



GET ON BOARD

Saitsa Elections Information Package

2023/2024



Saitsa*

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!

Package Contents

This package was developed to inform students about our elections and our governing body: the Board of Directors. In addition to this package, students interested in getting involved with Saitsa's governing body are encouraged to go to 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 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 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 an election each year to fill the seats of the Board of Directors. The election is held in the Winter semester and 9 directors are elected.

Board of Directors

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.**

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 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

Students do not need to have previous board or committee experience to run for election; any Saitsa member is eligible to run. The 9 elected directors are provided extensive training for their term and the staff of the Governance & Advocacy Department provide ongoing support throughout the year. 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 (May to May) 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 per week on average. Directors sit on various SAIT committees, support students experiencing various issues, and act as liaisons between students and their school. Directors are paid an honorarium of \$1000/month and receive other benefits for their service to the student membership.

Board Leadership

The Board elects the Association's President and Vice President from within the Board at the beginning of the Board's term. The President and Vice President act as the governance officers of Saitsa. They also manage and organize all board business which includes agenda setting, minute review, and acting as the main points-of-contact for external parties such as the media and SAIT. They are responsible for representing Saitsa to other organizations and acting as presiding officers of the Board.

Saitsa's Election Process

Just like municipal, provincial, and federal governments, Saitsa holds elections to fill the seats of our governing body. 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.

Becoming A Candidate

To become a candidate, you must:

- * Be a Saitsa member (pay Saitsa fees)
- * Be in good standing with SAIT (not on academic or non-academic probation, no outstanding fees owed)
- * Complete a nomination package
 - Available online at saitsa.com/elections/ or pick up at NN117, V204, MC107)
- * Fill out all required information & review relevant information/documents
 - Collect 20 signatures from fellow Saitsa Members
 - Submit the nomination package online or in person
- * Attend a Candidates' Meeting.
 - 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, that's you, will be provided with 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.

Political Committee

The Political Committee (PC) is comprised of the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) along with members of Saitsa's Governance and Advocacy staff. Saitsa contracts the CRO to administer the elections to ensure that the election process is fair and transparent. The PC oversees elections, manages questions and complaints, hosts election events and declares the result of the vote. Election related questions must be submitted to saitsa.elections@sait.ca.

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.

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 adhere to ALL rules pertaining to campaigning.

Campaigning Tips & Tricks

1. 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!

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 is more realis-

tic for the Board to allocate more funding to 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.

5. Typical Ways To Campaign

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

6. Submit A Candidate Photo/Video

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.

7. 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 proof-read and reflects all the great reasons people should vote for you.

8. 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.

Candidate Profile

We strongly encourage all candidates to submit a 150-word (750 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

It is highly recommended, but not required, for candidates to submit their candidate photo and campaign video to be posted on Saitsa's media platforms. This is a great way to get your message out to the student body. Directions on how to take your candidate photo and produce your 120 second campaign video, as well as useful tips, are in the Photo and Video Guidelines posted on the Saitsa website. Be genuine and creative in your messaging approach. Just remember the SAIT and/or Saitsa logo cannot be visible in either of your photo or video.

Campaign Expenses

Running a campaign doesn't have to cost you anything, but if candidates do spend money on their campaign (printing posters, campaign props, purchasing Facebook ads, etc.) they must adhere to budget limits and other restrictions. Candidates may spend up to \$300 on 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. Please refer to the Elections Policies and Procedures for additional information.

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 by submitting a complaint form online at saitsa.com/elections/. 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

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

Panel Night

During the 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 vision for Saitsa. Candidates are encouraged to invite instructors, students, and their supporters 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. On voting days, 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.

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.

Saitsa may host 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!

Get On Board!

Now that you've read through this package and familiarized yourself with the election process 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?

Come visit us in Saitsa's Governance & Advocacy Office in NN117.

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 to communicate their campaign platform through channels organized by Saitsa. Saitsa shall organize opportunities for students to question and engage each candidate.

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.