

# Saitsa's Election Information Package

<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>Package Contents</b>	2
<b>Saitsa's Governance</b>	3
<b>The Board of Directors (BOD)</b>	4
Individual Directors	6
Board Leadership	7
Role of the President & Vice President	7
Compensation	7
<b>Saitsa's Election Process - Easy as 1,2,3!</b>	8
1. Eligibility	8
2. Nominations	8
3. Candidates' Meeting	9
<b>Campaigning</b>	10
Candidate Profile	10
Candidate Photo & Video	10
<b>Campaign Expenses</b>	12
Gifts-In-Kind/Donations to Campaigns	13
Home Printing	13
<b>Campaigning Tips &amp; Tricks</b>	14
<b>Complaints &amp; Demerits</b>	16
<b>Candidate Meet &amp; Greet</b>	17
<b>Panel Night</b>	17
<b>Voting &amp; Results Night</b>	18
Voting	19
Results Night	19
<b>Guiding Principles of Saitsa's Elections</b>	20
<b>RUN, DECIDE, VOTE!</b>	22



# Introduction

## **RUN BY STUDENTS, FOR STUDENTS**

The SAIT Students' Association (Saitsa) offers a wide variety of programs, services, and events designed to support students and enhance the student experience. We are a leading student organization, with students deciding our direction at the highest levels. We advocate on behalf of SAIT students to the institution, industry leaders, and government on various issues that affect students. Issues such as: public transportation, tuition rates, sexual violence on campus, affordable housing and much more. 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 run by students!



# Package Contents

This package was developed to inform students about our election and the Board of Directors, our governing body. In addition to this package, students interested in getting involved with Saitsa's governance 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
- Annual reports

Continue reading for information on how you can become a candidate in our election 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 not-for-profit organization. This means our Board of Directors is comprised of SAIT students and any revenue that is generated through student fees and operations go directly back into our services and programs. 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 one election each year to fill the seats of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors election is held in the winter semester and 9 Directors are elected.

## DO I NEED PREVIOUS LEADERSHIP/ ADVOCACY EXPERIENCE TO RUN AS A CANDIDATE?

### F.A.Q.

No experience is required, just a great attitude and passion for student issues! One of the greatest things about student-led Boards like Saitsa's is that we are prepared to teach you from the ground up and help you along the way. We realize that the majority of students who are interested in running, due to their age or phase in life, may not have any experience with governance or advocacy, so we're a learning Board. Directors are provided extensive onboarding and the support of the Governance & Advocacy department to help make the experience a memorable one.



# The Board of Directors (BOD)

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

- ✓ Have Loyalty to Saitsa
- ✓ Respect the confidentiality of Board business
- ✓ Make reasonably informed decisions
- ✓ Take an active and direct role in key strategic matters of Saitsa

The business and affairs of the SAIT Students' Association is governed by the Board of Directors (BOD), the BOD provides strategic oversight and decision making for the Association on behalf of the members who elected them. The role of the Board is to provide ongoing ownership linkage with the student body, to set organizational policy in accordance with ownership needs and preferences, to provide monitoring and oversight of Executive Director compliance with policy.

For more information on the duties of the BOD, please refer to our Bylaws.

Ultimately, 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 regularly 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.

## IS THE POSITION TO BE COMPENSATED?

Directors are provided an honorarium for their advocacy efforts; the intention of the honoraria is to off-set potential wage losses a Director would experience by not being able to work part-time (or not work as much as they would if they didn't have the Director responsibilities). Depending on performance (academic and assigned tasks) honoraria for Directors is \$10,000+/year. The President and Vice President have additional responsibilities and workload and therefore would find it difficult to maintain any part-time work; depending on performance (academic and assigned tasks) honoraria for the President and VP is \$24,000+/year.

## Individual Directors

While the success of the Association is tied directly to the responsibility of the Board, each individual Director is responsible for acting honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the association. They are to exercise the care and skill that a reasonable person would in a similar situation.

Directors will be appointed to sit on various committees or working groups within SAIT, and maintain the ownership linkage by connecting with students on a regular basis. Various opportunities for leadership experience, student engagement and advocacy work will present themselves throughout the term and Directors will be encouraged to engage.

