

POLICY TITLE: ELECTION POLICY

Date Adopted by Board: December 1, 2025

This policy outlines the rules, responsibilities, and procedures for the fair and transparent administration of the Niagara College Student Administrative Council (NCSAC) Elections. This policy applies to all NCSAC members who are eligible to participate as candidates or voters in the annual elections for President and Directors. The candidates with the majority of votes will be elected to serve their respective offices for the length of the term (May 1 – April 30). Any vacancies will be handled through the Director Vacancy Process Policy.

The NCSAC Elections are independent from Niagara College's Board of Governors Elections, which are administered by the College.

If a candidate requires an accommodation during any part of the NCSAC Elections process, they are encouraged to contact the Chief Returning Office (CRO) or a member of the Elections Team as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be provided in a fair and confidential manner. Requests for accommodations will not affect a candidate's eligibility or standing in the election. NCSAC will ensure that all candidates have equitable access and opportunity to participate fully in the election.

Definitions

- **CRO:** Chief Returning Officer
- **DRO:** Deputy Returning Officer
- **Candidate:** Any eligible NCSAC member seeking election to the President or a Director position.
- **Endorsement:** Official support from an enrolled student at large as required per Candidacy Requirements.

Policy

1. Election Guidelines (Overview/Term)
 - a) All Directors and the President will be elected each year prior to the end of April.
 - b) All nomination forms must be submitted on-line by the time and date provided in the current year's Elections Package.

- c) Any current member of the NCSAC Board of Directors running in the current election must sign a “NCSAC Board Member Candidate Agreement”. This release outlines guidelines specific to current NCSAC Board Members who are running in the current election and covers guidelines regarding office conduct to ensure a fair election.
- d) As part of the nomination process, all Candidates must watch a mandatory informational video to learn more about the role as a Director and what they can expect of the role, if elected, and candidates must sign off that they have watched the video and understand the guidelines.
- e) After the nomination period, all candidates must attend the All Candidate’s Meeting to review the rules and guidelines of campaigning. If a conflict exists due to a candidate’s program schedules/classes, the candidate must confirm their absence with the CRO five (5) business days in advance.
- f) Candidates will be expected to submit their personal biography and a headshot by the date provided in order to appear on the NCSAC Elections website, various election materials, as well as the voting ballot.
- g) All candidates must agree to allow the Election team to view their academic standing from their last semester in order to ensure eligibility of the candidate and agree to allow the CRO to view their Niagara College Student Code of Conduct record, if any exists, with the College. The CRO may exclude a candidate based on their offence history. Nominees may be subject to a police check.
- h) Candidates will have five (5) business days to appeal election results. All appeals must be sent directly to the CRO. The CRO will have exactly five (5) days to review appeal after receipt of appeal.
- i) Election dates will be set annually by the Election team.

1.1. President

- a) The President Nomination Process will open the first day of classes in the Winter semester and close ten (10) business days after.
- b) Nomination packages will be available through the CRO.
- c) Prior to the closing of the nomination process, Presidential candidates must submit their election package on-line by the time and date provided.

2. Eligibility

2.1. President

- a) The President shall not be subject to any academic requirements and is not required to be a registered student of Niagara College during their term of office.

- b) A current President may serve consecutive terms to a maximum of two (2) years.
- c) If a current President chooses to run for a second term – they must abide by the same Election Policy that all other candidates follow.
- d) In order to run in the election as a Presidential candidate, a member of the Corporation must be a current Niagara College Student Administrative Council Board of Director Member, or be the current President or have served as a past Board of Director member and is currently enrolled as a student; and have the ability to serve a one-year employment term in a full-time capacity with a minimum of 35 hours per week (Monday – Friday), commencing May 1 and ending April 30.
- e) A candidate must have maintained a program pass in their prior semester (if not a returning President).

