

Saitsa's Election Information Package

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Introduction

The SAIT Students' Association (Saitsa) offers a wide variety of programs, services, and events designed to support students and enhance the student experience on campus. We also advocate on behalf of SAIT students to the institution, industry leaders, and government on various issues affecting students; these include issues like public transportation, tuition and affordable housing. Like all Student Unions or Associations in Alberta, Saitsa is authorized by the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) and is governed by a body of elected students. At Saitsa, everything is done FOR students and we're run BY students!

At Saitsa, everything is run by students, for students

Package Contents

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic Saitsa's election process has shifted to an online format for the foreseeable future. Nominations, campaigning, and voting will all be done virtually. This package was developed to inform students about our elections and our governing bodies: the Board of Directors and Executive Council. In addition to this package, students interested in getting involved with Saitsa's governing bodies are encouraged to go to [Saitsa.com](https://saitsa.com) and familiarize themselves with Saitsa's:

- Mission, vision, programs and services
- Bylaws, Strategic Plan and Governance Structure
- Elections Policies & Procedures
- Financial statements and annual reports

Continue reading for information on how you can become a candidate in our elections and discover how Saitsa's governance structure works to ensure Saitsa is run by students – for students.

Saitsa's Governance

Saitsa is a student-led non-profit organization. This means that our highest governing body, our Board of Directors, is comprised of SAIT students. The Post-Secondary Learning Act requires Student Associations to be managed by a council that is elected by the members of the organization. To comply with the Act, Saitsa hosts two elections a year to fill the seats of the Board of Directors and the positions of the Executive Council.

The Board of Directors election is held in the Fall semester and 12 Directors are elected. The Executive Council election is held in the Winter semester and four positions are elected: the President and three Vice Presidents of the organization. The roles and responsibilities of the two bodies are different, as are their time commitment and remuneration.

DID YOU KNOW?

Saitsa is a Non-Profit Organization

Revenue from our operations directly support our services and programs! Saitsa operates the following businesses on campus:

- The Gateway restaurant and bar
- The Odyssey cafe
- Station Market
- Station Express

Revenues from these businesses are used to support Saitsa's other student-focused programs and events. Just a few examples include:

- The Peer Support Centre
- Saitsa Clubs
- Free Breakfasts
- Destress Fest

A black and white photograph of four young adults (two men and two women) standing in a library or bookstore. They are all smiling and holding books. The man on the far left is wearing a plaid shirt over a white t-shirt. The woman next to him is wearing a light-colored sweater. The woman next to her is wearing a plaid shirt. The man on the far right is wearing a plaid shirt. They are standing in front of bookshelves. There are some UI elements: a small 'A' icon in the top left, a circular icon in the top right, and a large 'X' icon in the bottom right.

Board of Directors (BOD)

Board of Directors (BOD)

On behalf of the membership, the Board is responsible for managing and supervising the activities and affairs of Saitsa. As the highest governing body, the Board has a fiduciary duty and a duty of care to the Association, which means that our Directors:

