

**Simon Fraser Student Society
2011 General Election and Referenda**

**CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK**

Prepared by the Independent Electoral Commission

For election information, please visit

elections.sfss.ca

Interpretation of Rules

The SFSS Elections & Referenda are governed by a number of documents including By-Laws, Policies, and Rules. These documents may overlap in coverage at times, leading to possible discrepancies. Although every effort is made to minimize such conflicts, some remain. As such, the IEC has adopted the following order of precedence where conflicts between governing documents arise.

- A. Candidates and Referenda campaigns are required to comply with all governing rules to the fullest extent possible. Where two rules are discrepant but compatible – that is, it is possible to comply with both concurrently – both must be satisfied.

- B. When conflicts arise, they will be resolved in favour of the higher-ranked rule, as follows:
 - 1. SFSS Constitution & By-Laws
 - 2. Electoral & Referenda Policy (R-17)
 - i) Other rules, policies, and procedures in the SFSS Policy Manual
 - 3. Candidate Handbook
 - 4. IEC rulings & written all-candidate notices
 - i) These may override the Candidate Handbook if explicitly stated as such
 - ii) These may clarify the meaning and application of the Constitution, By-Laws, or Policies, but will not override them.
 - 5. Directed actions from the IEC or a Commissioner (written or verbal)
 - 6. All other rules or guidelines

- C. The following are not binding but considered highly persuasive:
 - 1. Instructions, notices, or advice posted on the IEC website
 - 2. IEC responses to questions and inquiries
 - 3. IEC rulings in past elections

This document is not a substitute for familiarity with the policies and by-laws governing this election. For more information, candidates should consult the Independent Electoral Commission website at elections.sfss.ca. Information contained within this handbook shall be treated as supplemental to the by-laws and policies of the SFSS. Candidates must abide by all rules contained herein, in addition to those by-laws and policies, as well as any rulings that the IEC makes during the electoral process.

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1. The Independent Electoral Commission

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) consists of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and four Commissioners. The IEC is appointed by the SFSS Board of Directors to handle all SFSS electoral affairs, oversee elections, and ensure compliance with established by-laws, policies and rules. During the election, the IEC is responsible for approving nomination forms and campaign materials, hosting all-candidate debates and addressing any pertinent inquiries. Additional responsibilities include adjudicating complaints, administering the online voting system, and tabulating the results of the election. The IEC is an independent body of the SFSS.

1.1 The Chief Electoral Officer

Appointed for one year, the CEO oversees and coordinates all SFSS elections, by-elections, and referenda, and has the right to attend and speak at all SFSS Board, Forum, and Committee meetings. He or she interviews and recommends applicants for IEC Commissioners, who are then appointed by the Board of Directors. The CEO also provides a comprehensive election report for the Board.

To contact the Chief Electoral Officer, email ceo@sfss.ca or call **778.230.8895**.

2. Getting Started

A prospective board member must first be nominated. After a valid nomination form has been received and approved, the nominee will become an official candidate. If joining a slate (see section 2.4), a nominee must indicate their intention to do so on the nomination form.

Once their nomination forms have been approved, candidates are permitted, and encouraged, to submit a platform to the IEC for publication on its website.

2.1 Getting Nominated

Nomination forms are available from February 21st to March 7th at the following locations:

- The IEC office in Burnaby, located in room 2240 of the Maggie Benston Centre
- The SFSS office in Surrey, Room 3390 (next to the student lounge)
- Online at <http://elections.sfss.ca>

To be nominated, you must gather the support of 10 students eligible to vote for you.

- Executive Officer and At-Large Representative positions require the signatures of 10 SFU students who are active members in good standing of the Society
- Faculty Representative positions require the signatures of 10 SFU students who are members in good standing, and have either:
 - a) Declared a major or minor in the faculty; or
 - b) Enrolled in a class in the faculty during the semester in which the election takes place

Being an 'active member in good standing' of the SFSS means that the person in question is an SFU undergraduate student who is registered in classes during the semester in which the election is held and has paid all the fees that have been levied on their student account. The IEC will verify that the people who signed your nomination form meet this standard – as such, nominees should consider getting more than 10 signatures in case some prove invalid. However, the number of signatures on a nomination form may not exceed 15.

In order to become an official candidate, you must submit a valid nomination form to the IEC by noon on March 7th. **Late entries will not be accepted.**

2.2 Candidate Platforms

The IEC publishes candidate platforms (including pictures) on its website, and each candidate is encouraged to make a submission.

There is no word limit for platforms, although they are subject to the requirements outlined in section 3.2.1 on campaigning materials. As the by-laws and election policy do not permit campaigning during voting period, this is a good opportunity to generate awareness.

