

Elections Bylaws

Undergraduate Student Government (USG)

The Ohio State University

Submitted on July 30th, 2025 by Presiding Chief Justice Matthew Okocha

Article I: The Campaign Process

A. Candidate Eligibility

- a.** To be a candidate for Undergraduate Student Government elections, one must be a registered, degree-seeking undergraduate student at The Ohio State University and may not be on any form of probation or warning issued by the university from the time nominating petitions are approved and through the first day of the elected term.
- b.** No candidate can have a pending application for graduation prior to the first day of the elected term.
- c.** No candidate may be an individual convicted of sexual assault or sexual misconduct as determined by the Civil Rights Compliance Office, or an individual on academic or disciplinary probation.
- d.** Candidates and candidate teams for office who wish to be placed on the official election ballot must collect the necessary number of petition signatures by the deadline set by the Undergraduate Student Government Judicial Panel.
 - i.** The Judicial Panel shall make available a blank copy of the petition by the third Monday of Spring Semester. The Judicial Panel reserves the right to utilize a verified digital petition, in which case content guidelines for the petition will be included at all information sessions.
 - 1.** “Verified Digital Petition” as used herein means a petition form which requires a secure verification via the use of a current undergraduate Ohio State e-mail account.
 - ii.** Candidates using a digital petition to gain signatures must adhere to the Digital Petitioning Guidelines set forth by the Undergraduate Student Government Judicial Panel.
 - iii.** To appear on the official ballot, the candidate or candidate team must submit a completed petition with the necessary number of signatures for certification by the Judicial Panel by the fourth Friday of Spring Semester. All petition signatures must be verified Ohio State undergraduate students.
- e.** Candidates for the offices of President and Vice President shall run together as a single unit, referred to throughout these rules as a “candidate team.”
- f.** No candidate or candidate team can run concurrently for more than one (1) elected position in any Undergraduate Student Government general election.
- g.** All Living Area Senators must be students at The Ohio State University Columbus campus and live in the area that they represent at the beginning of the Autumn Semester following the general election and must reside in that area for the remaining term of office.
 - i.** Off-Campus Area – University Village, all commercially-owned residences within the bounds of University District, and all residences within the area bounded by the Olentangy River and the NYC Railroad Tracks, from east to west, and Arcadia Avenue through West Dodridge Road and Fifth Avenue, from north to south, excluding all University Residence Halls.
 - ii.** Commuter Area – All areas outside of the defined off-campus area.

- iii. On-Campus Living Areas exclusively consist of the residence halls designated by Housing and Residence Education on the Columbus Campus
 - iv. The Regional Campus Senator must have attended a regional campus for at least one (1) full semester prior to their term of office and must have attended that regional campus within one (1) year of petition validation for the election cycle in which they are seeking election.
 - h. A College or School Senator must be enrolled in the college that they are to represent at the time of petition validation and through their elected term.
 - i. If a candidate has a major and a minor, the College or School that a Senator is eligible to represent must correspond to their declared major.
 - j. An Exploration Senator must be designated as “Exploration” by The Ohio State University at the time of petition validation and must have been an Exploration major for at least one (1) full semester prior to their term of office.
 - k. Candidates for President, Vice President, and General Assembly must attend at least one (1) Judicial Panel information session in order to be placed on the ballot.
 - l. By the 15th Monday of the Autumn Semester, the Judicial Panel shall publish a schedule including dates, times, and locations for all information sessions publicly.
- B. Petitions and Nominations**
- a. A blank petition and the Digital Petitioning Guidelines for the relevant academic year or election semester shall be included as an appendix to the Election Bylaws.
 - b. Submission Protocols
 - i. All petitions to be submitted shall be subject to the rules and regulations of these Elections Bylaws.
 - ii. No signatures may be collected prior to the petitioning start date and time designated by the Judicial Panel. Any signatures collected before that time shall be considered invalid.
 - iii. Verified signatures contained within the petition must come from registered and active Ohio State University undergraduate students.
 - 1. The Judicial Panel shall verify and validate all petitions submitted.
 - 2. Any unqualified signatures shall be rejected as invalid, but shall not invalidate other valid signatures on the same petition.
 - 3. No petitioner, circulator, or candidate shall allow any undergraduate student to sign any name other than their own to all petitions.
 - iv. Every page of the petition, whether physical or digital, shall bear the name of the circulator, verifying that they identified the purpose of said petition and witnessed that all signatures placed upon it were made by eligible students to the best of their knowledge, for that page to be valid.
 - 1. For digital petitions, a "page" shall be defined as a distinct section or submission form that collects a set of signatures, typically separated by unique submission timestamps, petition links, or digital signature blocks. Each such section must include the circulator’s name and be clearly attributable to them.
 - 2. In the case of circulating petitions on social media, petitions may only be circulated by approved and listed circulators on their personal social

media accounts with their name clearly attached to the account, for the purposes of clearly verifying who the circulators are.

