

RHODES STUDENT GOVERNMENT

The By-Laws of the Elections Commission

Last amended: February 6, 2003

PREAMBLE

The Elections Commission is a semi-autonomous body of the Senate of Rhodes Student Government whose purpose is to efficiently and fairly manage campus elections under the management and/or jurisdiction of Rhodes Student Government.

ARTICLE I. SELECTING THE ELECTIONS COMMISSION

SECTION 1—The Elections Commission

The Elections commission will consist of two Elections Commissioners and four Elections Committee members.

SECTION 2—The Elections Commissioners

The Elections Commissioners will be chosen from the student body at-large, except for current elected RSG members. They will serve renewable 1-year staggered terms (one shall be appointed before the final RSG meeting of the spring semester, and the other before the final RSG meeting of the fall semester). At the end of each semester, the Internal Affairs Committee will take applications to fill the position; the Committee will announce availability of applications through e-mail and/or flyers hung in the academic buildings (defined as Kennedy, Ohlendorf, Rhodes Tower, Briggs Student Center, Palmer, Halliburton, Gooch, Catherine Burrow Refectory, Clough, Buckman, Burrow Library, BCLC, and Hassell). Seven days later, applications will be due at 5 P.M. in the RSG office. From this pool of candidates, the Committee will nominate an Elections Commissioner, subject to Senate confirmation.

SECTION 3—The Elections Committee

Before the Freshman Elections Candidate Information Session, the Vice President will appoint one Senator from each class to serve on the Elections Committee.

ARTICLE II. DUTIES OF THE ELECTIONS COMMISSIONERS

SECTION 1—Regular Elections

The Elections Commissioners will be responsible for conducting three regular elections during the year. The Freshman Elections will elect representatives from the freshman class to RSG, Honor Council, Social Regulations Council, Rhodes Activities Board, and Publication Board, and should be held before the end of the third week after the beginning of fall classes. The Officer Elections will elect officers from the student body at large to RSG, Honor Council, Social Regulations Council, Student Trustees, and Publication Board, and should be held during the month of February. The General Elections will elect representatives from the rising freshman, sophomore, and junior classes to RSG, Honor Council, Social Regulations Council, Rhodes Activities Board, and Publication Board during the month of March. Allocations Board representatives will be elected at large from the Student Body during the General Elections.

SECTION 2—Mr. & Ms. Rhodes Elections

The Elections Commissioners will be responsible for conducting elections to choose Mr. & Ms. Rhodes. The Mr. & Ms. Rhodes Elections will be held in time to select Mr. and Ms. Rhodes before homecoming weekend.

SECTION 3—Miscellaneous Duties

The Elections Commissioners shall, in conjunction with the Publicity Chair(s) of the Senate of Rhodes Student Government where necessary, create any required publicity, create petitions and make them available to potential candidates, reserve campus facilities for all elections events, and acquire any materials for the elections from the appropriate sources. The Elections Commissioners should ensure that the results of all elections are printed in The Sou'Wester and on the Electronic Bulletin Board as soon as possible after an election. The Elections Commissioners should also request the sending of an All-Student and All-Faculty/Staff/Administrative e-mail announcing the results as soon as possible after an election.

SECTION 4—Elections Commissioner Ineligibility

In the event that an Elections Commissioner is running for an office, they may continue their duties up until the day of elections. In the event that both Commissioners are ineligible, the most senior member of Rhodes Student Government serving on the Elections Committee, not seeking reelection shall assume the position and responsibilities of Elections Commissioner.

ARTICLE III. DUTIES OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

SECTION 1—Grievances

In the event of a grievance, the Elections Committee shall be available to rule on grievances.

SECTION 2—Vote Counting

If an election is conducted with hand balloting, the Elections Committee shall be available to assist the Elections Commissioners with counting votes.

SECTION 3—Miscellaneous Duties

The Elections Committee shall, at the request of the Elections Commissioners, assist with posting elections publicity and creating elections materials.

SECTION 4—Election Committee Member Ineligibility

In the event that an Elections Committee Member is running for an office, that member may continue their duties up until the day of elections.

ARTICLE IV. REGULAR ELECTIONS

SECTION 1—Methods

Elections may be held either by manual hand balloting or by online/internet based balloting. The Elections Commissioners will determine the method of balloting.

