

Trine University

Student Government Election Process

Authored by 2014 Vice President **Dustin Arvola**

Approved by 2014 Oversight Committee

Approved by 2014 Executive Board

Approved by 2014 Senate

Introduction

The implementation of this election process will be in an effort to make fair and equal the opportunity for every Trine University student to run for a position in Trine University's Student Government. Student Government is a governing body for the students and by the students. It shall be the desire of all who run for a position in Student Government to serve the students. All those who are in Student Government that show biasedness and abuse of power towards any student organization or individual on this campus will be removed from office pending an investigation by the Oversight Committee.

Being a member of Student Government is an obligation. It is the responsibility of those running for any position to know whether they can make a time commitment or not. All those who cannot give a position the utmost attention and effort in completing, will be doing a disservice both to their school and fellow student body. Every candidate needs to research the position and understand the obligations that go along with it. Let us remember that every student pays a "Student Activity Fee" and that Student Government is in charge of spending this money. Therefore, every student already has a monetary investment within Student Government.

I. End of Position Terms

All senators, executive board members, and committee members, will have terms that last, and are limited to, exactly two semesters (Fall through Spring). This will hold true unless a member is impeached or voluntarily resigns. Such impeachments or resignations will be overseen by the Oversight Committee. Appointments of any vacant position(s) in Student Government will be made by the executive board. Each person being appointed to a position must be approved through a senate vote.

II. Nominations (1st Week of Spring Semester to 1st Week of February)

Open nominations for all Student Government positions will begin the first school day of the Spring semester. It is during this period that any Trine University student may nominate themselves or be nominated to run for a Student Government position. Those who nominate themselves will need to fill out a candidate sheet that will outline their qualifications. This sheet can be found on MyPortal under the Student Government tab.

Those who are nominating someone else will need to submit the previously mentioned sheet with their name, the name of the person being nominated, and the position that person is being nominated for. The nominee will then be contacted by Student Government to see if they accept their nomination. If they accept, they will be given a blank copy of the sheet to fill out and submit. It is the responsibility of the nominee to be prompt in submitting their candidate sheet before the deadline.

Further instruction on the nomination process will be sent out to the campus by Student Government via email. Nominations will conclude at the end of the 1st week of February.

Position qualifications are as follows:

1. **President** – Must have held and completed a term of Presidency in another organization or have held a Student Government executive board or senator position for two semesters; need to have and maintain a GPA of 2.75 or greater.
2. **Vice President** – Will run slated with the President. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of the nominated President to choose who his/her Vice President will be; need to have and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater.
3. **Secretary** – Must have held and completed at least one executive board position in a student organization or have held a senator position for two semesters; need to have and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater.
4. **Treasurer** – Must have held and completed a term as Treasurer of a student organization or have been a member of the Finance Committee for two semesters; need to have and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater.
5. **Publicity Director** – Open to all Students, but Communication majors or those who have held Secretary positions in other organizations will be held in high regard over other candidates; need to have and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater.
6. **Speaker of the House** – Open to all Students; need to have and maintain a GPA of 2.75 or greater
7. **Assistant Speaker of the House** – Open to all Students; need to have and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater.
8. **Senator Positions** – Open to all Students; need to have and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater
9. **House of Representative Members** – Student Government Representatives will consist of members of an organization that were selected by their organization to represent them. Choose your representative carefully for they may be called upon to speak for your organization. Failure to provide appropriate representation will result in the suspension of that organization from being able to request Student Government funding.

III. Processing Nominations (Must be Completed the 2nd Week of February)

It shall be the duty of the Executive Board to organize all of the applications. Once organized, the individuals who applied will be called candidates. It shall be the job of the Executive Board to select the Top Two candidates for every Executive Board position (purely based on numbers, organizations involved in, and number of positions held). The exception shall be if there are ties for the second open spot. In which case, we would accept however many candidates are tied for the second spot. A tie is defined as the same in nearly every aspect (GPA, number of organizations involved in, number of positions held, any other relevant award/title). Executive Board **MUST** go off of the numbers when selecting the Top Two candidates and **NOT** their own personal opinions. Selection of the Presidential slates will be determined by the qualifications of **BOTH** candidates within the slate.

Senators will not follow the same process as stated above, but rather, every person running for a senator position (divided by classes and schools) will be put on a ballot together. It is here, not Executive Board, where a vote heavily influenced by popularity is important. The more people who know the senators, the better representation Student Government will have, which is the intended job of the senators.

IV. Campaign Process (Must be Completed the 3rd Week of February)

Only the two slated Presidential candidates are allowed to campaign. To help ensure the most qualified candidate wins for every Executive Board position, Student Government will dedicate a web page containing a brief description of the candidates' qualifications for the position and/or a picture to identify each candidate.

As long as the candidate remains within the realm of school guidelines and ethical behavior, there will be no campaign guidelines. Only the Presidential Slates are required to campaign. Some common ways of campaigning includes hanging up posters around campus, visiting Greek and campus houses to hear the opinions of the students, partnering with a student organization to host an event, posting an article in The Triangle, etc.

