

MODEL ELECTION GUIDELINES FOR CFA CHAPTERS

Adopted by CFA Board of Directors June 15, 2007

Use of These Model Guidelines

While it is difficult to develop a standard set of rules because the elections processes for chapters as provided in their bylaws vary chapter by chapter, nevertheless, we hope that following these model guidelines will help ensure smooth running, open, fair and democratic elections. Where the chapter bylaws differ from these model guidelines, your bylaws prevail and must be followed as long as they conform with the statewide CFA Bylaws and governance documents.

Preamble

The election process must be conducted in such a way that voters and candidates are satisfied that reasonable rules and procedures for ethical conduct, transparency and fairness have been adopted and will be followed in spirit as well as in actual practice.

Elections Committee

1. The Elections Committee should consist of no less than three (3) members, none of whom should be a candidate for office. The Committee should be composed of an odd-number of members to avoid tie votes.
2. The Committee conducts all aspects of chapter elections in a fair and impartial manner, such as preparation and distribution of ballots, receiving and counting ballots, announcement and certification of the results, and establishment and enforcement of timelines.
3. A member should abstain from participation in the Elections Committee during the period in which an immediate family member is a candidate.
4. Staff should be limited to a support role under the direction of the Elections Committee, e.g., preparation, printing, and distribution of ballots and collection of unopened ballots. Staff members are prohibited from endorsing, indicating their preference for, promoting or in any way assisting a candidate.

Announcement of Elections and Nominations Process

1. Announcements of chapter elections should be made by the Elections Committee *at least 28 days/weeks* prior to the actual voting.
2. The announcement of election should include the offices, length of terms, and the election timeline.
3. The timeline for the election should include dates for:
 - i. Time, date, and place where declarations of candidacy are to be received (date received, not post-mark date).
 - ii. Date for acknowledgment of declarations from candidates.
 - iii. Date for preparation of ballots.
 - iv. Date on which ballots will be distributed.
 - v. Date(s) when voting will take place.

- vi. Deadline date, time and place for return of ballots, (date received, not post-mark date).
 - vii. Date, time and place where ballots will be counted.
 - viii. Date(s) that announcement of results will be made to leadership, candidates and members.
 - ix. Dates and timelines for run-off election, if necessary.
 - x. Deadline for filing of challenges (date received, not post-mark date).
4. A candidate may run for only one office in any particular chapter election.
 5. Calls for nominations should be sent *at least* 14 days before the deadline established by the Elections Committee for closing nominations.
 6. The call for nominations should be publicized in a manner that ensures every member has an opportunity to file a declaration of candidacy.
 7. Solicitation of nominations should be in the manner specified in the chapter's constitution or bylaws. Unless proscribed by these documents: (1) there should be an open call for nominations with acceptance of self-nominations, and (2) those nominated by another must state in writing a willingness to serve.
 8. The Elections Committee should notify, in writing, all chapter members of the complete list of nominees for office within the time period specified in the chapter bylaws or at least two weeks prior to balloting.
 9. No barrier, beyond the limits set by statewide CFA, e.g., only lecturers may serve as representatives to the Council of Lecturers, may be established to restrict members from running for office.

Campaigning and Campaign Literature

1. It should be the responsibility of the candidate to conduct and finance his/her candidacy for office.
2. During the candidates' campaigns, chapters should treat candidates equally and fairly.
3. Officers and elected leaders of a chapter may not, in their official capacities, endorse or indicate their preference for a candidate. They are free to express their opinions as individuals.
4. Chapter resources, including monies and assets, facilities, staff, equipment, E-mail list serves and mailings, should not be used to promote any candidate.
5. A chapter may offer candidates a membership mailing and/or email communications as long as the offer is made to all candidates and if requested by the chapter, the candidates must reimburse the chapter for any associated expenses. Such communications will be handled by the Elections Committee and candidates are not entitled to access to membership lists.
6. If a chapter does a mailing of candidates' campaign literature, it may not censor, regulate, or alter the literature.

7. When a debate among the candidates is requested by any candidate, the Elections Committee may, at its discretion, sponsor a candidates' forum, act as moderator and the set the ground rules for conduct of the forum.
8. During the voting period, in order to engage in GOTV (Get Out The Vote) efforts, candidates may be given access to the Unofficial Membership Voter Roster which contains only the name and department of the voter. If made available to any candidate, the roster must be made available to all candidates.

Ballots

1. The order of candidates' names on the ballot should be determined by a drawing by lot using any fair, random method by the Elections Committee in advance of the election.
2. The ballot should include a space for write-in candidates for each office.
3. Brief biographical sketches and/or candidates' statements may be included with each ballot, preferably on a separate page, as provided by the chapter's constitution/bylaws or within the discretion of the Elections Committee. All candidates shall be given notice of this right, if afforded, and the deadline for submitting their statements.
4. The Elections Committee may limit the length of candidates' statements or bios. If a statement is longer than the prescribed length, the Committee may, at its discretion, give the candidate an opportunity to, within a specified time period, shorten the statement or it may in its discretion print the statement cutting off words in excess of the limitation.
5. The Elections Committee may, at its discretion, circulate a mock up of the ballot to candidates before printing.
6. Ballots should be distributed *at least* 7 days before the ballot return deadline.
7. Print ballots in excess of the number of eligible voters in the event that members request duplicate ballots (to replace lost/spoiled ballots). Keep the excess ballots in a secure area.
8. Only the Elections Committee or staff under its direction is authorized to distribute ballots.

