

Election Rules for Class of 2014 Elections

IMPORTANT DATES – SEPTEMBER 2010

- 9/1/2010 -- Candidate Information Session – Time and Location TBD.
-- Absentee Ballots Available.
- 9/2/2010 -- Campaigning Begins at 7 AM.
-- Candidacy and Nomination Forms are Available at 7 AM.
- 9/7/2010 -- Candidate Information Session – Time and Location TBD
- 9/9/2010 -- Candidate Information Session – Time and Location TBD
- 9/13/2010 -- Candidate Information Session – Time and Location TBD
- 9/17/2010 -- Nomination Petitions due by 9 PM.
- 9/18/2010 -- Primary Ballots posted in the Student Government Suite.*
- 9/19/2010 -- Deadline to check Primary Ballots for errors at 7 PM.*
-- All campaign material within 100 feet or in any line-of-sight of a poll site must be removed by 10 PM.*
- 9/20/2010 -- Primary Elections. Poll sites in Commons, the Union West Lobby, and the DCC will be open 8:30 AM to 7 PM.*
- 9/21/2010 -- Primary Election Results announced at approximately 4 PM in Union Rathskellar.*
-- Final Ballots Posted in the Student Government Suite by 7 PM.
- 9/22/2010 -- Deadline to check Final Ballot for errors at 7 PM.
-- All campaign material within 100 feet or in any line-of-sight of a poll site must be removed by 10 PM.
- 9/23/2010 -- Final Elections. Polling places in Commons, the Rensselaer Union West Lobby, and the DCC will be open 8:30 AM to 7 PM.
- 9/24/2010 -- Final Election Results are announced at approximately 4 PM in the Union Rathskellar.
- 9/27/2010 -- Candidate Expense Forms are due.

* Calendar items with an asterisk will only be applicable in the event that a primary election is necessary.

Section I – Eligibility and Multiple Offices

1. Only members of the Rensselaer Union are eligible to run in elections. Members are defined in the Rensselaer Union Constitution (Article II) as those students presently enrolled at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute who have paid the Union Activity Fee. Students on co-op are also eligible to vote and hold office.
2. Candidates may not run for any office which is not open to their class year. In Class of 2014 Elections, elections are only held for the positions exclusive to the Class of 2014. Candidates may only be a member of one class year, and may not change their class year affiliation (except due to Registrar Error) for the purposes of elections. Undergraduate class years are determined by one of two options (at the choice of the candidate):
 - a. Number of credits completed as reported by the registrar – in general: 0-30 credits for the Class of 2014, 31-60 credits for the Class of 2013, 61-90 credits for the Class of 2012, 91 credits and over for the Class of 2011.
 - b. Expected graduation year as reported by the Registrar (this includes co-terminal students).
3. Candidates may not run for more than one position on the same Class Council (which includes Class President, Class Vice-President, and Class Representative and does not include Independent Council Representative or Senator). For example, a student may run for and win both the Class President and Senator positions for their class. A candidate may be nominated to multiple positions on the same Council, but must decide which nomination to accept by the ballot check deadline listed in the calendar.
4. Only Independent students may run for or hold a position on the Independent Council. An Independent student is a member of the Union who is not a brother, sister, associate member, nor bid acceptor of any fraternity or sorority which is a member or associate member of either the Interfraternity or Panhellenic Council at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, as determined by the Dean of Students.
5. All candidates must attend at least one Candidate Information Session to be eligible to be placed on the ballot.

Comment [s1]: Added example here.

Comment [s2]: The Political Parties section was removed, and two clauses were added – one in the finance section and one in the campaigning section to account for the policy change.

Section II – Nomination Procedures

1. A candidate must be nominated by the requisite number of students in order to appear on the ballot, as follows:
 - a. For the offices of Undergraduate Class Officers or Senator: **125 nominations are needed.**
 - b. For the Class Representative offices: **50 nominations are needed.**
 - c. For the office of Independent Council Representative: **25 nominations are needed.**
2. Only designated Class of 2014 Elections Nomination Forms may be used to solicit nominations.
3. The candidate's name and desired office must be written on the sheet prior to any nomination. Each form only applies to one office.

