

# Student Assembly Elections Q&A

*Finalized April 4, 2021*

## **Q: Who manages Student Assembly elections?**

A: Per SUNY Board of Trustee regulations and Student Assembly Bylaws, the Election Chair designated by the President – traditionally the Parliamentarian – manages the election process (in the event they are not themselves candidates for office), with various certifications managed by System Administration.

## **Q: What positions are on the ballot?**

A: Officers: Student Assembly President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary; and Executive Committee members as follows:

- Three undergraduate representatives from University Centers
- Three representatives from other state-operated campuses
- Two representatives from technology colleges and/or statutory colleges
- Two graduate representatives from University Centers
- Six representatives from community colleges

## **Q: Am I qualified to run for one of these positions?**

A: For 2021 elections, any student who is a graduate or undergraduate student enrolled for credit at any SUNY institution may run for any of these positions so long as they meet any eligibility requirements to serve on their campus student government organization. System Administration verifies eligibility for all candidates with campuses after nomination forms are submitted. Candidates must have a 2.5 GPA, with written confirmation from their campus.

For 2022 and future elections, eligibility will remain the same as previously stated for the four officer positions. However, eligibility for the 16 Executive Committee representative positions will require that candidates also be a current Student Assembly voting delegate for their campus.

## **Q: What if I am qualified but my campus administration is slow to respond to the request for verification?**

A: Contact System Administration Student Assembly Advisor Robert Anderson for immediate assistance on this matter at [Robert.anderson@suny.edu](mailto:Robert.anderson@suny.edu) or 518-320-1148.

## **Q: Do I need to be a Student Assembly member to run for a position?**

A: No.

## **Q: How do I get on the ballot?**

A: Interested candidates do not need to be a current Student Assembly member, but must have their candidacy nominated by any Student Assembly member from any SUNY campus who is a currently certified voting delegate.

Nominations are due to the Student Assembly Parliamentarian on or before April 9. Nomination forms are available at [https://96b4cd6e-7352-4023-8996-01c269f81c68.filesusr.com/ugd/19f499\\_9d2443423db04f27af21090f5cb00116.pdf](https://96b4cd6e-7352-4023-8996-01c269f81c68.filesusr.com/ugd/19f499_9d2443423db04f27af21090f5cb00116.pdf)

Eligibility must be confirmed as outlined above.

**Q: Can I be removed as a candidate from the ballot?**

A: The Parliamentarian may only remove candidates if they do not meet qualifications as outlined above.

**Q: When are nomination forms due?**

A: In 2021, nomination forms are due on or before April 9 to allow for full consideration and the opportunity to cure any deficiencies in eligibility documentation. Student Assembly Bylaws require that nominations be accepted “from the floor” on the date of the election, however for any such nominations to be considered by the Parliamentarian, they must have the complete and uncontroverted eligibility documentation. Any incomplete or inaccurate documentation automatically nullifies the nomination.

**Q: If I submitted my nomination form on or before April 9, and there is an error, do I have time to fix it?**

A: Yes, the Parliamentarian will review nomination forms, and provide the forms to System Administration for verification. Any concerns will be shared with the candidate in advance and any deficiencies must be remedied prior to the date of the election.

**Q: What are the responsibilities of the elected positions?**

A: Detailed responsibilities can be found at [https://96b4cd6e-7352-4023-8996-01c269f81c68.filesusr.com/ugd/f298b6\\_754f9ca46ee94caebfeb6f664c6bee6e.pdf](https://96b4cd6e-7352-4023-8996-01c269f81c68.filesusr.com/ugd/f298b6_754f9ca46ee94caebfeb6f664c6bee6e.pdf)

Past officers regularly volunteer to speak with candidates; the Parliamentarian and System Administration can help facilitate these conversations if desired.

**Q: Do elected positions receive stipends?**

A: Yes, the four elected officers may receive stipends, subject to availability of funding. The Student Assembly has allocated the following stipends (paid on a prorated monthly basis) for the current budget year:

1. President: \$8,000
2. Vice President: \$6,000
3. Treasurer: \$5,000
4. Secretary: \$4,500

**Q: Do all representatives receive stipends?**

A: Campus representatives may receive stipends, subject to the availability of funding. Stipend recipients and totals are determined on an annual basis and may change. In 2021, the 16 representatives of the Student Assembly who serve on the Executive Committee were provided the option to receive a stipend.

**Q: What is the length of service for the elected officers?**

A: One year, which runs from June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022.

**Q: Do elected officers need to maintain a minimum GPA?**

A: Yes, if an elected officer's cumulative GPA drops below 2.25 at any time during their service, their position will automatically become vacant and the process for filling that position as outlined in the governing regulations and bylaws will begin.

**Q: Are candidates for any of the officer positions permitted to play a role in the elections process?**

A: No. Bylaws prohibit candidates for office from participating in the election process in any way other than through their own campaign activities. Election disputes are managed by the Parliamentarian, with matters concerning regulations or Bylaws handled at the direction of the SUNY Office of General Counsel. True factual disputes are to be adjudicated by the full Rules Committee.

**Q: When is the Student Assembly election for officers?**

A: [Sunday, April 25 \(Time TBD – midday expected\)](#)

**Q: How do I participate?**

A: The election is open for public viewing with a livestream managed by the Student Assembly. However, only voting delegates as defined by SUNY rules and Student Assembly Bylaws may cast ballots.

