



Concordia University of Edmonton

**Students' Association**

## ELECTIONS & REFERENDUM POLICY

CONCORDIA STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY OF EDMONTON

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

2024-2025

**Concordia Students' Association**  
**Election & Referendum**

**Policy: CSA Elections & Referendum**

**Category: Organizational Policies**

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**1.0 General Provisions**

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**1.1. Definitions**

- 1.1.1. **By-election** is when another election is held to fill elected offices that have become vacant.
- 1.1.2. **Campaign Materials** are materials used by a candidate and all those acting on his/her behalf in campaigning.
- 1.1.3. **Campaigning** is the process undertaken by a candidate seeking election, whereby that candidate aims to promote his or her desire to hold office and what he or she intends to do if elected. Campaigning also encompasses the process undertaken by a candidate who seeks to influence the outcome of a particular referendum question.
- 1.1.4. The **Electoral Returning Officer (ERO)** is an active member of the CSA elected by the General Council to organize and oversee the annual election of the Executive Council and any necessary by-elections.
- 1.1.5. A **candidate** is a qualified person who seeks to obtain an elected position and has passed the nomination stage or a person who seeks and registers with the ERO for a specific outcome for a referendum question.
- 1.1.6. The **election/election period runs** from the day the election nominations open until the election results become official.
- 1.1.7. A **referendum** is a general vote by the electorate on a single question referred to them for a direct decision.
- 1.1.8. **Unions** are identified by their distinctive population and represent academic faculties at Concordia. They are directly responsible to the CSA VP Finance and General Council and are governed by the CSA's By-laws and policies.
- 1.1.9. **Social Media** is any social media or professional platform where the candidate has an account.

**1.2. Applicable Legislation and Bylaws**

- 1.2.1. All policies and procedures of the Concordia Students' Association (CSA) are subject to the provisions of Alberta's *Societies Act* (as amended), CSA Objects, and the CSA Bylaws. If there is a conflict between the requirements of any CSA policy or procedure and the provisions of the *Societies Act* or CSA Objects or CSA Bylaws, then the provisions of the *Societies Act* or CSA Objects or CSA Bylaws shall prevail.
- 1.2.2. The policies and provisions herein shall apply to:

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- a) The CSA holds all elections, by-elections, and referendums.
- 1.2.3. The policies and provisions herein are subject to change without notice to CSA members. It is up to the CSA members to ensure they are aware of any changes to this policy.

## **2.0 Governing Authority**

### **2.1. Electoral Returning Officer (ERO)**

- 2.1.1. Is elected each academic year by the General Council, is a current Active CSA member, selected at the first General Council meeting of the semester, and is to serve the entire academic semester.
- 2.1.1.1. The ERO may request assistance to help fulfill all required duties.
- 2.1.1.1.1. Anyone assisting the ERO must remain impartial and help enforce the CSA bylaws, policies, and procedures.
- 2.1.1.1.2. Those that can assist the ERO are the following:
- Executive Director,
  - CSA General/Executive Councilors that will not be running or have a conflict of interest with anyone in the election,
  - Any CSA General Member that will not be running or have a conflict of interest with anyone in the election.
- 2.1.2. The ERO shall be impartial to all members and accountable to the General Council for the proper conduct of electoral processes.
- 2.1.3. The ERO must enforce all CSA bylaws, policies, and procedures for an election or by-election.
- 2.1.4. The ERO is responsible for reviewing and taking disciplinary action during the election if an event requires such action.

### **2.2. General Council (GC)**

- 2.2.1. Is responsible for ratifying the election results from all elections and referendums.
- 2.2.2. Is responsible for selecting the Electoral Returning Officer at the first General Council meeting of the year.

### **2.3. Executive Council (EC)**

- 2.3.1. The Executive Council is responsible for marketing and

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communicating the election, by-election, referendum, and open positions.