4. Only the candidate may solicit signatures, and this must be done in person unless a Candidate Proxy has been approved by the Rules and Elections Committee.
5. No candidate shall solicit nominations prior to filing a Class of 2014 Elections Candidacy Form with the Rules and Elections Committee or the Rensselaer Union Administration Office.
6. Nomination Forms may only be signed by students who are eligible to vote for the position listed on the form.
7. Each nomination must contain the nominator's Rensselaer Identification Number, his or her signature, and his or her initials. All information must be legible or the nomination will be considered invalid. Typically, about 10-15% of nominations are invalid (though this is a rough estimate and should not be used as an indication of future results).
8. Candidates shall have the right to see the nomination form and which signatures were not accepted along with the reason for such denial.
9. Any person may nominate him- or herself, and any person may nominate more than one person for the same office.
10. Nomination Forms are due by September 17, 2010 to the Union Administration Office or a member of the Rules and Elections Committee.
11. Candidates are urged to submit forms periodically throughout the process in order to facilitate the process of timely record of nominations. After processing the forms, the candidate will be notified of the total number of valid signatures they have completed via the Rules and Elections Committee website.

Section III – Finances

1. A record of all expenditures (including items received for free) must be kept along with receipts for all items. Receipts are not needed for copies under \$1.
2. The following limits are established for maximum expenditures by candidates.
 - a. For the officer of Senator and Undergraduate Class Officer \$100.
 - b. For the offices of Class Representative and Independent Council Representative: \$50.
3. Candidates seeking more than one office may not spend more than the maximum amount for the office which has the lower spending limit. (Example: A student running for Senator and Class Representative may spend \$50, not the combined total of \$150)
4. Each candidate must submit a record of their expenses by Monday, September 27, 2010, with a record of their expenses during the campaign. Failure to properly disclose expenses or failure to abide by spending limits may result in a ruling which would make the candidate ineligible to take office. Any questions should be directed to the Rules and Elections Committee prior to the date of the election.
5. Any service to a candidate must be made available to all candidates for the same office under the same terms.
6. Any campaign material which is used for the purpose of campaigning (as defined in Section IV) for more than one candidate must be accounted for in the full amount of the cost of the campaign material on both candidates' expense reports.
7. Posters on paper shall be considered to have an expense of the greater of:

Comment [NYSS3]: This is new language. Since we don't require a pre-election filing, I think it's good for us to be abundantly clear about this.

- a. 20 cents per square foot (13 cents per 8.5"x11" sheet) OR
- b. The cost to purchase the paper as indicated by a receipt from the vendor added to the cost to print on such paper (as determined by an outside vendor or the standard cost to print using an RPI printer).

Comment [s4]: BRAND NEW.

Section IV – Campaigning

1. Campaigning is defined as the promotion of any candidate or the promotion of a slogan, symbol, likeness, or idea which promotes a candidate. Active Campaigning shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Soliciting nominations
 - b. Dissemination of campaign material
 - c. Public displays or actions intended to draw attention to a candidate
 - d. Parties or assemblies at which attention is drawn to a candidate.
2. Passive campaigning shall include but not be limited to:
 - a. Wearing campaign material (shirts, buttons, hats, etc.)
 - b. Casual conversation
3. No candidate may begin campaigning prior to Tuesday, September 2, 2010 at 7 AM.
4. No campaigning of any kind may occur prior to acceptance of a 2010 First-Year Elections Candidacy Form for that candidate by a member of the Rules and Elections Committee or the Rensselaer Union Administration Office.
5. Candidates may only be assisted in campaigning by activity-fee paying RPI students.
 - a. These students must complete a Candidate Assistance Form that is signed by both the candidate and the assistant.
 - b. A candidate assistant shall not participate in campaign activities prior to acceptance of this form by a member of the Rules and Elections Committee or the Union Administration Office.
 - c. Individuals may assist in more than one campaign, but they must file a separate candidate assistance form for each office.
6. Candidates may campaign together (i.e. put two or more names on a single sign), but they must follow the procedure outlined in the Finances section of this handbook for reporting such materials in their expense report.
7. Any student may engage in passive campaigning, without regard to their status as a candidate assistant.
8. Campaign material submitted to Concerto may only be added to the Rules and Elections Feed.
9. Candidates shall observe all Institute Rules and Regulations during campaigning.
10. Campaigning may not disturb the academic process nor cause any physical damage to anything on campus. Use of any classroom equipment may be considered disturbing the academic process.
11. Candidates may not leave unsolicited voicemail for the purpose of campaigning.
12. Candidates may not place campaign material in campus mailboxes.