SECTION 2—General Guidelines for Elections Publicity

Elections Publicity shall be placed in outside of the previously defined academic buildings. In addition to flyers or posters, the "VOTE TODAY" banner should be hung above the amphitheatre the night before any election. The student body should be notified by e-mail of elections procedures and locations the day before an election is held.

SECTION 3—Petitions

All potential candidates will be required to petition the Elections Commission in order to become candidates in regular elections. The petitions will be available in the RSG office by 8 A.M. the morning after the Candidate Information Session and will be due at the Campaign Information Session one week later. Each potential candidate will be required to write on the petition their name, their class year, and the position that they are seeking before collecting the 30 signatures required to complete the petition. The petition of a potential candidate in the Officer Elections may contain signatures from students of any class. The petition of a potential candidate in Freshman and General Elections may contain signatures only from the class that they will be representing. No candidate may alter the information on the petition concerning their potential candidacy after collecting their first signature. The petitions will also include a calendar of elections events, a condensed version of pertinent elections rules, contact information for the Elections Commissioners, and instructions on how to access a copy of the elections by-laws. The rules listed on the petitions do not supersede the elections by-laws. In addition to a petition, each potential candidate will be required to submit a biography of no more than 100 words by e-mail to the Elections Commissioners for publication in The Sou'Wester and/or online. The Elections Commissioners will have the sole power to rule on the inappropriate use of petitions. Failure to complete and submit a petition in compliance with the elections by-laws will result in the rejection of the petition.

SECTION 4—The Candidate Information Session

The Candidate Information Session shall be the first official elections event. At the session, the Election Commissioners will describe the rules for submitting petitions, and representatives from all representative bodies involved in the election shall be present to describe the duties and requirements of the open positions. Publicity for the Campaign Information Session shall be posted four (4) days in advance, and should tell the date and time of the session, the positions available, and contact information for the Elections Commissioners. The day following the session, the Elections Commission shall post new publicity announcing the availability of petitions, and should include the location of the petitions, when petitions and biographies are due, what positions are open, and contact information for the Elections Commissioners.

SECTION 5—The Campaign Information Session

The Campaign Information Session shall be held the day that the potential candidates submit their petitions. All potential candidates are required to attend the session. If a potential candidate cannot attend the session, they must notify the Elections Commissioners of their absence in writing or by e-mail before the session. The candidate will be responsible for obtaining from the Elections Commissioners the information disseminated to the candidates during the session. Failure to attend the session or notify the Elections Commissioners will result in disqualification. At the session, the Elections Commissioners will collect the completed petitions (see Art. IV, Sec. 3), review the campaign rules and answer any questions the candidates may have. Publicity for the Campaign Information Session shall be posted 2 days in advance, and should include date, time, and location of the session, must state that it is required for all candidates in addition to signed petitions, and include contact information for the Elections Commissioners.

SECTION 6—Campaigning

Campaigning will start at midnight the morning after the Campaign Information Session. Candidates may not post any publicity before this time, nor may they announce their candidacy through any means of mass communication. Simply talking to individuals about their candidacy is acceptable. Physical campaign materials may not be constructed from butcher paper or any other similar materials, nor may the candidates use chalk or paint on any surfaces. Campaign material is subject to review by the Elections Commissioners, and must be removed by the candidates no less than 6 days after the election (or the runoff, if one is held).

SECTION 7—The Campaign Forum

The Elections Commission shall hold a Campaign Forum not fewer than 3 days before elections. All candidates are encouraged but not required to give a speech of no more than five minutes and answer questions for no more than three minutes at the forum. Because of the potentially large number of candidates in the General Elections, the Elections Commissioners should conduct the campaign forum in this manner: have a plenary forum during which all at-large candidates may speak, after which the group will divide by class and retire to separate rooms where candidates for class representative positions can speak. Publicity for the Campaign Forum shall be posted three days in advance of the forum, and include the date, time, and location of the event and contact information for the Elections Commissioners.

