APA ELECTION GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATES AND SUPPORTERS

Based on Those Approved as Amended by the Board of Trustees – October 2023

A. Overview

The intent of the guidelines is to encourage fair and open campaigning by APA members on a level playing field by:

1) specifying permitted and prohibited election related activities;
2) fostering opportunities for candidates to educate their colleagues about the issues;
3) informing voters about candidate experiences and views;
4) keeping costs down; and
5) maintaining dignified and courteous conduct appropriate to the image of a profession.

Campaigning, as allowed and specified in this document, is not permitted until after the final slate of candidates has been announced to the membership. Members should withhold commitments of their final support or votes until after all candidates are known. Members soliciting letters of nomination or circulating petitions to be nominated may not use the nomination process for campaign/electioneering purposes beyond asking for nomination letters or signatures on petitions. Use of APA/DB resources is not permitted, except where stated in this document.

Each Candidate:

1) Receives a copy of these guidelines and a statement to sign, certifying that they have read the guidelines;
2) Promises to abide by the guidelines;
3) Will immediately report any deviations of which they become aware to the Elections Committee; and
4) Will notify and try to correct any supporter upon learning of an actual or potential deviation.

Candidates are to inform members they ask for support about the guidelines by sending a copy or calling their attention to the guidelines on the APA website.

All APA members are expected to abide by the APA election guidelines in APA elections, including in their capacity as officers and members of other organizations. APA requests that other organizations adhere to the intent of the campaign guidelines and provide fair and equitable coverage of opposing candidates.

When candidates or their supporters are unclear about whether an intended campaign action is permitted, they should seek guidance from the Elections Committee before taking action. The Elections Committee will respond with a ruling concerning the proper interpretation of the guidelines and inform all candidates.

The Elections Committee investigates any potential violation by a candidate or supporter of which it becomes aware, and reports violations to the Board of Trustees. The procedures used by the Elections Committee to investigate and report campaign violations are in the APA Operations Manual and will be sent to candidates with these Election Guidelines.
B. Campaigning
Campaigning is defined as any attempt to influence a potential voter’s vote. Campaigning includes mentioning one’s candidacy or making any statement that might be interpreted as a position statement reflecting what actions the candidate would take if elected. It does not include appearances made as part of one’s normal work activities, and individual communication through any medium (email, mail, phone call) by a candidate to a single individual recipient. Mass emails (one email to more than one recipient) are discouraged but not prohibited. **Permitted campaign activities are specified in this document.**

Approved APA-Organized Campaign Activities are as Follows:
- APA Election Guide to Candidates, published electronically during campaign period;
- Psychiatric News December Election Issue;
- APA Election Website (psychiatry.org/election); and
- Any other activities reviewed and approved by the APA Elections Committee.

1. General
   - Candidates are to state their own positions on issues and their own plans for the Association directly and positively.
   - Candidates and supporters may not make personal attacks against other candidates.
   - The APA National Nominating, Elections and Tellers Committees, as well as the Board of Trustees, are not permitted to participate in campaigning, and endorse/support a candidacy.

2. Resources
   - Candidates and supporters may communicate with each other and coordinate campaign activities. However, formal campaign committees (entities that can make statements or take other actions on behalf of the candidate) are not allowed and candidates may not enter into agreements to campaign together. Merely endorsing a candidate is not a violation of the guidelines if there is no prior commitment or agreement in campaigning together.
   - Use of APA, Area Council/State Association, or District Branch resources or personnel is prohibited, except to support the election process, including communication of candidate statement to members.
   - APA, Area Council/State Association, or District Branch funds, services, stationery, or staff may not be used to endorse, support, or promote any candidate; however, Area Council/State Association or District Branch funds – not APA funds – may be used to support the expenses of candidates invited to the branch/area meeting for election purposes.
   - Permitted APA resources are the APA Election Website (psychiatry.org/election) and platform used for campaigning and APA election publications.
   - Use of personal assistants, aide, hired individuals, friends, and family members, or other persons to campaign for a candidate is prohibited. All permitted activities must be developed, performed, and executed by candidates themselves, e.g., email, mail, or phone call from a candidate to recipients.
3. Campaign Communications
Permitted forms of campaigning include the following: **all others are prohibited.**

a. **Electronic Messages**
   There are no limits on the number of campaign messages sent electronically. However, candidates and supporters are advised to use restraint with electronic messages of all kinds, as these are often ill received by voters, especially if voters perceive that they are being spammed. Campaign E-mail messages must have “APA Campaigning” in the subject line as a courtesy so that recipients may sort out campaign E-mail messages if preferred. Obtaining E-mail addresses is the responsibility of the candidates and their supporters; they are not to be provided by APA, Area Councils/State Associations, or District Branches.

b. **Listservs**
   Candidates may create their own listserv (group email list) to facilitate communication with, and among their supporters.

