



The University Students' Council Makes Significant Amendments to Elections Bylaws

Changes to Bylaw #2 impact the referendum and violations policy, financial procedure, and Elections Governance Committee terms of reference



2020 USC Presidential Debate in the UCC (Photo Credit: USC)

For Immediate Release

LONDON, Ontario, December 18, 2023 - The **University Students' Council (USC)** announces substantial changes to Elections policies and procedures for the upcoming Spring Elections in January. The changes aim to make it easier for candidates and voters to engage in the electoral process.

"Through these changes, we are trying to make the focus of Elections the beauty of the democratic process and not the underlying bureaucracy," said Peter Bratic, Chief Returning Officer (CRO), Elections Governance Committee.



"It is for candidates to express themselves freely, and for the voters to have their voice heard through their votes. I am confident that the new Elections process will make things better for everyone involved."

The amendments to [USC Bylaw #2](#), the rules and regulations that govern Elections, were presented to the USC Board of Directors (the Board) and approved at their October meeting. The following policies and procedures were updated by the CRO and USC Advocacy & Government Services department, and approved by the Board in November.

Policy/Procedure	Update
Elections Rules and Violations Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no longer provisions around colour choice/usage • The CRO is no longer required to approve campaign material
Violations Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting allegations of violations is no longer anonymous • Candidates can be issued a written warning, and be disqualified only if they cease to be a student; they interfere with voters, voting procedures, or ballot counting; or if they ignore the written warnings issued by the EGC, resulting in repeated violations of the Bylaw or Policy
Financial Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign spending limits for divisional candidates have increased • CRO can deduct from the reimbursement of those candidates who have violated the elections policy or Bylaw #2 (up to 50% of their eligible reimbursement)
Referendum Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is the only body empowered to initiate a referendum • Council may choose to approve a referendum that would change the mission of the organization. In this instance, Council would be required to first, pass a motion approving in principle the change to the mission of the organization, and second, approve the referendum question.
Elections Governance Committee Terms of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New composition: Chief Returning Officer (CRO), a Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), and up to three Elections Governance Officers (EGO) • There will only be one subcommittee which is solely dedicated to investigating violations
Nominations Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates will be required to submit their political platform. Each platform should have at least three, and at the most, nine principal goals.



The USC's Elections Governance Committee (EGC) is tasked with enforcing Elections policies and procedures. The EGC reports directly to the Board and helps ensure Elections are fair, democratic and transparent. It is led by the CRO with support from the Deputy Returning Officer.

"We play a crucial role in ensuring eligible voters can confidently decide who will lead their student government. Throughout the entire Elections process, the EGC also has many leadership and learning opportunities for candidates, volunteers and voters," said Peter.

During the Spring Elections, students vote to elect the USC President, Faculty Council Presidents, Faculty Councillors, Western Student Senators, and student representatives on Western's Board of Governors.

Students interested in running for an elected position can visit uscelections.ca for more information. Nominations open on January 15, 2024.

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The **University Students' Council** (USC) is a student-led organization that first and foremost exists to advocate for and represent undergraduate students at Western University. Since 1965, we have grown beyond an advocacy organization, becoming one of the largest student governments in Canada and one of the largest nonprofits in London. Each day, we work to support, improve and enhance your student experience, because we believe that students have the power to change the world.

For more information and interview opportunities, please contact:

Petar Bratic

Chief Returning Officer

Elections Governance Committee

cro@westernusc.ca