



Elections and Voting

1. **PURPOSE**

This policy covers the process of conducting a ballot within the membership of the MRSSA. It includes the process for elections, ratification ballots and other general ballots that may from time to time be conducted on behalf of the MRSSA.

2. **DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions are used in this policy:

Non-disclosure – A formal agreement for maintaining the confidentiality of a process, program or operation such that all information about that subject is not to be disclosed to anyone not identified in the non-disclosure agreement.

Plurality – The winner is the one who receives the largest number of votes to be given any candidate or proposition regardless of the number of choices on the ballot.

3. **VOTING PROCEDURES**

Voting shall take place for the election of the Executive, EDT Committee, and Negotiating Committee of the MRSSA. It shall also be conducted for the ratification of the Collective Agreement, amendments to the Constitution, any other such items as deemed necessary by the Executive.

4. **ELECTED POSITIONS**

The following positions shall be elected from the membership:

- a) President- 2 year position alternating with VP and Treasurer
- b) Vice-President- 2 year position alternating with the President
- c) Treasurer- 2 year position alternating with the President
- d) Secretary/Vice President – 2009 1 year position then beginning 2010 two year term alternating with Vice President and Treasurer
- e) Representatives (minimum of six)
- f) Board of Governors Representative- 2 year appointment
- g) Negotiating Committee – 2 year appointment (four members with two elected each year) - The President is the fifth member of the Negotiating team.
- h) EDT Committee (minimum of five)

In the event that no individual is elected to succeed the incumbent, then they may remain in office in an interim capacity until a suitable candidate has been nominated and elected by the general membership. No member may hold more than one elected position on the Executive excluding committees.

5. **DECLARATION OF VACANCY**

The Executive shall inform the Elections Chair of the vacancy of all positions not occupied and those whose term is about to expire. Such a declaration shall be made at least five weeks in advance of a general election. No action shall be taken to nominate or fill a position until such position has been declared vacant.

6. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

The Elections Chair shall announce to the membership that nominations will be accepted until a specific date determined by the Elections Committee. Candidates can canvas support from the membership upon acceptance of the nomination by the Nominations Officer until the day preceding the elections. **There will be no canvassing by any candidate 12 hours prior to the polls opening, during the time the polls are open until their official closure by the Poll Captains.**

7. **VACANCIES CREATED DURING THE YEAR**

In the event that a position becomes vacant for any reason between the annual elections, the Executive shall consider the following options:

- a) The position may remain vacant if, in the opinion of the Executive, there is insufficient time remaining in the term for a candidate to be elected, become conversant in the material of the office, and still have the ability to contribute positively to the MRSSA.
- b) The position may be filled by an interim volunteer appointed by the Executive to complete the term of office.
- c) The position may be passed to the Elections Committee to conduct a by-election under the same criteria as would be followed for a general election and ballot.

8. **RATIFICATION OR OTHER VOTE**

In the event that the membership is required to vote on issues other than an election of the Executive and Committees, then the purpose of the vote and information on the subject of the vote must be announced formally and be made available to all members. All members shall be given the opportunity to review the information on the subject of the vote. In any event, members shall be permitted to review the information at the MRSSA Office.

No less than ten (10) days shall transpire between the notification of the vote and the taking of the ballot itself to ensure that all members have had ample time to review the material and have their questions answered.

A ratification vote may take place at the same time as a general election. If so, it will be on a separate ballot. The number of ballots shall be identified at the time of the election call. All such ballots shall be well publicized so that there is no doubt by any member that more than one ballot will be provided at the polling station.

9. **ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS**

The general election will be on a date as determined by the Elections Chair in consultation with the President and shall normally take place within the first two weeks of May. The Elections Committee shall inform the membership at least four weeks prior to the election date that nominations will be accepted at a specific date determined by the Elections Chair in consultation with the President.

