

ELECTION TOOLKIT

FOR CAMPUS GROUPS

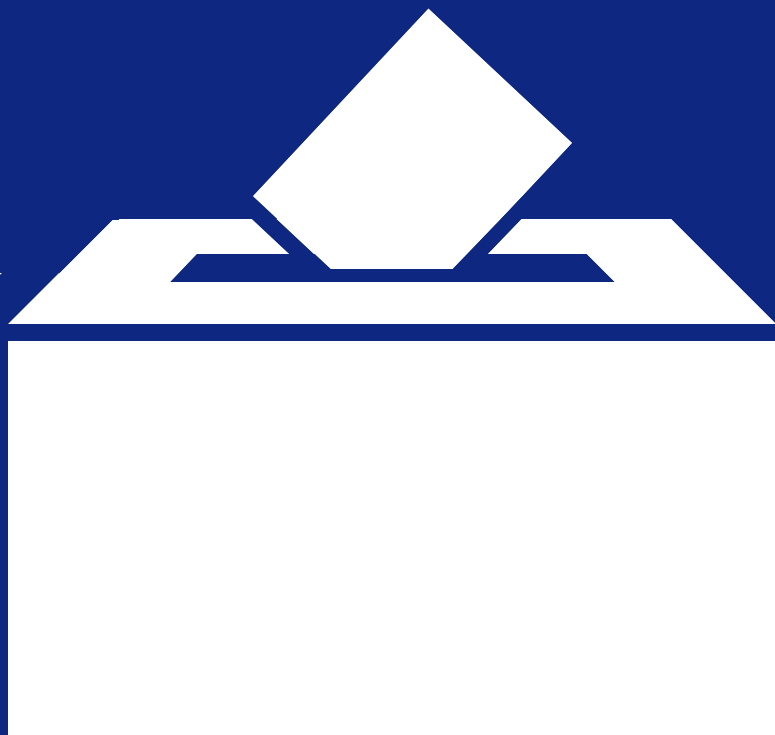


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ABOUT:

This document outlines some best practices regarding campus group elections. While not prescriptive, we highly encourage campus groups to adhere to the general principles and spirit of the practices.

Generally, the USSU requires that campus groups be organized democratically, with mutual decision-making at the forefront of their operations and activities.

For instance, our [sample constitution](#) includes a section outlining elections and a clause about non-autocratic decision-making. Moreover, [CG-2, Campus Groups Operations Policy](#), states that the USSU expects groups to hold elections to remain accountable to their members.

We understand that new groups might find holding elections challenging, and that they may not have the necessary resources to facilitate them. Nonetheless, we do expect groups to *try* to hold elections, and this document is meant as a resource to help in that process.

ELECTION TOOLS:

There are several tools that groups may use to conduct elections. Below is a list of common and easy-to-use ones, although groups are allowed to use whichever tool they feel is appropriate.

PAWS ELECTION SYSTEM

The USask Governance Office hosts the PAWS Election System, which is best used by large groups with easy-to-define membership (i.e., students' unions that represent all students in a college, all Indigenous students, or all International students).

Campus groups that have smaller membership sizes may be required to input electors' NSIDs if they do not belong to an easily-identified group as stated above.

To request use of the system, visit governance.usask.ca/elections and input your group's membership, the election date/period, and other required information, including a group executive's NSID for communication purposes.

If approved by the University Secretary's Office, your election will be hosted in the Vote channel within PAWS, and results will be tallied and emailed to the person who requested access to the system.

MICROSOFT FORMS

As part of your student access to Outlook and the Microsoft suite of office tools, students also gain access to Microsoft Forms, which groups can use to facilitate elections.

Microsoft Forms works similarly to Google's equivalent program, although it allows a group to restrict voting to members of the University of Saskatchewan's ecosystem (i.e., valid NSIDs). Therefore, it is an easy choice for groups looking for more security in their voting procedures.

To access Microsoft Forms, visit forms.office.com and sign in to your USask account. From there, you can create the form as you see fit, with a number of settings geared towards voting and, especially important online, accessibility.

GOOGLE FORMS:

Campus groups have access to a Google account through the ratification process. With this access, groups can use Google Forms to facilitate elections.

Google Forms is similar to Microsoft Forms, but with fewer security measures. For instance, there is no option to limit responses to USask accounts only. Despite this, Google Forms is a widely-understood program that many of your voters will already know how to use. You can require respondents to sign in to their Google accounts to limit responses to one per user, if you wish.

To access Google Forms, visit docs.google.com/forms and sign in to your group's @ussu.ca account. You can then create the form, inputting election-related questions.

You can also link the responses to a spreadsheet for easier reading, which also allows you to make charts and other visualizations of the votes.

IN-PERSON VOTING:

Should groups wish, they may hold their elections using in-person voting, usually at an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

In person voting for campus groups is most often facilitated in one of two ways: 1) Secret Ballot or 2) a Show of Hands vote.

Secret Ballot voting means that each voter fills out a ballot with their preferred candidate that is counted in secret. After the count, the results are announced by the meeting chair.

A Show of Hands vote is a common form of voting in Robert's Rules of Order. In this format, the chair asks for voters to indicate their preference as "in favour," "against," and "abstaining" by raising their hands.

Secret Ballot voting requires that the number of votes is recorded, whereas a Show of Hands vote does not. No matter what, the outcome of the vote should be recorded in the meeting minutes, with the elected candidates indicated.

OTHER TOOLS:

Campus groups are not required to use any of the tools listed above. So long as the group conducts elections in some recorded manner, the election meets USSU policy requirements.

When in doubt about your election procedures, email campus.groups@ussu.ca for help.

BEST PRACTICES:

To prepare your group for elections, consider the following best practices followed by the USSU:

1. Advertise the elections and candidate nominations ahead of time
2. Let candidates think about running and give voters enough time to think about how they will cast their ballot.
3. Have clear rules ready in advance. Expectations should be obvious and placed in your group's constitution.

ELECTION CHECKLIST:

- Prepare and advertise the election format in line with your group's constitution and/or bylaws

- Appoint a person to supervise the election
This person should be a neutral third party, having no vested interest in the outcome.

- Release nomination forms/call
These should be advertised to all members of the group who are eligible to run for election.

- Have a complaints procedure ready should something go wrong
Make sure that candidates and voters are aware of these rules and procedures.

- Have election results ready to share with the USSU for when your group applies for ratification.
Election results should include the total number of votes cast for each candidate, as well as the overall number of votes cast.

- Do not interfere in the election.
Current group executives have particular influence over their group. Do not use that influence to interfere.

UPLOADING RESULTS

When your group applies for ratification, you will need to upload election results to show who your executive members are and that they were duly elected by members.

To upload results, log in to the USSUhub, navigate to the ratification application tab, then to the Governance Docs tab. Drag and drop the file containing your group's election results into the applicable box, and you are good to go!

If your group needs assistance with this, please contact the VP Operations & Finance.

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