SECTION 8—Elections

Elections will be held seven (7) days after the Campaign Information Session. There will be two (2) criteria used in determining winners. First, the Elections Commissioners will look at the number of positions available in a particular race and the corresponding number of candidates receiving the most votes, and second, those candidates must receive a majority of the ballots cast in their particular race. If each available position is not filled by a candidate receiving a majority, then the number of remaining positions open will be taken into consideration for runoffs. Publicity for the elections should be posted three days in advance, with new publicity the day of the elections. It should tell when they will be held, which classes are involved, the balloting method, where students can vote, during what hours, and contact information for the Elections Commissioners. Also, the morning of the day before an election, the Elections Commissioners should send an e-mail to the Student Body stating that elections will be the next day, what offices are being voted on, who may participate, and when, where, and how they may vote.

SECTION 9—Runoffs

Runoffs will be held two (2) days after the Elections, except in the event of a grievance upheld by the Elections Commission; in this case, the Elections Commissioners will set the date of the runoffs within the next seven (7) days. Only elections in which one position is contested may require a runoff, and a runoff will be held only in the event that no single candidate receives a majority (50.1%) of all votes cast in that election. If an election requires a runoff, the Elections Commissioners will enter the two candidates who receive the most votes; in the event that there is a tie between two such candidates, however, both will be eligible for the runoff. Publicity for runoffs should be posted as soon as the Elections Commissioners officially know that a runoff will be held, and should tell when they will be held, which classes are involved, the balloting method,

where students can vote, during what hours, and contact information for the Elections Commissioners. Also, the morning of the day before a runoff, the Elections Commissioners should send an e-mail to the Student Body stating that elections will be the next day, what offices are being voted on, and when, where, and how they may vote.

SECTION 10—Grievances

If a candidate wishes to file a grievance, they must do so by sending an e-mail stating the nature of their complaint to the Elections Commissioners and the Vice President of RSG within 48 hours of the infraction. If the Elections Commissioners decide to rule with the complainant, no further action shall be necessary. If they reject the grievance, they must turn it over to the Elections Committee. The Elections Committee will rule on the grievance in the following manner: at a meeting scheduled by the Elections Commissioners, the complainant will present his grievance to the Committee, and the Elections Commissioners will state why they feel the grievance should be dismissed. The Committee will vote by simple majority on whether to rule in favor or against the complainant. Any tie shall be broken with the vote of the Vice President of RSG. When the Elections Commissioners schedule the meeting, they shall make every effort to ensure that all involved parties can attend and to ensure that the complaint will be ruled upon in time to put the ruling into effect. The Elections Committee members will make every effort to attend. The complainant may send a proxy if it is impossible for them to attend.

ARTICLE V. MR. & MS. RHODES ELECTIONS

SECTION 1—Methods

Nominations for Mr. & Ms. Rhodes shall be held by hand. Elections for Mr. & Ms. Rhodes may be held either online or by hand balloting at the discretion of the elections commissioners. All students may participate in the nomination and elections procedures.

SECTION 2—General Guidelines for Elections Publicity

Elections Publicity shall be placed in outside of the previously defined academic buildings. In addition to flyers or posters, the “VOTE TODAY” banner should be hung above the amphitheatre the night before any election. The student body should be notified by e-mail of elections procedures and locations the day before an election is held.

SECTION 3—Nominations

Each student will be allowed to nominate only one male and one female senior. A list of all seniors will be made available to students at the nominations site. The top five male and top five female nominees will be put on the election ballot. If there is a tie between the nominees, the Elections Commission will decide which nominees to accept. The Elections Commissioners shall notify the nominees as soon as the nominee list is finalized and inform them that in order to accept their nomination, they must submit a biography to the Elections Commissioners before the day of elections. If a nominee declines their nomination, the Elections Commissioner will replace them with the senior who had the next highest amount of votes. Publicity for nominations will be posted five days in advance and shall tell the date, time, and location of nominations, who may participate, and contact information for the Elections Commissioners. Also, the morning of the day before nominations, the Elections Commissioners should send an e-mail to the

student body stating that elections will be the next day, what offices are being voted on, and when, where, and how they may vote.

SECTION 4—Nominee Biographies

Biographies shall be no more than 200 words and include the nominee's name, the names of their parent(s), major, activities, and future plans. The Elections Commission should submit the biographies to the Alumni Office (or whatever organization is conducting homecoming events) so that they may be read during halftime of the homecoming game.

SECTION 5—Elections

Mr. and Ms. Rhodes Elections shall be held two days after the nominations. The nominee receiving a plurality of votes wins. Publicity for Mr. & Ms. Rhodes Elections will be posted after the list of nominees is finalized and will include the date, time, and location of nominations, who may participate, and contact information for the Elections Commissioners. Also, the morning of the day before elections, the Elections Commissioners should send an e-mail to the student body stating that elections will be the next day, what offices are being voted on, who may participate, and when, where, and how they may vote.

