Undergraduate Student Government Elections Code

Article I: Fundamental Principles

I.A. The rules and procedures specified in this Elections Code shall apply to all Undergraduate Student Government (USG) Elections and are intended to supplement provisions of the USG Constitution and Bylaws pertaining to the conduct of the Elections.

I.B. All candidates shall be governed by the rules set forth in USC policies as identified in the current USG Constitution and Bylaws, the USG Code of Ethics, and the USG Elections Code.

I.C. In the event that the Elections Code conflicts with University Policies as identified in SCampus, the University Policies shall take precedence.

Article II: Definitions

II.A. Throughout the Elections Code, the following terms are referenced. These terms are defined below:

II.A.1. Candidate: Any individual who meets the qualifications as outlined in Article IV of this code and the USG Constitution and Bylaws and has successfully submitted and received approval for a candidate application or an official Write-In Candidate Form.

II.A.2. Endorsement: Any announcement or publication by an individual or recognized student organization, as defined by the Office of Campus Activities or Office for Residential and Greek Life, in support of an office seeker with the intention of advancing the candidacy of that individual.

II.A.3. Currently seated member of the Undergraduate Student Government (including Funding Boards, Advocacy, Communications, Senate, and Program Board): Defined as any individual required to hold office hours, as well as members of the judicial council and senate aides.

II.A.4. Elections Application Part I: The form available to students beginning Friday, November 25th, 2016, at 12:00am, that identifies an individual’s intent to run for an
elected position. The application will be due Friday, December 9th, 2016, by 6:00 pm, and starting immediately will enter the Silent Period where information regarding the candidates may not be released to the public. All information pertaining to the candidates must remain limited to the candidates and their respective ticket or slate.

II.A.4.i. Silent Period: During this period no candidate has been approved to run and may not discuss candidacy with anyone except their ticket or slate until their eligibility has been approved by Elections.

II.A.5. Preparation Period: The period following the due date of Application Part I & II on Friday, December 9th, 2016, by 6:00pm. The Preparation Period will run from Friday, December 9th, 2016 at 6:00pm – Thursday, January 26th, 2017 at 7:00pm.

II.A.6. Correspondence: During the Silent Period which begins once candidates turn in Part I of their application, correspondence is not permitted outside the ticket or the slate. During the Preparation Period, correspondence is limited to the individuals submitted for the Application Part II. During the Campaign Period, correspondence is open to the public, including social media interaction, with any email communication between the candidates and recognized student organizations CC’d to the email address usgelect@usc.edu.

II.A.7. Elections Application Part II: This form is due on Friday, December 9th, 2016 by 6:00pm, and will enable candidates to begin the Preparation Period. During this time candidates will be allowed to form their campaign teams and begin planning their campaigns internally. Any information and correspondence pertaining to the candidates is limited to the candidates, their campaign team, and their respective ticket or slate. Candidates will be able to submit a maximum of five members of their campaign team with the Elections Application Part II. This list cannot be altered once submitted.

II.A.8. Campaign Period Part I: The initial campaign period, Campaign Period Part I, will be from Thursday, January 26th, 2017, at 7:00pm, to Monday, January 30th, 2017, at 11:59pm. During this period, candidates will be permitted to begin any external interactions on behalf of their campaign. No physical material will be permitted during this campaign period which includes but is not limited to: handouts, stickers, t-shirts, or any physical items endorsing a candidate or ticket. In addition, any campaigning on campus during this time is limited to meetings with recognized student organizations; furthermore, no campaign materials may be distributed during these meetings. The candidate meetings must be approved by the respective organization, and any and all
correspondence and confirmation must be CC’d to the email address usgelect@usc.edu.

II.A.9. Campaign Period II: The Campaign Period Part II expands the initial Campaign period by allowing physical material to be handed out and allowing active campaigning on campus. Campaign Period Part II begins Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at midnight and runs through the elections which end on Thursday, February 9th, at 11:59pm. During this time, candidates are allowed to hand out any physical items promoting their candidacy. In addition signs may also be placed on Trousdale Parkway (see VII.E).