Comment [s5]: This is new and reflects the fact that we've done away with the prohibition on parties.

13. A list for candidate assistants may be created, but must include instructions to unsubscribe from such list.

Comment [s6]: The prohibition on email here has been removed.

14. Candidates may use Facebook® and/or Twitter® for the following purposes only:

- a. To create a feed, page, or group, via updates, to which individuals must positively enroll to follow. The personal profile of a candidate may be used to create such updates.
- b. To invite those students within the RPI network to join such group or subscribe to such page.

Comment [s7]: BRAND NEW

15. Candidates are responsible for any message or information which is posted on any electronic forum which is administered by the candidate, or with which the candidate is affiliated for the purpose of his/her campaign.

Comment [NYSS8]: New language.

16. No candidate shall use Rensselaer Union resources for the purpose of campaigning.

Comment [s9]: Prohibition on under-door advertising has been removed.

17. Only passive campaigning is permitted in Dining Halls.

18. No campaigning of any kind shall be permitted on or in polling locations during the times specified in the calendar on page 1 of this document.

19. No campaigning of any kind is allowed within a 100-foot distance of any polling location on any election days.

20. Candidates may reserve rooms in the Union for the purposes of his or her campaign, or for the planning of his or her campaign, subject to the following restrictions:

- a. The candidate will have the same rights as any organization not affiliated with the Rensselaer Union .
- b. Any fines imposed by the Rensselaer Union shall be subtracted from the candidate's spending limit.
- c. Listings on room reservations shall be put under an individual's name and shall read "Private Meeting – [Person's name]."

21. In limited circumstances (including temporary or permanent disability or a student's non-local co-op status), the candidate may select a Candidate Proxy, subject to the approval of the Rules and Elections Committee, who will determine the list of activities in which the Candidate Proxy may participate.

- a. The Candidate Proxy must be a member of the Rensselaer Union.
- b. The Candidate Proxy may not be running for any office.
- c. The Candidate Proxy must state that they are acting as a proxy for a candidate.
- d. If the Candidate Proxy commits a violation, the candidate is also liable and may be assigned a penalty.
- e. A candidate may use only one proxy.
- f. The candidate and Candidate Proxy may not participate in the same campaign activity simultaneously.

22. All campaign material must clearly include the candidate's name and contact information (e-mail or local telephone number). Contact information must be a minimum font size of 12 point Times New Roman or equivalent.

23. The Rules and Elections Committee shall be the primary authority for interpreting and enforcing the rules for all campaigns, but it may designate subsidiary elections inspectors who are members of the Rensselaer Union for the purposes of inspecting the campus for rules violations.

Section V - Primary and Final Elections

1. A primary election may be held at the discretion of the Rules and Elections Committee, if there are more candidates than twice the number of available positions.
2. Prior to an election, a preliminary copy of the ballots will be posted. It is the responsibility of each candidate to ensure that his or her name appears and is accurate by the dates specified on page six of this document. The Rules and Elections Committee will not be responsible for unreported errors.
3. The order in which candidate names appear on the ballot is determined randomly for each ballot.
4. The Rules and Elections Committee may delay election results for any reason for up to 48 hours following the close of polls.
5. The Rules and Elections Committee will report the number of ballots received, the number of votes received for each registered candidate, and the number of votes received for all valid write-in candidates receiving over 5% of the votes. At the Committee's discretion, additional write-in information may be released.
6. Additional demographic information regarding the entire voting population and those who voted may also be released at the discretion of the Rules and Elections Committee.

