



University Students' Council Of Western University

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## Election Governance Committee Campaign Finance Procedure

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| <b>Authority:</b> Elections Governance Committee   | <b>Date Ratified:</b> November 8, 2024  |
|  | <b>Next Review Date:</b> November, 2027 |
| <b>Previous Amendments:</b> November 21, 2023; September 29, 2021  |   |
| <b>Related Document(s):</b>  |   |
| <b>Review Committee(s):</b> Governance Committee, USC Board of Directors                                 |   |
| <b>Delegates:</b> Senior Manager, Advocacy & Government Services; Senior Manager, People and Development |   |

### 1. SCOPE

1.1. This procedure shall specify:

- 1.1.1. The proper procedures for setting candidate spending limits, tracking candidate spending, and administration of reimbursements.
- 1.1.2. The standards that the Elections Governance Committee shall use to govern its interactions with candidates relating to matters of campaign finances.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. For the purpose of this policy, in addition to definitions from **Bylaw #1** and **Bylaw #2**, these terms shall be defined as follows:

- 2.1.1. **Fair Market Value:** The typical price, without special concessions or discounts, that is available to all persons.
- 2.1.2. **Campaign Materials:** Any physical or digital item created, distributed, or used to promote a candidate.
- 2.1.3. **Contribution:** Any goods, services or privileges donated, in whole or part, to a candidate or their campaign. This can include both monetary and non monetary contributions, such as discounts, gifts, or volunteer work.
- 2.1.4. **Expenses:** Costs incurred by or on behalf of candidates for campaign purposes.

- 2.1.5. **Specialized Venues:** Locations that are not typically used for common campaign activities or events that are chosen for their unique characteristics or appeal. These venues may include, but are not limited to:
1. High-profile or exclusive event spaces, such as concert halls, theaters, or private clubs.
  2. Locations outside of common public areas (e.g., city parks or university spaces), such as professional studios, private properties, or rented facilities tailored for media production.
  3. Any venue that incurs a significant cost due to its distinct nature, location, or amenities beyond those needed for standard campaign purposes.
- 2.1.6. **Non-Traditional Promotional Strategies:** Unconventional methods or platforms used to promote a campaign that go beyond standard practices. These may include, but are not limited to:
1. The use of innovative technology, such as mobile apps, augmented reality (AR), or virtual reality (VR) campaigns.
  2. Viral marketing tactics, such as flash mobs, guerilla marketing, or large-scale stunts aimed at drawing attention to the campaign.
  3. Paid influencers, partnerships, or endorsements not typically used in standard candidate campaigns.
  4. Use of digital platforms or media channels outside of typical social media or website advertisements (e.g., podcasts, professional video platforms, or live-streamed events with special features).

### **3. MANAGER OF ELECTION FINANCE**

- 3.1. The Manager of Election Finance shall be a member of the Elections Committee designated by the Chief Returning Officer (or the Chief Returning Officer herself) to be responsible for tracking candidate spending and calculating reimbursements on behalf of the committee.
- 3.2. The Manager of Election Finance shall be responsible for ensuring that the Elections Committee is notified of any candidates that violate financial regulations as per this procedure.

### **4. SETTING SPENDING LIMITS**

- 4.1. Spending limits for each candidate will be confirmed by the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) at least seven (7) days before the campaign period begins and announced through:
- 4.1.1. A press release;
  - 4.1.2. An email to all candidates;
  - 4.1.3. The All-Candidates meeting before the campaign period

- 4.2. Spending limits for candidates' expenses and contributions, combined, shall be as follows:
  - 4.2.1. Each Presidential candidate has a spending limit of \$1500.
  - 4.2.2. Each Divisional candidate, excluding Faculty President candidates, has a spending limit of \$200.
  - 4.2.3. Each Faculty President candidate has a spending limit of \$400.
  - 4.2.4. Each Vice-Presidential candidate has a spending limit of \$400.
  - 4.2.5. The spending limit for Senate and Board of Governor candidates shall be determined by the Secretary of the University.

