

# Executive Council Elections Handbook

**TRI  
SIGMA**  
*empowered*

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*“One of the most  
important responsibilities  
of membership  
is electing our future leadership.”*

## INTRODUCTION

The election of Sigma Sigma Sigma’s Executive Council is vitally important to the future of the organization and its ability to serve and grow.

Conducting Executive Council elections can be a complex and demanding process. It must adhere to all requirements set forth in the Bylaws of Sigma Sigma Sigma. It must be fair—in both perception and fact—and completed within a specific time frame.

This handbook applies solely to the election of Sigma Sigma Sigma’s Executive Council. It is intended to guide in planning and managing the election process. It is designed to serve the following purposes:

- Prescribe the rules and protocols governing the Sigma Sigma Sigma Executive Council election.
- Clarify the authority and responsibilities of those involved.
- Provide continuity and consistency from election to election.

## PRINCIPLES FOR ELECTIONS

Tri Sigma is committed to ensuring fair elections. To help ensure this standard is met, Tri Sigma has adopted the following principles for Executive Council elections:

- **Equality of opportunity to participate.** Procedures affecting participation in elections must be equitable. All qualified individuals shall have an equal opportunity to participate in the process.
- **Fairness in governing and managing elections.** Procedures affecting the conduct of elections must be impartial.
- **Accuracy and accountability of the election results.** Every valid vote must be counted, and the final tally must be correct with no reasonable possibility of error or falsification.
- **Transparency of the election process.** Procedures affecting participation in and management of the election shall be prominently announced and posted. All relevant election information shall be available to the entire membership.

Executive Council and the Nominating Committee will use these principles as a guide for evaluating new procedures that may be proposed, as well as their own decisions and actions during any election.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Council, the Nominating Committee, and National Headquarters staff each play a necessary and distinctive role in the Executive Council elections. During each election cycle, Executive Council, the Nominating Committee and NHQ staff shall fulfill their responsibilities in full, while mutually respecting and supporting assigned roles.

### ***Executive Council***

Executive Council has broad oversight and authority over Tri Sigma's elections. It establishes the process and mechanisms for elections and assumes ultimate responsibility for ensuring the election process is fair and objective. Executive Council's involvement is limited to avoid actual conflicts of interest or the appearance of such.

Specifically, the Executive Council's general duties are as follows:

1. ***Voting Platform:*** Executive Council reviews and approves the electronic or online voting platform recommended by the Executive Director.
2. ***Executive Council Election Handbook:*** Executive Council reviews this handbook annually and revises as necessary or desirable. In so doing, Executive Council consults closely with the Nominating Committee, and Executive Director.
3. ***Nominating Committee:*** The Nominating Committee is a Standing Committee of the Sorority whose members are appointed by Executive Council and shall report to Executive Council.

## ***National Headquarters Staff***

Regarding NHQ general duties:

1. *Staff* refers to NHQ staff members assigned to support the elections process.
2. The *Executive Director* will serve as the liaison to the Nominating Committee and Executive Council. The ED's duties are as follows:
  - a. Act as the primary communications link between Executive Council and the Nominating Committee.
  - b. Notify Executive Council of issues or questions arising from the elections process that require attention.
  - c. Notify the Nominating Committee Chair of issues or questions arising from the elections process that require attention.
  - d. Verify, on behalf of Executive Council, that the election process is consistent with this handbook and the Bylaws.

## ***Limitations on Authority***

Executive Council's involvement in any Executive Council election is limited in three important respects:

- Executive Council has no authority over the nomination or selection of ballot candidates.
- Executive Council is required to abide by this handbook, in detail and in spirit.
- Executive Council receives staff reports on legal, financial, and other issues pertaining to elections, while matters pertaining to the ballot, the voting process and election results are reported to the Nominating Committee Chair.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

### ***Purpose***

The Nominating Committee is charged with the responsibility to strategically identify, evaluate, and provide a report to the membership for the Executive Council leadership of Sigma Sigma Sigma. The members of the Nominating Committee have influence on the future of the organization and should each be carefully selected. Nominating Committee members need a broad knowledge of the membership and the organization's mission, vision, and values, including the strategic plan.

### ***Selection***

- Chair – a Past Executive Council member
  - Governance experience preferred
  - Appointed by Executive Council in a process separate from the Nominating Committee application and selection process

- Application process for Nominating Committee
  - Selected by Executive Council
  - All members in good standing are eligible to apply
  
- Committee Make Up — Executive Council will work to assemble a committee that reflects the diversity of Sigma Sigma’s membership and interests. Committee diversity shall include but is not limited to age, geographic location, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, professional experiences, and volunteer/leadership experience. It will be comprised of:
  - Five (5) alumnae members
  - One (1) collegiate member
  - All members must be in good standing, as verified by NHQ
  
- Committee members can serve consecutive trienniums.
  