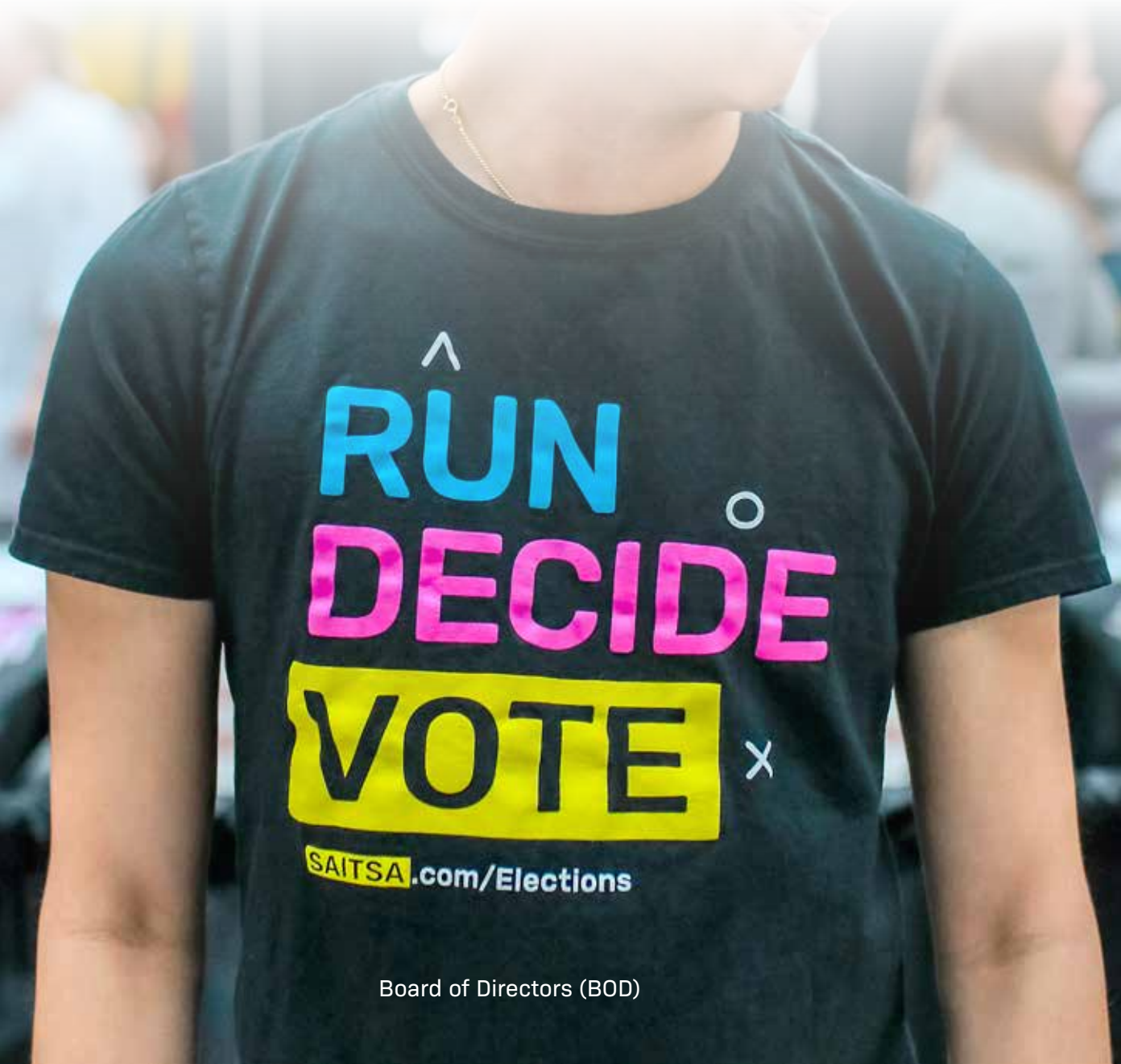
- ✓ Are loyal to Saitsa;
- ✓ Make reasonably informed decisions; and
- ✓ Take an active and direct role in key strategic matters of Saitsa.

The Board is responsible for the actions of the Association, and therefore the Board must exercise due diligence with respect to its fiscal and statutory responsibilities, contractual obligations, and maintain a standard of care to its employees, volunteers and members. To fulfill this mandate, the Board meets monthly to review and discuss the business and affairs of the Association; decisions made by the Board are done so in the best interest of the Association and with consideration for the future.



Directors

All Saitsa members are eligible to run for election, even if they do not have previous experience. The 12 elected Directors are provided extensive training for their term during a weekend-long orientation. Saitsa Governance & Advocacy staff also provide support throughout the year. Put simply, Directors are responsible for acting honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the Association and its members. If you are considering running for a position, it is important that you understand what you are committing to if elected.





Term, Time Commitment & Compensation

The term for a director is one year (October to October) and each Director is required to:

- ✓ Prepare for and attend monthly Board meetings;
- ✓ Join and actively participate in a standing committee of the Board (Finance, Governance or Nominations);
- ✓ Think strategically and ask strategic questions;
- ✓ Keep informed about issues relevant to the mission and objectives of the Association;
- ✓ Identify potential recruits and support recruitment initiatives of the Board;
- ✓ Have a genuine interest in serving the membership and the Association.

The time commitment for a Director is 10-15 hours a month on average. However, some students dedicate more time by volunteering to help with events and by joining more than one committee. Directors are paid an honorarium of \$50 for every Board meeting they attend and are eligible for leadership awards and bursaries that are student-leader specific.