To submit nominations, members must adhere to the following process:

- a) print off the Nomination Form from the MRSSA website or obtain a copy from the MRSSA office
- b) manually fill out the form with the proper fields filled out and all necessary signatures completed
- c) hand deliver the completed form to the Nominations Officer care of the MRSSA office by the specified deadline

10. **NOMINATION FORMS**

The Nomination Form is available on the MRSSA website and in the MRSSA Office.

11. **ELIGIBILITY**

Any MRSSA member in good standing can run for office.

12. **ADVANCE POLLS**

For the purposes of permitting those members who know that they will be off campus on the day of the vote to cast their ballots, an advance poll will be available. It will operate as follows:

- a) The advance poll will occur within 7 calendar days before the election.
- b) The ballots will be cast in the MRSSA boardroom in accordance with the rules and regulations outlined in this policy.
- c) An advance poll will take place only if necessary and at the discretion of the elections chair.

13. **MOBILE POLL**

As Mount Royal College is spread over a number of locations there is a need for a poll station to be available for all members of the MRSSA. As such, a mobile poll station will ensure the ability of those in the satellite locations to cast their ballots on the day of the vote. The mobile poll will operate as follows:

- a) Any member whose primary work location is at a satellite campus will have the opportunity to vote at any of the Mobile Poll locations.
- b) Any member whose primary work location is at a satellite campus will not be allowed to vote at the Lincoln Park Campus, unless granted exception by the Elections Chair.
- c) One member from these locations will be designated the Mobile Poll Captain.
- d) All MRSSA members at a Mobile location will receive a copy of the ballot within 7 calendar days before the election.
- e) The ballots will be marked and returned to the Mobile Poll Captain and sealed in an envelope.
- f) The Election Chair or designate will pick-up all ballots during the lunch hour on the Election Day from any satellite location.
- g) Members in locations outside of Calgary will be e-mailed a ballot by the MRSSA's Admin assistant and the ballot will be returned to and received in the MRSSA office (e-mail or Canada post) by the date of the election.

14. **REQUEST TO VOTE AT LINCOLN PARK**

A request to vote at Lincoln Park Campus from members who are located at a satellite location will be accepted if received 48 hours prior to the Election Day. This will permit those members who must travel to the Lincoln Park campus on the day of the vote to be able to cast their ballot at that location. However, members who arrive at the voting booth without having pre-approved their request to vote at Lincoln Park will be turned away and must vote at their prescribed location. This will ensure that only one vote is cast per person at the designated location.

15. **SECURITY POLL**

All Lincoln Park Security personnel will be given special voting status due to their work schedule. Those members who will not be on-site during Advance Poll or Regular voting hours will be given the opportunity to vote. The ballots will be made available through the Election Chair one day after nominations close.

16. **BALLOT BOXES**

Ballot boxes will be secured with two sets of locks. The keys to one set will be held by the Elections Chair and the keys to the other set will be held by the Poll Captain.

17. MANUAL BALLOTING

The following is the procedure for a manual ballot:

- a) Ballot(s) will be issued only for contested nominations, ratification of the Collective Agreement, changes to the Constitution, changes to membership dues, and any other votes indicated to the membership.
- b) There will be a separate ballot for election of each of the Executive positions, EDT Committee, Negotiations Committee, ratification of the Collective Agreement, changes to the Constitution, changes to membership dues and any other vote indicated to the membership.
- c) All voting shall be by secret ballot.
- d) The ballot shall be a check box.
- e) When possible the names of the candidates will be rotated within their positions to avoid an alphabetized ballot.
- f) Each member shall receive only one ballot for each position per balloting session.
- g) Each ballot will be initialed by the Poll Captain/Mobile Poll Captain and witnessed by another member of the Election Committee before balloting starts.
- h) A further mark will be added when the member receives the ballot. It can be made either by initials or a special stamp.

