



Subject:	Referenda Policy of the Dalhousie Student Union
Date Passed by Council:	
Last Date Revised:	November 23, 2016
Expiration Date:	
Committee:	

**NOTE: All terms will hold the same definition as outlined in the Dalhousie Student Union Constitution.**

1) SCOPE

- a. The provisions of this Policy shall apply to Dalhousie Student Union referenda.

2) DEFINITIONS

- a. Spokesperson – means the Member of the Union chosen by a referendum campaign team to act as the official spokesperson for the team’s campaign and as the team’s liaison with the Elections Committee.
- b. Volunteer – means an individual, other than the spokesperson, registered with a particular campaign team in a referendum campaign.
- c. Campaign – refers to a coordinated effort to elect any candidate or to pass or defeat any referenda during the Union’s elections.
- d. Campaigning: advertising by any campus medium (including class talks) or the distribution and/or posting of any material including but not limited to social media platforms designed to influence voters.
- e. Campaign worker – a person who has been asked by a candidate or referendum campaign and has agreed to assist that candidate or campaign with campaigning in any capacity.
- f. Official polling station – any polling station, whether stationary or mobile, operated by the Elections Committee or Elections Committee volunteers.
- g. Resource – any material or asset that provides a benefit to a person or organization.
- h. Business Hours – shall refer to the hours between 8:00am - 8:00pm Atlantic Standard Time

3) UNION MEMBERS’ ELIGIBILITY

- a. Any Union member may serve as a Spokesperson. It is the responsibility of the Chief Returning Officer to authenticate student status and Spokesperson eligibility with the Registrar's Office or Student Accounts. Members serving as a campaign Spokesperson may not sit on the Elections Committee.

#### 4) REFERENDUM REGISTRATION

- a. A referendum to increase Union Fees over and above the rate of increase of the Canadian Consumer Price Index must adhere to the regulations laid out in s. 9 of the DSU By-Laws.
- b. Members wishing to register a society levy referendum question in the general election must adhere to the regulations laid out in s. 9 of the DSU By-Laws.

#### 5) CAMPAIGN REGULATIONS

##### a. General Rules

- i. No campaigning shall take place prior to the campaign period as established by the Chief Returning Officer.
- ii. The foregoing shall not impede any officer or member of the Dalhousie Student Union from carrying out all duties reasonably incident to their portfolio.
- iii. For the purpose of running a referendum the Union shall be permitted to use its official multimedia platforms and website to promote their referendum during campaign period. Any oppositional campaign to the Union referendum must also be granted to the Union's multimedia platform.
- iv. The Chief Returning Officer shall set the date and time that campaigning is to cease and set the yearly parameters regulating post-campaigning.
- v. Referendum campaigns shall be responsible for the actions of their campaign workers as they relate to campaign violations.
- vi. Campaigns must submit the names of all campaign workers to the Chief Returning Officer no later than 12 pm on the day prior to the commencement of campaign period.
- vii. Under extenuating circumstances, if a person becomes or ceases to be a campaign worker after the deadline mentioned above, the Elections Committee must be notified immediately via e-mail and a reasonable explanation, as determined by the Elections Committee, must be provided.
- viii. There shall be no campaigning of any kind at any of the University Libraries, on-campus bars or residences except where the Elections Committee is hosting an official elections event.
- ix. Campaigning shall be restricted to Dalhousie University campuses, only. Public sidewalks adjoining campus buildings are considered for the purposes of this policy to be part of the University.

##### b. Poster Regulations

- i. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief Returning Officer and the Elections Committee to secure poster display space in as many university buildings as possible.
  - ii. Poster display spaces secured by the Chief Returning Officer and Elections Committee shall house one poster per candidate and one poster for each registered campaign. These posters shall be grouped, when possible, by position.
    - 1. Poster space shall be distributed evenly at the discretion of the Elections Committee.
  - iii. Posters in the poster display areas shall be the only legal candidate posters.
  - iv. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief Returning Officer and the Elections Committee to obtain and print candidate and campaign posters, display them in regulated poster display spaces and monitor them.
  - v. Candidates and campaigns shall provide the Elections Committee with a maximum of three different posters, of a maximum size determined by the Elections Committee, either by acceptable electronic means or in hard copy. These shall be the posters used by the Elections Committee.
  - vi. All posters shall be taken down by the Elections Committee no earlier than the end of the voting period.
- c. Other Forms of Campaigning
- i. All forms of media may be used during the campaign period except where explicitly prohibited by the Elections Committee. Advertisements placed in The Gazette and The Sextant, however, are subject to limitations by The Gazette and The Sextant to be made clear to candidates and campaign participants by the Chief Returning Officer at their respective forums.
  - ii. Campaign displays and the distribution of literature on campus are subject to the approval of the Elections Committee. All candidates and campaigns shall inform and have the approval of the Chief Returning Officer for any such activity that they plan to undertake.
  - iii. Media restrictions on campaigning shall include:
    - 1. All emails and candidate campaign materials must include a link to the official DSU elections website as stated by the Elections Committee
    - 2. The Elections Committee shall, on a yearly basis set the guidelines for online campaigning that will be available to candidates and registered campaign teams before the beginning of the campaign period.
  - iv. The use of posters or campaign materials within the classroom is forbidden
  - v. Verbal campaigning within the classroom requires the express permission of the presiding faculty member, permission must be given in advance of the in-class campaign and presented to the Chief Returning Officer.