- 2.3.2. The Executive Council is responsible for selecting the appropriate voting platform and making necessary payments.

## **3.0 Election Dates**

### **3.1. Purpose**

- 3.1.1. This policy is designed to give Executive and General Councils insight into setting up election dates.

### **3.2. Policy**

- 3.2.1. A general election of the Executive Council shall take place in the Winter semester of each year.
  - 3.2.1.1. Faculty Representatives shall be included in the general election, except for the following After-Degree Representatives, which are outlined in their Union constitutions:
    - 3.2.1.1.1. Education After-Degree Representative(s)
    - 3.2.1.1.2. Environmental Health After-Degree Representative(s)
  - 3.2.1.2. Special Student Group Representatives must apply for a seat on the General Council every academic year.
    - 3.2.1.2.1. Special Student Groups can be found in the CUE Recognized Student Group Policy.
    - 3.2.1.2.2. Special Student Groups can apply for one (1) seat as defined in Bylaw 9.5.3.
    - 3.2.1.2.3. The CSA General Council Recognized Student Group Application Form provides the procedure for applying for a student group.
- 3.2.2. Announcement of the General Election will be at least twenty-one (21) days in advance and at most forty (40) days before the second Monday in March.
  - 3.2.2.1. The ERO can select the election dates at the start of the semester in consultation with the Executive Council.
  - 3.2.2.2. The General Council must select the date for by-elections and announce it at least fifteen (15) days before the voting day.

## **4.0 Eligibility**

### **4.1. Purpose**

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4.1.1. This policy lets potential nominees know if they can run for office.

### **4.2. Policy**

4.2.1. To be eligible to hold a position on the Executive or General Council, a student must:

**4.2.1.1. At all times:**

4.2.1.2. Be a CSA member.

4.2.1.3. Be a student enrolled in three (3) credits at Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE).

4.2.1.3.1. In extenuating circumstances, this requirement may be waived by a General Council vote.

4.2.1.4. Shall only represent the Faculty, Faculties, or After-Degree they are currently enrolled in if they are not an Executive Councilor.

4.2.1.5. Not be on Academic Probation.

4.2.1.5.1. The Registrar will report to the CSA after every term to confirm this standard has been maintained.

4.2.1.6. There are no academic discipline cases against them in the current academic year.

4.2.1.7. Have no Non-Academic Disciplinary cases against them.

**4.2.1.8. At the time of nomination:**

4.2.1.8.1. Be a student enrolled in at least three (3) credits per semester at Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE) when they apply.

4.2.1.9. For Executive Council nominees:

4.2.1.9.1. Maintained a minimum 2.0 GPA while attending Concordia University of Edmonton at the time of application.

4.2.1.9.2. Maintained an overall 2.8 GPA.

4.2.1.10. For General Council Nominees:

4.2.1.10.1. Have maintained a minimum 2.0 GPA while attending Concordia University of Edmonton at the time of application.

4.2.1.10.2. Maintained an overall 2.5 GPA.

## **5.0 Nominations**

### **5.1. Purpose**

5.1.1. This policy is designed to help the CSA and the ERO facilitate

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nominations.

## **5.2. Policy**

- 5.2.1. Nominations must be open for a minimum of four (4) days.
- 5.2.2. Any CSA General Member can nominate or be nominated if they are eligible.
  - 5.2.2.1. Current CSA Executive and General Councilors cannot nominate other CSA Members for positions. If they desire to seek re-election for a different or the same position, they must get a non-executive/General Councilor to nominate them.
- 5.2.3. Potential nominees must obtain a nomination package and complete it by the time and date determined by the ERO that includes:
  - The Nomination form
    - Which includes the name and signature of the person making the nomination.
    - Twenty-five (25) signatures from CSA Members (any undergraduate or after-degree student currently enrolled at CUE) that endorse the nominees' candidacy.
  - A signature from CUE Student Accounts acknowledging the nominee has no outstanding fees or fines at CUE.
  - A signature from the CUE Registrar's Office acknowledging that the nominee has maintained the required GPA for their respective position at the time of nomination.
  - A signature from CUE VP Student Life and Learning acknowledging the nominee is in good standing with CUE.
  - The nominee's signature acknowledges that they are enrolled in at least three (3) credits at Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE) when they apply.
  - Summary of Campaign rules.
- 5.2.4. When picking up the nomination package, the nominee and ERO, plus one Executive Councilor, must review the following:
  - Position Policy that they are being nominated for,
    - And all policies that pertain to that position,
    - Remuneration Policy for that position,
  - Highlight specific areas of the CSA Bylaws that pertain to that position,
  - Election & Referendum Policy,
  - The nomination package itself and where to go to get