The campaign process for both Presidential Slates will begin on Monday of the third week of February. On Thursday evening of the same week, the two Presidential candidates will give a public address in a designated location. The public address needs to include the candidate's agenda, if they were to win presidency. Each address shall be no longer than 15 minutes. Once both public addresses have concluded, the floor shall be open for questions from the students in attendance. The moderator of this event shall be the current Student Government President. If the current Student Government President is running for another term of Presidency, then the moderator will be the current Vice President of Student Government. It shall be his/her job to be the time keeper during both public addresses, ensure all student questions are appropriate and not redundant, and to officially conclude the event when he/she sees fit. The campaign process will officially end on Saturday at 11:59 pm.

V. Election Process (Must be Completed the 4th Week of February)

Beginning at 12:00 am on Monday of the fourth week of February, elections will be open to the entire campus. All votes will be through an electronic ballot sent to all Trine University students, faculty, and staff via email. Only currently enrolled students (undergraduate or graduate), who have a Student ID Number, will be able to cast a vote. The electronic ballot will close at 11:59 pm on Friday of the same week. Election winners will be announced before the end of Spring Break. The official swear-in ceremony of new officers/senators will take place at a Student Government General Meeting either on the third or fourth week of April.

The electronic ballot will consist of two candidates for Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations, Speaker of the House, Assistant Speaker of the House, and President slated with a Vice President. All senator candidates will be divided accordingly into class and school.

The email that contains the link to the electronic ballot will also contain a link to the Student Government webpage that shows a picture and/or qualifications of each candidate. Therefore, all students will be provided with the opportunity to make an informed vote for every candidate.

Votes will be counted by student ID numbers. One vote per student ID number. Votes shall not be determined by computer IP addresses as they had been in the past (i.e. one vote per IP address). Therefore, a voter may cast two votes, but so long as both votes have the same student ID number, it will be counted as one vote. The first vote casted by a student, will be the only vote considered. All attempts by that same student to cast a vote for a different candidate will be ignored.

VI. Transition Period (1st Week After Spring Break to 2nd Week of April)

Election results will be sent out to the student body via email before the end of Spring Break. It shall be the duty of the new Student Government to properly transition with the old Student Government before the end of the Spring semester. The old Student Government will retain full power for the Spring semester until their term officially concludes following completion of the swear-in ceremony (described in **Article VII. Ceremony**). The purpose of the transition period is to get all new members acclimated with their position by having them foreshadow their predecessor. This involves attending the necessary meetings required for that position (general, executive, and/or committee). New members shall be governed under the same attendance policy as the old members during the transition period.

VII. Ceremony (3rd or 4th Week of April)

The ceremony will occur at the end of a Student Government General Meeting. It is an open campus event that marks the end of the old Student Government term, and the beginning of the new Student Government term. The details of the ceremony are up to the discretion of the old Student Government Executive Board. However, it shall be the duty of the new Student Government Executive Board to conclude this General Meeting in order to signify the transition into their position term.

VIII. Specific Organization Members

The mission of Student Government is to represent and be the voice of Trine University's student body. Therefore, limitations on how many members of a specific organization, on Trine's campus, that can run for a Student Government position must be imposed.

Out of the seven executive board positions, only a maximum of **two** positions may be held by members of the same campus organization (greek or non-greek).

Out of the sixteen senator positions, only a maximum of **four** positions may be held by members of the same campus organization (greek or non-greek).

These limitations will be enforced by the executive board once the ballot results are in. For instance, three members of the same fraternity are running for three different Student Government executive board positions (President, Vice President, and Secretary). All three of them win their elections. The top two positions (President and Vice President) will retain their spots. The Secretary position will be deferred to the runner-up on the ballot. If the runner-up is from the same fraternity as well, then the position will be considered vacant and it will be the duty of the previous senate to appoint a Secretary (refer to **Article I. End of Position Terms**). The same process shall apply to the senator positions.

If some Student Government positions have not been filled by the time the new Student Government begins its term in the Fall, then it becomes the responsibility of the new Student Government to fill its vacant positions (refer to **Article I. End of Position Terms**).

IX. Consequences

Any violations to the above rules and/or restrictions will result in disqualification from the ballot. Prior to enforcing the removal of a candidate from the ballot, an investigation will be preceded by the Student Government Oversight Committee. Pending a final verdict from the Student Government Oversight Committee, disqualification from the ballot will be enforced with no chance for appeal by the offender.

All questions regarding the rules of election should be directed towards the Vice President of Student Government. Contact the Department of Student Services to obtain the Vice President's contact information.

X. Benefits

The benefits of being a part of Student Government varies every year. However, in the past, benefits have included free customized Student Government apparel, lapel pins, food, direct contact with the University's President and Alumni Board, special meetings in VIP areas, leadership training/workshop, executive board retreats, management of student activity budget, power to institute change on campus, representation of Trine on and off campus, and increased reputation amongst the student body and campus organizations.