- a. Promotion of petitions through the social media accounts of any third-party entity, including student organizations, university-affiliated groups, or external organizations, is strictly prohibited. This is a Type II bylaw.
3. Initiatives and referenda do not have to provide a candidate name or signature, but must still provide the printed name and signature of the circulator.
4. Circulators must be registered undergraduate students at The Ohio State University.
- v. Petitions must include the position sought. Once petitions are filed with the Judicial Panel, this cannot be changed.
- vi. Before filing a petition with the Judicial Panel, the circulator of a petition may strike out any signature they do not wish to present as part of that petition.
- vii. Any person may remove their own signature before it is filed with the Judicial Panel by striking out or requesting removal of their name on said petition.
- viii. Candidates must turn in their own petitions in order to get on the ballot.
- c. A list of official candidates and candidate teams shall be posted by the Judicial Panel on the Undergraduate Student Government website, within forty-eight (48) hours of validation of all signatures.
- d. All official candidates and candidate teams shall be notified in writing or by e-mail of their status by the Judicial Panel by the fifth Friday of Spring Semester.
- e. Sponsors of official referenda and initiatives shall be notified in writing or by e-mail of their status by the Judicial Panel by the seventh Friday of Spring Semester.
- f. Nominating Petitions
 - i. The name(s) of the candidate or candidate team must appear on each nominating petition.
 - ii. To appear on the official ballot for Undergraduate Student Government office, a candidate or candidate team must obtain the necessary number of valid signatures on the petition to be submitted for certification by the Judicial Panel by the fourth Friday of Spring Semester, when the petition shall be posted starting the third Monday of Spring Semester:
 1. Each President/Vice President Candidate Team must obtain five hundred (500) signatures.
 2. Each Senator Candidate must obtain fifty (50) signatures.
 - iii. By filing a petition with the Judicial Panel, candidates and candidate teams agree to abide by the Undergraduate Student Government Bylaws and consent to a conduct check conducted by a designated advisor of the Undergraduate Student Government.
- g. Initiative and Referendum Petitions
 - i. An initiative petition shall express the opinion of the Undergraduate Student Body or shall establish a financial or policy directive for the Undergraduate Student Government to endorse and/or promote.

- ii. Proposed ballot initiatives calling for USG to take any action prohibited by local, state, or federal law may not appear on the ballot.
- iii. A referendum petition will place a possible change to the Undergraduate Student Government Constitution on the ballot for consideration.
- iv. A petition, without any signatures, must be submitted to the Judicial Panel by the second Friday of Spring Semester for review.
 - 1. This petition must contain intended language as it would appear on the ballot.
 - a. The Judicial Panel shall initially aid petitioners in phrasing all ballot language.
 - b. All ballot language shall be posed in the form of a question: (e.g. "Shall the OSU Undergraduate Student Government...?").
 - c. If additional time is needed for this stage of the review, petitioners will be given an equal number of additional days for obtaining signatures.
- v. After initial submission from the petitioner, the Chief Justice of the Judicial Panel shall forward all petitions to the Senior Vice President for Student Life (or designee), the Advisor of the Undergraduate Student Government, and a representative of the Ohio State University Office of Legal Affairs for ballot language review and approval.
 - 1. They will have until the end of the third Friday of Spring Semester to return the ballots with revised language. If necessary, these officials may consult with the petitioners.
 - 2. If more time is needed for this stage of the review, petitioners will be given an equal number of additional days for obtaining signatures.
- vi. The Judicial Panel will then return an official copy of the approved language to the petitioner on or before the fourth Monday of Spring Semester, written on an official petition form.
- vii. Final petitions must be submitted to the Judicial Panel by 5:00pm on the sixth Friday of Spring Semester bearing the full text of the approved initiative or referendum language at the top of the petition along with the valid signatures of one thousand (1000) undergraduate students.

Article II: Campaign Procedures

A. Candidate Conduct

- a. A lack of knowledge or understanding of the Election Bylaws shall not be considered a valid defense for any violation.
- b. Campaign Materials
 - i. Candidates and candidate teams may not knowingly spread false or misleading information about another candidate with the intent to harm their reputation or influence the outcome of the election. This is a Type III bylaw violation.