SECTION 6—Senior Involvement

No seniors shall be involved in any part of the Mr. & Ms. Rhodes elections process. A temporary appointee of the Vice President will replace any senior members of the Elections Commission.

ARTICLE VI. MANUAL HAND BALLOTING PROCEDURES

SECTION 1—Poll Workers

At the RSG meeting prior to the election, the Elections Commissioners shall request that all RSG members sign up for available time slots to work the polls. All RSG members are obliged to work the polls. If RSG members cannot fulfill these requirements, Honor Council and SRC members may also work the polls. The Elections Commissioners are responsible for creating a schedule that includes the names of poll workers and their assigned shifts, distributing the schedule to poll workers before the election, and posting the schedule at the polling locations. Poll workers will work one hour shifts and are expected to be on time and prepared to fulfill their duties; they should avoid arriving late or leaving early, and if they cannot work their entire shift should arrange for a replacement worker from. At all times, the polls are to be monitored by at least one official worker, and special effort should be taken to ensure that two monitors work each shift. If every shift does not have at least one worker, the polls shall be closed during that time, though the lost time will have to be compensated by alternate polling time during the same day.

SECTION 2—Ballot Boxes & Ballots

On the day before the election, ballots, roster sheets for each class involved in the election, instruction sheets for the poll workers, a poll worker schedule, a device for making a special mark (such as a hole punch or stamp) on the ballots, candidate biographies (except in the Mr. & Ms. Rhodes Nominations), and pens shall be placed in the ballot box. Roster sheets should be obtained from the Registrar's Office at least one day in advance of the elections. The ballot shall state what offices are being voted on,

which candidates are running for which office, how many positions are open in each office, how many candidates students are allowed to vote for in each office, and include instructions on voting procedures for the voter to read. Each candidate shall be assigned a unique two-digit number; the first candidate on the ballot will be numbered "01," the second "02," and so forth. If a candidate's name appears twice on the ballot, then sequential numbering will be broken in that instance so that they will have the same number in both locations on the ballot. Separate ballots are to be made for each class to ensure that no voter's ballot contains positions for which they are not eligible to vote. The number of ballots made prior to the election shall correspond to at least 75 percent of the voters eligible on vote on that particular ballot. Elections Commissioners should occasionally verify that sufficient ballots are present at the voting location.

SECTION 3—Polling

Polling shall be conducted in one location, preferably at The Catherine Burrow Refectory or in Java City. The polls shall stay open for at least eight hours during a twelve hour period of election day; that is, polls may not be closed for more than four one hour shifts. Elections Commissioners are responsible for setting up and taking down polls, and for transporting the ballot box to the RSG office immediately after the polls close.

SECTION 4—Voter Registration & Voting

Class rosters are to be provided at each voting location for each class involved in the election. Before giving a ballot to a voter, the worker is to request the name of the voter and cross the name off of the roster, and the voter is to initial by their name on the roster. No one is allowed to vote twice; if their name has already been crossed off the roster, they will not be allowed to vote. Also, the worker should place the aforementioned special mark on each ballot before giving it to a voter. No voter is to leave the polling area—to be determined discriminately by the Elections Commissioners or the worker present—with a ballot in their possession. Voters are not required to vote on every position in every race, but voting for more candidates in a particular race than positions open will invalidate a voter's ballot in that particular race. After each voter has completed their selections, they are to return the ballot to the monitor who is then to place the ballot in the ballot box.

SECTION 5—Vote Tabulation

At least one Elections Commissioner, three Elections Committee members, and one Executive branch member shall tabulate the votes. Other non-candidate RSG members may also be recruited to tabulate votes at the discretion of the Elections Commissioners. If members of the Elections Commission are candidates in the elections, they may not count votes; if so many members of the Elections Commission are candidates that both Elections Commissioner and three or more Elections Committee members are disqualified from voting, the RSG President will appoint other RSG members who are not candidates in that election to tabulate votes.

