

FALL | 2020

THE CANDIDATE HANDBOOK



This handbook is a UVSS document and is primarily speaking to UVSS election and referenda participants.

Table of Contents:

Spring 2020 Important Dates.....	1
Introduction.....	2
About the UVSS Electoral Office.	2
Electoral Policy: Purpose and Guiding Principles	3
Important Terms and Definitions	4
The 2020 Fall Electoral Events	6
Campaigning	7
Third Party Endorsements	11
Working with Volunteers.....	11
Candidates Forums and Debates	12
Voting Period.....	12
Campaign Violations and Infractions.....	13
Complaints, Appeals and Preventative Options	14
Post-Electoral Event.....	15
Appendix: Tips from a Candidate and Proponent	16

The UVSS Electoral Office is online.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, we will primarily be available online. We have weekly office hours where we will answer questions live, and set up zoom meetings for more complicated questions.

Office hours are updated weekly on our website:

<https://uvsselections.com/>

Phone: 1 (250) 472-4305

Stay up to date by connecting with us on:

Facebook.com/uvsselections

Twitter.com/@UVSSElection

[Instagram.com/@UVSSElection](https://www.instagram.com/UVSSElection)

election@uvss.ca

Important Dates

- October 16 | 9am PST – Close of Nominations
 - *After the 16th, nobody else can put their name forward for candidacy.*
- October 18 – Candidates Confirmed
 - *The Elections Office has finalized its list of approved candidates.*
- Between October 19 and 23 | TBD– Candidate Orientation
 - *The Office will host a virtual event helping you understand the elections process.*
- October 26 – Campaign Period Begins | Voter Information Guide Launch
 - *You can now start promoting your candidacy or your referendum.*
- October 30 | 2pm PST – All Candidates Forum (virtual)
 - *You will have your chance to tell the voters why they should choose you.*
- November 4 | 9am PST– Voting Opens Web Vote
 - *You can still campaign during voting days.*
- November 6 | 12pm PST – Voting Closes Web Vote
 - *Time to remove all campaign material (take down your campaign-related social media pages! by 4:30pm PST)*
- TBD – Release of Results
 - *Depending on whether the Office has to resolve any complaints, this could take a while.*

Introduction:

Congratulations! If you are reading this handbook, you are considering or have decided to participate in one of the upcoming UVSS Electoral Events at the University of Victoria. As a candidate, you will experience the thrill of defending your platform and your opinion on key electoral topics, while gaining insight and knowledge surrounding political institutions.

While this document is full of useful information that will aid you during the electoral event, it cannot replace the **Electoral Policy**. You are encouraged to look through both this handbook and the Electoral Policy, in order to understand the key policies in place for this electoral event. Please do not hesitate to contact the Electoral Office and **ask questions** if you are ever unsure about something you have read, something you have seen, or something you have done or something you are contemplating doing.

About the UVSS Electoral Office:

The Electoral Office is here to guide you throughout the electoral process. Our primary role is to administer and provide guidance and oversight on the electoral event processes, ensuring that they are fair, impartial and align with the UVSS Bylaws and Electoral Policy. More specifically, in terms of Candidate support, the Electoral Officers are responsible for:

- Approving and declaring official candidates;
- Providing a mandatory training session for all official candidates;
- Establishing expense procedures and guidelines including Zap credit;
- Approving and monitoring campaign material and activities;
- Producing a Martlet insert with candidate materials;
- Organizing public forums to help UVSS members make informed voting decisions;
- Providing voter information and support during the voting period;
- Ensuring all campaign materials follow UVic regulations including timely disposal;
- Providing a statement on the ballot results at the close of voting once all campaign activities have been resolved;
- Receiving, investigating and ruling on complaints;
- Resolving candidate disputes.