Section VI - Write-In Candidates

1. Write-in votes are permitted, except in Runoff Elections. In the Primary Election, a write-in candidate who garners enough votes will appear on the final ballot, if eligible.
2. Write-in candidates must meet the qualifications for the particular office and are subject to the same rules as registered candidates (including those referring to campaign expenditures).
3. To be counted as a valid write-in vote, the vote must contain a legible first and last name recognized by the Registrar.
4. Write-in candidates do not have to file any forms with the Rules and Elections Committee, except for an expense form if requested by the committee. Write-in candidates must abide by the Extended Sign Policy.

Section VII - Supervision, Counting, and Irregularities

1. Voting will be supervised by members of the Rules and Elections Committee or persons approved by the Committee Chair.

2. At least two members of the Rules and Elections Committee will be present where votes are being counted. No candidate will be involved in counting the ballots for his or her race.
3. The Rules and Elections Committee has the authority to suspend any and all election results if any election is questioned. If an election is suspended, the ballots will be impounded, pending further action by the Committee and/or instructions from a superior body (i.e. the Student Senate or Judicial Board, as appropriate).
4. In the event of a tie, a runoff election will be held on a date to be determined by the Rules and Elections Committee.
5. All requests for recounts, challenges, and other inquiries must be made to Rules and Elections Committee pursuant to Section XIV within 24 hours following the posting of election results. The Committee will prepare a written report on all contested elections, copies of which will be provided to the Judicial Board, the Student Senate, and any member of the Union pursuant to the Student Senate Bylaws. Only constituents of a position may contest the election of that position.
6. Election ballots will not be disposed of until ten business days after the election results are posted, or, in the event of an election whose validity is contested, for one year following the date of the election.
7. Primary Election results will be announced in the Union Rathskellar at approximately 4 PM on Tuesday, September 21, 2010, and Final Election results will be announced at approximately 4 PM on Friday, September 24, 2010. Results will not be released prior to either time.
8. In the event that a decision of invalidity of a candidate creates a vacancy, the candidate receiving the next highest number of votes may be proclaimed the winner. In extraordinary situations, the Rules and Elections Committee shall have the authority to use any reasonable course of action to determine the outcome.
9. No person may access any Rules and Elections Committee facility, including the Rules and Elections Committee Office, without prior authorization.

Comment [NYSS10]: Slightly different from the past – I don't set out a date for runoffs.

Comment [NYSS11]: New language.

Section VIII - Honor Code

Every candidate running for a student government office has an obligation to observe and uphold basic principles of decency, honesty, and fair play so that after a vigorously contested but fairly conducted campaign, students may exercise their constitutional right to a free and informed choice that expresses their will. Student government office is a campus-wide trust. Every candidate for a student government office is expected by the voters to adhere to the following basic principles. Violation of any of these principles may result in any of the sanctions listed in this handbook, at the discretion of the Rules and Elections Committee. Such sanctions

Comment [NYSS12]: Part of the attempt to outline some specifics when it comes to violations.

will be based on the severity of the violation in addition to whether multiple offenses have occurred.

- I will conduct my campaign openly and fairly. I will discuss the issues and participate in fair debate with my opponents, respecting his or her views and qualifications. I will present my record and policies with sincerity and frankness, criticizing without fear and without malice the record and policies of my opponents that merit such criticism.
- I will neither engage in nor be involved with unfair or misleading attacks upon the character of an opponent, nor will I engage in invasions of personal privacy unrelated to fitness for office.
- I will not participate in or condone any appeal to prejudice.
- I will neither use nor be involved in the use of any campaign material or advertisement that misrepresents, distorts, or otherwise falsifies the facts regarding an opponent.
- I will clearly identify by name and address the source of all advertisements and campaign literature published or distributed as part of my campaign.
- I will uphold the right of every qualified student to full and equal participation in the electoral process.
- I will publicly repudiate support deriving from any individual or group whose activities would violate this Honor Code.
- I will not abuse the process of the Rensselaer Union Student Government Elections.