II.A.10. Campaigning: Any unsolicited or solicited action taken to advance or promote a certain candidate, ticket, or slate, including but not limited to: physically or technologically advocating for campaign support or any action that may be defined as supporting a candidate, ticket, or slate; having campaign materials in plain view in areas where campaigning is restricted, regardless of intent; and utilizing individuals for campaign purposes with or without their proper consent.

II.A.11 Voting Period: The period in which undergraduate students may cast votes for a Presidential/Vice Presidential ticket and for Senators. Voting polls will open at 12:00am on Tuesday, February 7th, 2017, and close at 11:59pm on Thursday, February 9th, 2017.

Article III: Elections Commission

III.A. The Elections Commission shall oversee the elections for the offices of President, Vice President, and Senators.

III.A.1 The Commission shall be chaired by the Associate Director of Elections.

III.A.2. There shall also be at least five additional voting members called Commissioners, who are not currently seated on the Executive Cabinet, as stated in the Bylaws.

III.B. No member of the USG Elections Commission shall endorse, campaign for, make a contribution to, or in any other manner support any candidate(s) or ticket(s) for any USC USG elected office or any USC USG Ballot Measure(s) except for his/her vote in the Election. Interactions with candidates must be non-campaign related. Failure to
adhere to this policy will be grounds for immediate removal of the commissioner and of the candidate.

**III.C.** The Elections Commission shall make decisions and levy sanctions in matters concerning ambiguities, questions, or violations of the USG Elections Code.

**III.C.1.** The members of the Elections Commission shall have the power to warn, sanction, or disqualify a candidate in a uniform manner. The Strike system is predetermined by the Elections team as highlighted from XI.M.1.i to XI.M.1.vii.

**III.C.2.** For violations concerning but not limited to the USG Constitution, Bylaws, Code of Ethics, SCampus, state or federal law, the Chair of the Commission may order compliance and refer the complaint to the appropriate governing body.

**III.C.3.** Violations can also result in referral to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards (SJACS).

**Article IV: Candidate Eligibility Requirements**

**IV.A.** All candidates must be undergraduate students who can verify that they will be a full time student at USC for the entire duration of the term, as outlined in the Bylaws. Candidates cannot study abroad during their Fall and/or Spring term while in office.

**IV.B.** Candidates must fulfill all academic and constituency requirements stated in the USG Constitution and Bylaws.

**IV.B.1.** All candidates must have and maintain a minimum USC cumulative GPA of 2.500. Should this be the first semester at USC for a candidate, the candidate shall have maintained a cumulative GPA of 2.500 at his/her most recent institution.

**IV.C.** All candidates shall be in good standing with the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards (SJACS), as determined by the Office of Campus Activities.

**IV.E.** Any candidate who is a member of the Judicial Council or the Elections team must resign from their position upon submission of the candidate application.

**IV.F.** No student shall hold or run for more than one elected USG position.
Article V: Declaration of Candidacy

V.A. All students who wish to begin planning their campaign before the campaign period begins must first submit Part I of the Elections Application.

V.A.1. Part I of the application does not serve as a form of approval for a student as a candidate. The approval of this form by the Associate Director of Elections and/or Assistant Director of Elections signifies that a potential candidate may enter the Silent Period where they may discuss their candidacy plans with only their respective ticket. This Silent Period will be in effect until Friday, December 9th, 2016, at 6:00pm, after the Elections Application Part II is submitted and the Preparation Period begins.

V.B. All students running for an elected position in the USC Undergraduate Student Government must submit Part II of their application with a signature and an original unofficial USC transcript to the Associate Director of Elections and Assistant Director of Elections by Friday, December 9th, 2016, at 6:00pm. Failure to submit a complete application prior to the deadline shall result in disqualification.