The UVSS Electoral Office staff includes:

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Emma Hamill
Senior Electoral Officer (SEO), Owen Pachal
Senior Electoral Officer (SEO), Ali Calladine

Contacting the Electoral Office:

This semester, all correspondence will be online due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Email is the best way to reach us. We will strive to return emails within 1 day of receiving them, and to return them even more quickly during the campaign period.

We will also have online office hours. During these office hours, we will respond to inquiries immediately, and be available to open a zoom meeting for any questions that need 'face to face' support. See our website and social media channels for office hour updates.

Email: election@uvss.ca

Hours: See uvssselections.com for office hours for each week.

Please do not hesitate to contact us during the posted office hours; we are here to help!

Electoral Policy: Purpose and Guiding Principles:

Copies of the UVSS Constitution and Bylaws and the September 2020 [Electoral Policy](#) are available on the UVSS Electoral website.

The Electoral Policy shapes every facet of the election process. Almost every decision made by Electoral Officers relies on interpretation of the Policy. The Office is bound by the principles espoused in the Policy: it will strive for orderly and democratic participation in every electoral event.

The Electoral Policy will, where possible, be interpreted broadly and positively, to encourage candidates and students to participate in the UVSS electoral process. At times, past practices and rulings by former Chief Electoral Officers may be looked to for guidance, however, past rulings are not binding on the Electoral Office.

In some circumstances the Electoral Policy may leave little or no room for discretion or for alternative interpretations. In these circumstances, the result is disciplinary penalties which could have potentially significant negative consequences, including being disqualified as a candidate. We would like all candidates to avoid being the subject of any such consequences, through a thorough understanding of the Policy. If you are not sure, ask an Electoral Officer but protect yourself, always ensure any verbal guidance is consistent with the Electoral Policy.

Though the content of the Candidate's Handbook is taken directly from the Electoral Policy and Constitution/Bylaws it is imperative that you familiarize yourself with the contents of these documents.

Non-adherence may result in penalties, complaints and/or disqualification. **Should there be any discrepancy between Handbook materials and the Electoral Policy or Bylaws, the latter two documents will take precedence.** The Electoral Office may establish supplemental rules to provide greater clarity, improve fairness and facilitate the Electoral process.

The most up to date information and clarifications will be posted on our website; please check it daily.

Important Terms and Definitions:

UVSS – The University of Victoria Students Society is an independent undergraduate student organization, governed by the BC Society Act. The UVSS is not an arm or department of UVic (governed by the University Act). As such UVSS must have a Constitution and Bylaws in keeping with the Society Act, requiring elections for its directors, and full member referendums on decisions such as fees. The UVSS has over 18,000 undergraduate student members. All undergraduate students who pay UVSS fees are members. Graduate students have their own student society (GSS) and are associate, non-voting UVSS members. Undergraduate students who are not on campus (co-op terms or distance education) are still members of UVSS.

UVSS Board of Directors – The Board of Directors is the collective decision-making body for the Students' Society, governing the UVSS and overseeing all of its campaigns and events. The Board is made up of 21 student directors. Elections for positions on the Board of Directors take place every year in March.

Electoral Officer – includes all persons hired to staff the Electoral Office, including the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Senior Electoral Officer (SEO), and Deputy Electoral Officer (DEO).

Referenda – the UVSS, as a non-profit society, is required to have the majority approval of its members for any major changes in its work or fees. The Board of the UVSS or a group of UVSS members can petition for a referendum question to be called on any issue. For the UVSS, Electoral Policy requires all referenda questions to be answerable with YES or NO.

Proponent/Opponent – Proponents/opponents fill the function of a 'candidate' in a referendum. Proponents/opponents are individual UVSS members, not organizations, and apply to be awarded official status in the electoral event by the Electoral Office.

WebVote – is the name of the computer online voting system that UVSS has contracted with to carry out the vote. In this case, UVSS has contracted UVic to be that service provider. It is important to know that UVic's only role is as a contracted service provider. This is NOT UVic's Electoral Event.

