

Policy for Hosting Student Elections & Referendum:

The Senate Office has the ability to host confidential on-line elections. This has become an increasingly popular request from student groups. In particular, we are increasingly being asked to host referendums on extraordinary fees that student groups wish to levy. The Senate Office has developed this policy to ensure that when it hosts election and referenda requests that the responsibilities of the groups running the election or referenda (in particular in ensuring that students affected are made aware of these votes) are aware of what we require to run an efficient and timely election. The Senate Office has a limited capacity to run elections. As a result, student groups should build some flexibility into their timelines to accommodate this reality.

The Senate On-line Election System (website link):

The Senate On-line Election System is available to Student Societies at the University to conduct their referenda or elections. This document outlines the steps to be taken:

- (a) to request that a on-line vote be done;
- (b) the communication process – using a Chief Returning Officer;
- (c) the information required for the Senate Office to run an election;
- (d) the role of the Senate Office; and
- (e) an overview of the election process.

1. How does a group seeking to run an on-line vote register with the Senate Office?

The group's Chief Returning Officer (CRO – see below) must notify the Clerk of Senate's Office (clerkofsenate@carleton.ca) at least three (3) weeks prior to when the group wants to hold its vote and must provide all required information and documentation at least two (2) weeks prior to the beginning of the voting period. For example, if the group's referendum or election is taking place on April 1st, the CRO should notify the Senate Office no later than March 8th, and submit all the documentation by March 15th.

Once the CRO has notified the Senate Office of their request – they will be asked to meet with the Clerk and/or the Secretary of Senate to discuss the election. The Senate Office is located in the Tory Building, 4th Floor – Rooms 421C & E.

2. What is a Chief Returning Officer (CRO)?

The Chief Returning Officer is a person appointed by the organization in question, who exercises (for the group having the election) direction and supervision over the preparation of the election or referendum question(s), who is responsible for ensuring that all documentation reaches the Senate Office (including, but not limited to the provision of the criteria for students who are to be included on the voting list), the person with whom the Senate Office will communicate for clarification on all issues related to the election, and to whom the Senate Office will provide the report once the election or referendum has been run.

3. What information should the CRO provide?

The CRO must provide documentation to prove her/his status as the appointed CRO for the organization (e.g. letter from the executive, meeting minutes documenting motion for and approval of appointment, etc.). The CRO should also bring their membership criteria for inclusion on the electoral list (e.g. – All full time MBA students; all first year students in Biomedical Engineering) and a copy of the question(s) or the slate of candidates and positions. For the latter, documentation of the nomination process should also be included. They should also include their process for informing students of the vote and over what time period and how they advertised the vote. The Senate office, upon receipt of the list of candidates will perform a check to verify their eligibility. We do NOT require that groups share their advertising strategy with us – we simply wish to ensure that students have been informed of the vote and IF they have been provided specific voting dates. It is best to consult with the Senate Office before fixing voting dates to see if we are able to run an election during that time period.

4. The Role of Senate Office

Once the CRO has provided the required documentation, the slate of candidates and/or the referendum questions(s), then the Senate Office will review the material. The review will consider the clarity of the question, ensure that referendum question(s) is (are) **NOT** open-ended (e.g., allowing for fee increases without going back to the electorate), and ensuring that questions and candidate lists were approved by the proper authority. In addition, the candidates will be assessed to ensure

that they meet the criteria for a position (e.g. if a student is running for a position slated for a student from the Faculty of Public Affairs, we will check to make sure they are actually student in an FPA program).

5. How are the elections run?

The Senate Office will ensure that the question(s) and/or the slate of candidates are electronically distributed to the constituency. Invitation to vote, a unique URL, will be emailed to students at their connect account. This email will also contain voting instructions. This link, unique to the student, can only be used once and cannot be used by any other account. The Senate Office will ensure that the voting site opens on the designated date and closes on the designated date. We will also ensure that the information is tabulated and reported to the CRO.

Please note: unless requested the survey tool, by default, uses a random listing order.

6. Next steps:

For an election, the results will be presented to the CRO. It is essential that results are reported to the electorate as provided. For a question on a student levy, the results of the referendum and the referendum question must be submitted to the office of Vice-President (Finance and Administration) for consideration before they can come into effect. The office of Vice-President (Finance and Administration) will consult with senior management and then forward a recommendation to the Board of Governors. No levies can be enforced without the approval of the Board.