## **5. CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENSES**

- 5.1. Candidates shall have a spending limit for the campaign consisting of the sum of expenses and contributions.
- 5.2. Expenses shall be defined as costs incurred by, or on behalf of, a candidate for goods, privileges, or services for use in their election campaign.
  - 5.2.1. If a candidate receives a good, privilege, or service at a discounted price that is not available to the public, both an expense and contribution shall be recorded: The expense shall be recorded as the amount paid, and the contribution shall be recorded as the difference between the fair market value of the good, privilege, or service as defined in Section 2.1.1. and the actual amount paid for that same good, privilege, or service.
- 5.3. Contributions shall be defined as goods, privileges, or services donated or given in whole or in part to a candidate or their campaign for the purposes of campaigning. A candidate shall not accept cash, cheque, or any other monetary equivalent in any amount as a contribution.
  - 5.3.1. If the contributor supplies goods and services, the value shall be determined at fair market value, as per its definition in section 2.1.1.
- 5.4. Special Rules for Expenses and Contributors:
  - 5.4.1. Where an item is purchased for use during the campaign period, but not entirely consumed, the cost shall be declared for the entire item, regardless of the amount of the item that remains unconsumed.
  - 5.4.2. Candidates will be required to declare expenses or contributions for the production of campaign material and media, including but not limited to videos, mobile apps, or graphics, but only the costs of making said product available to the public.

5.4.3. If a professional, even if the professional is a campaign volunteer, who would normally charge for a service provides a service to a candidate for free, the value of the service is considered to be a contribution.

## **6. ELIGIBLE REIMBURSEMENT**

- 6.1. The Manager of Election Finance shall be responsible for maintaining a record of each candidate's eligible reimbursement throughout the campaign period.
- 6.2. A candidate's eligible reimbursement shall be calculated as the sum of eligible expenses. Candidates will not be reimbursed for goods, privileges, or services received through contribution.
- 6.2.1. A disqualified candidate will not be reimbursed for their expenses.
- 6.3. Candidates will only be reimbursed for items which are directly related to their campaign and for which they provide original receipts. Any item deemed not to be an appropriate campaign expense may be excluded from reimbursement by the Committee or the USC's Senior Manager Finance.
- 6.4. The Committee may adjust a candidate's eligible reimbursement number at their discretion if they deem a candidate to have not competed in the spirit and purpose of the election using the following criteria:
- 6.4.1. Violating elections rules as outlined in **By-law 2** or the **Elections Rules and Violations Policy**.
- 6.4.2. The candidate is running a campaign for the sole purpose of discrediting another candidate.
- 6.5. The Senate and Board of Governors candidates will not be reimbursed by the USC for their campaign expenses.
- 6.6. The Manager of Election Finance shall keep a record of all eligible reimbursement calculations on file for thirty (30) days following the closing of balloting.
- 6.7. Eligible Reimbursement Categories:
- 6.7.1. Only expenses directly and clearly necessary for camping activities are eligible for reimbursement. These include, but are not limited to:
1. Printing for Posters, flyers and promotional materials;
  2. Website hosting or digital platform fees;
  3. Venue rental for campaign events held in London, Ontario;

4. Distribution costs for campaign videos and media such as social media ads or website hosting; and
5. Rental costs for electronic equipment supplied by the USC.

6.8. Prohibited Expense Categories:

6.8.1. Expenses considered ineligible for reimbursement include, but are not limited to:

1. Travel expenses outside of London, Ontario, unless directly related to a campaign event open to the public in London, Ontario;
2. Personal clothing or costumes for campaign materials except for campaign specific uniforms such as branded shirts; and
3. Equipment purchases or rentals such as cameras, microphones, or lighting.