Quorum – In reference to the referendum, quorum shall be fifteen percent [15%] of the voting membership.

Majority – 50% + 1 of the valid votes cast.

Plurality -votes cast for a candidate who receives more than any other but does not receive an absolute majority.

Elected Candidate – the duly nominated candidate receiving the most votes, who has not been disqualified, will be declared the winner of an election.

Acclaimed Candidate – any person who is duly nominated, who is unchallenged at the close of nominations, for positions other than Lead Directors in the UVSS Board of Directors.

Acclaimed Pending Approval Candidate – any person who is duly nominated for a Lead Director position, who is unchallenged at the close of nominations must win an approval vote on the Board of Directors ballot to claim the position.

Spoiled Ballot – A deliberate and considered method for a voter to record their general disagreement with the voting process. Under the circumstances for the UVic WebVote, a spoiled ballot would be a ballot which is filled out incorrectly, not including blank ballots.

Secret Ballot – the WebVote system ensures that it is not possible to trace the individual voter with how they voted.

Non-partisan – taking no side. All Electoral Officials for the duration of their employment at the UVSS Electoral Office are required to be non-partisan. It is an electoral offense to try to, or be perceived as trying to, influence an Electoral Official during the period of an electoral event. The UVSS Electoral Office is a non-partisan space. When an Electoral Officer has set up a roaming/mobile Voting Information Outreach Station, there must be no partisan activity or presence within a 6 metre radius.

The 2020 Fall Electoral Events:

From November 4th, 9:00 am PST to 12:00 pm PST November 6th, 2020, all 18 000 plus UVSS members will be able to vote in the Fall Referendum:

The three referendum questions are as follows:

1. Are you in favour of establishing a few of \$1.50 per full-time student per semester and \$0.75 per part-time student per semester in order to fund the creation of open-source textbooks and other open-source learning materials, which would be used in UVic classrooms?
2. Are you in favour of ending the collection of the fee, which is \$3.00 for full time students per semester and \$1.50 for part time students per semester, that goes towards a Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)?
3. Are you in favour of reallocating the fees currently held in trust for the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) to be split evenly between a student bursary/award and the UVSS Operating Fund?

You are voting for this question under the following circumstances:

1. *The fees held in trust are \$128,848.17 as of August 10, 2020; and,*
2. *If this question is defeated, the UVSS Board of Directors will administer all PIRG fees currently held in trust, In the best interests of students at the University of Victoria until such time as a service provider is identified.*

All voting will be conducted online using UVic's WebVote system, webvote.uvic.ca .

An individual may only run for one UVSS position in any given election but may concurrently run as a referenda opponent/proponent.

Campaigning:

Campaigning is your opportunity to share your message and goals with your primary constituents: undergraduate students. It is about sharing a vision, getting your information out to the public, and influencing voters. Of course, there are rules and regulations which govern some of the ways in which campaigning can happen on campus.

Please take the time to thoroughly familiarize yourself with Section 5 Campaign Supports and Section 6, *Campaigning*, of the Electoral Policy. This section highlights significant aspects of campaigning policies and regulations which include scheduling, candidate debate forums, and platforms.

Platforms:

As mentioned in Section 5.3 of the Electoral Policy, Once submitted to the Electoral Officers, a platform cannot be edited. Should the maximum applicable word limit be exceeded, the Electoral Officers must delete words, starting from the last word and continuing from there until the maximum allowable number of words is reached.

Platforms will be released in the Voter Information Guide on approximately October 26th. All platforms must be submitted via email prior to the publication of the supplement. Candidates must, within 24 hours of the email notice, give the Electoral Office written notice of any revisions necessary to correct any errors in the proof to correspond with the platform as submitted.

Digital Campaigning:

This year, we have an entirely off-campus electoral event. This means that physical campaign material is not allowed. Instead, we encourage candidates to campaign online. Please Review 6.1 Campaign Material of the Electoral Policy. Physical campaign material is only permitted for on-campus electoral events (3.3.e), which this election is not.