Section IX - Extended Sign Policy

This sign policy is in effect starting at 7 AM on Thursday, September 2, 2010, and ending at 7 PM on Thursday, September 23, 2010.

1. All campaign material must be clearly identified with the Candidate and/or Party's name and contact information (e-mail, local address, or local telephone number). Contact information must be in a minimum font size of 12pt in Times New Roman or equivalent.
2. No posters may be placed on the ground or on any sidewalks.
3. No space may be reserved in any on-campus location for any campaigning use (including poster locations as well as floor space for campaigning).
4. No duct tape may be used anywhere.
5. No pedestrian pathways shall be blocked. A 7 foot height clearance is required.
6. Only masking tape may be used on painted surfaces or glass.
7. No posters may be placed on the footbridge handrails.
8. No chalk may be used anywhere.
9. No posters may obstruct Institute signs.

Comment [s13]: Clarified

10. No campaigning or campaign material is allowed in or on polling site buildings after 10 pm on the days before voting and on the day of elections.
11. Respect other candidates and their campaigns. Do not tamper with or poster over other campaigns.
12. On campus bulletin boards, campaign material from any candidate or party may not cover a combined area larger than 8.5" x 11" on each board, including both sides. If a board has two sides, candidates and/or parties may cover 8.5" x 11" of one side only.
13. Campaign material may be placed on any vehicle only with the permission of the owner (no flyers under windshield wipers, etc.).
14. Animals may not be used as a method of campaigning.
15. Banners may be attached to trees with string only.
16. No campaign material is permitted in or on any Rensselaer construction site. This includes the Low Center for Industrial Innovation as well as the Darrin Communications Center.
17. No campaign material may be attached to the handrails of the 15th street footbridge or in the sign holders on said footbridge.
18. No campaign material may be attached to glass surfaces in or on any public door.
19. Banners (pieces of campaign material larger than 24" x 36") on the exterior of a residence hall must be approved by the Office of Residence Life, and may only be hung from a window with the permission of that room's residents.
20. No campaign material may be posted in public areas of residence halls other than on candidates' doors or on other doors with the permissions of the residents of that room.
21. Campaign materials (posters) inside the Union must be approved by the Union Administration Office (limit of 10 posters per person or 5 which promote a party with no more than two posters larger than 11" x 17").
22. No campaign material may be located within the line of sight of a polling location on any election days.
23. Sign policy violations as applicable to this section shall be subject to the following provisions:
 - a. First violation of this rule shall be an official warning.
 - b. Subsequent violations of this rule may include up to one hour of community service per violation and/or a removal of the right to poster in the area surrounding the location of the infraction.

Comment [NYSS14]: Totally new – I think this is a modest experiment in min/max sanctions that will be a good thing to test the waters for a larger implementation in the spring.

Section X - Violations and Hearing Procedure

1. Any alleged violation of election rules must be brought to the attention of the Rules and Elections Committee Chair.
2. The Rules and Elections Committee Chair at his or her discretion may issue a preliminary decision, and this decision shall be ratified or reversed by the Rules and Elections Committee within 24 hours of the decision being issued.
3. The Rules and Elections Committee shall decide on all alleged violations within 24 hours of the committee being notified. In the case of a violation being issued, the violator will be notified of all offenses and sanctions in writing. The Rules and Elections Committee

will then proceed to remove all offending material in question. Any candidate may request a hearing if the candidate feels he or she is not in violation. A hearing shall be held not less than 12 hours after the violation was issued and not more than 48 hours after such a request. At the hearing, the following procedures will be followed:

- a. The alleged violator shall make his or her opening statement.
 - b. Any witnesses brought forward by the alleged violator shall be called first, followed by any witnesses called by The Rules and Elections Committee. All witnesses shall be questioned first by the party calling them, and then by the opposing party.
 - c. Following the testimony of witnesses, The Rules and Elections Committee may question the alleged violator, and witnesses, and the parties may question each other.
 - d. Following the period of questioning, the alleged violator shall make his or her closing statement.
 - e. The hearing will then be closed for deliberations.
 - f. The Rules and Elections Committee shall issue its decision in writing immediately following deliberations.
 - g. If the appeal is successful, The Rules and Elections Committee will return all offending material in question back to the candidate.
4. The Rules and Elections Committee may defer any decision to the Judicial Board.
 5. Any candidate may appeal a Rules and Elections Committee hearing decision to the Judicial Board. All sanctions shall remain in place pending the outcome of the appeal.
 6. Any member of the Rules and Elections Committee who has a personal, financial, political, or institutional interest in any deliberation being made by the Committee shall recuse him- or herself from the discussion and decision-making. If such a conflict of interest can be proven by an appellant to the Judicial Board, the Judicial Board has the option to render the decision null and void.

Comment [NYSS15]: Brand-new Ethics language.

Section XI - Sanctions

1. The Rules and Elections Committee may issue and enforce any one or a combination of these penalties for a violation of election rules:
 - a. Warning against future offenses.
 - b. Removal of some or all campaigning rights including postering location and time and in-person events.
 - c. Removal of a candidate's name from the ballot.
 - d. Upon election to office, ruling a candidate ineligible to serve for any portion of their elected term.
 - e. Reduction of a candidate's maximum expenditure limit.
 - f. Require additional nomination signatures.
 - g. Monetary fines charged to a student account for sign violations (not to exceed \$.25 per 8.5" x 11" sign or \$.50 per square foot).
 - h. Referral to Judicial Board.

- i. Referral to Dean of Students' Office for disciplinary action.
- j. Community Service either on campus or off campus, to be completed by a designated date not less than two weeks following the date of the last election.
- k. Any other action The Rules and Elections Committee deems appropriate within the scope of elections and in accordance with all Institute, local, state, and federal regulations.

Comment [NYSS16]: I don't designate a date – this allows the rules to be more flexible.

Section XII - Notification

1. Written notification can be provided to The Rules and Elections Committee by:
 - a. Sending an e-mail to RNE@union.rpi.edu. Please include a phone number in all correspondence so that the authenticity of an e-mail may be verified.
 - b. Submitting a signed letter addressed to "The Rules and Elections Committee" to the Union Administration Office during business hours.
 - c. Submitting a signed letter in person to the Chair of The Rules and Elections Committee.
 - d. Mailing a signed letter to:
The Rules and Elections Committee
c/o The Rensselaer Union
110 8th Street
Troy NY, 12180
2. Written notification to candidates can be provided by:
 - a. Sending an e-mail to the e-mail address listed on the Candidacy Form.
 - b. Personal delivery of the letter from a member or representative of The Rules and Elections Committee.
 - c. Delivery of letter to a candidate's U.S. Postal Mailbox or Campus Mailbox.
 - d. Mailing a letter via certified mail.
3. Candidates are responsible for reading all material posted with regard to this election in The Rules and Elections Committee distributed material, The Rules and Elections Committee website, official Rules and Elections Committee emails, and the Rules and Elections Committee bulletin board.

Section XIII - Authority of the Rules and Elections Committee

1. The Student Senate is granted the authority to oversee elections by the Rensselaer Union Constitution (Article IX). The Student Senate, by approving this handbook grants this power to The Rules and Elections Committee. The Committee shall have the discretion to interpret and enforce these rules. Any decision made by the Committee may be appealed to the Judicial Board.

2. This handbook may be amended by the Rules and Elections Committee, subject to the approval of the Student Senate. Minor revisions, including but not limited to clarification, typographical mistakes, deadline extensions, and logistical issues that do not affect the overall fairness of elections may be altered by a unanimous vote of the Committee.

DRAFT