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signatures.

- 5.2.5. Nominees shall not knowingly campaign nor allow anyone else to campaign for them during the nomination period.
- 5.2.6. Two (2) All Candidates Meetings will be set for the last two (2) days of the Nomination Period, and all candidates must attend one;
  - 5.2.6.1. Absence from both meetings will result in disqualification.

## **6.0 Campaign**

### **6.1. Purpose**

- 6.1.1. This policy is designed to inform candidates how to campaign during the campaign period.

### **6.2. Policy**

- 6.2.1. Candidates must adhere to the CSA's bylaws, policies, and procedures and demonstrate reasonable judgment.
- 6.2.2. Candidates shall not knowingly campaign or allow anyone else to campaign for them outside the campaign period.
- 6.2.3. Candidates must attend the All Candidates meeting as well as all election events;
  - 6.2.3.1. Failure to do so may result in disqualification as determined by the ERO.
- 6.2.4. Candidates will not use or knowingly allow others to use CSA or The Bolt News resources for campaigning;
  - 6.2.4.1. This includes all CSA photographs and postings on websites, social media, and other web sources under the CSA's domain, including but not limited to feeds operated by The Bolt News, the Concordia Students' Association, Clubs and Unions, etc.
  - 6.2.4.2. Any articles written about the candidate in The Bolt News for the election issue, other than the 150 words each candidate is granted through the CSA Election process, must be accounted for in campaign expenses.
- 6.2.5. Candidates will not disburse to students any items that do not directly comply with the policies:
  - 6.2.5.1. Candidates are not permitted to give any food/beverages/consumables/gift cards to students as a part of their campaign;
  - 6.2.5.2. Candidates may only place or distribute campaign material in the following locations pending approval by the ERO and



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#### Concordia Administration:

- 6.2.5.2.1. On CSA-approved bulletin boards.
- 6.2.5.2.2. Transparent glass that does not impede safety through reduced visibility.
- 6.2.5.2.3. On tables or chair trays located in the following common areas
  - 6.2.5.2.3.1. Tegler
  - 6.2.5.2.3.2. Alumni Hall
  - 6.2.5.2.3.3. The Allan Wachowich Centre for Science, Research, and Innovation
  - 6.2.5.2.3.4. Ralph King Athletic Centre
  - 6.2.5.2.3.5. Library basement
  - 6.2.5.2.3.6. Braaksma Hall
  - 6.2.5.2.3.7. Hole Academic
- 6.2.5.3. Only the ERO may approve alternate locations. The following locations are not permitted under any circumstances:
  - 6.2.5.3.1. CSA offices or spaces
  - 6.2.5.3.2. The Cafeteria
  - 6.2.5.3.3. Classrooms
  - 6.2.5.3.4. Offices or Student Service locations
  - 6.2.5.3.5. Library study spaces
  - 6.2.5.3.6. Bathrooms
  - 6.2.5.3.7. Student lockers
  - 6.2.5.3.8. Laboratories
  - 6.2.5.3.9. Outside school buildings
  - 6.2.5.3.10. Athletic or recreational facilities
  - 6.2.5.3.11. Dorms or student residences
  - 6.2.5.3.12. Any religious or spiritual spaces
  - 6.2.5.3.13. The Indigenous Knowledge and Research Centre
  - 6.2.5.3.14. The BMO Centre for Innovation and Applied Research
  - 6.2.5.3.15. The auditorium
  - 6.2.5.3.16. Any location where the campaign material would damage paint or the surface of the material the materials are placed on
  - 6.2.5.3.17. Any other location that the ERO has not approved
- 6.2.5.4. Candidates must use appropriate fastening devices for any

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campaign material as determined by the ERO.