**Q: How do I know if I am a voting delegate?**

A: Per Student Assembly Bylaws, a voting delegate must be:

1. A graduate or undergraduate student enrolled for credit at any SUNY campus;
2. Elected to serve as a voting delegate by their campus student body; and
3. In good academic standing, with an overall GPA of at least 2.0, which must be confirmed by System Administration in writing from your campus.

Each member institution has one voting representative for each 4,000 full-time equivalent students or fraction thereof. Voting delegates are confirmed in advance of each election by System Administration in coordination with campuses.

**Q: How many voting delegates comprise the Student Assembly?**

A: Per 2021 enrollment data, there are currently 119 voting delegates which make up the SUNY Student Assembly. Only these members elect the 4 Officers, as well as the Representatives within each respective caucus. Each campus is guaranteed a minimum of 1 delegate (the campus SGA president) for the first 4,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment (or fraction thereof) of students, with an additional delegate provided to campuses for each additional 4,000 FTE enrollment (or fraction thereof) of

students. Prior to the start of spring semester when enrollment data is finalized, System Administration notifies each campus of their total number of delegates, so campus SGAs can plan and conduct elections accordingly per SUNY Board of Trustees rules.

**Q: Are appointed Student Assembly members qualified to cast votes?**

A: No, while any student may serve in an appointed Student Assembly position at the recommendation of the President and confirmation of the Executive Committee, only students elected by their campus as a voting delegate may cast ballots.

**Q: Who comprises the “Executive Board”?**

A: Only the 4 elected officers.

**Q: Who comprises the “Executive Committee”?**

A: Per SUNY Board of Trustees Regulations, the Executive Board, 16 Elected Representatives, and the Executive Cabinet Members (Chairs of Committees, Directors, etc.). Only members of the Executive Board and elected representative have Executive Committee voting rights.

**Q: Do I need to be present during the election to cast my vote, or can I submit my vote in advance?**

A: You cannot submit a vote in advance. If you are concerned that you will not be able to be present during some or all of the election process, you can select an “alternate” voter from your campus to represent you in your place. Be sure to fully document in writing any alternate designation at least 24 hours in advance with the Parliamentarian. Any alternate must be verified in good standing by System Administration with their campus in advance of the election.

**Q: Can other delegates vote on my behalf (“proxy”)?**

A: Representatives must act in person and not by proxy. However, an “alternate” is not considered a proxy and has all the voting rights assigned to a representative.

In other words, as defined in SUNY regulations, if you are a representative planning to vote for Candidate A for President, but cannot participate in the election, you cannot grant a specific “proxy” to another delegate to bind them into casting a vote in your place for Candidate A. You can select an “alternate” voter in advance, to represent your campus in your place (any qualified student), but that alternate voter will have *all* voting rights assigned to a representative and can cast the vote for any eligible candidate they so choose.

**Q: Is the vote a silent or public ballot?**

A: Under the Bylaws, all elections must use a secret ballot, and if no person receives a majority of votes cast, a run-off election is to be conducted immediately to choose from the two candidates receiving the largest number of votes cast.

**Q: What if I have technological access issues that prevent my participation in the election?**

A: System Administration previously provided laptops to Student Assembly Executive Committee members who raised access concerns, and may help to ensure every voting delegate has access during

the election. Any voting delegate with these concerns should contact Robert Anderson (information above) as soon as possible for assistance as request may take time to process.

**Q: What happens upon conclusion of the election?**

A: Under the Bylaws, the ballots will be counted by the President, Secretary, Parliamentarian, and a representative from System Administration. If any of the aforementioned officers are a candidate in the election they shall recuse themselves from validating that set of ballots as candidates are not to play any role in the management of the elections process for their election race. The Student Assembly Parliamentarian and System-designated advisor will confirm the validity of votes immediately upon conclusion of voting but before winners are announced. Once that occurs, the Parliamentarian then submits formal written certification to System Administration and the SUNY Board of Trustees.

**Q: Is training available for elected officers?**

A: Yes, under section 2.02(e) of the Student Assembly Bylaws, the President is responsible for organizing a transition of officers between the time of election and June 1st.

**Q: Does the Parliamentarian always oversee elections?**

A: As per Student Assembly Bylaws section 2.02(d), the President is responsible for chairing the election of the elected officers or designating a chair in their stead in the event they are a candidate.

**Q: If I am told that I am ineligible to run for an officer position, but meet all necessary criteria, what recourse do I have for appealing the decision of the Parliamentarian?**

A: Any factual election disputes should be adjudicated by the Rules Committee. If a student wishes to appeal a decision of the Rules Committee they should contact Student Assembly Parliamentarian Meaghan Irving at Meaghan.irving@sunysa.org. The SUNY Office of the General Counsel is available to provide guidance in the event of rule or Bylaw disputes.

**Q: Does one need to be a Student Assembly representative to receive a Student Assembly stipend?**

A: No. All members of the Executive Committee were provided the option to receive a stipend.

**Q: Who verifies and processes stipends?**

A: Currently, once approved by the Student Assembly Executive Committee, stipends are verified and processed by System Administration in accordance with processes established by the Office of the New York State Comptroller.

**Q: What is the overall annual budget?**

A: The current budget for the SUNY Student Assembly is \$70,000.