6.9. Pre-Approval for Unusual Expenses

6.9.1. Candidates must obtain pre-approval from the Manager of Election Finance for any expenses that fall outside of standard categories. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Specialized venues for media production; and
2. Non-traditional promotional strategies.

6.9.2. Candidates are required to submit detailed documentation for all expenses related to these expenses, including:

1. Written justification for how the expense directly supports the campaign; and
2. Receipts or invoices clearly linked to the campaign that include the total cost of the purchase, date of purchase and name of the provider.

## **7. TRACKING EXPENSES AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

7.1. Candidates will use tracking sheets provided by the CRO for all expenses and contributions and submit original receipts..

7.1.1. Candidates who fail to use designated tracking sheets shall not be reimbursed for the candidate's campaign expenditures.

7.2. All candidates shall submit to the CRO original receipts of all expenses and contributions by the end of balloting.

7.2.1. Failure to submit receipts by the deadline will result in an automatic reduction in the candidate's eligible reimbursement by five (5) per cent per business day that the submission is late.

7.3. The CRO shall immediately forward any received receipts or tracking sheets to the Manager of Election Finance and shall forward any and all received receipts and tracking sheets after 4 p.m. on the last day of balloting.

- 7.3.1. The CRO may authorize the Manager of Election Finance to pick up any receipts and/or sheets from the USC Front Desk.
- 7.4. The CRO may request that candidates submit original receipts and tracking sheets prior to 4 p.m. on the last day of balloting.
- 7.5. The Manager of Election Finance and any Committee member chosen to assist them shall review each candidate's tracking sheet to ensure that candidates have not exceeded their spending limits, have original receipts for all expenses, have only listed expenses that can be considered appropriate, and have adhered to any other relevant provisions in **Bylaw 2**.
- 7.6. The Manager of Election Finance shall inform the CRO of any irregularities in expenses or contributions lists
- 7.7. In addition to Section 5, the Manager of Election Finance shall produce a list of expenses and/or contributions flagged as inappropriate for the Committee to approve. Any expenses deemed inappropriate by the Committee shall not be reimbursed.
- 7.8. The Manager of Election Finance has the authority to approve any and all expenses and contributions lists in which no irregularities have been noted .
- 7.9. The Manager of Election Finance shall keep all expenses and contributions records on file for thirty (30) days after the close of balloting in case a candidate wishes to contest their reimbursement.

## **8. ISSUING REIMBURSEMENT**

- 8.1. The Manager of Election Finance shall provide a list of candidates and the amount they are to be reimbursed along with a completed cheque requisition form to be signed by the Senior Manager Finance no later than fourteen (14) days, including Reading Week and other holidays, after the close of balloting.
- 8.2. At the same time as section 8.1, the CRO shall inform candidates of the amount they are scheduled to be reimbursed, including a list of expenses the Committee did not deem to be appropriate.
- 8.3. Candidates shall be reimbursed for the amount equal to their eligible reimbursement, less any outstanding loans.
- 8.4. Reimbursement cheques shall be made available for pickup at the USC Front Desk no later than twenty-one (21) days after the close of balloting.

8.5. The CRO shall notify all candidates that are eligible for reimbursement that their cheques are available by email on the day they become available at the Front Desk.

8.6. Any cheques that have not been picked up from the Front Desk and have stale-dated shall not be reissued.

## **9. CAMPAIGN LOANS**

9.1. A Presidential candidate may obtain an interest-free loan for the spending limit established in section 4.2 of this procedure, by applying to the Senior Manager, Finance.

9.1.1. Any loans granted pursuant to this section must be repaid, subject to any amount reimbursed, within thirty (30) business days from the close of balloting

## **10. ENFORCEMENT AND VIOLATIONS**

10.1. Any violation of this procedure or the associated Bylaw 2 may result in the adjustment or denial of eligible reimbursement.

10.2. Candidates deemed non compliant with these procedures may face disqualifications or other penalties as determined by the Elections Governance Committee.