



# Candidate Checklist

March 23, 2023

## Get to Know StuGov

- Attend an info session
- Visit our [sg.rpi.edu](http://sg.rpi.edu)
- Attend a StuGov meeting

## Put your Name in the Hat!

- Decide on a position
- Submit candidacy form
- Prep a support team

## Build your Platform

- Talk to your constituents
- Identify key passions
- Find action items for passions

## Advertise your Campaign

- Create a website
- Draft posters on Canva
- Make social media accounts

## Develop Support

- Gather nominations
- Share your platform!
- Incorporate feedback

## Land the Plane

- Submit all forms
- Participate in GM Week
- Vote!

## Kicking Off Your Campaign

**Go to an info session from 5pm to 6pm any weekday in the Student Government Suite.**

It is the crucial first step before you can start campaigning. You'll get all the resources you need there, and it's required before you begin running. If you can't make that time, email [wadlee@rpi.edu](mailto:wadlee@rpi.edu), and we will figure out something for you. Every campaign is individual, but these are just some pieces of advice

### Creating a Platform

The word "platform" sounds intense. A platform is just a list of **what you care about and what you want to achieve**. While certain positions, like the GM and PU, will have very long platforms, most other positions should aim to have 1-3 items on their platform.

Every campaign is unique, but here is my formula for a platform:

#### **Platform = Passion + Investigation + Action**

1. **Identify a general passion of yours.** Pick something you care about, something you know you could talk about for ages. You can always go to the [poly.rpi.edu](http://poly.rpi.edu) and look for former candidate interviews for inspiration (search the Class of 2024 candidate profiles from March 2021).
2. **Investigate your passion.** Ask yourself, how can I make life better through the lens of my passion? What is life like for the people I am serving and for the things I am passionate about? What things do people struggle with thro
3. **Brainstorm a few ideas to act on your passion around campus.** This can be anything. How can we be better as a Union, as an Institution?

Here's an example— one student was interested in improving athletic connection on campus. In particular, he decided that more athletes should have knowledge of their representatives and get to vote. He investigated the issue and noticed that most athletes don't have time to go out of their way due to their busy practice schedules. So, his platform includes putting a voting booth in ECAV.

Improving athletic connection (passion) + athletes struggle to work around practice schedules (investigate) + Plan a voting booth in ECAV (action) = I want to improve athletic connection on campus by planning a voting booth in ECAV to relieve the stress of athletic practice schedules (platform statement).

My advice: **be creative and be authentic**. I guarantee you that the average voter cares more about depth than breadth. Fight for something you believe in. The most common

complaint I hear is that there were no concrete action points. Talking to your friends and neighbors is a good way to get inspiration.

## Gathering Nominations

Nominations get you on the ballot for GM week. Only the people you'll be serving will be able to sign your nomination sheet– so if you're running for 2025 senator, someone from 2023 can't sign your sheet. Some of the numbers may seem excessive, but the nomination process serves a few purposes:

1. **It gets you talking to your constituency.** Talking and listening to the people you serve is a core tenant of any position. It's much easier to strike up a conversation after having someone sign your form than just randomly talking to someone.
2. **It shows that you're willing to put in the work.** Being a student leader takes time and effort each week, and by gathering nominations, you're showing your constituencies that you are willing to devote time and effort to them.

How do you gather nominations?

1. **Release your inhibitions, and don't be afraid to look stupid.** As someone with anxiety, I get why it's a bit nerve wracking to solicit random people for a signature. It may take some prep work, maybe a therapy session, but it will be worth it. This is a great opportunity to apply your coping skills and be brave.
2. **Start with your friends.** All of your friends will sign your nomination form, it'll give you a good start and a good confidence boost. You can even ask one of your friends to be a campaign manager and they can then help you gather nominations!
3. **Look for groups of people who will be in your constituency.** If there are any clubs or organizations around that you know have large populations of your constituency, ask to attend a meeting and hand out your form there.
4. **When all else fails, ask around crowded spaces.** The Union, the dining halls, the DCC Great Hall... there are tons of people around campus. Just add in a line asking if they are in your class year.

There are a few key points you should mention when you are asking someone for nominations. Firstly, be sure to introduce yourself and your position. Be sure to define what a nomination is compared to a vote, and tell them how to vote in GM Week. Finally, while they are signing your form, give them a quick review of your platform.

Here's my example script:

- > "Hi, I'm Cait Bennett and I'm running for Grand Marshal. Do you have a minute to sign my nomination form? It's not a vote, it will just help me get on the ballot.
- > [If they say no] "Ok, have a great day!"

- > [If they say yes and start signing] I have been serving as Grand Marshal for the last year, and I am hoping to strengthen the student-administrative relationship while amplifying student voices. Do you have any questions for me?
- > [Answer questions and converse]
- > Thanks so much for signing my form. You'll be able to vote on March 23rd from 8 to 5 in the Union and other spots around campus. We have mugs, and they're glass!

At the end of the day, I've collected over 1500 nominations in the last three years. Only about ten people have denied. And I guarantee you that very few people remember the 2 minutes of their time I took up. But, some of them definitely remember the conversations that ensued about our campus.

## Advertising Your Campaign

### Word of Mouth

The good news is that by gathering nominations, you are de facto advertising your campaign. Many people will vote for the representatives that they know and who have talked to them before. It means that you'll keep talking to them and keep being visible going forward. Another way to advertise by word of mouth is to go talk to clubs and organizations, sharing your platform and listening to their concerns. You should listen more than you talk, especially for special interest groups that you are not a part of.

### Postering and Banners

Posters are a very popular way of building name and face recognition. If people know who you are, they are more likely to reach out to you and more likely to recognize your name on a ballot. The crucial elements of a poster are name, position, and face. You want people to know that you're a human being and not just an abstraction.

You should have an overall theme, but simple is sometimes better. Keeping consistency is maintains association across your platform. Most people will have a generic poster and then posters with some platform points. Remember, people aren't going to spend a lot of time looking at your poster, because they're usually just walking past it, so don't put too many words on it and use big font. Here are some example posters I have used below.



## Social Media and Websites

Websites are really only necessary for larger positions like GM and PU. For those positions, there should be information about you, about your accomplishments, and about your goals. It should be simple– you don't have unlimited time and it would be a lot to build an entire new website from scratch. I recommend using Google Sites or WordPress. You can use GoDaddy to get a domain name, or leave it as is. I have [caitforgm.com](http://caitforgm.com) still up for the 2023 GM Week election if you want to use it as a reference.

Social media is something that most candidates will want to consider. You can either advertise on your current page, or you can advertise on a separate new page. Either way, you want to make sure you **build a following**. You could make the best posts, and it won't matter if no one sees them. The benefit of using your current page is that you already have a following. But the downside is it's more personal. To build a following, you can follow students in your constituency. You can find people by looking at other RPI pages. You can also have your friends and campaign managers repost your campaign posts.

Here are a few examples of campaign pages and posts. Crucially, **people want to see people**. Words don't mean nearly as much as your humanity does, as cliché as it sounds.

