UMBC SGA Election Rules 2015

Please read carefully!

1. **Violations of these rules will result in penalties, potentially including candidate disqualification.** Disqualification is especially likely when a candidate has committed a violation with a high probability of affecting the outcome of the election during the period of voting. In addition, any action which appears to violate the Student Code of Conduct will be reported to the proper UMBC authorities.

2. Candidates may run for no more than one position in the election.

3. In this document, “campaigning” means advertising one's campaign through verbal, written, printed or electronic promotion.

4. Candidates are responsible for any actions taken on their behalf by people who could reasonably believe that they are acting with the candidate's approval. If the candidate is aware that somebody intends to violate an election rule to promote the candidate’s campaign, the candidate is required to intervene to try to prevent the violation.

5. Making false statements of fact to promote or discredit a candidate, orally or in writing, or misleading people about the voting process, either intentionally or because the person making the statements did not take reasonable steps to verify their accuracy, is prohibited. True statements and statements of opinion or intention are welcome except when they violate UMBC rules.
   
   a. Infractions involving false statements about an opposing candidate or intentionally misleading people about the voting process will be considered especially serious violations.

6. During the election (the entire time voting is possible), no campaigning (other than wearing a button or t-shirt) is allowed on Main Street, defined as the rectangle between PNC Bank and the bookstore on one side and the Commons terrace window on the other, extending from the top of the staircase leading up from the lowest level of the Commons to the bottom of the staircase leading up to the Commons Information Desk lobby.

7. No candidate or campaign representative may physically or verbally approach any individual in The Commons to advocate for a specific candidate and/or ballot issue(s). In addition, campaigns are prohibited from sitting at non-reserved tables with the intent to distribute information in support/opposition of candidates and/or ballot issues. Candidates or campaign representatives may approach students to encourage them to walk over to the Main Street polling station to cast a vote in the election.

8. Any student organization may endorse any candidate at any time. Organizations may decide whether/who to endorse in any way they want, and may publicize their endorsements AFTER:
9. A candidate may publicize the fact that an individual student has endorsed the candidate only AFTER submitting a statement signed by the endorsing student identifying the candidate(s) endorsed.

10. Students must be free to vote as they wish without being harassed, badgered, or intimidated by candidates or their supporters. Campaigns may not provide prospective voters with equipment (e.g., laptops, tablets, cell phones) on which to cast votes. Campaigns may not assist or interfere with voters in the act of voting. If a candidate or supporter is aware that a student is in the act of voting, the candidate or supporter may not approach within 10 feet of the voter to provide information, solicit votes, or attempt to view the voter's selections. The Election Board will disseminate information to assist students in reporting violations of this rule.

11. If candidates make use of funds provided by the Election Board to print promotional materials at Commonvision, those promotional materials must meet the following standards:
   a. The candidate’s first name (as it appears on the ballot) must appear.
   b. The office the candidate is seeking must appear in the same font size as the candidate’s name.
   c. No other text in the ad may appear in a font size larger than 50 percent of the font size of the candidate’s name and sought office. This does not apply to words in a phrase containing the candidate’s name or sought office (i.e., Jane Doe for SGA President 2015, Vote John Doe for SGA Senate).
   d. If a candidate chooses to print on both sides of an ad, both sides must comply with these standards.
   e. For buttons, only the following standards apply: the candidate’s first or last name must appear, and all text must be the same font size.

Candidates must submit their designs for promotional materials to the Election Board to confirm that they meet these standards prior to printing them at Commonvision. Election Board funds may not be used to print stickers.

12. There are no spending limits.
13. Campaigning in the residence community is restricted by Residential Life policies, which are designed to ensure a comfortable living environment for resident students: Door to door solicitation, including knocking on residents' doors, is prohibited. No posted advertising (except on a resident's door by the residents him/herself) or residential mailbox ads by individual candidates are permitted in the residential community. Postings and mailbox ads are permitted if they are sponsored by the SGA Election Board and include all candidates' information. Other permitted activities include having conversations, and using one's own computer to send e-mails, etc.


15. Any campaign method is allowed provided it does not violate any of these rules, any law or any UMBC policy. Even if UMBC policies are not usually enforced by campus authorities, their violation will be considered a violation of these Election Rules. For example, the UMBC Campus Posting Policy--(http://www.umbc.edu/saf/policies/Campus_Posting_Policy.html)--must be followed to the letter. Permissible campaign methods include: Handing out literature; making phone calls; using Facebook; putting posters, flyers, banners, etc. in any location that does not violate UMBC rules; using campaign buttons; wearing a sandwich sign; sending e-mails (but see Rule #16, below) and handing out food, pencils, etc. When there is limited access to a public forum (such as VideoNet, LEDs and space to hang banners), the Election Board will decide how to apportion the resource among candidates interested in using it.

16. The use of resources owned by SGA or any other UMBC office for campaign purposes is prohibited, except when the resources are available for public use. Campaigning or preparing campaign materials in the SGA Office is prohibited. Examples of prohibited conduct within the SGA office: Using SGA telephones to solicit votes, wearing paraphernalia supporting candidate(s), or using supplies from a UMBC office to create advertising.

17. The use of any UMBC listproc, including the Student Organization listproc (stuorgs@lists.umbc.edu), by a candidate, a candidate’s designee, or a student organization, for campaign purposes is prohibited, with the following two exceptions: Any student organization may use its own, organization-specific UMBC listproc to communicate with its members regarding the organization’s candidate endorsements, and the Election Board may utilize listprocs to distribute information about the election.

18. Any student may file a complaint with the Election Board about an alleged violation of these rules. Complaints must be filed by 48 hours after an alleged violation is discovered OR by 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 23rd; whichever is earliest, by emailing the Election Board Chair, Evan Leiter-Mason (leiter1@umbc.edu) with the subject line “SGA Election Complaint.” Complaints must be accompanied by evidence of the alleged violation. The Election Board will either determine that the evidence is insufficient to support the allegation or invite the accused student(s) to present contrary evidence. The Election Board will rule that a violation has occurred if the weight of the evidence supports this conclusion.
19. The Election Board may choose to issue statements clarifying one or more of these rules. Candidates may request clarification of a rule at any time by submitting a written request to the Election Board Chair, Evan Leiter-Mason (leiter1@umbc.edu). The Election Board’s clarifying statements will be made available in writing to all candidates only by the Election Board Chair, and will be clearly identified by the heading “Official Election Board Statement Clarifying Election Rules.” Any clarifying statement not published by the Election Board Chair, or not set forth in writing with the heading described in this rule, is invalid.

20. All official communications from the Election Board will be done by email. All official communications to the Election Board must be done by email. Oral communications or social networking communications are not official.

21. The Election Board will NOT give advance approval to any specific action by any campaign. **If you think an action might violate a rule but are not sure . . . do not do it!** If you think that any statement by an Election Board member not contained in these rules will immunize you against penalties . . . you are wrong! Be creative, but play it safe!

22. The Election Board may amend these rules at any time. If it does, an email will be sent with the official title “Official Election Board Statement Amending Rules.” If an amendment is made, the rules will be effective at the time of the email sent.