- vi. The use of Union or University facilities not available to all candidates and campaigns is forbidden. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - 1. The Student Union Building's front marquee.
  - 2. The University's 'tiger mascot' costume.
- vii. The use of Society resources by candidates and campaigns is forbidden. This includes, but is not limited to society funds, websites, e-mail accounts and distribution lists.
- viii. The use of stickers is forbidden.
- ix. Handbills shall be no larger than 4.25 inches by 5.5 inches in size.
- x. All candidates are obligated to follow University policy as well as municipal, provincial, and federal laws in the course of campaigning.
- xi. No candidate shall engage in libel, nor distribute material which could be construed as slanderous towards an opponent.
- xii. Any new interpretation or clarification of election rules or policies by either the Chief Returning Officer or Committee shall be noticed to all candidates and the entirety of the Committee within 24 hours of being made. The decision will come into effect once all candidates have been notified.

d. Campaign Expenditures

- i. The total cost of a campaign shall have a value of no more than two hundred dollars (\$200), excluding the cost of printing official posters. The Vice President (Finance and Operations) can provide each candidate and campaign an advance equal to the amount specified in that candidate's or campaign's application projecting their campaign expenses, in any case not to exceed \$200.00, for the purpose of facilitating their campaign. Candidates and campaigns will be required to return unused funds to the Vice President (Finance and Operations) within seven (7) days of the close of the elections period.
- ii. No candidate or campaign shall receive discounts that are not available to all students.
- iii. Any in-kind good or service given to a campaign will be assigned a 'market-value' price as determined by the Elections Committee and included as part of the total campaign spending limit.
- iv. Goods or professional skills belonging to the candidate are exempt from this regulation.
- v. An itemized account of all expenditures must be submitted to the Chief Returning Officer or their appointed agent within twenty-four (24) hours after the closing of the polls, and these accounts must include a written receipt or bill for each separate item of campaign material;
- vi. All candidates who receive more than twenty percent (20%) of the vote in an election race with two or less candidates or more than ten percent (10%) of the vote in an election with three or more candidates will be reimbursed for campaign

expenses up to \$200. For election races with five or more candidates, the Elections Committee may set an alternate threshold, which shall be announced prior to the start of the campaign period.

- vii. Any fines incurred by the candidate will be collected by the VPFO upon the recommendation of the Chief Returning Officer within one (1) week following the close of campaign period.
- viii. Receipts and bills shall be submitted to the Vice President (Finance and Operations) for all expenditures for which candidates seek reimbursement under Section 5(d)(i) above.
- ix. Any infractions of this Regulation by a candidate shall be investigated by the Chief Returning Officer, and candidates and/or their agents in violation of this regulation may be penalized according to the seriousness of the breach, which may result in the candidate owing the DSU funds equivalent to the amount fined by the Chief Returning Officer under section 6 (b) of this policy.

#### 6) REFERENDUM PROCESS

- a. Referenda will run concurrently with the general election period.
- b. Members wishing to register themselves as part of a referendum campaign team, whether the affirmative or oppositional campaign team, shall do so by filling out the standard nomination forms and by attending the public meeting for all campaign teams as set out in this policy.
- c. A member's registration for a team shall be accepted when the spokesperson completes the standard Union registration forms and the Chief Returning Officer is satisfied that the team members do not aim to falsely represent that team by registering for it.
- d. Non-Union members may participate with a registered campaign team. A non-Union member's registration for a team shall be accepted when the non-Union member completes the standard Union registration forms and the Chief Returning Officer and team spokesperson are satisfied that the non-Union member does not aim to falsely represent that team by registering for it.
- e. No member or non-Union member shall register for more than one (1) team for any referendum.
- f. There shall be no more than one (1) registered campaign for each possible answer to a referendum question, excluding the 'spoil' option;
- g. Referendum questions may be accompanied by a brief preamble approved in accordance with By-Law 9.
- h. Each registered campaign team shall select at the time of registration one (1) member to act as the campaign's spokesperson.
- i. A campaign team must apply in writing to the Chief Returning Officer in order to declare a new spokesperson.
- j. A spokesperson shall
  - i. ensure that each volunteer engaged in campaign activities with their team is made aware of all by-laws, rules and regulations;

- ii. ensure that non-Union member volunteers are in compliance with all by-laws, rules and Union Policy.

## 7) VOTING

### a. General Procedures

- i. Voting shall be done using a secret, online ballot.
- ii. The purpose of providing electronic balloting is to increase voter participation by making voting more convenient while ensuring that the process remains anonymous, democratic, and free. Any one member's vote belongs to that member alone – as such, online voting should not be done in a group setting or in the presence of persons who might influence the direction of a member's vote.
- iii. For the days of voting of the election, all Dalhousie University computer rooms and terminals for the purposes of the election shall be considered to be polling stations for the purpose of restricting candidates/campaign worker activity around these sites.
- iv. The Online Voting system shall be in operation continuously from the start of the election until closing of the polls at 9pm on the second day of voting with the exception of system downtime that will occur during the night of Day 1.
- v. Persons elected to the Senate or Board of Governors are subject to approval and appointment by those bodies.
- vi. Each candidate and registered campaign is entitled to see a print-out of the official results from the voting software.
- vii. There shall be no voting by proxy.
  - 1. In the event that a member with a disability requires assistance to use the online voting software, they should seek it from Dalhousie's Accessibility Services rather than the DSU in order to ensure impartial assistance.

## 8) APPEALS OF REFERENDUM RESULTS

- a. Any student may challenge the validity of an election or referendum result in a written submission to the Elections Committee within two (2) school days after the close of voting.
- b. Written submissions appealing election, referendum, or recount results shall contain the appellant's name, student number, telephone number and address, as well as a detailed explanation of the reason(s) for challenging the results.
- c. The Elections Committee shall investigate the appeal and decide on the appropriate action.
- d. No record of vote shall be destroyed until thirty (30) days after the close of voting.