

# STUDENT GOVERNANCE COUNCIL ELECTIONS ACT

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Ithaca College  
Revised Spring 2021

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## DEFINITIONS

<b>Term or Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Demerit	A point awarded against someone for violation of rules outlined in this document.
Infraction	A violation or infringement of a rule or agreement based on the rules outlined in this document.
Student Senate	The representative body of Student Governance Council, composed primarily of senators.
Engage Page	A Engage Page is a student organizations page for clubs to post important information about the club along with events.
Election Materials	This includes, but is not limited to, a Candidate Election packet and endorsements.
Disinformation	False information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth

# ARTICLE I: ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

## Section 1: Purpose and Function

1. To establish and oversee election rules and procedures in order to ensure a fair and democratic election for the SGC Executive Board and SGC Senators.

## Section 2: Committee Membership

1. The Committee shall be composed of a maximum of seven voting members of the Ithaca College student body, including the two Co-Chairs of the committee. The Senate Chair and President of the Student Body shall Co-Chair the Committee. If the President of the Student Body and/or Senate Chair are unable to serve as Co-Chair, their designee may co-chair the Committee, subject to two-thirds approval of the Student Senate.
  - a. No current or prospective candidate may serve on the Committee.
  - b. Should a member of the Elections Committee withdraw from membership in the committee, they will regain their eligibility for candidacy.
2. Committee members shall be appointed by the Chairs of the Committee, and approved by a 2/3 vote of the Student Senate.
3. The Committee shall be closed to new membership following the last Senate meeting prior to the due date of the election packets and signature forms.
4. If the membership of the committee shall become less than five voting members, replacements will be made by the Co-Chairs of the Committee as soon as possible and shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Student Senate.
5. Should a member of the Elections Committee find they cannot fulfill their duties as a Committee member, a resignation letter must be submitted to the Elections Committee Co-Chairs.

## Section 3: Duties of the Committee

1. The Committee shall be responsible for the execution and planning, and success of elections for the SGC Executive Board and SGC Senate.
  - a. These activities include, but are not limited to, the collection and distribution of election packets, managing candidates, communications, event planning, and day of Election Day activities.
  - b. The Committee shall convene at least four weeks before Elections Packets are due.
2. Official committee decisions require a two-thirds vote by recognized voting members.
3. Elections Committee meeting minutes shall be recorded by one of the Elections Committee Co-Chairs, or their designee.

- a. Elections Committee meeting minutes must be kept on file electronically on the SGC IC Engage page.

#### **Section 4: Special Authority**

1. The Elections Committee shall have the power to sanction and/or disqualify any candidate or party by a two-thirds vote for violation of the SGC Elections Act, SGC Constitution, [Ithaca College Student Handbook](#), [Ithaca College Student Code of Conduct](#), and [Student Organization Handbook](#).

## **ARTICLE II: STUDENT GOVERNANCE COUNCIL SENATORS**

#### **Section 1: Student Senate Positions**

1. Senate positions elected in the Spring election are as follows:
  - a. Eight Class Senators
  - b. Five Academic Senators
  - c. One Transfer Senator
  - d. One International Senator
  - e. One Varsity Athlete Senator
  - f. One Club Athlete Senator
  - g. One Off-Campus Senator
  - h. Five Senators at Large
  - i. One Student of Color Coalition Senator
  - j. One Graduate Senator
2. Further details on positions can be found in Article IV Section 3 of the SGC Constitution.

#### **Section 2: Candidacy Qualifications**

1. Candidates for the Student Government Council Student Senate shall
  - a. Be in good judicial standing, according to the standards of the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.
  - b. Be a member of the constituency they intend to represent, as deemed by the Office of the Registrar.
  - c. Only run for one position.
2. Further details on eligibility for candidates can be found in Article IV Section 3 of the SGC Constitution.

### **Section 3: Steps to Candidacy**

1. All Election materials must be completed and returned by the specified date and time to the Co-Chairs of the Committee.
2. Students shall obtain three endorsements from members of the constituency in which their intended position represents. These endorsements may be in video, text, or written format. All three endorsements shall be sent to the Co-Chairs of the Elections Committee.
3. Upon submission and confirmation of Election materials, students are now considered candidates and shall abide by the rules, expectations, and guidelines outlined in this document.

### **Section 4: Term of Office**

1. Senators elected in the spring shall serve from the last Senate Meeting of the current academic year to the last Senate Meeting of the following academic year.
  - a. Any positions filled as a result of a vacancy shall serve from the day of their confirmation to the final Senate meeting of that academic year.