V.B.1. Any student applying to run for an elected position for whom Spring 2015 is the first semester of study at USC must present an unofficial transcript from the previous institution he/she most recently attended.

V.B.2. All components of the application must be enclosed in a sealed envelope.

V.B.3. Upon receipt of the application, either Associate Director of Elections or the Office Manager shall sign and date the envelope.

V.B.4. An electronic copy of the position paper and candidate questionnaire responses must also be submitted via e-mail to usgelect@usc.edu by the deadline mentioned in V.B.

V.B.5. Candidates will receive an email confirmation from usgelect@usc.edu upon the receipt and approval of their application within three business days.

V.B.5.i. Candidates shall be considered official upon email confirmation from the Associate Directors of Elections and Assistant Director of Elections. Only upon receipt of email confirmation from usgelect@usc.edu will the introduction of candidates be permitted.
V.C. Along with the application, candidates running for President and Vice President must submit a list of 100 signatures in support of their candidacy. Candidates running for Senate must submit a list of 25 signatures in support of their candidacy. Signatories must be members of the undergraduate population at USC.

V.C.1. Signatories are welcome to sign in support of more than one candidate or ticket. No signatory may sign more than once in support of the same candidate or ticket.

V.D. Upon submission of the application, all candidates’ GPAs will be verified with the University and all previous institutions.

V.E. Upon approval of the candidate’s application, the name of the approved student or ticket will be listed on the USC Undergraduate Student Government website to inform all interested parties of who is running.

V.F. Upon approval of the candidate’s application and approval of the candidate’s Campaign Finance Plan by the Election team, the candidate can begin spending money on their campaign.

V.G. The Elections Commission shall submit all position papers and candidate questionnaires to the appropriate campus media outlets. Position papers shall be posted on the USG website, in the Elections Handbook, and/or elsewhere at the discretion of the Associate Director of Elections for student voters to review.

V.H. Candidates for Senator may form groups of two, three, four, or five candidates; these groups are called slates and must be registered with the Elections team. Candidates who are members of slates may file a common filing form and position paper, or may file them individually. The members of the slate may collaborate, share financial and volunteer resources and work together towards the Election of all members of the slate to the Senate.

V.H.1. No individual candidate may be a part of more than one slate, nor shall any slate or member of a slate collaborate or in any way share resources with another slate.

V.H.2. Slates are responsible for the actions of all slate members and individuals who are working for their respective campaign.
V.I. Candidates for President and Vice President must register with the Elections Commission as a ticket. A ticket is a two-person slate with a designated candidate for President and a designated candidate for Vice President. No candidate for either office may be on more than one ticket. Candidates for either office may not run simultaneously for the position of Senator.

V.I.1. Candidates for President and Vice President may not form a slate with candidates for Senator.

V.J. Anyone withdrawing from the election must do so in writing to the Elections Commission. This act is completed by filling out a Statement of Withdrawal, and must be submitted before the closure of voting.

V.K. If a member of a slate for Senate withdraws or is otherwise removed from the race prior to the election, the slate may continue without the candidate or add an independent, but still registered, candidate to their slate. If an independent is added, they must not already be part of another slate.

V.K.1. If a member of a ticket for President or Vice President withdraws or is otherwise removed from the race prior to the Election, the remaining candidate shall name a replacement by Sunday, February 5th, 2017, at 6:00pm, before elections begin who will then successfully declare his or herself as a candidate, to take the withdrawn candidate’s place.

V.K.2. If these changes are made after the ballots have gone to press, the ballot shall remain unchanged. In the case of online voting ballots, the web page shall be updated to indicate these changes.

**Article VI: Preparation Period Rules**

VI.A. During the Preparation Period, communication is limited exclusively to the members of the respective candidate’s team. Each candidate will submit a list of up to five names which will constitute their Campaign team. This list will be submitted with the Application Part I & II on Friday, December 9th, 2016, by 6:00pm. Any and all communication must be limited to these members. Candidates on a slate may communicate with the members on their fellow slate’s lists.