- ii. No candidate or campaign member shall post a flyer over, conceal, or otherwise deface any material created by the Judicial Panel or another candidate. This is a Type II bylaw.
 - iii. Campaigns must make reasonable accommodations to ensure that their public activities and events are accessible to all students for participation.
 - iv. Any candidate seeking election to any position is required to abstain from engaging in any type of bullying or harassment of other candidates. This is a Type IV bylaw.
 - 1. This includes, but is not limited to, actions such as mockery, belittlement, intimidation, or any other behavior intended to harm, demean, or undermine the candidacy of others.
 - v. All websites maintained by a candidate or candidate team are subject to review by the Judicial Panel and must adhere to the rules and regulations in these bylaws. Such websites must have a visible link to the Judicial Panel Elections webpage on each page of their website. This is a Type I bylaw.
 - vi. All e-mail advertising a specific candidate must include a disclaimer at the bottom of the e-mail that reads, "Please reply to sender requesting removal from e-mail list if you do not wish to receive further e-mail from this candidate. If you still receive e-mail from this candidate please contact the Judicial Panel at usgelections@osu.edu." Any such request must be honored within twenty-four (24) hours. This is a Type I bylaw.
 - 1. Each uniquely worded e-mail or mail merge sent without the disclaimer, regardless of the number of recipients, counts as an individual Type I bylaw violation.
 - 2. Class e-mail lists may not be utilized by any candidate or candidate team. This is a Type II bylaw.
 - 3. Organization e-mail lists may only be utilized with permission of instructor or administrator. This is a Type II bylaw.
 - vii. No candidate or candidate team may use supplies, materials, or equipment from the Ohio Union Resource Room for any campaign activity. This is a Type III bylaw.
 - 1. This prohibition includes any material used by student organizations for purposes of endorsing a candidate, candidate team, or ballot issue.
- c. Campaigning
 - i. Campaigning may not interfere with classroom activities. This is a Type III bylaw.
 - ii. No person may campaign within a student-computing site during voting days. This is a Type IV bylaw.
 - iii. No candidate or candidate team may campaign in any residence hall. This excludes independent and collaborative work done within a virtual space while physically present in a residence hall. This is a Type III bylaw.
 - iv. Candidates and candidate teams may not overtly act to gain votes, or solicit for votes before the approved campaigning season begins. This is a Type III bylaw.

1. Candidates and candidate teams may produce campaign materials and create a website at any time but may not be visible at any time before campaigning begins.
- v. All campaigning must follow guidelines set by Facilities Operations and Development Posting and Chalking Guidelines, Residence Life Student Code of Conduct, and the Ohio Union, and any other university department that maintains additional standards for physical facilities in their purview. This is a Type II bylaw.
- vi. All campaigning must follow any guidelines set by the Office of Student Life for student organizations, as well as all University health and safety regulations. This is a Type IV bylaw.
 1. This applies to both on-campus and off-campus campaigning.
- vii. The Judicial Panel reserves the right to name areas off-limits for campaigning. No campaigning may be done in these areas. This is a Type II bylaw.
 1. The Chief Justice of the Judicial Panel must give all candidates notice of what areas are off-limits and how long they will be considered so at least twenty-four (24) hours before an area is declared off-limits.
- viii. No campaigning of any sort is allowed in any office in the Keith B. Key Center for Student Leadership and Service (CSLS), even if invited to speak by a student organization that meets in the CSLS. Furthermore, no person may use any Undergraduate Student Government resources including meeting spaces or Student Government Suite resources for any campaign activity. Campaigning in other areas of the Ohio Union is permitted, as long as the activity is in compliance with Ohio Union building policies. This is a Type IV bylaw.
- ix. No candidate or campaign team may use resources or materials purchased or maintained with Student Activity Fee money. This is a Type V bylaw.
- x. The Judicial Panel will take necessary steps to disseminate information though it is upon the candidates to be fully aware of the rules.
- xi. **Campaigning shall begin on the seventh Sunday of Spring semester at 8:00pm, pending the approval of all candidate and candidate teams (by the Judicial Panel). Campaigning shall end immediately upon the end of voting at 11:59pm on the ninth Wednesday of Spring Semester.**
 1. Write-in candidates are expected to adhere to the Elections Bylaws with regard to campaigning and all other guidelines therein. If, after a write-in candidate has been elected, they are found to have been in violation of the elections bylaws, said candidate will be subject to disqualification.
 - a. Candidates and candidate teams may not promote, sponsor, or endorse any write-in candidate. This is a Type III bylaw.
 - b. Only the Judicial Panel may maintain polling stations of any sort. This is a Type III bylaw.
- xii. All campaigns must submit the names of their campaign manager(s) and treasurer(s). This is a Type I bylaw.
 1. The campaign manager and treasurer can be the same person or the candidate themselves.

