

Northern Iowa Student Government Election Rules

Section 1. Purpose

These Election Rules and the Election Commission exist to assist candidates in their campaign to represent students through election to the Northern Iowa Student Government, hereafter referred to as NISG. This document shall set forth the rules under which NISG will operate student body elections. This document shall provide rules for all elections and referendums.

Section 2. Election Commission

A. Purpose

The Election Commission shall be the original governing agent for the conduct of all elections, including General, Special, run-offs, and referendums.

B. Membership

The Election Commission shall be composed of an Election Commissioner and ten (10) Election Agents:

1. Election Commissioner:

The Director of Public Relations shall serve as Election Commissioner. In the event he/she is a candidate or affiliated with any of the campaigns, (see Section 2, Subsection C, Part 4 and 5), or for other reasons, he/she shall appoint an Interim Commissioner to execute charged duties. The appointed Interim Commissioner must be a senator who is not running for any NISG office in the elections. The Director of Public Relations shall appoint the Interim Commissioner with concurrence of 2/3 of the NISG Senate, no later than the 2nd meeting of the semester in which the elections or referendums will occur.

2. Election Agents:

- a. The election Agents shall be made up of students.
- b. Must be at least 10 election agents to the Commission.

C. Appointment:

1. The Speaker and Election Commissioner shall appoint senators with concurrence of 2/3 of the NISG Senate.
2. The President and Election Commissioner shall appoint Non-senators with concurrence of 2/3 of the NISG Senate.
3. If for any reason a Senate or non-Senate Election Commission seat should become or remain vacant, the Speaker and Election Commissioner may appoint individuals to membership with concurrence of 2/3 of the NISG Senate.
4. Eligibility: The following scenarios shall prohibit membership as an Election Agent:
 - a. Individuals seeking an elected NISG position for the election forthcoming.
 - b. Individuals holding the NISG positions of President, Vice President, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, or members of the Judicial Branch.
 - c. Immediate relative of candidate(s)
 - d. Spouse of candidate
 - e. Non UNI Student
5. Conduct:
 - a. While exercising duties support or endorsement of any candidate or candidacy is prohibited.
 - b. May not solicit voters while engaged at polling site.
 - c. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the Election Rules.

D. Term of Office:

The Election Commission shall be appointed no later than the 2nd meeting of the academic year and shall serve until the end of the academic year in which they were appointed, or until the execution of charged duties is complete.

E. Duties

1. The Election Commission shall meet at least once in the first two weeks of the spring semester.
2. The Election Commissioner shall be available, upon request, to meet with any candidate regarding election rules, campaigning, or other questions regarding NISG related concerns

3. The Election Commission shall ensure that all on-campus campaign publicity or items which promote a candidate, including, but not limited to, flyers, table tents, posters, or signs, have been stamped appropriately according to UNI policy.
4. The Election Commission shall also remove all campaign literature that is posted prematurely for an election. Candidates are not allowed to post any materials for election until the start of campaigning (See Section 3, Subsection A, Part 1).
5. The Election Commission shall have authority to modify the election calendar if conflicts arise.
6. The Election Commission shall enforce the election rules.

Section 3: Campaigning and Election Dates

A. Campaigning

1. Campaigning for the NISG general elections will begin at 8 AM, 30 days prior to the election day of the semester in which the election ends.
2. Campaigning is defined as the distribution of campaign materials, including but not limited to: advertisements, flyers, table tents, posters, clothing, buttons, or signs speaking before groups as a candidate or otherwise generally advertising for one's candidacy. Any of these activities conducted on behalf of a candidate by a third party are also considered to be campaigning. Campaigning does not include meetings attended by candidates and their workers for developing a platform, adopting policy, or for conducting business related to the campaign.
3. Campaign postings in the Residence Halls or other DOR facilities shall be subject to the Residence Hall Posting Guidelines, most recently revised. Campaign postings in other buildings, including the Maucker Union, shall be subject to the guidelines of the owners/operators of those buildings.

B. Election Dates

1. As stated in the Constitution of the NISG, the General Election shall be held each year on the last Tuesday and Wednesday of February. The Election Commission, with the power granted in §2, Subsection E, Part 5, shall set the dates of the Special and Recall Elections and the dates of the referendums.