## **ARTICLE III: STUDENT GOVERNANCE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### **Section 1: SGC Executive Board Qualifications**

1. Candidates for SGC Executive Board shall:
  - a. Be in good judicial standing, according to the standards of the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.
  - b. Candidates must have completed at least one semester at Ithaca College at the time the term of office begins.
  - c. Obtain full parties to run, comprised of one nominee for each of the following positions (as per the Constitution of the Ithaca College SGC):
    - i. President of the Student Body
    - ii. Vice President of Academic Affairs
    - iii. Vice President of Business and Finance
    - iv. Vice President of Campus Affairs
    - v. Vice President of Communications

### **Section 2: Steps to Candidacy**

1. All Election materials must be completed and returned by the specified date and time to the Elections Committee Co-Chairs.
2. Qualifications of all candidates will be verified within five business days from the time nomination forms are due. If for any reason a candidate is disqualified from

running in the election, the party must have an approved replacement by the Platform Presentation event.

- a. If the party does not replace the candidate by the Platform Presentation Event, the party can be declared ineligible to run by the Elections Committee.
3. Students shall obtain three endorsements from Ithaca College students at large. These endorsements may be in video, text, or written format. All three endorsements shall be sent to the Chairs of the Elections Committee.
4. Party Alterations
  - a. Changes to party membership shall be submitted and approved by Platform Presentation Night.
  - b. Changes to party name shall be submitted and approved by Election Day and may not change after.

### **Section 3: Term of Office**

1. All SGC Executive Board members shall serve their constituencies from the day after graduation until the next graduation day. In the event of a fall election, elected officials shall serve from the day after elections until the day of graduation.

## **ARTICLE IV: CAMPAIGN PROCEDURES FOR SGC CANDIDATES**

### **Section 1: General Conduct and Information**

1. All candidates shall be courteous to their opponents.
2. All candidates shall exhibit honest and fair behavior.
3. Votes should be sought in an ethical manner.
4. Vandalism
  - a. There is to be no vandalism of opponents' property. Any vandalism, as defined by the [Ithaca College Student Handbook](#), by associates or candidates will result in demerits or possible expulsion from the election.
  - b. Any act that violates the Student Organization Guidebook, [Ithaca College Solicitation and Advertising Policy](#), located in the Ithaca College Student Handbook, and the Elections Act.
5. Campaigning for each party begins on the date specified by the Elections Committee. Upon submission of the elections packet, said party is bound to all rules and regulations set forth in all election materials.

## Section 2: Sanctions

### 1. Infractions

- a. **Minor Infractions.** Any of the below violations will result in one to two demerits, pending committee assessment.
  - i. **Identification.** All printed materials must follow the rules stipulated in the SGC Allocations Handbook.
  - ii. **Prohibited Posting Areas.** All campaigning materials must follow the policies in the [Advertising and Solicitation Guidelines](#).
  - iii. **Tampering with Campaign Material.** No candidate may move or obscure the campaign material of another candidate or party.
    1. A student removing campaign material from their private property is not in violation of this rule.
  - iv. **Not Attending a Mandatory Candidates' Meeting.** Candidates who fail to attend a mandatory candidates' meeting shall be in violation of this rule. If the Elections Committee Co-Chairs are notified at least 24 hours in advance, exceptions will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
    1. Two demerits per person shall be assessed for missing mandatory events unless previously excused.
  - v. **Campaigning Prior to Campaigning Period.** No candidates or parties may begin campaigning of any kind (including posters, social media, etc.) prior to the scheduled campaigning period.
- b. **Major Infraction.** Any violations will result in two to four demerits, pending committee assessment.
  - i. **Destruction of Campaign Material.** No candidate may destroy, deface, remove, or alter the campaign material of another candidate.
  - ii. **Influencing a Student While Voting.** No candidate may influence any student while the student is voting, or be in the presence of a student while they vote.
  - iii. **Inappropriate and Irresponsible Use of Email Privileges.** No party or candidate may knowingly send an unsolicited electronic communication or email to members of the Ithaca College Community. The following actions will also be prohibited under this rule: harvesting addresses from the Ithaca College online directory, running unsolicited mass-mail programs, sending campaign email to individuals that are not students, and sending campaign email to groups or email lists that the sender does not own.