When counting votes and determining winners, the Elections Commissioners should make note of the total number of votes submitted for each particular office and what percentage of these votes each candidate received. Refer to article IV, Sections 8-9 for information on determining winners and for determining runoff candidates. All ballots shall be double counted. Once the number of votes has been tabulated, this number shall be compared to the number of students registering to vote. If the total number of ballots

differs by more than two percent the results shall be referred to the Elections Commission for immediate review.

SECTION 6—Announcing Results

Publicity announcing the winners should be posted on the RSG bulletin boards outside of Palmer Hall and the RSG office, printed in the next issue of The Sou'Wester, and sent to the Student Body through e-mail; the number of votes received by the winners and losers should not be in this publicity, but should be available in the RSG office for any student to see if they wish.

ARTICLE VII. ONLINE/INTERNET BASED VOTING

SECTION 1—Facilitators

The Information Services Department will facilitate online elections, if they wish to do so. The Elections Commissioners shall arrange to have voting online before the first publicity for elections day is posted. The Commissioners shall follow the guidelines set forth by the Information Services Department and shall, if need be, work with the Department in amending those guidelines as needed. A copy of said guidelines shall be kept by the Elections Commissioners, but need not be a matter of official record. Changes thereto need not be approved by the Senate or any subset thereof.

SECTION 2—Ballots

The Information Services Department will be responsible for creating ballots; however, the Elections Commissioners should review the ballot to ensure that candidate biographies are readily accessible and that instructions on voting are included. Separate ballots are to be made for each class to ensure that no voter's ballot contains positions for which they are not eligible to vote. Voters are not required to vote on every position in every race, but voting for more candidates in a particular race than positions open will invalidate a voter's ballot in that particular race. Measures should be taken to ensure that no student votes twice.

SECTION 3—Polling Times

To account for the possibility of unforeseen network failure, polls should be kept open for ten hours of a twelve-hour period instead of eight hours of a twelve hour period.

SECTION 4—Vote Tabulation

The Information Services Department shall tabulate votes according to the guidelines in Article V, Section 5.

SECTION 5—Announcing Results

Publicity announcing the winners should be posted on the RSG bulletin boards outside of Palmer Hall and the RSG office, printed in the next issue of The Sou'Wester, and sent to the student body through e-mail; the number of votes received by the winners and losers should not be in this publicity, but should be available in the RSG office for any student to see if they wish.

SECTION 6—Polling Irregularities

In the event that the ResNet Network fails, the Elections Commissioners and the Information Services Department will determine how many hours the network was down and over what percentage of campus. Results of an online election will be invalidated if the entire network was unable to access the polling site for less than eight of the ten

scheduled polling hours. Efforts will be made to reschedule network maintenance or planned network outages if they will affect the elections.

SECTION 7—Publicity

Publicity for online elections should also include instructions on how to access the polling site. Efforts should be made to publicize elections on the Rhodes College home page; a URL leading to the polling site or specific instructions on how to access the polling site should be placed on the home page if possible.

SECTION 8—Miscellaneous

To the greatest extent possible, the rules outlined in Article V should be followed when voting online.

ARTICLE VIII CONTESTED ELECTIONS

SECTION 1—The Elections Commission

Both Elections Commissioners and three-fourths of the Elections Committee may move to invalidate the results of an election within 14 days after election day. To do this, they must compose a brief detailing their reasons for overturning the elections results and submit a copy signed by the contesting Election Commission members to the Vice President and Senators of Rhodes Student Government. The Senate can overrule the Elections Commission with a vote of $\frac{3}{4}$ Senators assenting.

SECTION 2—Candidates

Within 10 days after election day, a candidate may contest an election by filing a brief with the Vice President detailing their reasons for overturning the election results. At the next RSG meeting, the Vice President must read the brief to the Senate, after which the complainant and the Elections Commissioners will have the opportunity to present their cases to the Senate. The Senate will then ask any questions they have concerning the contest. The Senate can overturn the results with a vote of $\frac{3}{4}$ Senators assenting.

ARTICLE IX. ELECTIONS MATERIALS

SECTION 1—Materials Filed in the RSG Office

The following elections materials should be filed in the RSG office after an election (if they exist in a particular election): a copy of the poll workers schedule, detailed results of an election, a copy of all publications which carried information submitted by the Elections Commissioners, petitions for candidacy, used ballots, and used class rosters. All materials may be discarded after two years.

SECTION 2—Miscellaneous

Unused paper ballots should be recycled