2.1.1. Vote of Confidence

- a) A vote of confidence meeting will occur for Presidential nominees at first Board of Directors meeting of the winter semester.
- b) All nominees will be required to complete a 15 minute presentation for the NCSAC Board of Directors and be prepared for up to 15 minutes of questioning from the NCSAC Board of Directors. No opposing Presidential Candidates will be in the room during presentations from opposing candidates.
- c) A vote of confidence will follow the question and answer period after the nominees have left the voting room.
- d) Each nominee must receive a majority vote of confidence (more than 50%).
- e) Only nominees receiving a vote of confidence will then move forward to the general election process as a Presidential candidate.

2.2. Director

- a) Must satisfy the Director Qualifications described in Article 5.2 of the NCSAC By-laws.
- b) Meet the corporations membership requirements described in Article 3 of the NCSAC By-laws and be in good standing with Niagara College.
- c) A candidate must have a minimum average of 65% in their program for the semester completed prior to the election, with the exception of January start students.
- d) Candidates may only run for the “school of” that they will be enrolled in for the upcoming academic year.
- e) Be a registered Niagara College student in their respective “school of” and remain enrolled in that “school of” for the duration of their term of office. If a candidate is no longer enrolled in their respective “school of” at any point during their term of office,

they are no longer eligible to hold that Director position.

2.3. Candidacy Requirements

- a) Each position requires the following number of endorsements from the NCSAC membership at their respective campus:
 - i. President – Majority Vote of Confidence (more than 50%) from current Board of Directors + 100 endorsements from students at large (Candidates are encouraged to obtain endorsements from both campuses).
 - ii. Directors– 50 endorsements from students at large.
- b) Candidates may self-endorse to count towards their total.
- c) Only candidates running in the Election are permitted to personally obtain endorsements from the NCSAC membership.
- d) No candidate will obtain endorsements in the NCSAC office(s), Wellness Lounges, or Library.
- e) NCSAC staff will verify endorsements.
- f) Candidates must submit their on-line application by the time and date provided (not less than 21 calendar days before the election date). Late nomination forms will NOT be accepted.
- g) Candidates must meet the Members Entitlement section in Article 3 of the NCSAC By-laws.
- h) Candidates must be bondable.
- i) Candidates must be at least 18 years of age at the start of the academic year.
- j) Any Director that has been deemed to have resigned previously must refer to Article 5.5 of the NCSAC By-laws.

3. Campaigning

- a) All candidates must respect the personal boundaries of all students and must not pressure or coerce anyone into engaging in conversation.
- b) All candidates may participate in any marketing initiatives organized by the CRO.
- c) Candidates are entitled to spend a maximum of \$500.00 each on campaigning expenses.
- d) NCSAC will reimburse up to \$100 in expenses incurred for candidate's elections campaigns. Receipts must be submitted to the CRO. Receipts must be in original list form (no debit or credit card receipts without itemized list of materials). Lost receipts will mean no reimbursement for election expenses.

- e) Campaign materials can be in the form of, but not limited to: social media, posters, t-shirts, buttons, and swag. Other means of campaign materials will be discussed at the All Candidates meeting.
- f) Use of discriminatory or offensive materials will result in the CRO deducting demerit points.
- g) No candidate will destroy or damage any other candidate's materials or slander any other candidate. Doing so will result in the CRO deducting demerit points.
- h) There will be multiple designated spaces at each campus for candidate posters. This space will be monitored by the NCSAC Marketing team to ensure no wrongdoing.
- i) No candidate shall request or receive any form of campaign promotion from current NCSAC staff, student centre staff, or NCSAC-affiliated clubs. For clarity, "promotion" includes, but is not limited to, wearing campaign pins, sharing campaign-related social media posts, or publicly promoting a candidate in any way.
- j) Each candidate runs as an individual; slates are not permitted.
- k) Any defamatory language towards other candidates will not be tolerated. Doing so will result in the CRO deducting demerit points.
- l) Additional campaigning rules will be explained at the All Candidates Meeting.