Section 4. Publicity and Promotion

The publicity and promotion of the General and Special Election shall be at the discretion of the Election Commission. The following are minimum requirements for publicity and promotion:

- A. Election dates and application material availability shall be announced during a Senate meeting. Following the meeting, a news release shall be provided to KULT, the *Northern Iowan*, and UNI-TV. Other media sources are left to the discretion of the Election Commission, taking in consideration student patronage.
- B. Advertising promotions shall be carried by student related media venues, including, but not limited to, KULT, the *Northern Iowan*, and UNI-TV. Content of promotions shall serve to advocate the general interest of the election forthcoming.
- C. The Election Commission shall not organize public debates.
- D. The Election Commission shall provide the results of the election transpired to said media sources in Section 4, Subsection A.

Section 5. Applications

A. Application packets shall include

1. Informational Cover Sheet
2. Application form
3. Copy of Election Rules, the NISG constitution, NISG by-laws, and the University of Northern Iowa Posting Policy.
4. Petition:
 - a. Candidates shall obtain student signatures of endorsement for their candidacy to NISG office in order to have their name placed on the ballot. Petition forms will be issued to each candidate for the purpose of obtaining these student signatures. All candidates must use the form provided by the Election Commission. This form may be reproduced, but only

if such reproduction includes both the front and back of the sheet and is on the same size paper. Petition forms will be available at 12:00 Noon, thirty-three days before an election is scheduled to end.

- b. The following numbers of signatures are required prior to application packet certification:
 - i. Residence Hall Senator -- 25
 - ii. University Apartments Senator-- 15
 - iii. University at Large -- 40
 1. University At-Large candidates shall provide no less than twenty (20) signatures from on-campus, and twenty (20) signatures from off-campus.
 - iv. Off-Campus Senator -- 25
 - v. College Senator -- 25
 - vi. President Candidacy -- 150
 1. Presidential candidates must provide no less than ten (10) signatures from University Apartments, sixty (60) signatures from On-Campus residence halls, and eighty (80) signatures from off-campus.
 - c. A candidate for a position in which the candidate will be representing a specific portion of the student body shall presently be a member of that constituency or shall expect to be a member during the term of their appointment. There shall be no minimum GPA for candidates.
 - d. All required signatures shall be from the constituency in which the candidate is running.
 - e. Students may sign more than one petition, but they may sign for each candidate only once. Students signing a petition must be a registered student of the University of Northern Iowa, as defined by the Registrar. The signee's printed name, address, and phone number are also required in order for the signature to be valid.
 - f. NISG may not amend the Election Rules from one week before the application packets are made available until the election results are finalized.
- B. A completed application and a completed petition sheet must be submitted for verification no later than 12:00 Noon three weeks prior to the election. The Election Commission will, within 48 hours of receiving the petition, verify the document and notify the candidate if he/she has met the minimum signatures required for candidate Northern Iowa Student Government Election Rules certification. To verify the signatures, Election Commission members will select a minimum of five random signatures from each senate application petition and 10 signatures from each executive application petition and determine whether these persons are registered students at the University of Northern Iowa living at the appropriate residence as specified under Article III, Section 3, Subsection A of the Constitution, for the semester in which the election will occur.
- C. Application packets will not be accepted after the designated date and time. Completed applications shall be made available for controlled viewing within the NISG office.
- D. In the event of a discrepancy concerning applications, the Election Commission shall convene in order to evaluate the nature of the discrepancy and decide upon appropriate action.
- E. Submission of a completed application by a candidate or Candidacy shall imply acknowledgement of the NISG Election Rules and other binding NISG documents.

Section 6. Voting Procedure

- A. Voter Requirements
 1. Must be a registered student at the University of Northern Iowa. No registered student will be denied the opportunity to vote.
 2. A person of his/her choice may accompany any student needing assistance in voting.
- B. Polling Location and Hours
 1. All UNI students shall vote on the World Wide Web at a designated web site.
 - a. Students may either vote at any University computer lab or at their personal computer.
 2. Polling hours: 6 a.m. Tuesday day until 6 p.m. Wednesday as determined in Section 3, Subsection B, Part 1 of the Election Rules.
- C. Voting
 1. Students will have the option to elect zero or one set of candidates for President and Vice President.
 2. Students will have the option to elect zero or one senator for each constituency he/she is a part

of.

