

POLICY TITLE: ELECTION POLICY

Date Adopted by Board: November 16, 2023

All Board of Directors members and the President will be elected each year prior to the end of April. The candidates with the majority of votes will be elected to serve their respective offices for the length of the term.

Policy

1. Election Guidelines (Overview/Term)

- a) All Board of Director members and the President will be elected each year prior to the end of April.
- b) Nomination forms and Presidential nomination forms must be handed into the NCSAC office front desk or submitted on-line by the time and date outlined in the current year's Elections Package.
- c) Any current member of the NCSAC Board of Directors running in the current election must sign a "NCSAC Board Member Candidate Agreement". This release outlines guidelines specific to current NCSAC Board Members who are running in the current election and covers guidelines regarding office conduct to ensure a fair election.
- d) All candidates must attend the All Candidate's Meeting where the collection of your personal biography and a photograph will take place. If a conflict exists due to your program schedules/classes, you must confirm your absence with the CRO five (5) business days in advance.
- e) All candidates may participate in any marketing initiatives organized by the CRO.
- f) Candidates are entitled to spend a maximum of \$500.00 each on campaigning expenses.
- g) NCSAC will reimburse up to \$100 in expenses incurred for candidate's elections campaigns. Receipts must be handed in to the CRO, at the front desk of the SAC office for reimbursement. Receipts must be in original list form (no debit or credit card receipts without itemized list of materials). Lost receipts will mean no reimbursement for election expenses.
- h) Candidates will have five (5) business days to appeal election results. All appeals must be in writing (emails not accepted) and stamped by the NCSAC office front desk on date of receipt. The CRO will have exactly five (5) days to review appeal after receipt of written complaint. The Election Tribunal will review the complaint.
- i) Election dates will be set annually by the Board of Directors.

1.1. President

- a) The President Nomination Process will open the first day of classes in the Winter semester and close ten (10) business days after.
- b) Nomination packages will be available from the Executive Director.

- c) Prior to the closing of the nomination process, Presidential candidates must submit all completed forms contained within the nomination package, in a sealed envelope, to the Niagara College Student Administrative Council front desk.
- d) All candidates must agree to allow the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) to view their academic standing from their last semester in order to ensure eligibility of the candidate and agree to allow the CRO to view their Niagara College Student Code of Conduct record, if any exists, with the College. The CRO may exclude a candidate based on their offence history. Nominees may be subject to a police check.

2. Eligibility

2.1. President

- a) The President shall not be subject to any academic requirements and is not required to be a registered student of Niagara College during their term of office.
- b) A current President may serve consecutive terms to a maximum of two (2) years.
- c) If a current President chooses to run for a second term – they must abide by the same Presidential Election Policy that all other candidates follow.
- d) In order to run in the election as a Presidential candidate, a member of the Corporation must be a current Niagara College Student Administrative Council Board of Director Member, or be the current President or have served as a past Board of Director member and is currently enrolled as a student; and have the ability to serve a one-year employment term in a full-time capacity with a minimum of 35 hours per week (Monday – Friday), commencing May 1st and ending April 30th
- e) A candidate must have maintained a program pass in their prior semester (if not a returning President).

2.1.1. Vote of Confidence

- a) A vote of confidence meeting will occur for Presidential nominees at first Board of Directors meeting of the winter semester.
- b) All nominees will be required to complete a 15 minute presentation for the NCSAC Board of Directors and be prepared for up to 15 minutes of questioning from the NCSAC Board of Directors. No opposing Presidential Candidates will be in the room during presentations from opposing candidates.
- c) A vote of confidence will follow the question and answer period after the nominees have left the voting room.
- d) Each nominee must receive a vote of confidence (50% + 1 vote). Only nominees receiving a vote of confidence will then move forward to the general election process as a Presidential candidate.

2.2. Director

- a) Must satisfy the Director Qualifications described in Article 5 of the NCSAC By-laws.
- b) Meet the corporations membership requirements and be in good standing with Niagara College as stated in NCSAC By-laws, and
- c) A candidate must have a minimum average of 65% in their program for the semester completed prior to the election, with the exception of January start students.

- d) Candidates may only run for the Director for their respective “school of”.
- e) Be a registered Niagara College student and remain so until the end of their term.