Board Leadership

The Board elects a Chair and Vice Chair from its members at the beginning of the Board's term. The Chair and Vice Chair help to manage and organize all Board business (agenda setting, minute review, committee membership, etc.) and provide support on challenges from the President or Executive Director. Board meetings are facilitated by our Neutral Facilitator, who is a neutral third-party and is an expert in Parliamentary Procedure and general best-practices as they pertain to governance.



Executive Council (EC)



Executive Council (EC)

Saitsa's Executive Council sit as voting members of the Board. The term for an Executive is one year (May to May). In the Winter semester a current Executive may decide to run for a second term in the same position, run for a different position, or not run at all and move on to their next stage in life. Executives cannot serve for more than three terms. A Director is permitted to run in an Executive election, if elected to the Executive then that Director resigns their position as a Director when their term for Executive begins. Both returning and graduating students are eligible to run for election to the Executive Council. Students do not have to currently be involved with Saitsa or have previously run in an election to be eligible.

There are four positions within the Executive Council, which all act as full-time salaried personnel of Saitsa. However, Executives are required to take a minimum of one course per semester to maintain their student status. The four positions are:

President

Vice President Academic

Vice President External

Vice President Student Life

Each position on the EC has a different role and responsibilities. All of them require travel, occasional evening and weekend work, and a strong desire to represent and advocate passionately for students. They are provided with training to help them succeed in their roles. See the next page for a breakdown of each Executive position.



**The EC work hard to represent
over 13,000 students.**

DID YOU KNOW?

**Saitsa's Executive Council
receive several benefits
for their service.**

The Executive Council works hard to represent those who elected them. Their work days can include meeting with SAIT Administration and Government Officials to influence policy, advising students, and working with Saitsa's staff.

In return they are paid a salary of \$43,700, are provided three weeks' vacation, and health and dental benefits.



President

The President is a visionary leader and public representative of the Saitsa. They are the main point-of-contact for external parties such as the media and SAIT. They are accountable, in consultation with the Executive Director, for operationalizing the strategic vision of Saitsa. The President is an ambitious leader who represents the needs of SAIT students and provides oversight and support to the Executive Council.

Vice President External

The Vice President External is responsible for developing and maintaining external relations on behalf of Saitsa. They are the voice of SAIT students within the municipal, provincial and federal governments. They are responsible for maintaining awareness of external issues that may impact SAIT students, and for developing and implementing Saitsa's external advocacy initiatives. The VP External is an excellent communicator, who can build and strengthen relationships with external organizations to benefit the student body.



Vice President Academic

The Vice President Academic is responsible for all areas related to the academic experience at SAIT. They work closely with the staff at SAIT to facilitate the resolution of student concerns and grievances and ensures that the review processes are fair and just. They liaise with SAIT on all academic issues, providing a student perspective to the institution and advocating for the academic needs of students. They act as an adviser and a resource to all students regarding academic matters. The VP Academic is effective at conflict resolution, is knowledgeable about the SAIT community, and cares about the success and well-being of every SAIT student.

Vice President Student Life

The Vice President Student Life is responsible for supporting students in areas related to the non-academic experience of SAIT students. They work to ensure that student wellness is incorporated in all aspects of campus life. They act as a liaison between Saitsa and internal SAIT groups to promote a positive and fulfilling student experience. The VP Student Life is passionate about contributing to student wellness and cares about the success of SAIT students.

Appointed — Board of Governors Student Representative (BOG Rep)

SAIT students are provided the opportunity to have two voting seats at SAIT's highest governing body, the Board of Governors (BOG). Saitsa's President serves at the BOG as Saitsa's representative, and a Student-at-Large serves as the student representative. The Saitsa President and BOG Rep work together to bring student issues to the SAIT BOG; in-turn, they also bring back any information they are permitted to share with the student body to Saitsa's Board of Directors.

Though this is not an elected position, it's important for students to know that they can apply for the position in the Winter semester if they plan on returning to SAIT the next academic year. The Board's Nomination Committee review all the applicants and present the top candidates to the Board for a final decision. The BOG Rep is required to fulfill all the explicit obligations as determined by SAIT as well as Saitsa.