- 6.2.6. Candidates may campaign in classrooms with prior approval of the instructor and ERO.
- 6.2.7. Candidates must publicize their social media and professional accounts and add the ERO and CSA's current ECs for the campaigning period.
  - 6.2.7.1. The ERO can permit exemptions on a case-to-case basis due to extenuating circumstances.
- 6.2.8. Candidates may campaign using social media or electronic communications subject to the discretion of the ERO.
  - 6.2.8.1. Candidates may not purchase advertising or spend campaign funds on social media.
  - 6.2.8.2. Candidates may not post or share any electronic material during the campaign period directly connected to the CSA or from a CSA account. This includes but is not limited to:
    - 6.2.8.2.1. Posting photos with CSA logos.
    - 6.2.8.2.2. Posting photos of the candidate engaged in activities wearing visible CSA branded or distributed apparel.
    - 6.2.8.2.3. Using a CSA electronic distribution method, including social media accounts, to remind voters of the candidate's existing or prior role in the CSA.
  - 6.2.8.3. Candidates may design and host a personal website, with the prior approval of the ERO for the website design, name, and content.
    - 6.2.8.3.1. Website hosting and design costs shall be included in the campaign spending form.
  - 6.2.8.4. Candidates may post copies of approved campaign materials on their personal social media accounts or websites.
  - 6.2.8.5. Candidates may contact potential voters electronically if the communication follows Concordia's Code of Student Conduct.
    - 6.2.8.5.1. Candidates may continue a conversation started due to an approved direct message without consulting the ERO on each message.
  - 6.2.8.6. Candidates may post a picture of themselves and a message to encourage voting but may not explicitly promote voting for them without ERO approval.
- 6.2.9. Up to \$50 (Fifty Dollars) can be reimbursed upon approval of the expenditure form.

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- 6.2.9.1. Candidates are required to maintain records of the amounts spent on campaign expenses, including receipts and the amount of campaign materials purchased, which must be submitted to the ERO and VP-Finance by 4 pm MST the day before the first voting day;
- 6.2.9.2. In-kind donations or assistance given to candidates must be accounted for in the expense claims;
  - 6.2.9.2.1. This includes but is not limited to graphic design, photography, and specialty printing;
    - 6.2.9.2.1.1. In-kind donations are recorded as the item's market value, subject to the previously listed maximums and the campaign budget limit.
- 6.2.9.3. Candidates who do not attend at least one All Candidates Meeting and all election events will not have expenses reimbursed.
- 6.2.9.4. Upon submission of an expense report, no further campaign expenses may be incurred by the candidate;
  - 6.2.9.4.1. Candidates found incurring extra costs or failing to return expense reports during campaign week will disqualify the candidate from running.
- 6.2.10. The CSA and the ERO can deem any event as inappropriate.
  - 6.2.10.1. The ERO must preapprove any campaign event.
    - 6.2.10.1.1. Any approval requests must be submitted in writing.
    - 6.2.10.1.2. Any approval confirmation or denials from the ERO must be provided in writing.
- 6.2.11. Any materials that are to be distributed to students or put up for display must be approved by the ERO or their appointed designate;
  - 6.2.11.1. Any candidate found distributing campaign material without ERO approval shall face disciplinary action from the ERO.
  - 6.2.11.2. The ERO has the right to refuse authorization of campaign materials for reasons including but not limited to appropriateness and legality.
  - 6.2.11.3. Any approval requests must be submitted in writing.
  - 6.2.11.4. Any approval confirmation or denials from the ERO must be provided in writing.
- 6.2.12. Campaign materials will be placed as outlined by the ERO, the Concordia University of Edmonton, the Concordia University of Edmonton Faculties Department, and their appointed designates. Any campaign material found posted on surfaces or areas expressly