2.3. Candidacy Requirements

- a) No candidate will request or confirm any endorsement from any current staff (office or student centre) of the NCSAC.
- b) File their nomination in a sealed envelope in person to the front desk at their respective Student Administrative Council Inc. office or submit on-line at the date described on the Elections Package (not less than 21 calendar days before the election date). Late nomination forms will NOT be accepted, and
- c) Must meet the Members Entitlement section in Article 4 of the NCSAC By-laws.
- d) Be bondable, and
- e) Be at least 18 years of age at the start of the academic year, and
- f) Any Director that is deemed to have resigned will not be eligible to be elected or appointed as a Director or officer for three (3) years from the date of resignation. Such Director may request a review of his/her circumstances for removal and the Board shall, by Ordinary Resolution, determine that the ban will be lifted or upheld.

3. Campaigning

- a) Campaign materials can be in the form of, but not limited to: social media, posters, t-shirts, buttons, and swag. Other means of campaign materials will be discussed at the All Candidates meeting.
- b) Use of discriminatory or offensive materials will result in consequences determined by the Election Tribunal.
- c) No candidate will destroy or damage any other candidate’s materials or slander any other candidate. Doing so will result in a review by the Election Tribunal.
- d) Additional campaigning rules will be explained at the All Candidates Meeting.

4. Voting (Procedures/Platform)

- a) Each eligible voter, a member of the Corporation, is entitled to one (1) vote.
- b) An on-line platform will be used for voting.
- c) All elections and voting will be done by electronic ballot when feasible.
- d) When voting by secret ballot, incorrectly marked ballots will be kept, but not counted.
- e) The candidates with the majority of votes will be elected to serve as the Director from their “school of” for the length of term.
- f) All acclaimed positions/candidates must obtain a majority “YES” vote from the membership.

5. Vacancies/Hiring

5.1. President

- a) In the event that the current sitting President leaves during their term of office, due to resignation, removal, or otherwise, the NCSAC will select a new President according to the Succession Planning of President Policy.

5.2. Director

- a) In the case of a vacancy of office within Board of Directors, NCSAC will move to a (by-election or hiring) of any Board of Director Member.
- b) In the case where no qualified candidate fills the vacant position, the Board of Directors will appoint or hire a qualified, current student member of the Niagara College Student Administrative Council Inc. to assume the vacant position, if the majority of the respective Board of Directors Members motion and approve the appointment.
- c) In special circumstances such as where a by-election interrupts regularly scheduled NCSAC elections or would hinder the Corporation from functioning efficiently in the interim, the respective Board of Directors may appoint or hire, by majority vote, a qualified person to fill a vacancy in office.

6. Job Descriptions

6.1. Chief Returning Officer

- a) Appoint a Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) to assist in the election process, and notify the DRO of their duties, and
- b) Give a minimum of 21 calendar days' notice of the election, and post all election rules, regulations, and procedures, and
- c) Prepare and execute all aspects of the Presidential elections including, but not limited to: nomination, vote of confidence from the Board, and elections, and
- d) Meet with all candidates prior to election in order to review all rules and regulations dealing with campaigning for office, and
- e) Regulate and supervise all campaigning activities, and
- f) Ensure electronic voting is prepared, and
- g) Determine if an advance poll is needed and make the necessary arrangements, and
- h) Oversee online voting system and electronic ballot report, and
- i) Confirm the election results, and
- j) Keep electronic report in a sealed envelope for one (1) year after the election, and
- k) Be responsible for any formal written complaints received within five (5) calendar days of the elections that concerns either the election or the conduct which would require re-examination of the electronic ballot report, and
- l) Receive, in writing, all election complaints, and keep the requests for a recount or re-evaluation if necessary, and
- m) Have authority to declare an election invalid if the election procedures have not been followed, and
- n) Ensure there is a contingency plan for paper ballots if online voting system is compromised, and
- o) Hire, train and supervise polling clerks, and
- p) Be responsible for determining dates, times and questions for campus debates, and
- q) Determine locations and set-up online polling stations.

6.2. Deputy Returning Officer

- a) Prepare voter lists, act as member of Elections Committee, appoint the necessary impartial personnel only when voting by secret ballot, and
- b) Review electronic ballot report, and
- c) Verify that each candidate received at least a 65% average in the semester prior to running for the Elections, and
- d) Complete a Code of Conduct check for all candidates, and
- e) Obtain proof from the College Registrar of all candidates eligibility to run for office at time of Election Package submission, and notify any candidates who do not meet the requirements.