Saitsa's Election Timeline

[Saitsa.com/Elections](https://saitsa.com/Elections)

RUN



Nomination Period 1



Nomination Period 2

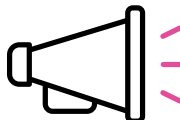


DECIDE



Candidate Meet & Greet

All Students Welcome!



Panel Night

For EC Election Only



VOTE



Voting Opens
(8 a.m.)

**Voting
Period**



Voting Closes
(4 p.m.)



Results Announced!

(5 p.m.)



Saitsa's Election Process

Just like municipal, provincial and federal governments, Saitsa holds elections to fill the seats of our governing bodies. Becoming a candidate and running a campaign may seem a little intimidating at first, but once you understand the basics you'll be well on your way to running a successful campaign. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic Saitsa's election process has shifted to an online format. Nominations, campaigning, and voting will all be done virtually. Saitsa will host various events through Microsoft Teams or Zoom to give students the opportunity to learn about the candidates and make an informed decision.

1. Eligibility



Some students are not eligible to run for election because they do not pay Saitsa fees. These groups include: English Language Foundations, Pre-employment Programs, and Continuing Education students. However, most SAIT students are Saitsa members.

You must determine if you are eligible to run as a candidate. Check to ensure you are:

- A Saitsa member (pay Saitsa fees); and
- In good standing with SAIT (not on academic or non-academic probation, no outstanding fees owed)

2. Nominations



If you meet the eligibility requirements, you must be nominated first before you become a candidate. To become a nominee, complete the following:

- Download the Elections Nomination Package (available online at saitsa.com/elections);
- Fill out all required information & review relevant information/documents and submit the package to saitsa.elections@edu.sait.ca. Staff will review your submission
- Receive 20 endorsements from fellow Saitsa members and submit your package to NN118

By submitting your nomination package you are one step closer to becoming a candidate!

3. Candidates' Meeting



Before you become a candidate, you are required to attend a Candidates' Meeting; the date, time and location of the meeting is detailed in the nomination package and online. This meeting is an opportunity for you to meet your fellow candidates as well as the Political Committee; the rules pertaining to the election will be reviewed at this meeting and nominees will be provided ample opportunity to ask questions. At the end of the meeting you officially become a candidate and are permitted to launch your campaign! You are encouraged to bring your campaign manager and/or campaign representatives to the meeting. Your campaign manager and team must be SAIT students.

Campaigning

Campaigning is all about reaching out to as many students as possible and giving them a reason to trust that you will do a great job representing them and will lead their Association in a positive direction.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all campaigning will now need to be done online. There is a wealth of information available for how to run online campaigns, but some tips for you can use on social media are:

- Host live video discussions with voters and students;
- Create question and Answer forums and threads for voters to learn about you;
- Use a variety of social media, including Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter

Saitsa's campaigning rules are outlined in the Elections Policies and Procedures and will be reviewed at the Candidates' Meeting. Candidates are encouraged to get creative with their campaign and recruit fellow students to help them promote their platform. Students who assist with a candidate's campaign are known as Campaign Representatives. It is very important that you adhere to ALL rules pertaining to campaigning.

Political Committee

Saitsa contracts a Political Committee consisting of a:

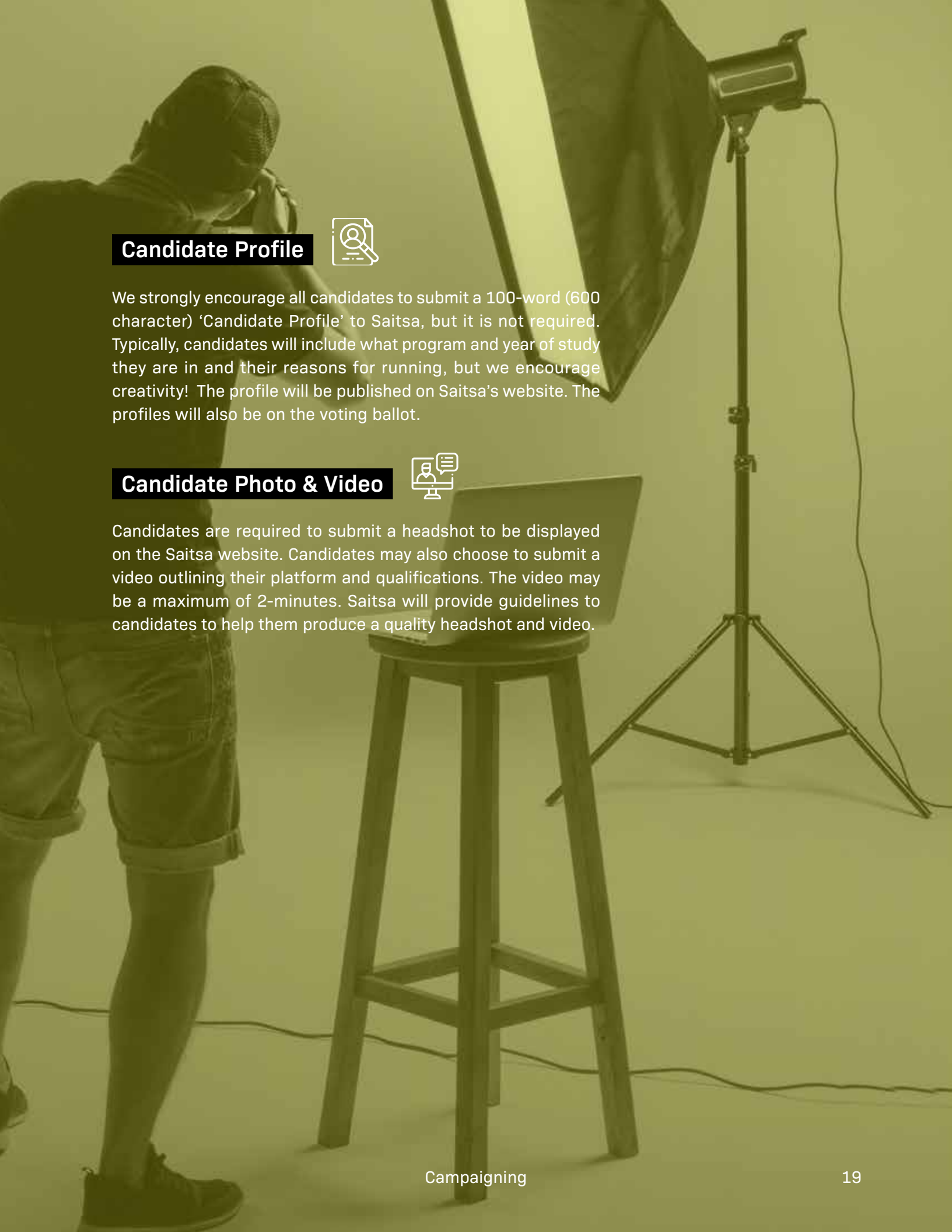
- Chief Returning Officer (CRO)
- Deputy Returning Officer (DRO)
- and Student at Large (SAL)

The PC work to ensure elections are run in a fair and transparent manner. Saitsa's Governance and Advocacy Manager also sits on this committee as a non-voting member.

The Political Committee oversee the elections, manage questions and complaints, hosts the Candidates' Meetings, panel/forum night, and declare the results of the vote.

Questions or complaints must be sent to: saitsa.elections@edu.sait.ca

DID YOU KNOW?



Candidate Profile



We strongly encourage all candidates to submit a 100-word (600 character) 'Candidate Profile' to Saitsa, but it is not required. Typically, candidates will include what program and year of study they are in and their reasons for running, but we encourage creativity! The profile will be published on Saitsa's website. The profiles will also be on the voting ballot.

Candidate Photo & Video



Candidates are required to submit a headshot to be displayed on the Saitsa website. Candidates may also choose to submit a video outlining their platform and qualifications. The video may be a maximum of 2-minutes. Saitsa will provide guidelines to candidates to help them produce a quality headshot and video.

A man and a woman are shown in profile, looking at a tablet together. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right. They are both looking intently at the screen. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a modern office or meeting space with large windows.