This semester, we have to all work together to engage students through online and distanced mediums. Please contact us if you have questions about online campaigning, and work to be inclusive in your campaigning efforts.

Budgeting and the Expense Allowance Form:

As per Electoral Policy there are strict spending limits for campaigning. Each candidate can spend up to **\$100** to campaign for UVSS Electoral Events which will be reimbursed by the UVSS after the conclusion of the Electoral Event for all candidates who are not disqualified.

Referenda Proponents or opponents may spend a maximum of \$200 on their campaign which will be reimbursed by the UVSS after the conclusion of the Electoral Event for all proponents or opponents who are not disqualified.

Keep track of all receipts! Spending limits cannot be exceeded and all receipts must be kept and submitted to the Electoral Office by the times the polls close at 12 pm on March 8nd, 2019. The Electoral Office Expense Allowance Form is available on the uvsselections.com website and at the UVSS Elections office. Read this form through carefully BEFORE you purchase any materials or accept any volunteer or third-party assistance.

All expenses incurred during the course of campaigning **must** be declared on the Expense Allowance form. A receipt is required for all external expenditures. Include receipts in an envelope and attached to this form. You must declare the fair market value of all donated items, and donated/discounted labour that is not available to all candidates. These are to be included in your spending limit. You must submit an expense form even if you do not spend any money (write \$0.00 for the totals).

You should read through section 6.5 of the Policy Manual before beginning your campaigning. Certain things that you might not think would count as campaign expenses, such as donations, will count toward your total expenditure. Familiarize yourself with the policy to avoid unpleasant surprises.

You must submit an expense form even if you do not spend anything!

Failure to submit all required financial information by the deadline or exceedance of spending limits will result in a candidate's disqualification.

Campaign Managers:

As stated in Section 6.6 of the Electoral Policy, Cooperatives must designate one person as their campaign manager. The Electoral Office must receive the campaign managers contact information, in writing, 72 hours prior to the start of the Campaign Period

Campaign Material:

We expect all candidates to act fairly and with respect. Please accord each other and the election process appropriate dignity. Candidates are prohibited from making public statements or undertaking activities in relation to another candidate, or referendum proponent or opponent that is discriminatory, defamatory, malicious, threatening or intimidating.

You must not publish any campaign material until after 9:00 AM on the first day of campaigning.

Read section 6.1, “Campaign Material,” carefully. It tells you what you can and cannot do. 6.1 (i) lays out the ground rules for digital campaigning, which will be more important to this electoral event. You can use social media outlets – but **only ones created specifically for your campaign**. Send a link to your new profiles to the Electoral Office. Make sure to take down these profiles when polls close.

If you choose to spend your campaign funds on boosting social media posts, make sure you track costs accordingly.

On and off campus groups are prohibited from endorsing candidates. Please see 6.1 (h) for details.

Social Media is a Regulated and Monitored Campaign Material:

Digital campaign material is permitted for all Electoral Events i. Candidates, proponents and opponents are permitted to use one social media page or profile per social media platform for the purpose their campaigning. Only a social media page or profile created solely for the purpose of campaigning for the current UVSS electoral event may be used. A link to the social media page or profile must be shared with the Electoral Officers.

It is considered best practice to let the Electoral Office know what your social media accounts are and how they can access them. You can send links by email to election@uvss.ca.

Third Party Endorsements:

Candidates are prohibited from accepting endorsements from any on- or off-campus groups, including but not limited to:

- i. Political parties at any level of government,
- ii. ii. Businesses or corporations,
- iii. iii. Labour unions,
- iv. iv. Interest groups, and
- v. v. Student unions or their umbrella organizations.

Working with Volunteers:

Volunteers play an integral role in the success and reach of your campaign. It is important to build a network of volunteers that are excited to take on various roles throughout the campaign. At the same time, there are important things to keep in mind when working with volunteers.