VI.B. During the preparation period, candidates are prohibited from asking for support or endorsement from campus organizations.
VI.C. Candidates are prohibited from using or distributing any physical campaign materials until the Campaign Period II officially begins on Tuesday, January 31st, 2017 at 12:00am.

VI.C.1. This includes but is not limited to: printed materials, posters, chalk, shirts, pamphlets, handouts, or any physical material.

Article VII: Campaign Period Rules

VII.A. There shall be a campaign period prior to the voting period starting on Thursday, January 26th, 2017, at 7:00pm and ending on Thursday, February 9th, 2017, at 8:00pm. Candidates and/or volunteers working for their campaign may not begin campaigning prior to the campaign period.

VII.A.1. Campaign Period Part I will begin on Thursday, January 26th, 2017, at 7:00pm, and end on Monday, January 30th, 2017, at 11:59pm. During this period, candidates are permitted to expand communication beyond their campaign teams. They are now permitted to publicly declare their candidacy. No solicitation is permitted on campus with the exception of meeting on campus with a recognized student organization. No physical material may be handed out or present in campaigns during this time as listed in VI.C.1.

VII.A.2. Candidates are permitted to utilize social media tools during Campaign Period Part I. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Web Pages, and other non-physical, digital forms of communication. Any other form of social media in a mass messaging manner is prohibited, including but not limited to recognized student organization listservs, departmental listservs, and Facebook mass messaging; however, individual messaging through social media is allowed as well as posting in Facebook groups.

VII.A.3. Candidates may begin meeting with recognized student organizations in person. All meetings must be confirmed by the organization with the approval sent to usgelect@usc.edu. Any and all e-mail communication between the candidate and an organization must CC usgelect@usc.edu.

VII.A.3. During this time, the Candidate Guide will become available both online and in print. A copy of the print may be picked up at the USG office, TCC 224.
VII.B. All students campaigning on behalf of a candidate must follow the campaign rules set forth in this Elections Code. All candidates are responsible for the actions of those campaigning on their behalf. Failure to adhere to the Elections Code shall result in sanctions on the candidates for whom the volunteers were campaigning, as determined by the Elections Commission.

VII.C. If a candidate determines that someone who has campaigned on his or her behalf without his or her knowledge may have violated the Elections Code, the candidate should immediately do that which is in his or her power to end the actions potentially in violation of the Elections Code and document his or her efforts if possible to the Elections team.

VII.C.1. Any person may still bring a charge against that candidate.

VII.C.2. The Elections Commission will determine the ruling on such a charge according to the guidelines in Article III of this Code.

VII.D. All campaign materials shall be approved by the Associate Directors of Elections and the Assistant Director of Elections. Approval will not be given until a candidate submits a detailed write up including a description of material, proposed use, and design.

VII.D.1. Materials must be used in the approved manner as determined by the Elections Commission.

VII.D.2. All visual campaign material must display the USG Elections logo to be provided with the application for candidacy. Any alterations to the USG Elections logo are prohibited in any form. Black and white or color versions of the logo will be provided and must remain as is.

VII.D.3. All campaign material shall contain no “fighting words,” meaning language which (a) the speech, considered objectively, is abusive and/or insulting rather than a communication of ideas, and (b) is actually used in an abusive manner in a situation that presents an actual danger that it will cause a breach of peace.

VII.D.4. All campaign material may not contain any derogatory language or material that is aimed at harming a specific person or an organization’s reputation.
VII.E. No more than 25 Trousdale Signs, per campaign will be permitted on Trousdale Parkway at one time. Trousdale Signs should measure no larger than 18 inches by 24 inches.