18. THE CONDUCT OF A VOTE

The procedure for the conduct of a vote shall be as follows:

- a) Voting will commence at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 4:00 p.m. on the designated day(s). At 4:00 p.m. the doors to the polling station will be locked and only those people in the room who have not yet voted will be permitted to finish the voting process.
- b) A member or designate of the Elections Committee must be present in the voting station at all times.
- c) All members in good standing, as per the MRSSA Constitution, shall be eligible to vote.
- d) The voters' list shall be compiled of all members one day after nominations close. Any employee starting during the period between this day and Election Day must provide proof of employment.
- e) Ballot(s) will only be issued from the Poll Captain's desk to those eligible members with Campus Card or equivalent picture identification. If the identification matches the voter and he/she is on the voters' list, he is given all of the appropriate ballot(s), and his/her name is crossed off the voters list.
- f) The member then goes to an enclosed voting booth in the same room as the Poll Captain. The voting booth shall be set up so that the voter cannot be observed voting by anyone in the room.
- g) After the voter has marked his ballot(s) accordingly, he returns to the Mobile Poll or Poll Captain's table and places the ballot(s) in the designated ballot box.
- h) Only one person will be permitted to be in the voting booth at a time.

19. COUNTING OF BALLOTS

The following procedure shall be followed for the counting of the ballots after the conclusion of the vote:

- a) All elections will be determined by plurality vote.
- b) Only Ballot Counters are allowed to count the ballots.
- c) Each candidate is allowed one observer to witness the counting of the ballots.
- d) Ballot counting will not commence until all ballot boxes are in the Lincoln Park campus counting room.
- e) At the start of ballot counting, the Poll Captain/Mobile Poll Captain determines that the boxes are unaltered and the locks secure. The locks are then removed by the Elections Chair and the Poll Captain in the presence of the Mobile Poll Captain, the Scrutineer and the Ballot Counters. The ballot(s) are then removed and sorted according to category and if the number of ballot(s) cast is equivalent to the number distributed, then the counting of ballots commences.

- f) An illegal vote shall be immediately declared if the number of votes cast exceeds the numbers of votes distributed by the Elections Committee. A new vote will occur.
- g) Blank ballot(s) are recorded as illegal votes and are not included in any totals.
- h) If a Ballot Counter finds that two or more similar ballot(s) are folded together, they are recorded as one illegal vote.
- i) If a blank ballot is found inside a completed ballot, only the blank ballot is rejected.
- j) A ballot without the proper markings and sequence number will be considered an illegal ballot.
- k) Any marked ballot whose voting intention cannot be determined, but is not an illegal ballot, shall be counted as a spoiled ballot.
- l) In the event of a tie, a second vote will be held the following week. If there is still a tie after the second ballot then the successful candidate will be determined by random draw performed by the Elections Chair.

20. REPORTING OF RESULTS

The Elections Chair shall be responsible for the release of the results of the vote regardless of the purpose of the ballot. He shall have the results distributed such that every member has a reasonable opportunity to review the results. A minimum release shall include the following:

- a) posting on the MRSSA website
- b) a direct email to all members.

The notification shall include the particulars of what was voted on and the results of that vote. Under no circumstances shall the actual number of ballots per candidate be disseminated to the general membership. The results of the total number of ballots cast and the distribution of those votes shall be released to the individual candidates who participated in the elections. Release of that information will remain with the candidates themselves.

21. DESTRUCTION OF BALLOTS

After the ballots have been counted and the results are confirmed:

- a) All ballots shall be bundled according to the candidate and placed back in the ballot box.
- b) Any illegal or spoiled ballot(s) shall be placed in an envelope and then placed inside the same ballot box.
- c) The Scrutineer and Ballot Counters will sign the Official Results Vote Count Sheet and place a copy of it in the ballot box.
- d) The ballot box will then be locked and given to the Elections Chair who will keep it for 90 days. The ballot box shall be opened if there is a challenge to the election results.
- e) After 90 days the Elections Chair will destroy all ballots.

22. CHALLENGES TO THE VOTE

A challenge to the vote must be made by written submission to the Elections Chair and signed by 10 members outlining their concerns.

This document shall not be modified or changed without the approval of the MRSSA Executive Board.