- Resources include:
  - Parliamentarian
  - Executive Council position descriptions
  - Detailed Nominating Committee manual
  - Training on governance/training on unbiased interviewing/DEI
  - Elections Handbook
  
- Information on Nominating Committee applications should appear on trisigma.org.
- Members who serve on the Nominating Committee may also serve in other volunteer roles within the national organization.
- Anyone currently serving on Executive Council and current NHQ staff members are not eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- Anyone currently serving on the Nominating Committee may not be nominated to serve on Executive Council.
- The Executive Director will serve as the staff liaison to the Nominating Committee Chair.

## ***Obligations***

1. Attend Nominating Committee meetings/conference calls/Zoom meetings.
2. Participate respectfully.
3. Prepare for meetings by reviewing materials, including but not limited to, agendas, applicant information, manuals, recorded videos.
4. Be open-minded, objective, and diplomatic.
5. Listen carefully, ask questions, and be respectful of different opinions.

6. Be willing to express opinions.
7. Have a broad view of the Sorority.
8. Exhibit no bias to or advocacy for any candidate(s) or issue(s).
9. Keep confidential all applications and recommendations, interviews, rankings, and committee discussions.

## ELECTION INFORMATION

Executive Council elections are held on a triennium basis and take place in the same year as Convention. All elected Executive Council members serve a three-year term. Service on Executive Council is subject to term limits, as outlined in the Sigma Sigma Sigma *Bylaws*. Incumbents participate in the election process in the same manner as new candidates. In electing an officer, the candidate(s) receiving the most votes for the position is elected.

### ***Election Process***

- **Conversation with Council**
  - A “Conversation with Council” session will be hosted by current Executive Council members for potential applicants to provide a general overview on Executive Council service and answer any questions related to Executive Council service.
  - Nominating Committee members should be present at the “Conversations with Council” session and would be introduced at this time. Those unable to participate in the “Conversation with Council” session would be announced during the event.
  - The Nominating Committee Chair will outline the election process at this time for potential applicants.
- **Nominations & Recommendations**
  - The Nominating Committee, by way of staff, will send an email to the full membership asking for nominations/recommendations for service on Executive Council.
  - Members may self-nominate and complete an application packet. The packet must include an application, resume, and high-quality photograph.
  - Members may recommend other members for Executive Council service by completing a recommendation form.
    - The Nominating Committee Chair will contact all individuals recommended for Executive Council service and ask them to complete the application packet to be officially considered.

- **Applications**
  - All applicants will have access to the following resources: Executive Council Position Descriptions, and the Timeline of the Election Process
  - Nominations and applications will remain open for a minimum of three weeks.
  - Nominations and applications received after the closing date will not be considered.
  - NHQ will review applicants to ensure alumnae are in good standing.

### ***Candidate Review Process***

- The Nominating Committee will review all candidate applications.
- The Nominating Committee shall consider as many candidates as necessary to produce a candidate list.
- At each step in the candidate selection process, the Nominating Committee may determine that one or more candidates will not move forward. A candidate who is not moving forward will be notified by the Nominating Committee Chair.
- There is no limit to the number of candidates that may participate in each step of the candidate review process.
- The Nominating Committee will score each applicant using their resumes, and answers to questions on the application to determine which candidates will be asked to submit a video.
- Requirements for a video submission will be provided.
- Candidates will then be interviewed via video conference by a minimum of two members of the Nominating Committee. The interviews will be recorded so all committee members can review the interviews.
- Guidelines for interview questions and an evaluation form shall be utilized for consistency.
- All information shared and obtained in the interview process is confidential to the Nominating Committee.
  - Executive Council and staff members do not participate in candidate interviews or any decision making regarding who is presented to membership as a candidate for Executive Council.

Perhaps the most important criteria is the potential candidate's general suitability to function as a leader of Sigma Sigma Sigma. The most effective Executive Council members are team players. Making decisions on behalf of the membership requires accessible individuals with a broad perspective and willingness to seek the most appropriate solutions. Good leaders are individuals of principle and high integrity. They have open minds and are willing to tackle problems despite frustrations.

Each potential candidate needs to be evaluated to ensure, if elected, they will contribute positively as a leader. The Nominating Committee's candidate list should reasonably reflect the Sorority's diverse



members, interests, and highest organizational needs. The Nominating Committee may determine a potential candidate(s) will not be placed on the candidate list.