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communicated as off-limits for posting shall be confiscated by the ERO;

- 6.2.12.1. Before the end of the voting period, all campaign materials must be removed from campus and all social media and professional platforms.
- 6.2.13. All campaign materials must be 11" x 17" or smaller.
  - 6.2.13.1. The ERO may determine smaller maximum dimensions for items that must be communicated to all candidates equitably.
- 6.2.14. The ERO will oversee the following:
  - 6.2.14.1. Executive Council nominee debate.
    - 6.2.14.1.1. This will be held the day before voting starts, and candidates in competing positions will engage in a debate.
      - 6.2.14.1.1.1. Each position will have twenty (20) minutes to debate.
    - 6.2.14.1.2. A question period open to spectators will follow.
    - 6.2.14.1.3. Debate questions are to be determined by the ERO.
    - 6.2.14.1.4. The ERO or their appointed delegate will be the moderator.
  - 6.2.14.2. General Council question period.
    - 6.2.14.2.1. This will be held two (2) days before voting starts.
    - 6.2.14.2.2. This will combine three (3) questions from the ERO and spectator questions.
    - 6.2.14.2.3. The ERO or their appointed delegate will be the moderator.
  - 6.2.14.3. Candidates may not, under any circumstances, imply an endorsement from any institutional person, CSA employee, or CSA representative.
  - 6.2.14.4. If a candidate does imply an endorsement, the moderator may immediately interrupt them to correct the candidate and remind them and the audience of the campaign rules.

## 7.0 Voting

### 7.1. Purpose

- 7.1.1. This policy guides the ERO and CSA on how voting will take place

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during any election. The ERO must also consider the bylaws and this policy.

#### **7.2. Policy**

- 7.2.1. All voting is done online;
  - 7.2.1.1. If not online, the vote will be done by secret ballot;
- 7.2.2. The ERO and an appointed neutral third party shall count all votes.
- 7.2.3. All active Members are eligible to vote in Executive Council elections with one vote per member and no proxy votes;
  - 7.2.3.1. General Members shall only be able to vote in elections for Faculty Representatives in the same faculty as the voter. The active Member only has one vote per position with no proxy votes.
- 7.2.4. The ERO and their staff are responsible for determining the position of the polling station(s).
- 7.2.5. The ERO and their staff shall ensure that the polling stations provide a booth to cast votes privately.
- 7.2.6. Two election officials will operate each polling station for paper ballots or one election official for electronic votes.
- 7.2.7. The results shall be public by 5 p.m. on the afternoon of the last voting day.

### **8.0 By-Election**

#### **8.1. Purpose**

- 8.1.1. This policy is designed to guide the ERO and CSA in the event of a By-Election.

#### **8.2. Policy**

- 8.2.1. All by-elections will follow the same outline and policy as the General Election except in the following ways:
  - 8.2.1.1. Nominations are open for four (4) days, campaigning will be shortened to five (5) days, and voting will happen for two (2) days.

### **9.0 CSA Unions**

#### **9.1. Purpose**

- 9.1.1. This policy is designed to inform CSA Unions about their elections and how Faculty Representatives apply to the CSA and their Union.