3. Students will have the option to elect between zero and the maximum number of seats open for the office of University-At-Large Senator.
4. Students will have the option to vote yes, no, or to abstain from voting on each referendum or change to the Constitution.
5. All candidates shall be listed alphabetically by last name. All places where a candidate's name is to be chosen shall allow for a write-in candidate's name to be written in.

D. Declaring a Winner

1. Within 24 hours of the closing of the polls, the Election Commission shall convene to determine the winner of an election. For all Presidential and Vice Presidential races, the highest vote-getters shall be declared the winners. For all Senate races, the highest vote-getter shall be declared the winner. For all races in which more than one seat are vacant, the highest vote-getters shall be declared the winners. The Election Commissioner shall notify in writing (by e-mail) all candidates as to the results of the election in which they were running.
2. In the event that no Presidential Ticket receives a majority of the vote, the Election Commission shall schedule and operate a run-off election between the two candidates with the highest number of votes. This run-off election shall start the Tuesday following the announcement of the original results and shall end on Wednesday. Within 24 hours of the closing of the polls of the run-off election, the Election Commission shall convene to verify the winner.

E. Voting Procedure

1. Voting shall occur in a manner designed to protect each voter's confidentiality. When student's log in to the World Wide Web designated web site, they will be asked for a valid password.
2. All students voting will then be verified upon giving their password by the web server as to being a current UNI student, by using current university records, and that they had not previously voted in the current election. They will then be given a custom electronic ballot that shows only the NISG Senate Seats that they are eligible to vote on according to current university records.
3. After filling out the voters custom ballot it must be submitted personally by the voter in order to count
4. A voter may stop voting and void their current ballot anytime prior to final submission of their ballot. If a student should stop voting for any reason during their voting session they shall be allowed to return at a later time and vote while the polls are still open.
5. If a voter abandons the ballot prior to final submission, a commissioner member or employee shall cancel the ballot and the voter will still have the opportunity to vote at a later time while the polls are still open.
6. A person may cast only the custom ballots created by the computer for them and each student may vote only once in each election.

F. Appeals

1. In the event that any student wishes to appeal the outcome of an election, a decision of the Election Commission, or any Election Rule which the student believes to be unfair, the student may do so by submitting, in writing to the Election Commissioner within 5 school days after an election, their name, contact information, and the reason for the appeal, and the item which they are appealing.
2. The Election Commission shall review the appeal at its earliest convenience and shall be authorized to take any constitutional action which, in its judgment, is necessary to resolve the appeal

G. Challenged Ballots

1. If a student discovers an error on their ballot, the student has the option to challenge the ballot by notifying the Election Commissioner by going to the NISG office and telling them about the error.
2. Voter's challenging their ballots will then fill out a separate written ballot identical to others in their jurisdiction.
3. Once a student challenges a ballot, their votes will be held in a separate file while the Election Commissioner verifies their challenge.
4. A student may be asked to meet with the Election Commission within 24 hours of the closing of the polls to provide proof of residence for verification.
5. If the voter's challenge is eligible, all identification information will be removed from the

challenged ballot and placed with the rest of the ballots prior to final tabulation.

6. If the voter's challenge is ineligible, the ballot from that voter will remain in the separate pool of ballots with the votes remaining confidential from all persons outside the Election Commission. Ineligible voters will be notified in writing concerning the disposition of their ballots. The Election Commission will have final authority over the acceptance or rejection of challenged ballots.