VII.F. Campaign material shall not be posted on the doors, walls, ceilings, or floors of University Housing Facilities. All campaign materials must adhere to SCampus rules and regulations as well as all rules listed in the Elections Code. Posting campaign materials is prohibited in the following areas or in the following ways:

VII.F.1. All trees and hedges

VII.F.2. The ground (taped or loose). The signs can, however, be staked to the grassy interior on Trousdale parkway.

VII.F.3. Campus or University Owned Buildings, including but not limited to glass windows, doors, walls, and columns.

VII.F.4. Tommy Trojan and all other statues

VII.F.5. Trash Cans

VII.F.6. All lamp posts

VII.F.7. Emergency campus phones

VII.F.8. Parking lots and structures

VII.F.9. On top of other previously posted campaign materials

VII.F.10. In Chalk form—chalking sidewalks, buildings, etc. is prohibited.

VII.F.11. On parked or moving vehicles inside university property.

VII.G. Door to door soliciting within any USC Operated and Managed Housing Facilities is strictly prohibited.

VII.G.1. Candidates are not allowed to campaign within any University Housing Facilities unless attending a meeting of a recognized student organization (i.e. building government meetings).
VII.H. Any campaign material found in violation of the Elections Code is subject to immediate removal, and/or sanctioning by the Elections Commission.

VII.I. There shall be no campaigning, nor shall there be any campaign materials, within 50 feet of the polling sites (including all space surrounding and above the polling site) during the Elections period.

VII.J. No campaign materials may be stored, worn, or temporarily placed in the USG office.

VII.K. Candidates must remove all campaign material by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday immediately following the election.

VII.K.1. Failure to remove all campaign materials by the designated deadline is subject to sanction by the Elections Commission.

VII.L. All candidates must attend the mandatory candidates meeting and remain present throughout the entire duration of the meeting on Tuesday, January 17th, 2017, at 8:00pm.

VII.L.1. Ballot name placement for paper ballots shall be determined at random at the mandatory candidates meeting. Online ballot name placement shall be determined by the same procedure unless randomization is made possible. In this case, name placement shall be different with each voter login.

VII.L.2. Additional mandatory meetings may be announced by the Associate Director of Elections, and all candidates shall receive e-mail notification of additional mandatory meetings at least 48 hours in advance.

VII.L.3. If a mandatory meeting is missed, the absence will be reviewed by the Elections Commission, who will hear and vote on the legitimacy of the excuse and/or assess appropriate sanctions.

VII.M. The voting period shall be Tuesday, February 7th, 2017; Wednesday, February 8th, 2017; and Thursday, February 9th, 2017. Electronic online voting will be available from 12:00 am on Tuesday, February 7th, 2017, to 11:59pm on Thursday, February 9th, 2017, unless extenuating circumstances (as determined by the Elections Commission) arise.
VII.N. The Undergraduate Student Government shall provide at least three official public polling sites on the days of voting, as stated in the USC Undergraduate Student Government Bylaws.

VII.N.1. The creation of unofficial public polling sites, which includes but is not limited to the distribution of paper or online ballots in a public setting, is prohibited and subject to sanction by the Elections Commission.

VII.O. Candidates are responsible for any campaign party held on their behalf.

VII.O.1. A campaign party must be accounted for in full in the candidate, slate, or ticket Campaign Finance Plan. This includes but is not limited to all food, beverages, decorations, and entertainment.

VII.O.2. The consumption or distribution of alcohol or drugs at any event related to a candidate’s campaign (or which has any campaign materials present) is strictly prohibited.

Article VIII: Campaign Finance Rules

VIII.A. Each candidate must submit a campaign finance plan with their complete application by 6:00pm on Friday, February 10th, 2017.

VIII.A.1. Components of the Campaign Finance Plan: The campaign finance plan must include the following information to be approved by the Elections Commission:

VIII.A.1.i. Contact information for each vendor used.

VIII.A.1.ii. Estimates for each product to be purchased.

VIII.A.1.iii. Line item budget sheets, including an estimation of campaign spending.

