

SAIT STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS

You can make a difference!

What is SAITSA?

The SAIT Students' Association (SAITSA) is an autonomous non-profit organization, which means that we are a separate organization from SAIT Polytechnic. Though we work closely with the SAIT, we maintain our independence so we can be 100% responsible to our members, SAIT Students. SAITSA wants to make sure SAIT students have the best post-secondary experience possible; we aim to safeguard your ability to access high quality education, and to round out your academic experience with programs that are fun, informative and engaging.

In summary, SAITSA:

- Runs great services through our operations/centre (free breakfast, anyone?)
- Hosts fun events, like concerts and awareness days
- Makes sure students' voices are heard at all levels of governance (municipal, provincial and national)
- Cooperates with SAIT to make it a great place for students to learn and grow
- Operates the Gateway, Odyssey Coffehouse, the Station Market and more
- Provides students with opportunities to volunteer, make friends, start clubs, pursue goals...and pretty much anything else you can think of

Our mission statement pretty much sums it up:

The SAIT Students' Association is a representative organization dedicated to enhancing student life by providing rewarding leadership opportunities and quality services.

SAITSA and its members rely on Students' Legislative Council and the Students' Executive Council to act as the governing board—to make decisions regarding the overall goals of the organization and the means by which it will achieve its goals.

Why should you get involved?

There are lots of reasons to get involved with student government, but here are a few that really stand out:

1) **Create change.** As part of student government, you'll have a chance to learn about the workings of the post-secondary world, to identify that world's strengths and weaknesses, and to advocate changing things for the better. If you sit on the Executive Council; you'll have a chance to be a part of high-level SAIT committees, representing student interests in discussions on everything from public transit to tuition raises. ***Get to know the issues and see how you can make a difference.***

2) **Meet people.** Student government gives you a chance to meet other Councilors and Executives who are as driven as you are. You'll also interact with students who are full of inspiring ideas, and staff who are committed to making your goals a reality. ***Be part of a dynamic team working together on everything from high-level lobbying work to throwing great Gateway parties.***

3) **Gain experience.** As part of our team, you'll gain invaluable experience in board governance, financial management, policy development, public relations and teamwork. ***Give yourself an edge in the working world.***

4) **Help out.** Whether it's by lobbying for better academic programs or approving new programs/services, you can help your fellow students by looking out for their interests. ***Help us make sure that student fees are used in ways that students find valuable.***

5) **Grow.** Emerge from your experience in student government with more knowledge, more professional skills, new friends and maybe even new goals for your schooling and career path. In the meantime, you'll have a vote on Council and your very own business card. ***What have you got to lose?***

What would you do in office?

As a Students' Councilor you would:

- Attend at least six board meetings per semester as well as a team building training retreat in early fall
- Make decisions governing a multi-million dollar organization (that's SAITSA!)
- Create initiatives that help students succeed
- Receive an honorarium for your participation

As an Executive Council member you would:

- Hold the same responsibilities as a Students' Councilor, in addition to a comprehensive portfolio of duties dependent upon your position,
- Work full-time representing the interests of students (don't worry, you'll only need to take one class per semester and you'll be paid a salary)
- Participate in SAIT and/or external committees
- Formally represent the SAITSA to internal and external audiences

How much of a time commitment do I need to make?

As a Students' Legislative Councilor you can expect to put in approximately 40-50 hours each semester between your training, regular meeting schedule and committee requirements. In addition, expect to spend some additional time reading and preparing for meetings.

As a member of the Executive Council, you can expect a substantial workload, with a minimum time commitment of 40 hours per week with frequent evening and weekend commitments (you do get to travel!).

The Election Process

SEC and SLC

February 27- March 8 Nomination period

March 9 - 5 PM All Candidates Meeting V128

March 9 (after All Candidates Meeting) Campaign Period begins – ends on March 26

March 20th SEC Candidate Speeches to Student Body, 11 am – 1 pm in the Heart Atrium

March 22-26 Voting Days (online and at various places on campus)

March 26th at 5 pm Council Election results at the Gateway Restaurant and Bar

How to nominate yourself

- Pick up a nomination package from the SAITSA's main office in V204 or out of the Resource Centre in MC107, or print one off online.
- Fill out the nominations forms completely. Some of the common errors include not getting enough signatures, or forgetting to submit a form.
- Turn in your nomination form any time before NOON on Thursday, March 8th for the elections.
- Attend the All-Candidates Meeting at 5:00 PM March 9th.

Tip: Although there are more signature lines on the nomination form than you need, it's a good idea to fill it out completely just in case one of signatures is from a student who is not a member of SAITSA and/or who is not in good standing with SAIT and/or SAITSA.

Election Tips

Before the Campaign Period

- Get to know the SAITSA's Elections Policies, available in your nomination package or online at saitsa.com. It's important that all candidates and their teams follow these rules and regulations—failure to do so could get you sanctioned or even disqualified.
- Keep in mind that you aren't allowed to actively campaign before the campaign period starts (on March 9th AFTER the All Candidates meeting). That means you can't put up any posters, promote your campaign on Facebook, give out flyers or do anything else to try to persuade people to vote for you. You're allowed to approach people to get signatures for your nomination and you're allowed to assemble a campaign team to help you, but save your actual campaigning for the designated times.
- Don't be afraid to contact the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) with your questions. The CRO is the official in charge of overseeing the election and your go-to source for information. Confused about the nomination package? Not sure if your poster meets the criteria? Want to see if the rules let you email other people in your student club? It's always best to ask in advance rather

than to find out later that you were breaking the rules.

- Assemble a campaign team to help you out, but remember to make sure they are completely familiar with the rules. You are responsible for the actions of your campaign team, so while loose cannons might cause a splash with the electorate, they could also end up getting you disqualified.
- Ensure you've got a handle on your class work before campaigning starts and talk to your instructors so they know what's going on. Some might even be willing to grant you an extension on that assignment and even get to speak to your class.

During the Campaign

- Talk to as many people as possible. One-on-one conversations are perhaps the number one way to secure votes, especially in student government.
- In everything you do, be yourself. Students like humble and down-to-earth candidates. Most voters see through phony personas or simplistic slogans.
- Start early: poster space is limited, so be there at the very start of the campaign period to snag prime poster spots.
- Play fair and be respectful. Your opponents may one day end up being people you have to serve with (or work for!). There are lots of other ways to get involved in the SAITSA and SAIT communities; bad behaviour could close some of these doors to you.
- Keep some perspective. Elections are decided by the voters and even if you aren't successful you don't need to feel like a loser. Just by taking part in the election you've made a contribution to democracy on campus. Plus, you'll have enriched the Students' Association, of which you and your fellow students are members. Try your best to make your campaign a positive experience, even if you aren't elected.

Good Luck and Have FUN!