- c. **Egregious Infractions.** Any violation will result in the assessment of at least 4 demerits, pending committee assessment.
- i. **Defacement Prohibited.** No campaign material may be affixed to any surface that would be permanently and seriously damaged by the campaign material or material used to affix or attach the campaign material. No campaign material may be affixed to paint or glass in any Ithaca College building, except where permitted by Ithaca College policy.
  - ii. **Preventing Voting.** No candidate may prevent any student from lawfully voting.
  - iii. **Bribery.** No candidate may promise or offer compensation, monetary or otherwise, in exchange for vote(s). Distribution of campaign material to voters shall not constitute a violation of this rule.
  - iv. **Fraudulent Voting.** No candidate may cast any ballot on behalf of another student. No candidate may log into the voting website using any username that is not his/her own.
  - v. **Slander and Libel.** No party or candidate shall spread disinformation about another party or candidate.

## 2. Expulsion

- a. Any party with five or more demerits will be expelled from the current election.
- b. No party shall be formed that consists of 50% or more of a former party who received 5 or more demerits.

## 3. Appeals

- a. Any party or candidate may appeal any infraction on the grounds that the Elections Committee violated their rights outlined in the [Ithaca College Student Handbook](#), Elections Act, Student Governance Council Constitution in writing or via email to the Co-Chairs of the Elections Committee within 48 hours after the notification of the decision.
- b. In the event of an appeal, the Senate will call an emergency session to be executed at the discretion of the SGC President in consultation with the Senate Chair.
  - i. A 2/3 vote by the Senate is necessary to overturn any Elections Committee decision.

## 4. Grievances

- a. A grievance is defined as a complaint based on circumstances regarded as just cause for protest.
- b. Grievances of the student body, including but not limited to candidates, may be submitted in writing or via email to the Elections Committee.

- c. The Elections Committee will review grievances within 24 hours of notification.
  - d. All filed grievances and concerns must contain full contact information including first and last name and email address. If a Student Governance Council Executive Board candidate is filing a grievance, the party name must be stated.
  - e. Any demerits assessed during the grievance process may be appealed by following the aforementioned appeals procedure in Article IV Section 2 Sub-Section 6 of the Student Governance Council Elections Act.
5. Investigations
- a. Investigations will be conducted when a question of conduct is brought in writing or email to the attention of the Elections Committee.
    - i. Investigations include, but are not limited to grievances, appeals, and violations of the solicitation policy, Elections Act, Ithaca College “Student Conduct Code,” SGC Constitution, or the Student Organization Guidebook.
  - b. Investigations will be conducted at the discretion of the Elections Committee Co-Chairs.
  - c. The candidate(s) in question will be notified that they (and/or their party) are under investigation.
    - i. The notification does not imply that disciplinary measures have been taken.
  - d. Any interview conducted during the process of the investigation will take place before the Elections Committee.
    - i. All interviews will be recorded.

### **Section 3: Events**

- 1. All candidates are required to attend all mandatory events set by the Elections Committee.
  - a. These events include, but are not limited to, an informational campaigning session and a platform presentation session.
  - b. Failure to attend will result in demerits assessed to the candidate’s party, as stated in Section 2 of this article.
  - c. Any absence must receive advanced approval by an Elections Committee Co-Chair at least 24 hours prior to the event.
    - i. Exceptions shall be made for academic classes, medical, or other personal emergencies at the discretion of the Elections Committee.
  - d. Those enrolled in a study abroad program are exempt from this requirement.

2. Each party is required to partake in the Platform Presentation Session, which shall be organized by the Elections Committee. Each party will present their platform(s) and be prepared for a question and answer period.