4. Posters

- a) There will be multiple designated NCSAC Elections walls that will display each individual candidate's poster at each campus. Locations of the designated walls will be determined by the NCSAC Marketing team.
- b) The NCSAC Marketing team will create and hang generic "NCSAC Election" posters to inform students about the elections and to promote awareness and voting.
- c) Hanging posters on campus will be exclusively handled by NCSAC Marketing team.
- d) Defacing any posters will result in the CRO deducting demerit points.

5. Social Media

- a) Candidates are permitted to create a public social media account designated to elections or utilize an existing public social media account.
- b) Candidates must report their social media accounts to the CRO and DRO for monitoring.
- c) Social media accounts used for Election purposes must be made public.
- d) Candidates cannot send unsolicited e-mails or unsolicited private messages about their campaign.

- e) Candidates are permitted to advertise through social media websites. All costs associated with social media advertising must be accounted for and receipt submitted to the CRO to count toward campaigning expenses.
- f) The NCSAC Marketing team will reshare candidates' social media posts/stories. Frequency will be decided by the NCSAC Marketing team.

6. Campaign Booths and Tabling

The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) will schedule promotional booths during the campaign period to support candidate engagement and visibility. Once announced, candidates may book a table through the CRO to promote their campaign, subject to availability and scheduling guidelines. Each candidate will be allocated a designated time limit at the discretion of the CRO to ensure equitable access for all participants. Candidates must be present at their assigned table for the duration of their scheduled time, and campaign representatives are not permitted to staff the booth in their absence.

Candidates are asked to only campaign at designated Campaign Booths set up by the CRO, and not during other tabling, including, but not limited to Club Booths, or Street Team Booths.

7. Slates

Slates, real or apparent, are strictly prohibited. For the purposes of NCSAC Elections, the following activities constitute a slate:

- a) Favouring another candidate.
- b) Sharing/pooling campaign finances.
- c) Appearing in campaign material with another candidate.
- d) Sharing branding or slogans with another candidate.
- e) Any other activity that could give voters the impression of a slate.

8. Voting (Procedures/Platform)

- a) Each eligible voter, a member of the Corporation, is entitled to one (1) vote.
- b) An on-line platform will be used for voting.
- c) All elections and voting will be done by electronic ballot when feasible.
- d) Each student must cast their own vote. Candidates are strictly prohibited from handling or submitting a ballot on behalf of another student, doing so will result in the CRO

deducting demerit points, or possibly enacting disciplinary actions including disqualification.

- e) When voting by secret ballot, incorrectly marked ballots will be kept, but not counted.
- f) The candidates with the majority of votes will be elected to serve as the Director from their “school of” for the length of term.
- g) All acclaimed positions/candidates must obtain a majority “YES” vote from the membership.

9. Violations

a) Reporting

- i. If someone is reporting a candidate for a violation, they must report it during the election period. Once the election closes, the CRO will not be able to intervene.
- ii. There must be evidence provided when reporting a candidate for a violation. The CRO will not be able to intervene based on hearsay.
- iii. NCSAC has no access to the security cameras on campus.

- b) Depending on the nature of the violation, the CRO may need to involve the Student Rights and Responsibilities Office (SRRO) at Niagara College and/or Campus Security and Safety.

c) Demerit Point System

All Candidates will begin the election with 10 demerit points each. Points will be deducted based on the violation of election rules. If a candidate reaches zero demerit points, they will face disqualification from the Elections. The following are the number of points deducted for each incident of rule violation:

Use of any intimidation tactics = 10

Campaigning before or after the campaigning period = 6

Use of offensive material/campaign smearing = 6

Campaigning in areas not authorized = 5

Running in a slate = 5

Social media violations = 5

Overspending on campaign = 4

Use of unapproved campaign material = 4

Poster violations = 4

Any other unspecified offences = At discretion of CRO

- d) All decisions by the CRO and DRO are final and binding.