2. This list must be submitted with nominating petitions. Changes or updates must be submitted within twenty-four (24) hours of said change.

B. Endorsement of Candidates

- a. Candidates for the General Assembly, President, and Vice President may publicly support or endorse other candidates. However, if a candidate or candidate team provides financial support to another, that support must be documented on the financial ledgers of both candidates. Failure to do so will result in a Type III bylaw violation.
 - i. Financial support includes, but is not limited to, monetary contributions, shared campaign materials, jointly funded advertisements, promotional events, or any resources of value used to benefit another candidate's campaign.
 - ii. In cases of discrepancy, the Judicial Panel may presume support occurred if either ledger reports it.
- b. Each candidate or candidate team is responsible for their own actions.
 - i. If it is determined that a candidate commissioned, directed, or encouraged another candidate or campaign to take a specific action, both parties may be held responsible for that action and subject to appropriate sanctions.
- c. If a candidate team is disqualified from the election, the disqualification applies only to the President and Vice President running as part of that team. Candidates endorsed by the disqualified team shall not be disqualified solely on the basis of that endorsement.

C. Campaign Finance

- a. Reports and Submissions
 - i. All candidates and candidate teams must maintain an online ledger. This is a Type IV bylaw.
 1. Online ledgers must be updated daily beginning on the first day of official candidacy.
 - ii. All individual candidates must maintain a ledger of expenses.
 1. This ledger must be submitted at a regular interval as determined by the Judicial Panel.
 2. Candidates and candidate teams must be able to provide receipts for all expenses.
 - iii. The Judicial Panel reserves the right to audit a campaign and require the submission of a Campaign Value Report (CVR) within twenty-four (24) hours of notification. The Judicial Panel reserves the right to check the authenticity of all expenses. The fine for omissions and discrepancies will be equivalent to the omission or discrepancy amount, in addition to a fifty (50) dollar fine.
 - iv. Campaign Value Reports must also include all donations in an itemized manner.
 1. Donations must be reported based on fair market value if price is unknown.
- b. Spending Limits
 - i. Spending limits shall be determined according to composition of a campaign, as follows:
 1. No Presidential/Vice Presidential campaign shall be valued at more than one thousand three hundred (1300) dollars in total. This is a Type V bylaw.

2. No Senatorial candidate's campaign shall be valued for more than one hundred fifty (150) dollars. This is a Type V bylaw.
- ii. Only campaign expenses used with the intent of influencing an individual's voting decisions, including, but not limited to, campaign materials promoting candidates or candidate teams such as t-shirts, flyers, and food shall be included in a campaign's value.
 1. Internal organizational and operational expenditures shall be included in a campaign's value.
- iii. No money raised for the purpose of campaigning in an Undergraduate Student Government election may be spent on alcohol. However, campaigning is permitted in establishments that serve alcohol. This is a Type III bylaw.
- iv. No candidate or campaign member may use financial incentives or rewards in their campaign activities. Prohibited rewards include, but are not limited to, gift cards, monetary raffles, and cash prizes. This is a Type II bylaw.
- v. Any fines incurred that bring the value of a candidate or candidate team below zero (0) dollars shall result in disqualification.
- vi. Any and all campaign expenditures of a candidate or candidate team are counted only once and only towards the value of the candidate or candidate team's campaign.
 1. This includes, but is not limited to, t-shirts featuring the names of multiple candidates, chalk, flyers featuring the name of only one (1) candidate, and websites.

Article III: Voting Procedures

A. Ballots

- a. Only the candidates and candidate teams that have been certified by the Judicial Panel will appear on the ballot.
- b. All initiatives and referenda shall appear on the ballot in the same full text as they appeared on the verified petitions. Some lengthy petitions may be condensed to only include the question that calls USG to an action, ex: "Shall the Undergraduate Student Government...?"
- c. A space for write-in candidates or candidate teams will be provided.
 - i. There will be one (1) box for Presidential write-in candidates and one (1) box for Vice Presidential write-in candidates.
 - ii. In order for a vote to be deemed valid, the candidate names must be spelled correctly in the format "First Name, Last Name".
 - iii. Eligible students can vote for one (1) Presidential candidate and one (1) Vice Presidential candidate. However, students do not have to vote for both positions when voting for write-in candidates.
 - iv. Punctuation and capitalization are not required in the proper formatting or spelling of the candidate name(s).