#### **Section 4: Expenditures for Student Governance Council Executive Board Parties**

1. This section only pertains to parties running for SGC Executive Board.
2. The maximum campaign expenditures must not exceed \$50 for each Student Governance Council Executive Board party.
  - a. The current SGC Executive Board will subsidize each party this amount from their budget.
  - b. The full amount of \$50 will be given to each party for campaigning, and any unused funds must be returned at the end of the campaign period.
3. Parties may not use any funds from any source other than the \$50 provided by the SGC Executive Board for their campaign.
  - a. Any parties that violate this rule shall be immediately disqualified from the election.
4. Each party must keep a record of their campaign expenditures (can be a document or spreadsheet).
  - a. All records and receipts of purchases must be submitted to the Elections Committee by the time of the Platform Presentation Event.
  - b. All records and receipts shall be sent to the Elections Committee.
5. Guidelines for Receiving Funding
  - a. Each ticket will be allocated \$50 for their campaign.
  - b. To access funding, contact the Vice President of Business and Finance at [sgcbusiness@ithaca.edu](mailto:sgcbusiness@ithaca.edu).
  - c. From there, you will have two options:
    - i. Send the Vice President of Business and Finance what you would like to purchase, from where, and how much it will cost. The Vice President of Business and Finance will then submit a spending request form on your behalf.
      1. Spending requests can take up to two weeks to process so make sure you plan ahead.
    - ii. Inform the Vice President of Business and Finance how much will be spent out of pocket and then you will get reimbursed through submitting a [reimbursement form](#) through the Office of Student Engagement.
      1. Do not buy anything until the Vice President of Business and Finance is contacted.
      2. Ithaca College is tax exempt so make sure you note this when purchasing something.

3. This method is not preferred, but it is an option in extreme scenarios.
- iii. For items sent to the print shop, the Vice President of Business and Finance can be notified via email and make the purchases on behalf of the ticket.

### **Section 5: Campaigning Materials**

1. Services and campaign materials offered to the candidates for Student Governance Council will be communicated to them by the Elections Committee.
  - a. Materials included in the Student Activities Supply Closet are available to be used during the election process, according to any and all guidelines and protocols from the Office of Student Engagement.

## **ARTICLE V: VOTING PROCESS FOR STUDENT GOVERNANCE COUNCIL ELECTION**

### **Section 1: Election Cycles**

1. The elections of the SGC Executive Board and Student Senate shall take place during the spring semester.
  - a. These elections shall be known as Spring Elections.
2. Any vacancies following Spring Elections will result in elections in the following fall semester.
  - a. These elections shall be known as Fall Elections.

### **Section 2: Tied Elections**

1. In the event of a tie in either SGC Executive Board or Senator Elections once all vote counting and appeals have been concluded, a run-off election shall take place between the tied parties that hold the most votes.
2. The Elections Committee shall determine the date and time of the run-off elections.
3. Parties shall be permitted to campaign before the run-off following the same campaigning regulations.
  - a. Any amendments to the campaigning regulations will be made by the Elections Committee in advance.
  - b. If the run-off election in question is for the parties running for SGC Executive Board then, each party in the run-off will be given a new budget of \$50. Parties may not use any leftover funds from the previous campaign period.

## **Section 2: Voting Rules**

1. All Ithaca College students (including, but not limited to, undergraduate, graduate, doctoral candidates, part-time students) are allowed to vote in SGC Elections where they are qualified to do so.
2. Voting for SGC Executive Board
  - a. All Ithaca College students may vote once for one party in the SGC Executive Board Elections.
3. Voting for SGC Student Senate
  - a. The following list outlines which students are qualified to vote for which positions in the Student Senate. These qualifications are dictated by a student's standing dictated by the Office of the Registrar.
    - i. Students may vote for up to two candidates running for their respective class year.
    - ii. Students may vote once for a candidate running for the senator position of that student's academic school(s).
    - iii. Transfer students may vote for one candidate running for Transfer Senator.
    - iv. International students may vote for one candidate running for International Student Senator.
    - v. Varsity student athletes may vote for one candidate running for Varsity Athlete Senator.
    - vi. Club sports students may vote for one candidate running for Club Athlete Senator.
    - vii. Off-Campus students may vote for one candidate running for Off-Campus Senator.
    - viii. All students may vote for up to five candidates running for Senators-At-Large.
    - ix. Students affiliated with the Students of Color Coalition (SOCC) or any of their member organizations may vote for one candidate running for the SOCC Senator.
    - x. Graduate students may vote for one candidate for Graduate Senator.

## **Section 3: Conducting Elections**

1. Elections shall be conducted on Engage.
  - a. Students can access Engage by visiting [apps.ithaca.edu](https://apps.ithaca.edu).
  - b. Students seeking accommodations for voting should contact the Elections Committee.

- i. The Elections Committee is responsible for advertising any and all accommodation statements necessary to provide all students equitable access to voting.
2. The following guidelines shall be enforced.
  - a. Voters will be required to input at least one unique identifier in order to vote. A student's Netpass username and password is an acceptable unique identifier.
3. Absentee ballots shall not be considered unless under extenuating circumstances, as determined by the Elections Committee.
  - a. Duplicate ballots as determined by the Elections Committee or Engage shall be disqualified votes.