Voting Methods

1. A chapter may provide for in-person balloting, voting by mail, E-mail balloting and/or elections at a membership meeting. The voting period should be no less than 5 days.
2. Voters should be provided the option of secret ballot voting.
3. When ballots are returned through intercampus mail, to insure privacy, the chapter should provide for the return of ballots in double blind envelopes:
 - a. An unmarked Secret Ballot Envelope (SBE) to insert and seal the ballot in;
 - b. A Ballot Return Envelope (BRE) with the member's name and signature line to return the ballot (inside the SBE) in; and
 - c. An Outer Envelope to mail the ballot packet, including the ballot, SBE, BRE, instructions or election information to members.

4. If a voter returns the ballot without signing the BRE, his/her vote should not be counted.
5. Elections conducted by email ballot must be verifiable through a paper trail. The E-ballot should contain notice that while every effort will be made to preserve the privacy of an email ballot, the Elections Committee cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of ballots by this method. If a member wishes her/his vote to be confidential, they should vote in-person or vote by mail.
6. When votes are cast in-person, by mail or by E-ballot, the name of the voter must be crossed off an Official Membership Voter Roster. Members who join CFA at the time of voting must sign the Special Voter Sign-in Sheet or if joining and voting by E-ballot or by mail, their names should be written into the Sign-in Sheet.
7. If a member's name is crossed off the roster and she/he attempts to vote again using any voting method, the second ballot should be marked as a "Duplicate" and set aside for the Elections Committee to determine whether or not to count it.

Vote Requirements

1. Only CFA members can vote. Any Unit 3 employee may join at the time of voting in order to vote.
2. In uncontested elections, the sole nominee may be declared elected if the chapter has clear, written policies and procedures providing for this and notice is given to voters during the announcement of elections and calls for nominations process that any sole nominee will be declared elected.
3. Unless otherwise specified in the chapter's constitution/bylaws or election policies or procedures manual, a majority vote of the ballots cast should be required for election.
4. In the event that no candidate receives a majority vote on the first ballot, a run-off election will be held between the candidates receiving the two highest number of votes.

Counting of Ballots

1. Upon receipt of ballots, tally sheets, Official Membership Voter Roster, and Special Voter Sign-in Sheet, the Elections Committee should count the ballots in a secure area with only the Elections Committee members, staff and observers designated by the candidates present.
2. The Elections Committee counts only valid ballots and sets aside any ballot(s) on which there is a question, such as: voter not a member, blank ballot, ballot submitted after deadline, voter's intent unclear, votes cast for more than number allowed, voter cast duplicate ballots, vote cast on unofficial ballot, or vote cast for ineligible candidate.
3. The Elections Committee prepares a report to submit to Chapter President and Executive Committee recording the following information:
 - a. Total number of ballots cast.
 - b. The number of set aside ballots with an explanation for each category of ballot not counted.
 - c. The number needed to win or pass (majority or plurality of the valid ballots cast).

- d. The number of votes received by each candidate or issue.
 - e. A notation whether the set aside votes would affect the outcome.
 - f. Signature of each Elections Committee member present during the preparation of the report.
4. If the votes set aside could affect the outcome of the election, the Elections Committee should decide whether to count the votes. Protect these ballots by boxing the election material, sealing the box with tape, and having observers sign the seal, then securely store the box for the Election Committee.
 5. Where there is an even number of votes for a candidate (a tie vote), the Elections Committee should conduct a re-election pursuant to the timeline set for a run-off election.
 6. The results of each balloting (vote tally by candidate) should be given to the Chapter President and Executive Committee who will officially announce the successful candidates to the general membership.
 7. Ballots, the Official Membership Voter Roster, and the Special Voter Sign-in Sheet should be kept in a sealed and labeled envelope at the chapter office and discarded after one year.

Challenges

1. A challenge cannot be initiated until after the results of the elections have been officially announced.
2. The challenging party must submit to the chapter president or Executive Committee his/her challenge in writing within 10 days after the announcement of the results of the election.
3. The chapter president or Executive Committee should make its/his/her ruling on the challenge no later than 10 days after the challenge has been submitted. Any Executive Committee member who is also a candidate who may be affected by a challenge should not take part in the ruling on a challenge.
4. Candidates not satisfied with the chapter's ruling on a challenge may appeal to the statewide CFA president who may assign a designee to investigate and make recommendations for his/her consideration. Decisions of the statewide CFA president shall be final and binding on all parties involved.