10. Job Descriptions

10.1 Chief Returning Officer

Position Purpose

The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) is responsible for the fair, transparent, and efficient administration of the Niagara College Student Administrative Council (NCSAC) elections. The CRO ensures compliance with all election policies and procedures and upholds the integrity of the democratic process.

Reporting Relationship

Reports to: NCSAC Elections Team (collectively)

Term: December – March

Hours: As required to fulfill the duties of the position, with increased hours expected during the nomination, campaign, and voting periods.

Key Responsibilities

- a) Appoint and train a Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) to assist with the administration of the election, outlining their duties and responsibilities.
- b) Provide a minimum of twenty-one (21) calendar days' notice of the election and ensure all election rules, regulations, and procedures are publicly posted.
- c) Oversee all aspects of the NCSAC Presidential and Director elections, including the nomination process, Board vote of confidence (Presidential candidates only), campaigning and voting period.
- d) Schedule and facilitate the mandatory All-Candidates Meeting following the nomination period to review campaign rules, regulations, and expectations with all approved candidates; ensure any candidate unable to attend due to a verified class or program conflict provides advance notice at least five (5) business days prior.
- e) Obtain official verification from the College Registrar confirming each candidate's eligibility to run for office at the time of election package submission, and promptly notify any candidates who do not meet eligibility requirements.
- f) Regulate and supervise all campaign activities to ensure fairness, equity, and compliance with election policy.
- g) Schedule and coordinate promotional booths during the campaign period to support candidate engagement, visibility, and student awareness of the election.

- h) Ensure that the electronic voting system is properly prepared, tested, and secured prior to voting.
- i) Determine the need for and arrange any advance voting opportunities, as necessary.
- j) Monitor the integrity and operation of the online voting system throughout the election period.
- k) Confirm and officially declare election results.
- l) Retain the official electronic ballot report in a sealed format for one (1) year following the election.
- m) Receive and adjudicate formal appeals submitted within five (5) calendar days of the election that relate to election procedures or conduct requiring re-examination of ballots.
- n) Maintain records of all election complaints, recount requests, and any resulting decisions or actions.
- o) Possess the authority to declare an election invalid if election procedures or policies have been compromised.
- p) Establish a contingency plan for paper ballots in the event that the online voting system is unavailable or compromised.
- q) Hire, train, and supervise polling clerks as required.
- r) Coordinate locations and/or online setups for voting stations as necessary.

10.2 Deputy Returning Officer (DRO)

Position Purpose

The Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) supports the Chief Returning Officer in the administration and oversight of the NCSAC elections. The DRO helps ensure the election process is conducted in a fair, impartial, and policy-compliant manner.

Reporting Relationship

Reports to: NCSAC Elections Team (collectively)

Term: December – March

Hours: As required to fulfill the duties of the position, with increased hours expected during the nomination, campaign, and voting periods.

Key Responsibilities

- a) Assist with the preparation of voter lists.
- b) Review and verify the accuracy of the electronic ballot report following the close of voting.

- c) Confirm that each candidate maintained a minimum cumulative average of 65% in the semester prior to the election period.

10.3 President

Position Purpose

The President serves as the Co-Chief Executive Officer (alongside the Executive Director), and primary spokesperson of the Niagara College Student Administrative Council Inc. (NCSAC). The President is accountable to the Board and the student membership for the effective leadership, advocacy, and management of the organization. The President is elected annually through the Election Policy.