Market-Value: Market Value is the price charged for an equivalent amount of equivalent services in the market during a relevant time. For the purposes of campaign spending limits, you must track your volunteer's skilled services at market value. For example, if you have someone who wants to volunteer for you who works as a graphic designer, having them create your digital materials (such as a website), would necessitate you including the average hourly wage that person receives for doing similar work **in their professional capacity** in your final expense report.

Candidates Forums and Debates:

The Electoral Office coordinates opportunities for UVSS members to hear from candidates to help make informed voting decisions. For this electoral event, we will have a single Candidates Forum for Member and large candidates and referendum proponents/opponents.

The Candidates Forum is organized by a series of questions posed by CFUV and the Martlet. All forums will allow for questions and answers from UVSS members attending, and will accept questions before hand. No questions from other candidates or campaign managers will be accepted. Sessions will be moderated by Electoral Office staff or designates and will also be broadcast on CFUV and the UVSS Facebook page. Details on the forum conduct ground rules and process will be outlined at the commencement of each forum.

The All Candidates/Referenda forum is moderated by the Electoral Office staff or designates.

Voting Period:

During the voting period, from 9am on November 4th until 12pm on November 6th. UVSS members will be emailed inviting them to vote in WebVote, and campaigns will be embedded in the WebVote platform.

Campaign Violations and Infractions:

As described in Part 8 of the Electoral Policy, in the event that candidates violate electoral policy, the CEO may investigate to determine if the behavior constitutes a minor or major infraction. The CEO may apply a warning or a sanction to any cooperative, campaign manager, or candidate. In the instance where a campaign manager or slate commits an infraction, a sanction may be applied equally to each candidate who is a member of that cooperative. An investigation may be initiated through a formal complaint.

Minor:

The following is an abbreviated summary of minor infractions which *may* result in punitive sanctions such as removal of campaign material or reduction in allowable campaign material, at the discretion of the Electoral Office. The Electoral Office will ensure that all similar infractions/situations are treated in the same or similar manner, keeping to the principle of fairness.

- Early campaigning (openly campaigning before the official start of the campaign period)
- Prohibited campaigning (publicity in The Martlet or on CFUV *except* as authorized)
- Unauthorized campaign material (e.g., dimensions, number, material not stamped by Electoral Office)
- Frivolous or vexatious complaints
- Intentional misrepresentation of facts
- Other acts which violate the election principles
- Willful vandalism of another candidate's campaign material will result in a mandatory sanction.

Major:

The following is an abbreviated summary of major infractions which shall result in immediate disqualification of the candidate(s). Note that candidates may be disqualified if either they, their campaign managers, slates and/or third-party endorsers commit the offence.

- Harassment
- Defamation of other candidates (slander or libel)
- Vote Buying
- Interference
- Financial non-compliance
- Repeated and willful violations
- Failure to identify a campaign manager

Complaints, Appeals and Preventative Options:

Advance Ruling: Should you be unsure whether one of your own actions may be in noncompliance with the policy, please request an **advance ruling** from us. See one of us in the office (preferably) or email the Chief Electoral Officer at chiefelectoral@uvss.com. A ruling (stripped of identifiable personal information) will be made and communicated to all candidates by the end of the next business day.

Informal Dispute Resolution: We also encourage candidates to meet with an Electoral Officer to request an informal discussion with another candidate about potential campaign violations prior to launching a formal complaint.

Formal Complaints: Formal complaints must be made in writing to the Electoral Office using the Complaint Form. The forms are to be filled out on the computer, and sent to chiefelectoral@uvss.com.

Please be aware that candidates only have (1) one business day upon receipt of the complaint or alleged offense, to provide a response, using the electronic complaint response form for that purpose.