An example of monthly duties of Directors would include: attending and preparing for meetings, attending and speaking at ownership linkage events, and identifying and communicating potential topics/areas for advocacy initiatives to the President & Vice President.





## **Board Leadership**

From within the Board a President and Vice President are elected. These two leadership positions are typically the delegates/representatives to Saitsa's municipal, provincial and federal advocacy groups.

As the President and Vice President have additional responsibilities compared to other Directors they are expected to work additional hours and therefore would find it difficult to maintain a fulltime course load compared to a Director.

## **Role of the President & Vice President**

- The President is the chief representative and advocate for the student body, they are also the chief spokesperson for the association and the leader (i.e.: Chair) of the Board.
- The Vice President is the deputy chief representative and advocate for the student body; in the absence of the President, the Vice President takes on the responsibilities of the President.
- The President and Vice President assume the primary advocacy role on behalf of Saitsa, this duty requires extensive travel and public speaking at various points in the year.
- An example of weekly duties would include: attending & scheduling meetings (committees, strategy, briefings, etc.), preparing agenda packages and minutes, attending and speaking at ownership linkage events, communicating advocacy achievements, corresponding with staff, Directors and external parties, and fostering leadership and development of Directors.

## **Compensation**

Directors will be provided with a monthly honorarium, totaling \$10,000+ for the term (\$24,000+ for President & Vice President). Directors are provided extensive governance and advocacy training, and professional, networking and leadership development opportunities.



# Saitsa's Election Process

## *As Easy as 1-2-3!*

Just like municipal, provincial and federal governments, Saitsa holds an election to fill the seats of our governing body, the Board of Directors. 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.



### 1. Eligibility



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

- A Saitsa member (pay Saitsa fees);
- In good standing with SAIT (not on academic or non-academic probation, no outstanding fees owed); and
- Planning on continuing your studies at SAIT for the next academic year, either part-time or full-time.

### 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:

- Complete a Nomination Form, available online at [Saitsa.com/elections/](https://saitsa.com/elections/)
- Fill out all required information & review relevant information/documents;
- Obtain the signatures of 20 fellow Saitsa members.

### COVID-19 UPDATE

- During a typical year where students are on-campus, signatures are collected in-person, however as we are operating in a digital world, signatures will be 'collected' digitally via a form online
- Nominees will be required to encourage their peers to endorse them via the 'online endorsement form';
- Once the required 20 signatures have been obtained then you officially become a nominee!
- More information will be provided upon the submission of the Nomination Form.



**By submitting your nomination package and collecting 20 signatures 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 online and you will be provided an invite upon the submission of your nomination package.

This meeting is an opportunity for you to meet your fellow candidates as well as the staff who organize and facilitate the election process. The rules pertaining to the election will be reviewed at this meeting and candidates will be provided ample opportunity to ask questions. You are encouraged to bring your campaign manager and/or campaign representatives to the meeting.

At the end of the meeting you officially become a candidate and are permitted to launch your campaign!

#### HOW DO I KNOW IF BEING A DIRECTOR IS RIGHT FOR ME?

##### F.A.Q.

One of the best ways to know if the position is right for you is to talk to those who are already in the position! You are welcome to reach out to current directors and ask questions about the role and what they've enjoyed about (or not enjoyed!) about it. You are also welcome to attend a Board meeting to see governance in action. Saitsa Governance & Advocacy staff are also a great resource.

# 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.

Candidates use a variety of tools to help them promote their platform. Typically, candidates will campaign using:

- Posters
- Social media
- Classroom talks
- One-on-one interactions

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.

## COVID-19 UPDATE

Due to students not being on campus, candidates are welcome to submit their poster to Saitsa and we will include it on the candidate's information page.

### Candidate Profile



We strongly encourage all candidates to submit a 'Profile' to Saitsa, but it is not required. The Profile form and further information are provided upon receipt of the nomination package. The profile will be published on Saitsa's website, profiles will also be on the voting ballot.

### Candidate Photo & Video



Typically, Saitsa hosts a Photo & Video session with a professional photographer, however due to COVID-19 candidates are required to submit their own photo and video. A specific drop box will be provided for candidates to submit their photo and video. Photos and videos will be posted on Saitsa's website.