Campaign Expenses

Running a campaign doesn't have to cost you anything, but if candidates do spend money on their campaign (printing posters, purchasing Facebook ads, etc.) they must adhere to budget limits and other restrictions. Budget limits are different for each election and are as follows:

- \$200 — BOD Election (Fall Semester)
- \$400 — EC Election (Winter Semester)

Budgets and permitted expenses are discussed in the Candidates' Meeting and are outlined in the Elections Policies and Procedures. Saitsa will reimburse up to 50% of approved campaign expenses. You are required to track all your campaign spending and submit all receipts along with the Expense Form. Please refer to the Elections Policies and Procedures for additional information.

Gifts-In-Kind/Donations to Campaigns



To make elections fair, gifts-in-kind or donated items count towards your total budget. Fair market value should be assessed on all gifts-in-kind or donated items and included in the expense form. You may be penalized for failing to include these items on your expense form.

Home Printing



Candidates cannot use Saitsa's printing services in MC107 for their campaign materials, but they can print at home or at print shops. If candidates print at home, they can expense it and be reimbursed for their prints at the following rates:

- \$0.10/copy for black & white (legal or letter size)
- \$0.25/copy for colour (legal or letter size)

Sales & Discounts



Items purchased on sale or through a special offer are permitted provided that such discounts are available to all candidates and items were not purchased in advance of the election.

Campaigning Tips & Tricks

There are all kinds of ways to run a campaign, and while there's no 'magic equation', here are some tip and tricks to help you get started:

✓ **Understand what you're running for**

Doing your homework will make you informed and more comfortable when approaching students. Read up on what Saitsa is, how it operates, and what the Board and Executive are responsible for, and you'll be more likely to get students to vote for you!

✓ **Understand why you're running**

Voters want to elect people who they believe have their best interest in mind. Think about why you want to contribute to your community, what issues are affecting students, and how can you improve the student experience. Be genuine and thoughtful.

✓ **Talk with students**

Knowing what students want or need will help you define and present your vision to students during your campaign. Ask your friends, classmates, and other students what they would like to see, and compare these with your ideas about Saitsa.



✓ **Be Realistic**

You won't be able to change everything about Saitsa in a short period of time. Focus your ideas on short-term, realistic, and achievable goals that would benefit students. For example, it's more realistic for the Board to allocate more funding towards clubs than it is for the Board to provide free parking for all students. Creating realistic goals will make you more successful as a candidate and a director.

✓ **Attend the Candidate Photo/Video Session**

Candidate videos are viewed by hundreds of student voters! A rehearsed and sincere script is the best way to go. Be sure to talk about what you're passionate about and what makes you a great candidate.

✓ **Proofread and be passionate in your Candidate Profile**

Your profile might be the only way you reach certain voters, so take your time to make sure it's proofread and reflects all the great reasons people should vote for you.

✓ **Recruit Campaign Representatives**

While you're responsible for them, it's easier to get the word out about how great you are if you aren't doing it alone. Having a team behind you can make all the difference.

Complaints & Demerits

Candidates and campaign representatives are expected to demonstrate respect for others and engage in fair competition. Campaign activities must comply with SAIT and Saitsa's Code of Conducts, Bylaws, Policies and Procedures. Saitsa welcomes healthy debate and opposition; however, campaign activities shall be based in truth and integrity.

Complaints



Complaints or concerns regarding a candidate's campaign should be directed to the Political Committee. To submit a complaint, please go to [Saitsa.com/Elections](https://saitsa.com/Elections) for an official Complaint Form. Complete the form and submit your concern or complaint to the Political Committee at: saitsa.elections@edu.sait.ca. Frivolous or vexatious complaints will not be tolerated.

Demerits




Whether intentional or not, from time-to-time, the actions of a candidate or their campaign representatives may result in the Political Committee issuing demerit points against a candidate. A demerit is a mark made against the candidate's record for a fault or for misconduct. Candidates who acquire 10 or more demerits will be disqualified. Please review the Elections Policies and Procedures for more information.

Candidate Meet & Greet

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Candidate Meet & Greet has been moved to an online format for the Fall Board of Directors election. The Meet & Greet will be a moderated event where candidates will present their platform and speak to various issues they hope to address on campus.

Forum/ Panel Night

During the Executive Council election, Saitsa hosts a forum for candidates to discuss their ideas. Candidates are asked a series of questions in front of an audience; questions pertain to their platform, knowledge about the organization, and the position they are running for. Candidates are encouraged to invite instructors, students and family to the event. This event is a great opportunity for students to practice their public speaking, which, if elected, they will be expected to do a lot of!