These guidelines are intended to help in this evaluation process. They are neither complete nor prescriptive but are offered as an aid to the Nominating Committee.

Nominating Committee members are encouraged to ask themselves the following questions as they consider each potential candidate:

- Has the potential candidate been actively involved in Sigma Sigma Sigma? Involvement can include a role on committees, task force service, local chapter service, service as a staff member, service to the Foundation, service to a Housing Corporation or CAB, or service of an interfraternal nature.
- Has the potential candidate been actively involved in similar membership associations or organizations? If so, in what leadership capacities? Does the candidate have experience as a volunteer? Or working with volunteers?
- Has the potential candidate shown a genuine interest in serving on Executive Council? Does the candidate seem to understand the extent and seriousness of such a commitment?
- What organizational knowledge, abilities and skills would the potential candidate bring to Executive Council? Consider experience gained both through Sigma Sigma Sigma and other professional and volunteer experiences (e.g., leadership, policy development, volunteer management, strategic planning, financial management, investment management, public speaking, etc.).
- Do the candidate's abilities and skills match the position for which they are nominated? Consider experience gained both through Sigma Sigma Sigma and other professional and volunteer experiences.
- Does a potential candidate possess other characteristics that should be considered, such as special abilities or significant life experiences? Are there other relevant factors to consider?

## PREPARING THE CANDIDATE LIST

- A candidate can be listed for all positions. These include National President, National Treasurer, and National Vice President.
- The Nominating Committee members will first select their choice(s) for National President. Candidates not selected who have indicated interest in serving as National President, may be considered as a candidate for National Treasurer or National Vice President.
- The candidates will be displayed in a randomized order using their full name to eliminate selection bias.
- A ranked voting method will be used.

- In the event a candidate has applied and/or is qualified for multiple positions, the following process shall be employed:
  - In the event the candidate elected National President is also on the ballot for National Treasurer and/or National Vice President, and the member is one of the top four candidates elected to National Vice President, the fifth candidate with the most votes will move up and be elected National Vice President. No further voting is required.
  - In the event the candidate elected National Treasurer is also on the ballot for National Vice President, and the member is one of the top four candidates elected to National Vice President. the fifth candidate with the most votes will move up and be elected National Vice President. No further voting is required.
  - The four (4) candidates for National Vice President with the most votes will be considered elected to the role.

## ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

### ***Ballot***

- The Nominating Committee and staff work together to prepare a ballot with information about each candidate.
- A candidate forum open to all members will be held prior to elections. This will be hosted by the Nominating Committee. The forum will be recorded and available on the Sigma Connect.
- The Forum will be available for 2 weeks prior to voting.
- Staff prepares, formats, and posts the ballot and related candidate information.
- Staff prepares, formats, and posts voting directions and other explanatory information to assist voters in casting their ballots.
- The following information will be included with the ballot:
  - A candidate’s application packet, including biographical information,
  - A headshot of the candidate,
  - Access to their video.

### ***Campaigning***

- No campaigning will be allowed for or by any member.
  - Campaigning is any series of actions or events meant to achieve a particular result (e.g., social media promotion, emails, texts, gifts, etc.).
  - Reports of campaigning will be reviewed by the Nominating Committee Chair and may result in candidate removal from the ballot.

- Elections will take place prior to Convention. This provides an opportunity for more delegates to participate, removes the barrier of being required to attend Convention to participate, and allows for a greater transition period of leadership. Additionally, it allows for attention to other important Convention business to be handled.
- Elections will be conducted electronically by an online voting platform.
- Voting will remain open for 14 calendar days.
- Elections shall be completed at least 6 weeks prior to Convention.
- Staff will serve as the administrator for voting. Staff will develop the online ballot (including preprogrammed voting reminders) and are responsible for testing and trouble shooting. The Nominating Committee will verify and approve the online ballot before it distributed.
- Staff will activate the online ballot for access by the voting members.
- Staff will respond to voting members who request technical assistance.
- The Nominating Committee Chair will respond to voting members' inquiries concerning the voting process.
- The Nominating Committee Chair notifies each candidate of the election results. No public announcement shall be made until all candidates have been notified.

### ***Announcing the Elections Results***

- Using the results of the online platform, the Nominating Committee Chair and the Nominating Committee will verify the final tally of votes for each candidate and deliver the results to Executive Council.
- The Nominating Committee Chair will announce the election results to the membership within 5 days following the close of voting.
- Installation takes place at the final banquet at Convention.