Candidates who want their platforms published must submit them by noon on March 8th, and to ensure fairness amongst all candidates, all submissions are final. Subject to approval, the platforms will be made available on the IEC website by March 9th.

2.3 Following the Rules

All candidates must comply with the regulations set out in the SFSS Constitution (“by-laws”), SFSS Policy Manual (“policies”), and the IEC Candidate Handbook (“handbook”).

Candidates should familiarize themselves with these regulations as soon as possible, paying special attention to By-Laws 14, 15, and 17, and Rule 17: Electoral & Referenda Policy. The IEC will enforce these rules rigorously as it is unfair if some candidates follow the rules meticulously while others do not.

As unforeseen issues sometimes arise during the electoral process, the IEC may make a decision regarding a situation mid-election. If such a decision warrants communication to all candidates, the IEC will provide written notice via the email address listed on the candidates’ nomination forms. Some notices may also be posted on the IEC website.

Candidates should contact the IEC for clarification if any election rule seems unclear.

2.4 Slates

Slates are groups of candidates with common electoral platforms and slogans, similar to a political party. However, slates are heavily regulated to ensure fairness to independent candidates.

Candidates who run together on a slate may share a common platform, slogans, themes, and colours. Slates may also create common websites and social media presence. However, candidates running in a slate may not pool resources that count toward the campaign budget, or produce physical campaign materials primarily attributed to the slate. Every candidate’s poster may only identify him or herself, but it could be accompanied by the slate name or logo.

Nominees wishing to run on a slate must indicate this on their nomination forms. Once nomination period ends, a candidate may not join or leave any slates. A candidate may not run on multiple slates. Slate affiliation will not appear beside a candidate’s name on the ballot.

2.5 Registering a Referendum Campaign

Unless otherwise specified, referendum campaigns must follow the same elections rules and procedures as candidates.

In conjunction with an SFSS election or by-election, the IEC oversees referendum questions put forward in one of two ways:

- SFSS Board of Directors or Forum pass a resolution to authorize a referendum question
- A petition signed by no less than 5% of SFU students who are active members in good standing

To be ran concurrent with this election, referendum questions must be received by the IEC before noon of February 23rd. The IEC will announce the referendum questions on March 1st.

The IEC will recognize one official 'yes' campaign and one official 'no' campaign for each referendum question. Those wishing to register as an official 'side' must do so by March 15th. Referendum campaigns will be registered on a first-come first-serve basis beginning on Notice of Referenda on March 1st.

Referendum campaigns are not permitted to endorse candidates, but candidates are allowed to endorse referenda.

3. Campaigning

The campaign period will last from March 7th to 21st. Campaigning outside of this period is strictly prohibited (pursuant to both the SFSS by-laws and the election policy). Campaigning is defined broadly – candidates who are unsure of what constitutes campaigning should contact the IEC.

3.1 Budget

The campaign budget is \$50 for each candidate, and \$300 for registered referendum campaigns. This will be fully reimbursed by the SFSS upon submission of a detailed statement of campaign expenses with accompanying receipts to the Chief Electoral Officer within 72 hours of the end of the voting period. It is the responsibility of the candidates to keep track of all receipts and expenses. Outside organizations and individuals may not donate money, goods, or services that count toward the budget to your campaign.

Any money spent for the purpose of promoting a candidate counts toward the budget. Examples include any costs associated with printing posters and flyers, making buttons, or producing or acquiring other promotional materials. Tools used to make or post campaign materials, such as stationary, tape, or software, do not count toward the budget, nor do costs that are merely incidental to the campaign, such as those related to the use of a vehicle.

Costs for materials printed at the SFSS Copy Centre are counted directly against the campaign budget, so candidates will not have to pay in cash. However, candidates must still keep track of their expenses at the Copy Centre, and remain responsible for staying within the overall budget. Likewise, candidates whose only expenses are Copy Centre printing costs must nevertheless submit an expense statement, but need not submit receipts.

In addition to printed posters, candidates may also create them by hand. They will be assessed against your budget at 5 cents each for 8.5" X 11", or 10 cents each for 11" X 17". Each candidate may also create one handmade banner, which does not count against the budget. If you would like to create a banner, or would like to create handmade materials of other sizes, please speak to the IEC first. Any printed material that is incorporated into handmade posters must still be printed at the Copy Centre and will be charged regular Copy Centre prices.

If you are unsure about what constitutes a campaign expense, contact the IEC for clarification.

3.2 Campaign Materials

Campaign materials are "anything designed to promote or to raise awareness of the candidacy of an individual." Candidates should be aware that the IEC interprets this broadly.

Campaign materials must be clearly attributable to a particular campaign, and must not endorse other candidates. All materials **must be approved by the IEC** before they are distributed or posted. Once approved, candidates will be responsible for their campaign materials, including those that they did not personally post but were posted on their behalf. Unapproved campaign materials will be removed.