Reporting Relationship

Reports to: NCSAC Board of Directors

Term: May 1 – April 30 (Full-time position) 35 hours/week

Key Responsibilities

a) Leadership & Governance

- Serves as the link between the Board of Directors and NCSAC management, ensuring that Board decisions and policies are effectively implemented.
- Involved in the affairs of the NCSAC in accordance with the By-laws and Board Policies.
- Supports the Board in fulfilling its governance responsibilities, including strategic planning, by-law and policy development, and fiduciary oversight.
- Ensures that all Board members have access to the information, context, and training necessary to perform their governance roles effectively.

b) Representation & Advocacy

- Acts as the official figurehead and spokesperson of NCSAC to the College, community partners, media, and government regarding the decisions made by the organization.
- Represents the student voice and positions of the NCSAC Board at college, community, and government levels.
- Leads advocacy initiatives and government relations efforts at municipal, provincial, and federal levels, in collaboration with the Board and external partners.
- Provides support in the academic appeals process by offering guidance to students on procedures and available resources, while not directly influencing appeal outcomes.

c) Organizational Oversight

- Reviews College and corporate partnerships, Board of Governors meeting minutes, contracts, and any other documentation that impacts NCSAC's strategic or operational direction.
- Serves as a signing authority and binding member of the corporation for financial and contractual matters, in accordance with Board policies.
- Ensures organizational alignment with NCSAC's mission, vision, and strategic direction.

d) Board Relations & Accountability

- Reports to the Board of Directors at monthly meetings on significant NCSAC activities, initiatives, and emerging issues.
- Collaborates with the Board and NCSAC staff on strategic direction, ownership linkage, organizational goals, strategic initiatives, and long-term planning.
- Maintains open communication with the Board of Governors Student Representative and provides regular updates to the Board.

e) Operational & Administrative Duties

- Works a minimum of 35 hours per week.
- Participates in hiring processes for NCSAC managerial and office staff.
- Attends all NCSAC Board meeting and committee meetings, as well as external commitments.
- Ensures equitable presence at both campuses.
- Determines, in consultation with the Board, NCSAC's delegate participation at student conferences, based on budget and learning relevance.

f) Professional Development

- Attends conferences related to student leadership, governance, and advocacy regarding emerging trends in student associations, as approved by the Board.
- Provides a written summary of key learnings at the subsequent Board meeting.

10.4 Director

Position Purpose

The NCSAC Board of Directors is the governing body of the Niagara College Student Administrative Council Inc. Collectively, the Board is responsible for setting the organization's strategic direction, ensuring financial sustainability, policy guidance, and representing the interests of Niagara College students as the owners of the organization. Each Director upholds the principles of good governance, accountability, and transparency on behalf of the student membership. Directors are elected annually through the Elections Policy.

Reporting Relationship

Reports to: NCSAC Board of Directors (collectively)

Term: May 1 – April 30

Key Responsibilities

a) Governance & Oversight

- Upholds the mission, vision, and values of NCSAC and ensures all organizational actions align with these principles.
- Participates actively in Board decision-making, policy development, and long-term strategic planning.
- Reviews and approves the annual budget and monitors financial performance against strategic and fiscal objectives.
- Understands and abides by NCSAC's By-laws, Board Policies, and governance framework.

b) Representation & Ownership Linkage

- Represents the interests and perspectives of Niagara College students as organizational "owners."
- Engages with students regularly to gather feedback, identify issues, and communicate NCSAC initiatives and Board decisions.
- Acts as an NCSAC ambassador at any NCSAC, Niagara College, or community events.
- Develops and implements an annual Ownership Linkage Plan to strengthen engagement between the Board and the student body.
- Meets regularly with the Associate Dean of their respective academic area to maintain constructive relationships and support student advocacy.

c) Board Participation

- Reviews and understands all Board package materials in advance of meetings to actively contribute to discussion and decisions.
- Serves on standing or ad hoc committees as appointed by the Board.
- Attends all Board meetings, training sessions, and major NCSAC events as an ambassador of the organization.

d) Advocacy & Student Support

- Supports advocacy initiatives, campaigns, and projects aligned with NCSAC's mission and Board-approved priorities.
- May be asked to serve as a student representative on a formal appeal panel, where no conflict of interest exists.

e) Professional Conduct

- Demonstrates integrity, accountability, and teamwork in all interactions.
- Maintains confidentiality regarding Board discussions and sensitive organizational matters.
- Represents all Niagara College students equally and without bias.