Listservs of other psychiatric organizations may be used for campaigning if permitted by those organizations.

c. **Social Networking Sites, Blogs, and Homepages (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)**
   Candidates may use unpaid social networking sites, blogs, and homepages for campaign purposes. Candidatures may not pay to advertise, nor pay to have better placement in search engines, generate more traffic, etc. Candidates are reminded to conduct themselves professionally and with integrity on these non-APA platforms. The Elections Committee does not actively monitor the social media/networking activity of any candidate but will investigate any reports of potential issues if such reports are brought forth to the Committee.

d. **APA Website**
   APA will include information on all candidates (the photos, biographies, and statements provided for the ballot booklet, and links to candidate homepages), and on the election itself (campaign guidelines, ballot mailing and return dates, etc.) on its website. This election information can be accessed through the election logo and linked to other information as appropriate.

e. **Candidate Homepage**
   In addition to the official APA candidate page, each candidate may have a separate homepage. The candidate is responsible for setting up and financing their own homepage. There will be a disclaimer on APA’s website stating that candidates’ homepages are their own creation and responsibility, and that APA takes no responsibility for information posted on them. APA reserves the right to cut the link between its website and a candidate’s homepage if a candidate violates the campaign guidelines.
f. **Phone**  
Campaign-related phone calls (including calls made through services such as Skype) may be made from candidates/supporters to individual APA members. Use of automatic calling services (robocalls) or hiring personnel to make such calls is prohibited.

g. **Letters and Handouts**  
There are no restrictions on the number of campaign letters, postcards, faxes, handouts, and other printed material.

h. **Private Discussion**  
Private election-related communication with colleagues is permitted and not monitored by the Election Committee. If a third-party reports to the Election Committee about an interaction/communication that may be an election violation, the Election Committee will review to determine whether a violation has occurred.

i. **Invited Position Statements**  
Psychiatric organizations may request written position statements or answers to questions for publication in a newsletter or other written medium. Such publication requires that no candidate is endorsed or favored and that all candidates for a given office have been given equal opportunity to respond.

j. **District Branch/State Association Campaigning: Newsletters**  
District Branch or State Association newsletters may announce as news items, without endorsement, two types of announcements:

1) A news item that requires equal representation of all candidates for an APA office, and/or;
2) A limited 150-words per candidate news item describing the candidacy for an APA office of local member(s) affiliated with that District Branch or State Association.

Editorial endorsement of candidates is prohibited, as are letters to the Editor in support of (or opposition to) candidates. Newsletters may print other statements or materials by or about a candidate only if they give equal opportunity to opposing candidates. Newsletters may not be distributed beyond the usual newsletter distribution.

k. **Mutual Campaign Presentations**  
A mutual campaign presentation is defined as an event where all candidates for an APA office appear together to acquaint voters with the candidates and/or to discuss campaign issues. Candidates may appear in person or through electronic media.

- If all candidates have been given equal opportunity to attend and one cannot attend, the other candidate(s) may present.
- Endorsement or favoritism of any candidate is prohibited.
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I. Introduction at Professional Presentations
A candidate’s candidacy may be mentioned when the candidate is introduced for the purpose of giving a professional presentation, provided that the candidate is not endorsed.

There are no restrictions on professional presentations, defined as events where no campaigning occurs, and a candidate participates in the dissemination of information through any medium. Running for office should not inhibit or prohibit candidates from conducting their usual professional business.
ADDITIONAL ELECTION ACTIVITY
It is a violation of the APA Election Guidelines for candidates to participate in webcasts or panel discussions, issue press releases, respond to surveys, or allow publication of interviews relating to the election, unless approved in advance by the Elections Committee.

Any request for additional election activity, e.g., surveys, questionnaires, debate, interview requests, etc., require advance approval by the Elections Committee.

ENFORCEMENT OF GUIDELINES
By accepting a candidacy, a candidate agrees to follow the APA Election Guidelines.

If a candidate engages in election activity inconsistent with the APA Election Guidelines, the committee will take appropriate action to address the violation with the candidate, including (but not limited to) addressing the violation with the candidate, requiring the candidate to withdraw with Board approval, or any other appropriate action(s,) as determined by the Elections Committee.

The Elections Committee is charged with enforcing the APA Election Guidelines which has been set forth in conjunction with the Board of Trustees. This document outlines the principles that will guide enforcement of the Guidelines.

In considering appropriate enforcement of the Guidelines, the Elections Committee will be guided by the following goals:
- To sustain the high professional reputation of the APA;
- To maintain the integrity and goals of the Guidelines;
- To be fair to all candidates;
- To not reward candidates who violate the Policy; and
- To ensure enforcement of action is appropriate to the violation.
ELECTION PRINCIPLES

The EQUITY OF ACCESS AND ECONOMIC PRINCIPLE:

The electorate and the candidates should enjoy optimum access to each other, to meet or communicate without unnecessary encumbrances. (This will address questions on the issue of free speech, of method of communications, i.e., postal, electronic, printed, etc.)

The FAIRNESS PRINCIPLE: (ensuring equity)

Every qualified member should have equal opportunity to run for leadership positions in the APA. (This addresses the problem of the power and privilege of incumbents, which pose handicaps to challengers or outsiders. Equal opportunity addresses the issue of finance-and expense issues.)

The COLLEGIALITY PRINCIPLE:

An atmosphere of collegiality should be promoted among candidates and among members, fostering the fellowship spirit, a more open communication and exercise of professionalism that would ensure focus on issues and fair play. Candidates who do not adhere to this principle, as determined by the Elections Committee, may be referred to the Board for removal from candidacy or their votes nullified.

The CANDIDATE ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLE:

Candidates should be involved in interpreting rules that affect their campaign to arrive at a common understanding of the said rules, and agreement on what they want to do to interact with the electorate.

The MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLE:

The election process should arouse members' interest in and knowledge of APA affairs and foster optimum ballot returns. Well-informed members will likely be involved voters.

The ECONOMIC PRINCIPLE:

The candidates and the APA should collaborate to find and utilize the most economic means of conducting the election campaign in terms of time and money.