- d. Write-in candidate winners will be determined by total votes received, where the candidate with the highest vote count wins.
- e. Write-in candidate winners must have a minimum of three (3) votes in order to be considered valid.
 - i. The threshold for the minimum number of votes is subject to be increased at the discretion of the Judicial Panel.
- f. Candidate names for each position shall be randomized with respect to order on each voter's ballot.
- g. Endorsements between candidates shall not be displayed on the ballot.

B. Election Validation

- a. The official certified results of the election will be announced no later than five (5) academic days after the end of voting, or after all Judicial Panel proceedings have been exhausted, whichever occurs later.
 - i. A write-in candidate winner must receive a minimum of three (3) votes in order to be considered valid.
 - ii. A write-in candidate must meet all eligibility requirements and confirm their intent to serve in the elected position with the Judicial Panel within forty-eight (48) hours of notification by the Judicial Panel about the election results before being declared the winner.
- b. Any person disrupting the election validity procedures shall be subject to University disciplinary action.
- c. All ballots of valid voters will be counted.

C. Voter Qualification

- a. All registered and currently enrolled undergraduate students of The Ohio State University are valid voters.
- b. Each eligible voter shall have the opportunity to vote for the following:
 - i. One (1) President/Vice-President candidate team or one (1) write-in candidate per position
 - ii. As many Living Area Senate candidates as there are seats in the constituency in which the voter lives.
 - iii. As many Academic Senate candidates as there are seats in the constituency in which the voter is enrolled.
 - iv. Each eligible voter may vote yes or no for each initiative or referendum placed on the ballot.

D. Tied Elections

- a. All ties will be broken in accordance with the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Government and its Bylaws.
- b. All ties shall be resolved by convening the elected Senators as determined by methods in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

E. Contesting the Election

- a. The validity of any election or any item on the ballot may be contested by any valid voter by filing a petition to the Undergraduate Student Government Judicial Panel.
- b. Petitions must be filed with the Judicial Panel no later than seven (7) days following the election certification announcement.

- c. For a recount, the petition must contain a total number of signatures equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of students who voted for the contested election or ballot item.
 - i. All petition signatures must be from students eligible to vote in the current Undergraduate Student Government Election cycle.
 - d. The Judicial Panel will act immediately on any valid petition.
 - e. Candidates who are announced as the winners of the election whose elections are contested will be seated unless otherwise determined by the Judicial Panel.
 - f. All briefs dealing with campaign violations must be submitted within seventy-two (72) hours of discovery of the violation(s) and by the end of voting. If the brief has not been heard by the end of voting, the election will be considered contested.
- F. Voting Days**
- a. Voting will begin at 12:00pm on the ninth Monday of Spring Semester and end at 11:59pm of the ninth Wednesday of Spring Semester.

Article IV: Elections Governance Procedures

A. Penalties

- a. Violating these bylaws carries a penalty. All penalties are counted as part of a campaign's value and must be reported on Campaign Value Report. These penalties will represent the value of the advantage a candidate or candidate team has gained through bylaw violation.
 - i. Violating any Type I bylaw has a minimum penalty of one (1) dollar, and a maximum penalty of ten (10) dollars per instance of violation.
 - ii. Violating any Type II bylaw has a minimum penalty of eleven (11) dollars and a maximum penalty of fifty (50) dollars per instance of violation.
 - iii. Violating any Type III bylaw has a minimum penalty of fifty-one (51) dollars and a maximum penalty of one hundred (100) dollars per instance of violation.
 - iv. Violating any Type IV bylaw has a minimum penalty of one hundred and one (101) dollars and a maximum penalty of disqualification or one hundred fifty (150) dollars per instance of violation.
 - v. Violating any Type V bylaw has a minimum penalty of disqualification.
- b. For every Judicial Panel order concurrent with a penalty, the penalty doubles every twenty-four (24) hours after the parties to the decision have been notified and the concurrent order has not been carried out.
- c. If the decision is appealed, the penalty is suspended until a decision on the appeal is made.

B. Enforcement

- a. The Undergraduate Student Government Judicial Panel reserves the sole authority to resolve any conflicts or allegations of violations of these bylaws.
 - i. The Judicial Panel reserves the authority to also enforce the violations of these bylaws through procedures listed in its standing rules.
- b. All candidates and candidate teams are to follow the Election bylaws and any directives given by the Judicial Panel.