VIII.B. The spending of money to prepare for campaigning is not permitted until after the candidate’s Application and Finance Plan have been approved.

VIII.C. The Elections Commission has the right to approve or deny any proposed campaign expenditure at their discretion.
VIII.D. The ticket consisting of a candidate for President and a candidate for Vice-President shall be limited to combined expenditures of $1,500 (including taxes, shipping, and handling).

VII. D. 1. Discounted materials shall be permitted if the discount is public. In the case of discounts made exclusively for candidates, candidates must include fair market value (FMV) on their budget report instead of their exclusive rate, and must also factor in California Sales Tax.

VIII.E. Each individual Senatorial Candidate, not a member of a slate, is permitted to spend a maximum of $300 excluding taxes, shipping, and handling.

VIII.F. Slate spending:

VIII.F.1. A slate of two senatorial candidates shall be limited to combined expenditures of $400 excluding taxes, shipping, and handling.

VIII.F.2. A slate of three senatorial candidates shall be limited to combined expenditures of $500 excluding taxes, shipping, and handling.

VIII.F.3. A slate of four senatorial candidates shall be limited to combined expenditures of $600 excluding taxes, shipping, and handling.

VIII.F.4. A slate of five senatorial candidates shall be limited to combined expenditures of $700 excluding taxes, shipping, and handling.

VIII.G. The Associate Director of Elections and Assistant Director of Elections at their sole discretion shall determine whether or not to allocate USG funds to all candidates on an equitable basis dependent on the position being run for. This decision will depend on the amount of funding available to allocate to candidates.

VIII.G.1. The Associate Director shall create reimbursement guidelines for allocated funds.

VIII.G.2. Refer to the Reimbursement Document.
VIII.H. A report of all contributions and expenditures as well as the original receipts for all campaign materials must be submitted to the Chair of the Elections Commission by 12:00pm on Friday, February 10th, 2017.

VIII.H.1. In the case of discounted, donated, or previously owned materials, candidates must submit the contact information of the vendor through which the material was originally purchased and/or received, including all applicable receipts, which must be included as an expenditure on the Campaign Finance Plan.

VIII.H.2. Failure to submit or fully disclose all contributions and receipts is an infraction of the Elections Code and may result in the disqualification of the candidate.

VIII.I. Any expenditure made on behalf of a candidate, slate, or ticket shall be subtracted from the applicable spending limit, based on its fair market value as determined by the Elections Commission.

Article IX: Candidate Endorsement

IX.A. Candidates may be endorsed by any recognized student organization, as defined by the Office of Campus Activities or Office for Residential and Greek Life. Endorsements are due by Friday, January 6th, 2017, at 6:00pm.

IX.B. Student organizations wishing to make endorsements must complete an official USG Endorsement Application and be confirmed by the Elections Commission prior to the endorsement publication.

IX.B.1. Student organizations may endorse only one Presidential ticket, up to three Greek senatorial candidates, up to six Residential senatorial candidates and up to three Commuter senatorial candidates.

IX.C. Any person that is considered a currently seated member of the Undergraduate Student Government and/or Program Board is prohibited from working on the campaign team for any candidate throughout the entire elections process. Currently seated members may publicly support campaigns, but the Undergraduate Student Government offices shall remain a nonpartisan space.

IX.D. Any endorsement from an organization of which a currently seated member of the Undergraduate Student Government and/or Program Board is a member requires that member to temporarily remove themselves from any decision-making process that
might affect the Elections from Wednesday, January 25th, 2017, until the Election is officially certified.

**IX.D.1.** If that member chooses to remain affiliated, the organization of which he/she is a member forfeits any and all rights to endorse a candidate.

**IX.E.** Campaign material may not imply, in any form, an endorsement by USG, Program Board, Graduate and Professional Student Senate, or any assembly, board, council, or committee of USG.