Voting & Results Night

Saitsa asks candidates to do their part in encouraging all members to vote. Students can vote by clicking on the link sent to their student email. Following the close of polls, candidates are encouraged to invite their friends and family to celebrate their efforts at the results announcement event.

DID YOU KNOW?: SAIT students see the value in voting

Saitsa received record voter turnout in October 2019, with 18.7% of students voting! It's highest voter turnout since 1998! Aligning itself with politically engaged institution like University of Victoria, Confederations College and St. Mary's University who receive an average voter turnout of 20%.

Voting



Voting is easy and is done through SAIT student emails. A third-party contractor, Simply Voting, works with Saitsa to organize the distribution of emails with secure links that enable students to vote. Students who are current Saitsa fee-paying members are eligible to vote; this includes most students, including apprentice students and students at SAIT satellite campuses.

Some students are not eligible to vote because they do not pay Saitsa fees; these groups include: English Language Foundations, Pre-employment Programs, and Continuing Education students. A few other programs do not pay fees, however most SAIT students are Saitsa members.

On the ballot, candidates will be listed in alphabetical order by last name. Saitsa hosts polling stations around campus to encourage students to vote, but voting can take place anywhere a student can connect to their email – at home, at work, wherever! Candidates are not allowed to interfere with or campaign near polling stations.

Results Night



While voting results and expense forms are being reviewed by the Political Committee, candidates are required to attend poster tear down. All candidates work together to ensure SAIT main campus is cleared of all posters. When the posters have been removed, candidates are to join their friends and await the results. Whether or not you are elected, all candidates are encouraged to celebrate their efforts – running a campaign can be a lot of work, so celebrate you and your team's efforts!

Guiding Principles of Saitsa's Elections

In the pursuit of democratic elections where the goal is the welfare of students, Saitsa's electoral processes are governed by the following principles:

Fairness



Candidates are to be treated fairly and in a consistent manner by the Political Committee and Saitsa staff. Candidates are to engage in fair competition and demonstrate respect for Saitsa, the institution, the community, and others. No candidate may exploit a current or recently held position to gain unequal access to any part of the student body. Each candidate shall have equal opportunity during the campaign period to communicate their campaign platform.

Success in an election is expected to be earned through positive campaigning without cheating, spreading falsehoods or attempting to achieve an unjust advantage. An emphasis on positive campaigning does not restrict candidates from challenging their fellow candidates in a professional and respectful manner. Every student shall have the opportunity to question and engage each candidate.

International Students

All Saitsa members are eligible to run for election, including International students! International students are able to run for both a Director and Executive position. However, because the Executive Council work full time, they cannot maintain a full-time course load. If you are an International student interested in running for an Executive position, please come to the Governance & Advocacy Office (NN118) for more information.



Equality



Each member in good standing shall have equal opportunity to become a candidate. Limits on campaign expenses exist to reduce the possibility of undue influence, diversify political discourse and overall participation. All members have the right to vote in elections, by-elections and referenda. Polling stations shall be provided by Saitsa to encourage voting and help facilitate the voting process.

Transparency



Every member has the right to know how the election, penalties, and appeals are to be administered prior to the start of the campaign period. Saitsa full-time staff are required to remain impartial and not publicly endorse any candidate; part-time staff are required to remain impartial during working hours. Preliminary and official results shall be made publicly available.

A summary report of the proceedings of the election shall be developed by the CRO and presented to the Board and made publicly available.

Student Interest



Candidates are to run on a platform of integrity, respect and with the best interests of SAIT students. The planning of election events is to be conducted with students' schedules in mind.



RUN, DECIDE, VOTE!

Now that you've read through this package and familiarized yourself with the elections and Saitsa's governance, will you run?! Feel free to reach out to current Directors or Executives to ask them what their experience has been like and why you should consider running. Saitsa staff are also a great resource. If being a candidate isn't for you, consider supporting a peer by being a campaign representative. Be sure to vote!

**Want a friendly face to talk to
about governance or elections?**

Come visit us in

Saitsa's Governance & Advocacy Office

in NN118.