- c. The Judicial Panel will notify the Undergraduate Student Government Advisors, candidates, and candidate teams of their ruling via e-mail in accordance with the Undergraduate Student Government Constitution.
 - i. The Judicial Panel will promptly notify and provide all relevant parties with copies of all rulings immediately upon receipt.

C. Conduct of the Judicial Panel

- a. No member of the Judicial Panel shall:
 - i. Be a candidate for any other Undergraduate Student Government position.
 - ii. Aid any candidate or candidate team in any way.
- b. All members of the Judicial Panel must remain neutral in all issues pertaining to election matters and voting throughout their entire term.
- c. Each Member of the Judicial Panel may vote in the Undergraduate Student Government election.

D. Contact with the Judicial Panel

- a. The Chief Justice of the Judicial Panel, or a designated justice or clerk, must publicize an e-mail address at which they can be reached.
- b. Candidates may not knowingly falsify any documents submitted to the Judicial Panel at any time or falsely testify/present false evidence in a Judicial Panel proceeding. This is a Type V bylaw.
- c. The Judicial Panel is authorized to disseminate impartial, informative content about candidates and election-related details.

E. Judicial Panel Responsibilities

- a. The Chief Justice of the Judicial Panel shall have the responsibility of ensuring the overall operation of fair, valid, and nondiscriminatory elections.
- b. The Judicial Panel will have a minimum of four (4) mandatory candidate information sessions between the Fall and Spring Semesters and before the deadline for submission of petitions to inform students seeking candidacy of the rules and election procedures.
- c. The Judicial Panel reserves the right to conduct the information sessions in a digital format.
 - i. At least one election information session must be in a synchronous virtual platform.
- d. The Judicial Panel must put all important dates on the Judicial Panel's official website by the 15th Monday of the Autumn Semester.
- e. The Judicial Panel must hold at least one (1) Presidential debate unless only one (1) candidate team is running on the ballot for the Presidential/Vice Presidential position.
 - i. The Judicial Panel reserves the right to conduct the debate in a digital format.
- f. The Judicial Panel must create all forms, or templates thereof, mentioned in these bylaws.
- g. The Judicial Panel must notify the Ohio Union staff supervisor for the Ohio Union Resource Room of the Judicial Panel bylaws.

Article V: Amendment Procedures

- A.** The Judicial Panel shall have original jurisdiction of amending the Undergraduate Student Government Elections Bylaws.
- B.** The Chief Justice shall submit the Undergraduate Student Government Elections Bylaws to the General Assembly in the form of legislation no later than the fourth meeting of the Fall Semester.
- C.** Any changes to the Elections Bylaws must pass the General Assembly by simple majority vote.
- D.** The General Assembly shall have the ability to amend the Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws by a majority vote, only after they are originally introduced by the Judicial Panel.
- E.** Amended Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws shall be sent back to the Judicial Panel to be approved by a majority vote of the Justices or vetoed.
 - a.** In the event that the Amended Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws are vetoed by the Judicial Panel, they will be sent back to the General Assembly and require a three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote to override the veto.
- F.** Any spelling, grammatical, and formatting errors discovered by or brought to the attention of the Judicial Panel do not have to be submitted for approval by the General Assembly.
 - a.** These changes will be brought to the attention of the sitting Vice President by e-mail.
- G.** The Judicial Panel may not make changes to the Elections Bylaws past the first information session and may not be ex post facto.
- H.** The Undergraduate Student Government Elections Bylaws must be in accordance with the Undergraduate Student Government Constitution.

Article VI: Elections Glossary

Appeal – A formal request for the Judicial Panel to review a decision or outcome based on alleged procedural errors, misinterpretations, or unfairness.

Ballot – The official mechanism used for voting in the Undergraduate Student Government election, including candidate names, referenda, initiatives, and space for write-in votes.

Campaign Finance – The system for managing, tracking, and regulating financial activity within a campaign, including spending, donations, ledgers, audits, and penalties.

Campaigning – Any action whose purpose is to explicitly persuade anyone to vote a certain way in the Undergraduate Student Government elections. Campaigning specifically does not include the actions of seeking endorsement, defined elsewhere in this glossary.

Campaign Manager – A person designated by a candidate or candidate team to oversee campaign operations. A campaign manager must be listed with the Judicial Panel and may also serve as treasurer or be the candidate themselves.

Campaign Materials – Any physical or digital items used to promote a candidate or candidate team, including, but not limited to, flyers, posters, t-shirts, websites, and e-mails.

Campaign Member – Any individual who is actively participating in or working on behalf of a candidate's campaign.