**IX.F.** “Program Board Assemblies, the five Greek Councils, and the Recreational Club Council (RCC) may not endorses candidates, but individual organizations under Program Board Assemblies or RCC may endorse candidates without using the specific title “Program Board” or “RCC” in their endorsement.”

**IX.G.** Individual chapters under one of the five Greek Councils may endorse candidates without using the specific Greek Council title in their endorsement.

**Article X: Write-In Candidates**

**X.A.** Write in candidates must submit their application by 6:00pm on Friday, February 10th, 2017. They must follow all rules set forth in this Elections Code that take effect after this date.

**X.B.** “Write-In” Candidates names will not appear on the written or website ballot. “Write-In” Candidates position papers will not be published in the Elections Handbook.

**Article XI: Complaints, Protests and Sanctions**

**XI.A.** The Elections Commission shall have original jurisdiction over complaints filed against candidates for violations of the Elections Code.

**XI.B.** The Commission must have a quorum of at least four Commissioners and the Chair of the Elections Commission to conduct business regarding complaints, infractions, and sanctions.

**XI.B.1.** Any and all complaints must be filed within 24 hours of the incident occurring. No complaints will be accepted after the 24 hours expire.
XI.B.2. No complaint will be accepted after 10:00am on Monday, February 13th, 2017. Any violations brought forth to the Elections Commission after this date, including but not limited to excessive campaign spending, may be brought to the Judicial Council.

XI.C. Any USC student may file a complaint with the Elections Commission. No member of the Elections Commission is permitted to file a complaint.

XI.D. All complaints must be signed. Additionally, all complaints must specify the provision of the Elections Code the accused candidate(s) has/have allegedly violated. Complaints must contain factual evidence of an infraction of the Elections Code, including but not limited to photographs, photocopies of evidence, and signed statements of witnesses accompanied by contact information.

XI.E. After a complaint has been filed with the Elections Commission, the voting members of the Commission have 24 hours to decide whether to hear the case, and 48 hours to reach a decision from the time the complaint is filed. The Elections Commission will rule on whether or not to hear a case based on the provision of evidence that suggests a violation of the Code.

XI.E.1. Between the date of a candidate’s confirmation by the Associate Director of Elections and Assistant Director of Elections and Monday, January 9, 2017, the voting members of the Commission have 48 hours to decide whether to hear the case, and 72 hours to reach a decision from the time the complaint is filed.

XI.E.2. In case of a deadlock, the Chair of the Commission shall make the final verdict, but shall not vote otherwise unless fewer than five commissioners are present.

XI.F. After deciding to hear a complaint case, the Chair of the Commission will notify all pertinent parties by email and will set a time and date for a hearing.

XI.G. Candidates shall have the right to hear a full statement of the complaint against them and to know the identities of those filing the complaint before the Elections Commission determines whether or not an infraction has taken place. All parties shall have the opportunity to confront the opposing party, to speak on their own behalf and produce witnesses on their own behalf before the Elections Commission determines whether or not an infraction has taken place.
XI.H. A member of the USC faculty and/or staff may be present to serve as a witness to time and to regulate the proceedings. This member shall not contribute his/her opinions on any matter during the hearings or deliberations, unless specifically asked by the Chair of the Elections Commission.

XI.H1. Hearings shall not be open to the general public, including but not limited to members of the press and general student body. Hearings are only open to: The accused, the members of any opposing ticket, the complainant, any witnesses, a USC faculty member and/or staff as mentioned in members of the Commission, the Associate Director of Elections, the Assistant Director of Elections and the USG advisors.

XI.H2. Any comment to the press by any participant in a hearing will lead to a sanction (as decided by the Elections Commission) for the respective party the participant is representing.

XI.H1A. For complaints directed towards any Presidential ticket, at least one member of each of the opposing tickets are required to be present at the hearing regardless of who files the complaint.

XI.I. Following the proceedings, an official audio or video transcript will be released to both the general public and the press. An official copy of the transcript shall be available in the USG office for public consumption as soon as a verdict is reached.

