debate**

- a. The EPC will organize a debate in which all the candidates running for executive positions will be required to attend. Failure to attend will be treated as a violation and shall be dealt with through the sanction process outlined in Article VIII Section 9 on the authority of the EPC. Exceptions to this rule will be made for those candidates not currently studying on campus and on a case-by-case basis.
- b. There will be no proxies for the candidates allowed, except those candidates who are not currently studying on campus. Proxies may not be current candidates themselves.
- c. The debate will be held in a central, public space and will be moderated by members of the EPC. The EPC will make an effort to include other interested community members in the debate process and moderation.
- d. The format of the debate will be determined by the EPC, ensuring that each candidate receives equal opportunities to speak.
- e. The EPC will publicize the debate thoroughly to ensure that student turnout is high, and schedule the debate at a time when there are no classes. The EPC is additionally responsible to attempt to avoid official school-sponsored conflicts that may limit attendance (i.e. Varsity athletic competition, Choir concert, etc.).
- f. The Executive Candidates' Debate will be held during the campaigning window for Executive elections, and must take place at least three (3) days prior to the election period.

### **2. Representative Committee Candidates' Forum**

- a. The EPC will organize a forum in which all the candidates running for Representative Committee positions will be required to attend. Failure to attend will be treated as a violation and shall be dealt with through the sanction process outlined in Article VIII Section 9 on the authority of the EPC. Exceptions to this rule will be made for those candidates not currently studying on campus and on a case-by-case basis.
- b. There will be no proxies for the candidates allowed, except those candidates who are not currently studying on campus. Proxies may not be a current candidate themselves.
- c. The Forum will be held in a central, public space and will be moderated by members of the EPC. The EPC will make an effort to include other interested community members in the forum process.

- d. The format of the forum will be determined by the EPC, ensuring that a space is provided for candidates and their prospective constituents to meet and converse.
- e. The EPC will publicize the forum thoroughly to ensure that student turnout is high, and schedule the debate at a time when there are no classes. The EPC is additionally responsible to ensure there are no official school-sponsored conflicts that may limit attendance (i.e. Varsity athletic competition, Choir concert, etc.).
- f. The Representative Committee Candidate's Forum will be held during the campaigning window for Representative Committee elections, and must take place at least three (3) days prior to the election period.

### **Section 7. First-Year Representatives Committee Elections.**

1. The MCSG President will convene the first meeting of the EPC by the first day of classes in the Fall semester in order to run the First-Year elections.
  - a. Prior to the first day of classes, the MCSG President will work with other members Legislative Body to promote filing for First-Year elections, beginning with the First-Year Orientation Process.
2. Filing
  - a. Filing for First-Year elections will begin no later than the first day of classes in the Fall Semester and remain open for at least fourteen (14) days.
3. Campaigning
  - a. Campaigning will last for at least seven (7) days.
  - b. All aforementioned rules regarding candidacy and campaigning still apply for First-Year elections.
4. Candidates' Forum
  - a. The EPC will host a Candidates' Forum similar to the Representative Committee Candidates' Forum held in the Spring Semester for First-Year elections.
5. Voter Validation and Balloting Process
  - a. The same processes that govern the other MCSG elections will apply to the First-Year elections.
6. Election Process Summary
  - a. The EPC will produce a summary of the entire election process, to be distributed to all candidates running for office, with special consideration for First-Year candidates, who are more unfamiliar with the process.
7. Additional Considerations
  - a. Any rules or guidelines previously mentioned in the Election Code apply to the First-Year Representative elections as well.



### **Section 8. Elections for Program Board and Financial Affairs Committee Chair.**

1. The EPC will conduct elections for the PB and FAC Chair positions no later than one (1) month into the spring semester.
2. The EPC shall follow all guidelines pertaining to the Executive Board election during the elections for the PB and FAC chairs.
3. Winners will serve the remainder of the spring term as Chair-elect of their respective Committee before assuming the role of Chair.
  - a. While serving as Chair-elect, the winners shall have no official vote in MCSG proceedings, but may hold the floor and conduct business on behalf of their respective committee.
  - b. Chairs-elect shall lead the selection and application process for future at large FAC/PB members.
  - c. Chairs-elect must attend their respective committee meetings and any additional meetings.
  - d. Chairs-elect shall have the option to attend Legislative Body meetings.

### **Section 9. Student Body Referendums.**

1. The process of calling a referendum must be in pursuant to the MCSG Constitution
2. All campaigning rules for elections are in place for referendums. In this case, the candidate is the party proposing the referendum.

### **Section 10. Interpretations and Violations.**

1. Appeals
  - a. Interpretations concerning this document, and choices made by the EPC, may be appealed to the Student Judicial Council. The Dean of Students or their designee will also ensure that the EPC conducts elections in a consistent and fair manner, and will work to resolve any potential conflicts of interest.
  - b. The EPC shall not finalize and distribute election results until all pending EPC appeals have been processed by the Judicial Council.
2. Violations

- a. Any violations of this document shall be reported to the MCSG email as a formal complaint. The EPC shall decide whether the formal complaint is a violation of the Election Code and appropriate sanction based on the number and severity of the complaint. Any violation of the Election Code by a candidate shall be explained in a student announce email from EPC and posted on the MCSG website and must result in one or more of the following:
  - i. Suspension of specific campaigning privileges.
  - ii. Removal from the election ballot.
  - iii. Disqualification of eligibility to serve.
- b. Any decision in response to a reported violation must receive a unanimous vote by the EPC. All members must be present in person to reach a quorum.
- c. If the EPC cannot reach consensus, the formal complaint is sent to the MCSG Judicial Council for a final majority decision.