The IEC has discretionary powers to adjudicate issues relating to the distribution, production and content of campaign materials.

3.2.1 Approval Process

The IEC must approve all campaign materials prior to posting or distribution. Materials will be reviewed in the order they are received.

Printed materials requiring approval should be emailed to **ceo+materials@sfss.ca** in a **flattened PDF format** (the Copy Centre will not accept other formats). Candidates must then await notice of approval or rejection. If approved, the IEC will forward the file to the SFSS Copy Centre Coordinator, and the candidate may then place an order in person at the Copy Centre. The Coordinator will only print posters forwarded by the IEC; candidates may not bring poster designs directly to the Copy Centre.

The IEC will begin approving and forwarding materials to the Copy Center at the opening of campaign period. Submit designs early to facilitate quick printing. The second day of campaigning, March 8th, is a statutory holiday for the Copy Centre Coordinator. Do not expect any printing services on this day.

The IEC must approve all hand-made materials in person, it is highly recommended to have a sample approved before producing numerous copies. Candidates wishing to use hand-made campaign materials should make an appointment with a Commissioner. Every hand-made poster will be stamped and numbered by the IEC, and candidates will be issued a receipt to help track spending.

If it is shown that someone has been tearing down posters (whether printed or hand-made), the IEC may allow the affected candidate to replace them with a number of handmade posters, without further deductions from the campaign budget.

Campaign materials may not:

- Be libellous, inflammatory, made in bad faith, in bad taste, or discriminatory
- Contain any foul, obscene, sexual, homophobic, or discriminatory language
- Infringe on other people's rights
- Promote violence or suggestive themes

Negative campaigning discourages participation in SFSS elections and is therefore not allowed. Attacking other candidates may result in penalties.

The IEC has the right to withhold approval of any campaign materials, or apply penalties to candidates using inappropriate campaign materials.

3.2.2 SFSS Copy Centre Rules

While it is understandable that candidates want to obtain their posters as soon as possible, there are strict guidelines concerning the use of SFSS Copy Centre services in order to avoid potential problems.

1. No candidates are allowed past the gates in the Copy Centre.
2. Do not call, email, or drop-by the Copy Centre to inquire about the status of the order. The Copy Centre provides email or phone call notification when posters are ready for pick up.

Please be patient, as the Copy Centre is extremely busy during campaign period. Speed of printing depends on the size of the order and the complexity of the design. Avoid intense graphics for faster results.

3. Posters may only be printed on 8.5" X 11" or 11" X 17" paper. Several colours are available and others can be ordered at the discretion of the Copy Centre Coordinator. Posters may be printed in colour or black-and-white and are priced accordingly.
4. Candidates are to be courteous and polite at all times toward the Copy Centre Coordinator. Yelling, swearing, threatening, or rudeness will result in a call to SFU Security and to the IEC. Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated and may be considered an electoral infraction.

The IEC requires that all black & white posters must be printed on coloured paper. Only colour prints may use white paper. The IEC may approve usage of white paper for specific purposes, such as graphics to be incorporated into handmade materials, please speak to a commissioner for permission.

3.2.3 Permissible Locations

Each campus has different rules regarding campaign materials.

At **SFU Burnaby**, posters are normally confined to bulletin boards around campus. The SFSS receives special permission during campaign period to allow candidates to post on concrete. Facilities Management has outlined a number of requirements that all materials must adhere to:

- May only be posted on concrete or bulletin boards (e.g. not on wood, glass, or painted surfaces)
- May only be secured with tape or staples
- May not be placed more than 8 ft. above the ground
- May not be attached to the floors
- Drawing with chalk is strictly prohibited
- May not be posted anywhere that is exposed to rain

Posters must be securely attached to surfaces. Filament tape works very well for SFU's concrete and is highly recommended, rolls are purchasable from the SFSS Copy Centre.

Facilities Management has the right to remove any materials that violate the above requirements, and the candidate's student account could also be charged for removal and clean-up costs.

Campaign materials may not be posted off-campus, in SFSS spaces, or areas that not all candidates have access to.

Campaign materials **may not be posted in the following locations:**

- Bathrooms
- Buses
- Cafeterias
- Graduate Lounge in the MBC
- Higher Grounds Coffee Shop
- Highland Pub
- International Student Lounge
- Libraries
- Out on Campus
- Strand Hall
- Student Residences
- Student Society Offices & Spaces
- The Underground
- Women's Centre

Campaign materials found in these locations will be removed and may result in a penalty.