6.3. Election Tribunal

All rules and regulations will be enforced by the NCSAC Election Tribunal which will consist of the CRO, the DRO and a student at-large. The tribunal will have the power to:

- a) issue a verbal warning to the candidate(s),
- b) issue a written warning to the candidate(s),
- c) remove candidate(s) from the elections,
- d) review all appeals submitted by candidates within the specified time frame,
- e) revoke reimbursement of election expenses.

Violation of any of the following rules and/or regulations of the NCSAC Elections may result in a review by the Election Tribunal. Issuance of both a verbal and written warning to the same candidate will result in automatic removal from the current elections. All decisions of the Tribunal will be final and binding.

The CRO will serve as the Chair of the elections tribunal.

6.4. President

The President reports to the Niagara College Student Administrative Council Inc. Board of Directors and is accountable to this group and to the membership at large for their actions. The President is elected annually through the Election Policy and is expected to work in a full-time capacity from May 1 – April 30.

- a) Acts as the figurehead of the Niagara College Student Administrative Council Inc.
- b) Acts as the primary contact with students regarding academic appeals.
- c) Attends college, community and NCSAC committee meetings.
- d) Speaks on behalf of the NCSAC Board of Directors for media inquiries, community events, college functions & meetings, and NCSAC business regarding the decisions made by the organization.
- e) Are involved in the affairs of the NCSAC in accordance with the By-laws and Board Policies.
- f) Ensures that all Board of Directors members have the appropriate information they require to perform their jobs.

- g) Reviews all College and Corporate partnerships as well as the College Board of Governors meeting minutes, contracts, and documentation that is relevant to or affects operations at the NCSAC.
- h) Acts as a signing authority and binding member of the corporation on cheque requisitions, contracts, and payments.
- i) Reports to the Board of Directors at the monthly Board Meeting in regards to important NCSAC matters.
- j) Liaises with the Board of Governors Student Representative and keeps the NCSAC up-to-date with all Board of Governors information and upcoming activities.
- k) Collaborates with the NCSAC Board and NCSAC staff on strategic direction, vision and annual goals of the organization.
- l) Organizes advocacy efforts and government relations between the NCSAC and other student organizations at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government.
- m) Attends conferences, which are pertinent to advocacy, regarding emerging trends in student associations and business matters where deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors. The President must provide conference updates for any conference attended as part of their next board report.
- n) Attends all Board of Directors meetings.
- o) Works a minimum of thirty-five (35) hours per week including scheduled office hours, Board of Directors & Committee meetings and professional conferences.
- p) Spends appropriate time at each campus.
- q) Sits on all hiring panels for NCSAC Manager Positions and office staff.
- r) It will be to the discretion of the President to decide the number of delegates that will attend a student conference presented by an organization that NCSAC is a fee-paying member. This decision must be based on key learning principles being presented and the relevance to each board member's position and availability of funds and budgetary guidelines.

6.5. Director

The NCSAC Board of Directors is collectively accountable to students and the Niagara College community. Board members are accountable for the NCSAC's performance in realizing its mission and achieving its goals. The NCSAC Board of Directors collaboratively, are also responsible for the effective stewardship of financial resources of the organization and the overall quality of supports to students.

The Directors are elected annually through the Elections Policy and are expected to fulfill their duties from May 1 – April 30.

- a) Attends NCSAC, Niagara College and Community events regularly to act as an ambassador of the NCSAC organization.
- b) Understand and demonstrate a commitment to the organization's mission and programs, while fully understand the organizations by-laws and policies.
- c) Meets with the Associate Dean in their respective "school of" regularly to maintain a positive relationship on behalf of NCSAC.

- d) Serves as the Student Representative/Ombudsperson on student grade appeals (conflict notwithstanding) as a liaison between the student body and the college's administration on academic matters.
- e) Participates in the approval of the annual budget and monitors the financial performance of the NCSAC in relation to the budget.
- f) Acts as a member of any assigned committees as well as any ad hoc committees as appointed by the Board.
- g) Participates in regular meetings with students, to listen to the students as owners and to relay important NCSAC initiatives to the students.
- h) Thoroughly understands Board package materials, in order to actively participate in monthly Board of Directors meetings.
- i) Participates in the development of long term, strategic planning of NCSAC.
- j) Represents all students.