XI.J. All verdicts and sanctions will be emailed to the involved parties and posted on the USG Elections website within 24 hours of the deliberations.

XI.K. The burden of proof is on the plaintiff/complainant. All complaints lacking sufficient evidence will be judged as such.

XI.L. Upon the charge of any violation of this Election Code, the Elections Commission shall employ the following guidelines in determining the verdict:

XI.L.1. The validity of the charge.

XI.L.2. The severity and effect of the offense on the election.

XI.L.3. The intent of the offender and/or his/her campaign staff

XI.L.4. The number of violations the offender and campaign staff has been sanctioned against previously.

XI.L.5. The cooperativeness of the offender and/or his/her campaign staff.
XI.M. All sanctions shall be determined by the Elections Commission in what they determine to be fair and just practices. The Commission shall determine appropriate sanctions in relation to the violation committed.

XI.M.1. Each ticket, slate and candidate will be allotted nine strikes, with the ninth strike leading to disqualification. Strikes are counted in a running total. It is up to the Elections Commission to decide if a complaint warrants a strike(s) or not applicable strike. Tickets, slates, and candidates may receive more than one strike per infraction hearing. The Commission may warrant a sanction based on the following approved sanctions below:

XI.M.1.i. A written warning will be issued to the ticket, slate, or candidate.

XI.M.1.ii. Loss of one full day of any and all forms of physical campaigning on campus

XI.M.1.ii.a. If the sanction is given to any ticket, slate, or candidate before the period that physical campaigning begins, the sanction date will be placed on hold until physical campaigning begins. The date is up to the discretion of the Elections Commission.

XI.M.1.iii: Loss of one full day of any digital campaigning which includes but is not limited to Facebook statuses, Tweets, or Instagram posts by the Candidate’s and their campaign team’s personal accounts.

XI.M.1.iv: Loss of an additional day of in-person campaigning by the candidate or ticket on Trousdale as determined by the Elections Commission.

XI.M.1.v: A monetary fine equivalent to \( \frac{1}{3} \)rd of the candidate’s reimbursement will be assessed.

XI.M.1.vi: All Trousdale signs must be removed for the remainder of the campaigning period.

XI.M.1.vii: The candidate and/or ticket will be disqualified from the elections and will no longer be considered for their position.

XI.N. Any sanction given to a candidate, slate, or ticket may be appealed to the Judicial Council.
XI.N.1. The Judicial Council shall have 24 hours after the appeal is filed to decide whether or not to hear the appeal. If the Council decides to hear the appeal, it shall have another 24 hours to reach a decision.

XI.O. The Associate Director of Elections and Assistant Director of Elections shall have the official jurisdiction over all campaign issues. Any responses received from a USG member, an Elections Commissioner, or an Elections Committee member are not valid until verified by the Associate Director of Elections or the Assistant Director of Elections.

**Article XII: Voting, Ballot Counting Requirements, and Recount**

XII.A. Voting is limited to currently enrolled USC undergraduate students, and each student is permitted only one vote throughout the Elections period.

XII.B. A Student Affairs staff member and at least one member of the Elections Commission must be present at the ballot counting. The Elections Commission shall invite a member of the faculty, staff and a representative of appropriate campus media to be present, but their attendance shall not be mandatory. Ballots shall be stored in a locked office desk to which only the Elections Director and Assistant Director and USG Advisors have access.

XII.B.1. Ballot counting requirements do not apply to the counting of votes cast online.

XII.C. In the case of a runoff or other Special Election, the USC Undergraduate Student Senate will approve matters concerning the Special Elections Code. The results will be published in the *Daily Trojan*.

XII.D. An announcement of the unofficial Elections Results will be made on Tuesday, February 14th, 2017, at 7:00pm. The results will be officially certified the following Tuesday, February 21st, 2017, at 7:00pm, by a Director of Campus Activities.