Appeals: Candidates who wish to appeal a decision of the Chief Electoral Officer or to the Electoral Office Adjudicator are permitted to do so by filling out and submitting an Appeal Form to the Electoral Office Adjudicator. These forms must also be submitted electronically. *The respondent or complainant has (1) one business day upon receipt of the ruling to make an appeal.* Please read the Electoral Policy for further details, if needed.

Arbitration: The adjudicator's decision can be further appealed to the Arbitration Panel using the appeal form *within (1) one business day*. The Arbitration Panel will investigate the appeal of the Electoral Office Adjudicator and make a final ruling.

All of the forms necessary for filing complaints, responses, and appeals can be found on the UVSS Electoral Office website.

We will consider each issue that arises or is brought to our attention through the complaint process on their own facts and merits. In the interest of fairness, we will aim to provide consistent interpretations for similar issues, although some interpretation will always be necessary. Past rulings by Chief Electoral Officers may be looked to for guidance; however, they are not binding on the Electoral Officer.

Post-Electoral Event:

Campaign Material Removal:

All campaign material must be removed by 4:30 PM on November 6th, 2020. The Electoral Office may withhold the Electoral Office results until all visible campaign materials (including social media and websites) are taken down.

Reimbursement:

Candidates are eligible for reimbursement of campaign expenses up to \$100. Final campaign budgets must be submitted individually to the Electoral Office, and providing that the submission is in accordance with Electoral Policy, a cheque for \$100 will be available. All candidates or proponents may request a cheque of up to \$100.00 or \$200.00, respectively, from the CEO at the start of the campaign period.

Remember the Value in Running:

Running as a candidate or proponent/opponent in a UVSS electoral event is a rewarding and valuable experience regardless of the outcomes. It is important to thank your team and everyone who plays a part in your election experience, including those on opposing slates and candidacies. Remember, you are playing an important role in the promotion of democracy and advocacy on your campus, and that is something to be proud of! Thank you for taking the time to learn more about your community, sharing your vision and putting yourself out there. Best of luck!

Feedback:

Every Electoral Event is different, and we want to hear from you on what works, what can be done better, and how your overall experience was. There will be opportunities post- electoral event for you to be in touch with us and give feedback for future policy updates and general practices here at the Electoral Office. We look forward to hearing from candidates in any and all capacities!

Appendix: Tips from a Candidate and Proponent:

- READ THE Electoral Policy then ASK QUESTIONS. The electoral policy is absolutely integral to your success as a candidate. Know the rules, play within them, and if you aren't sure, ask first!
- Once you know that you are running, start to assemble a team of volunteers. Be cautious however, because you do not want to pre-campaign. Make sure that conversations with potential team members happen in private, and meetings about what the campaign look like must be confidential.
- Build your platform early on: by the time the first day of campaigning rolls around, you should have your platform memorized. Find what feels the best, come up with roughly 3 key messages and know the ins and outs of why it's important.
- Keep track of everything! You do not want to have one receipt missing or one cent over your budget. Start a spreadsheet early on with all of your campaign expenses, and keep every single receipt in a safe place. Also keep track of how many posters and banners you have, going over your allotted banner/poster count could result in penalization. Be sure to note when leaflets are left at empty tables and clear these. Stagnant leaflets are not allowed.
- Make accessible graphics: You want your graphics to be clear, hard-hitting and easy to read. This again comes back to your key messaging. What are the most important aspects of your campaign? Condense those things down to a digestible format and create your campaign materials from there. Leave the longer and more nuanced information for social media and website content.
- SPEAKING OF SOCIAL MEDIA: do not underestimate the power of it! Social media is increasingly playing a huge role in the electoral campaigns everywhere, and UVic is no exception. Build content that is easy for your followers to share. Get students to take pledges of support and share them EVERYWHERE.
- At the end of the day, getting out and meeting your voters where they are is what wins. Assemble your team and build a spreadsheet of all the tasks that you need to do, paying special attention to: Classroom talks, leafleting, and chalking. These three things are key players in actually getting students to vote! And win or lose, you will have done something for democratic participation.