Section 7. Campaign Regulation

A. Proscriptions:

1. No campaigning or campaign materials will be allowed within the following places:
 - a. Any University computer labs during active polling hours except for advertisements from the election commission.
 - b. Offices housing student-managed and operated services receiving Student Activity funds, through line item or Contingency allotment.
2. These restrictions shall not be construed to deny candidates access to advertising through student media outlets, or to deny those media the right to endorse candidacies within their normal printed or broadcast material. However, Election Agents shall retain the power to enforce other restrictions so as to maintain the integrity of the election.
3. No candidate or his/her designated representative(s) may remove, deface, obscure, or destroy any written posted campaign material prior to the election.
4. A representative(s) from each candidacy shall meet with the Election Commission at a time designated, on the morning of the election, prior to active polling hours, to review the University computer labs in order to remove campaign paraphernalia.
5. No candidate may use NISG office supplies or equipment; equipment maintained in the Student Organization Center is also prohibited.

B. Enforcement

1. The Election Commission will investigate possible violation of the regulations and any actions will be at the discretion of the Commission or as stated here in.
2. A candidacy found in flagrant violation of the election rules may forfeit said candidacy.

Section 8. Absentee Ballots & Write-in Votes

A. Absentee ballots may be cast at the discretion of the voter.

1. The location for absentee ballots shall be the NISG office
2. The casting period shall begin one working day following certification of candidacies and shall end the day prior to the General Election.
3. Students shall cast a written ballot containing name, student ID, and constituency. In the event that an Election Agent is unavailable, an NISG office manager is empowered to act on behalf of the Election Commission.
4. Absentee ballots shall be completed within the Speaker's office of NISG. Once completed the ballot will be placed within an envelope and sealed by the voter.
5. Absentee ballots must be cast prior to the scheduled election, according to the schedule prescribed by the Election Commissioner.
6. In all cases, the Election Commissioner shall be responsible for insuring ballot security and integrity.
7. The Election Commissioner shall also ensure that individuals who vote via absentee ballot may not vote during the regularly scheduled election.

B. Write-in Candidates

1. Write-in candidacies are permitted, with the number of write-in candidates being equal to the number of positions available from one constituency.
2. If a name on a ballot is incorrectly spelled, the election commission may determine the validity of the ballot.

Section 9. Ballot Counting

- A. The election commissioner is responsible for coordinating with Information Technology Services (ITS) and verifying all votes.

- B. Should the Election Commissioner determine the discrepancy material, a record of this fact should be noted to later determine materiality. The Election Commission shall resolve discrepancies prior to the conclusion of ballot counting.

Section 10. Public Announcement of the Election Results

- A. Once the Election Commission has verified the results of the election, an announcement will be made in the Maucker Union, disclosing the results of all the positions, Executive and Legislative, and referendums. This concludes the duties of informing the public of the results for the Commissioner. If other said parties decide to announce the results in an alternative location, it is up to their discretion.

Section 11. Post Material Storage

- A. Upon Completion of the election, ballots will come under full control of the Election Commissioner.
- B. All election documents shall be made available for controlled public viewing upon appointment, and at the discretion of the Election Commissioner.
- C. The Election Commissioner shall store the following in a secure location:
1. Applications, petitions, voter sign in sheets, tally sheets, and completed ballots.
 2. The period of time for storage shall be two months or the end of the semester, whichever should come first, after the certification of the election.

Section 12. Grievance Procedure

- A. The Election Commission shall have original jurisdiction in all matters concerning elections and grievances.
- B. Any student may challenge the results or procedures of any election by submitting their written grievance to the chair of the Election Commission no later than 5 PM on the fifth class day following the election being challenged.
- C. Counter grievances will be taken until 5 p.m. on the fifth class day after notification of the filed grievance(s).
- D. Candidates objecting with the decision of the Election Commission may appeal according to the NISG Constitution, Article VI, Section 2.
- E. After the grievance period has been observed, the Election Commission will consider certification of the election and forward its conclusions to the Senate.

Section 13. Amendments

This document may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the Election Commission, subject to approval by a 2/3 vote of the NISG Senate. Any amendments to this document must be made six weeks prior to the next election.

- Date of Enactment: February 8, 1998
- Amendments:
 - February 16, 2000 - Electronic Balloting
 - January 17, 2001 - Total Revision
 - November 13, 2002 - petition requirements and grievance procedures
 - February 5, 2003 - revision of campaigning procedures
 - March 10, 2004 - Revision to Election Agents
 - January 14, 2009 - Multiple Revisions, explanations, and grammatical changes