At **SFU Surrey**, candidates may only place posters on three sets of designated poster racks. The racks will be placed at the top of the escalators on the third floor, between Galleria 3 and Podium 3, and in front of the library entrance. SFU Surrey prohibits posting of campaign materials on any other surfaces, including bulletin boards. **Only one poster is permitted, per candidate, per set of poster racks.**

At **SFU Vancouver**, materials may only be posted on bulletin boards not reserved for a particular department, and **only one poster is permitted, per candidate, per board.**

All campaign materials must be removed by 11:59 PM on March 21st.

3.2.4 Electronic Campaigning

Candidates must have reasonable grounds to suspect that the recipients would like to receive information about their candidacy before using email or social media websites to contact them. Facebook Events, or similar social media functions, may only send messages to those who have accepted the event invitation – not to everyone ever invited. **Do not use mailing lists to contact people about your campaign.** Candidates who spam will be penalized.

Websites, Facebook Events, or other online campaigning materials must be visible to all SFSS members. Prior approval is not required for online materials, but links to them must be emailed to **ceo+web@sfss.ca** as soon as the materials are published. The IEC will monitor these materials on an ongoing basis.

All electronic campaign materials must be removed by the end of campaign period. The only exemptions are the candidate platforms on the IEC website and anything on your personal social media profile pages. Websites, Facebook Events, etc. must be removed by the end of campaign period.

Facebook Groups

Do not create Facebook Groups, as they are near impossible to remove at the end of campaign period. You should use Facebook Events or Pages instead.

3.3 All-Candidates Debates

The IEC will host three all-candidate debates this election: two on Burnaby campus for executive and faculty representative positions, and one at Surrey campus. These will be recorded and made available for viewing online.

Each candidate will have an opportunity to give a brief opening statement. The IEC will prepare at least one question for each candidate, and each candidate will have a chance to direct one question to a fellow candidate. Audience questions will also be taken as time permits.

4. Complaints

Complaints are claims that a candidate has violated one or more of the rules governing the election. Any member of the SFSS may submit a complaint. In order for the complaint to be considered by the IEC, the person making the complaint must submit an official complaint form. The person submitting the form must provide some evidence that a non-trivial rule violation has occurred. The IEC has the right to reject frivolous complaints, and repeated submission of frivolous complaints may be penalized.

4.1 Procedure

If the IEC accepts the complaint, the adjudication process will begin on the next business day. In most cases, a copy of the complaint will be sent to the candidate in question, and the IEC will schedule a hearing to adjudicate the complaint. Although many hearings will be the result of complaints submitted by candidates or other students, the IEC may also initiate the adjudication process should it discover any serious breaches of the rules. Decisions will be communicated in writing to candidates within 48 hours of the hearing.

The IEC may adjudicate infractions of rules outlined in this handbook without scheduling a hearing.

4.2 Appeals

Candidates should familiarize themselves with the circumstances under which appeals are allowed (SFSS Policy Manual: Rule 17, s.14.e). Appeals must be based on new factual information. This means evidence that was not available at the time of the original hearing. Both the IEC's decisions on whether or not to hear an appeal, and its ruling on any appeals which it chooses to hear are final.

4.3 Penalties

Under SFSS policy and by-laws, the IEC may fine a candidate up to \$100 or disqualify them for infractions. In addition to these penalties, the IEC will consider verbal warnings, issuance of a letter of reprimand, directed actions, removal of some or all campaign materials, or deductions from the campaign budget, as is appropriate. In extraordinary circumstances the IEC may tailor specific penalties to fit the situation. Repeated violations will be subject to an escalating series of sanctions.

5. Results

Unofficial results will be tabulated at midnight on the last day of voting. These results will be announced in the SFSS conference rooms at 12:15 AM on March 25th, and will also be made available on the IEC's website shortly thereafter. The results become official once the Board ratifies them, which will take place after any outstanding appeals have been resolved.

6. Important Dates

Monday, February 21		Nomination period begins
Wednesday, February 23	12pm (noon)	Deadline for the submission of referendum questions
Monday, March 7	12pm (noon)	Nomination period ends Campaign period begins
Tuesday, March 8	10:30am	Candidate Information Session #1 <i>See the candidate nomination package for details.</i>
	12pm (noon)	Deadline for submission of candidate platforms and photos
Wednesday, March 9	5:30pm	Candidate Information Session #2 <i>See the candidate nomination package for details.</i>
Monday, March 14	3:30pm	Executive candidates' debate (Burnaby – Saywell Atrium)
Wednesday, March 16	3:30pm	Faculty candidates' debate (Burnaby – Saywell Atrium)
Thursday, March 17	1:30pm	All candidates' debate (Surrey – Mezzanine)
Monday, March 21	11:59pm	Campaign period ends
March 22, 23, 24		Online voting
Friday, March 25	12:15am	Unofficial results announced

**If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Chief Electoral Officer at
ceo@sfss.ca or 778.230.8895**

elections.sfss.ca