#### **9.2. Policy**

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- 9.2.1. Union elections are for their Union Executives, not the Faculty Representative(s).
  - 9.2.1.1. The Faculty Representative may run for a Union Executive position should they choose.
  - 9.2.1.2. CSA Members seeking an Executive role in the Election cannot run for a Union Executive position.
- 9.2.2. Unions must hold their elections at the same time as the CSA General Election;
  - 9.2.2.1. This includes the use of the voting platform.
  - 9.2.2.2. These elections include the election of their Union Executives, separate from their Faculty Representative, as outlined in the General Councilors Policy.
- 9.2.3. Unions must hold an election every year;
  - 9.2.3.1. The Union shall consult the CSA to run a by-election for a vacant Union Executive position.
- 9.2.4. All Union elections must adhere to the Campaign guidelines set forth by the CSA.
- 9.2.5. After-degree Union elections shall follow their Union constitutions.

## **10.0 Post Election**

### **10.1. Purpose**

- 10.1.1. This policy aims to help the ERO, CSA, and elected candidates after the vote.

### **10.2. Policy**

- 10.2.1. Candidates who are successfully elected will become candidates until the ratification at the next General Council meeting.
- 10.2.2. All candidates have two (2) business days after the results are made public on the CSA website and social media to file an appeal with the ERO;
  - 10.2.2.1. If an appeal is filed, the ERO will inform the CSA President, who will convene the Judicial Board;
    - 10.2.2.1.1. The Judicial Board will release its findings and recommended course(s) of action within two (2) business days of convening. The board's ruling is final.
- 10.2.3. Elected Candidates shall make a reasonable effort, as determined by the General Council, to attend the rest of the General Council meetings until the end of the year (April 30) when they start their term;

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- 10.2.3.1. Elected Executives shall make a reasonable effort, as determined by the Executive Council, to be present for all Executive Council meetings until the end of the year (April 30) when they start their term.
- 10.2.4. At the next available General Council meeting, barring an appeal, the General Council must ratify the election results;
  - 10.2.4.1. All elected candidates must be present for the meeting but leave the room during the vote following Robert's Rules of Order;
    - 10.2.4.1.1. Per Robert's Rules of Order, all individuals with a conflict of interest shall declare their conflict and leave the room during the vote.
  - 10.2.4.2. Once the vote is taken, all elected candidates become (representative position title)-elect until their term starts on May 1 of that year.
- 10.2.5. All elected candidates must reasonably attempt to be present for any group training.
  - 10.2.5.1. In a conflict, reasonable efforts will be made to ensure multiple training times are offered.
- 10.2.6. All elected candidates must reasonably attempt to attend any training designated by the outgoing position holder.
  - 10.2.6.1. The elected candidate and outgoing position holder are responsible for scheduling an agreeable training date and time.
- 10.2.7. Elected candidates must attend the minimum training required in their positional policies.
- 10.2.8. Elected candidates must make all their social media and professional platforms public during their term as elected officials.
  - 10.2.8.1. Due to extenuating circumstances, the Executive Council can permit exemptions on a case-to-case basis.

## **11.0 Referenda**

### **11.1. Purpose**

- 11.1.1. This policy is designed to assist the ERO in the event of a referendum.

### **11.2. Policy**

- 11.2.1. Referendums must follow the CSA Bylaws and applicable legislation.

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- 11.2.2. A question may go to a referendum only after the General Council has approved it.
- 11.2.3. A question can also be put to a referendum by a petition that states the question and bears the signatures, names, and student identification numbers of 25% of the CSA's General Membership.
- 11.2.4. A referendum election must be held two (2) weeks or more after the date of validation;
  - 11.2.4.1. The next business day after validation, the CSA must inform the General Members about the referendum.
- 11.2.5. A referendum is binding on the CSA when a simple majority of members present and voting vote in favor of the referendum question.
- 11.2.6. The CSA General Council can decide by a vote to take one of three positions on a referendum question:
  - Endorse the question and campaign in support,
  - Remain neutral and refrain from campaigning, or
  - Denounce the question and actively campaign against it.
- 11.2.7. Voting will follow the process outlined in the Election and Referendum Policy for dates, voting, and campaigning.