**Photo:** Your photo will be a 'headshot' with a neutral background; dress however you wish to present yourself and your campaign.

**Video:** You can get creative with your video, just be sure that the sound quality is as best as possible so that students can hear your important message. The length of your video must adhere to the rules.



## General Election Information

If you have general questions about Saitsa's governance or the election our Governance & Advocacy staff would be more than happy to help you!

Email us at: [saitsa.elections@edu.sait.ca](mailto:saitsa.elections@edu.sait.ca)

## Chief Returning Officer (CRO)

The election is managed by the CRO; decisions regarding candidates are also made by the CRO. Saitsa staff work to support the CRO and can be authorized to perform various tasks as directed by the CRO.

To contact the CRO please email: [saitsa.cro@edu.sait.ca](mailto:saitsa.cro@edu.sait.ca)

## Election Oversight Panel

Should a candidate wish to appeal a decision of the CRO they may do so by contacting the Election Oversight Panel, who is comprised of three impartial members.

## WHAT IF I WANT TO BE PRESIDENT OR VICE PRESIDENT?

### F.A.Q.

You must run in the Board of Directors election and first be elected as a Director by the general student body; following the election the Board themselves will elect/appoint the President and VP. Essentially there will be a 'campaign' of sorts within the Board following the general election, so if the President or VP position appeal to you, set that intention from the beginning and demonstrate your leadership potential!

A man and a woman are shown in profile, looking at a tablet held by the man. They are in a meeting room with a whiteboard in the background. The image has a purple tint.

# 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. Candidates have a maximum budget of \$300 for their campaign.

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.

## 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 must expense it at the following rates:

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

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** Due to SAIT restricting access to campus, printed materials are not permitted for this election.

## Sales & Discounts



Items purchased on sale or through 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 is 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 trust have their best interest in mind; Think about why you want to contribute to your community, what issues are affecting students, and how you can improve the student experience. Be genuine and thoughtful.

## ✓ **Talk with students**

Knowing what students are looking for 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 in Saitsa, 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, take your time to make sure it's proofread and reflects all the great reasons people should vote for you.

### ✓ **Recruit Campaign Representatives**

Though 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 Chief Returning Officer. To submit a complaint, please go to [saitsa.com/elections/](https://saitsa.com/elections/) for an official Complaint Form. 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 Chief Returning Officer 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


This is an event that provides students the opportunity to meet with all the candidates in one place. Candidates or their Campaign Representatives must attend, and they can decorate their booth in a manner that complies with the regulations and their budget.

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** Due to not being allowed on campus the Meet & Greet will not be taking place for this election.

# Panel Night

Panel Night is an event Saitsa hosts for candidates to discuss their ideas. To help them prepare, candidates are provided a list of questions in advance of the event. 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!

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** This event will be taking place online in a digital format and will be recorded for future viewing.

A background image showing a crowd of people with their hands raised, suggesting a voting event or a celebratory gathering. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

# 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.

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** The event will be taking place online and only the candidates will be invited; Saitsa's social media will post the results after the candidates have been notified.

## **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; though some do not pay Saitsa fees, the majority of SAIT students do and are therefore potential voters!

On the ballot, candidates will be listed in random order. 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.

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** Due to not being on campus, polling stations will not be hosted for this election.

Votes are counted using a Single Transferrable Vote system. This system is designed to ensure voters are happy with their representatives and can feel confident that their interests are being considered. In this system, voters rank their preferred candidates. Voters may choose to rank all the candidates or only some of them according to their preferences. Our voting software will then distribute votes according to voter rankings, ensuring that everyone elected has an equal mandate.

## Results Night



While voting results and expense forms are being reviewed, 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!

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** Due to not being on campus, poster teardown will not be required.

# 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 Election Oversight Panel, CRO, 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! However, because the President and Vice President work full time, they cannot maintain a full-time course load. If you are an International student interested in running for President or Vice President, contact the G&A department via [saitsa.elections@edu.sait.ca](mailto:saitsa.elections@edu.sait.ca) 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. Polling stations may 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 election and Saitsa's governance, will you run?! Feel free to reach out to current Directors 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? Contact us directly:

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