Campaign Season – The period beginning at 8:00 PM EST on the seventh Sunday of Spring Semester and ending at 11:59 PM EST on the ninth Wednesday of Spring Semester, during which campaigning is permitted.

Campaign Value Report (CVR) – A document detailing all transactions and penalties associated with a campaign, including all purchased and donated items (with receipts). Donated labor is not included in this report.

Candidate – An undergraduate student who meets the eligibility requirements outlined in the Election Bylaws and has been approved by the Judicial Panel to appear on the ballot.

Candidate Eligibility – The conditions a student must meet to run in the USG election, including being a registered undergraduate, not on academic or disciplinary probation, not having a pending graduation application prior to the start of the term, and not an individual convicted of sexual assault or sexual misconduct as determined by the Civil Rights Compliance Office.

Candidate Team – A joint ticket consisting of one (1) candidate for President and one (1) candidate for Vice President running together as a single campaign unit.

Circulator – A registered undergraduate student who gathers petition signatures and verifies that each signer is eligible and aware of the petition’s purpose. Each petition page must list the circulator’s name. A candidate seeking election to any position may also serve as a circulator for their own petition, but they must be clearly designated as the circulator on each page of the petition, whether physical or digital.

Class E-mail List – An academic mailing list associated with a class or course. These lists may not be used for campaign purposes.

Classroom Activities – The instruction or examination of students in any physical or digital space owned or operated by The Ohio State University.

Computing Site – Any OSU Library or OTDI-sponsored computer lab where campaigning is prohibited during voting days.

Disqualification – The removal of a candidate or candidate team from the election as a result of bylaw violations or exceeding campaign finance penalties.

Election Bylaws – The formal rules that govern all aspects of Undergraduate Student Government elections, including candidacy, campaigning, finance, voting, and enforcement.

Election Certification – The official process of validating and announcing election results. Final results are released no later than five (5) academic days after voting ends or the conclusion of any pending Judicial Panel proceedings.

Endorsement – A written or spoken declaration of support for a candidate, candidate team, initiative, or referendum made by an individual or group.

Financial Ledger – A spreadsheet that documents all campaign-related expenditures and receipts. Each candidate or candidate team must maintain and regularly update their ledger.

Initiative – A petition submitted to express student opinion or direct USG policy or finances. Requires approval and a minimum number of valid undergraduate signatures to appear on the ballot.

Judicial Panel – The branch of Undergraduate Student Government responsible for overseeing elections, resolving complaints, enforcing bylaws, certifying results, and issuing penalties for violations.

Nominating Petition – The official document used to collect signatures from eligible students in order for a candidate or candidate team to appear on the ballot.

Petition – A formal document used to gather support from undergraduate students for a candidate, initiative, or referenda. Must meet format, signature, and circulator requirements to be valid.

Polling Station – Any officially designated physical or digital space used for voting during the election period. Only the Judicial Panel may maintain polling stations.

Referendum – A proposed change to the Undergraduate Student Government Constitution placed on the ballot for student consideration through a valid petition process.

Senator – A student elected to represent a specific college, school, residential area, or regional campus in the Undergraduate Student Government General Assembly.

Spending Limits – The maximum allowable value for campaign expenses, including purchases, donations, and penalties. These vary depending on the candidate's position.

Treasurer – A person responsible for managing a campaign's finances and expense reporting. The treasurer must be reported to the Judicial Panel and may be the candidate or another person.

Type I Bylaw – A rule violation that carries a penalty of \$1 to \$10 per instance.

Type II Bylaw – A rule violation that carries a penalty of \$11 to \$50 per instance.

Type III Bylaw – A rule violation that carries a penalty of \$51 to \$100 per instance.

Type IV Bylaw – A rule violation that carries a penalty of \$101 to \$150, or potential disqualification.

Type V Bylaw – A rule violation that carries a minimum penalty of immediate disqualification.

USG Election – The annual democratic process by which undergraduate students vote for USG representatives and ballot measures.

Verified Digital Petition – A petition that is circulated electronically and requires a valid OSU undergraduate e-mail login for each signature, ensuring secure and authenticated participation.

Voter Qualification – The eligibility requirements to vote in USG elections, limited to currently enrolled undergraduate students at The Ohio State University.

Write-In Candidate – A candidate whose name does not appear on the ballot but is voted for by being written in by a voter. Must receive at least three (3) valid votes and meet eligibility requirements to be declared the winner.

The Ohio State University USG Election Petition

Candidate Name(s): _____

Position Sought: _____ **Circulator Name(s):** _____

First and Last Name (print)	Dot Number (.)	Signature	Date

Circulator(s) Signature: _____ **Candidate(s) Signature:** _____

This petition is the official Undergraduate Student Government Petition provided by the Judicial Panel. *This petition is not an endorsement of the candidates nor is it a vote for the candidate(s).* This petition will allow the candidate to appear on the ballot.

2025-2026 Digital Petition Guidelines

AUTUMN 2025 SEMESTER

- 1.) These guidelines will be updated each semester during the 2025–2026 academic year.
- 2.) To appear on the official ballot for the Undergraduate Student Government elections, a candidate or candidate team must obtain the necessary number of valid digital signatures on a digital petition form.
 - a.) For each President/Vice President Candidate Team: **five hundred (500)**
 - b.) For each Senator Candidate: **fifty (50)**
 - c.) For each Ballot Initiative or Referendum: **one thousand (1000)**
- 3.) Campaigns and circulators of initiatives and referenda shall use a secure digital form (Microsoft Forms) to collect digital petition signatures.
 - a.) The University does not consider Google Forms to be secure and therefore it may not be used for digital petitioning.
- 4.) Candidates and candidate teams must submit their own petitions in order to appear on the ballot.
 - a.) A President/VP candidate team only needs one petition form.
 - b.) Each ballot initiative or referendum needs a separate petition form.
- 5.) Digital petition forms for candidates must display the following information, which must be visible to all signatories who submit the form:
 - a.) **Candidate Name(s)**
 - b.) **Position the Candidate(s) is/are seeking**
 - c.) **Circulator Name(s)**
 - i.) A candidate seeking election to any position may also serve as a circulator for their own petition. However, they must be clearly designated as the circulator on each page of the petition, whether physical or digital. Merely listing the candidate's name in reference to the position they are seeking does not satisfy this requirement.
- 6.) Digital petition forms for initiatives and referenda must display the following information, which must be visible to all signatories who submit the form:
 - a.) **The Ballot Initiative or Referendum Question must be listed in full in the EXACT language approved by the Judicial Panel.**
 - b.) **Circulator Name(s)**
- 7.) Digital petition forms must collect the following information from signatories:
 - a.) **First Name**
 - b.) **Last Name.#**
 - c.) **Date**
 - d.) **Typed Signature**
 - e.) **Name(s) of Student(s) Who Circulated the Form to You***
 - i.) This can be selected from a list (dropdown, multiple choice, etc.) or typed manually (short answer, extended response, etc.), however an option to manually

type an answer must be available to signatories.

- 8.) Candidates and candidate teams may not collect additional information using their digital petition forms other than what is required by the Digital Petition Guidelines.
- 9.) Candidates and candidate teams may not utilize their digital petition form to engage in campaigning.
- 10.) All petitioning must follow University Health & Safety Guidelines, as well as all regulations set by the Office of Student Life for student organizations.
- 11.) Candidates and candidate teams may not utilize USG resources for digital petitioning.
 - a.) This includes both physical and digital resources/spaces.
- 12.) Candidates and candidate teams may not engage in petitioning within the physical space of University Residence Halls.
 - a.) This includes posting flyers and/or other advertisements within the Residence Hall.
- 13.) Once petitions are submitted, the position sought by the candidate cannot be changed.
- 14.) Before filing a digital petition with the Judicial Panel, the circulator of a petition may remove any digital signature they do not wish to present as part of that petition.
- 15.) Any person may remove their own digital signature before it is filed with the Judicial Panel by requesting the removal of their name on said petition.
- 16.) Digital signatures contained within the petition must come from registered and active Ohio State University undergraduate students.
- 17.) The Judicial Panel shall verify and validate all petitions submitted.
 - a.) Any unqualified signatures shall be rejected as invalid but shall not invalidate other valid signatures on the same petition.
- 18.) Circulators must be registered undergraduate students at The Ohio State University.
- 19.) No petitioner or circulator shall allow any undergraduate student to sign any name other than their own to all petitions.
- 20.) To appear on the official ballot, all candidates and candidate teams must submit the link to their digital petition form and a spreadsheet or document containing the necessary number of digital form submissions to usgelections@osu.edu for certification by the Judicial Panel no later than **Friday, September 5th at 11:59pm.**
 - a.) Petition signatures for candidates and candidate teams can begin to be collected on **Tuesday, August 26th at 7:00am.**
- 21.) All digital petitions to be submitted shall be subject to the rules and regulations stated in the Elections Bylaws.
- 22.) By filing a petition with the Judicial Panel, petitioners, candidates, and candidate teams agree to abide by all Undergraduate Student Government bylaws.