

Texas FFA Association

Policy Handbook

Section 20: State Officer Selection Process and Candidate Campaigning Procedures

Revised: January 2012

20.1 Constitutional Authority – Article X: State Officers and Procedures for Election

- (a) The elected officers of the Texas FFA Association/Texas Association of Future Farmers of America shall be selected and nominated by each of the Area Associations. Each of these officers has an opportunity to demonstrate FFA, agricultural education, parliamentary procedure and agricultural industry knowledge via a written exam, present their qualifications to an evaluation committee and appear before the state convention body delegates and deliver a campaign speech. A president shall be elected from the state officers by a combination of exam score, 20 percent, interview score, 30 percent and a score derived from the vote of the delegates present, 50 percent. The state elections committee shall consist of the outgoing state officers, with the State Executive Board acting as an advisory committee. The chairman of the elections committee shall be a current state officer designated by the board of directors. Chairman of the Board of Directors shall act as chairman of the advisory committee. These two committees will work in conjunction with each other on all decisions concerning the election. Results of all elections will be announced as seen fit by the two committees. No results will be posted concerning the election, and any questions concerning the election shall be taken up with the chairman of the advisory committee. The winner of the final election shall be declared President of the State Association, and the candidate receiving the second highest score total in the final runoff election shall be declared the first vice-president. The remaining officers shall be called vice-presidents, and shall assume the stations of the various other FFA offices for ceremonial purpose at the annual convention and other meetings throughout the year.
- (b) If for any reason a student officer becomes vacant, the area from which the vacancy occurs shall elect another student officer. If for any reason the office of President should become vacant, the student officer who received the next highest score in the election for President shall become President.
- (c) The officers of the areas, districts and local chapters shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, Sentinel, Advisor, and other officers if desired. All of these officers must be active FFA members and be enrolled in high school throughout the duration of their term.
- (d) The elected officers shall constitute the Board of Texas FFA Officers. It shall be the duty of this Board to advise and make recommendations to the Texas FFA Board of Directors with respect to the activities and business of the Texas FFA Association/Texas Association of Future Farmers of America.
- (e) Each Area Association may elect one state officer each year. The state officer shall be elected by a combination of exam score, 20 percent, interview score, 30 percent and a score derived from the vote of the delegates present, 50 percent and in accordance to policies adopted by the State FFA Board of Directors. The newly elected state officer shall sign the State Officers' Qualifications and Prerequisites Form and submit it to the State Executive Director on or before June 1. All state officers shall be notified as to their

eligibility on or before June 10. Those declared ineligible may file an appeal with the Executive Director no later than June 20. The State FFA Executive Board shall vote on any appeal and formally notify the ineligible officer of the decision no later than July 1. In the event that an officer is declared officially ineligible, the runner-up state officer candidate from that area will fill the vacancy.

- (f) The state officers shall hold the State FFA Degree at the time of their election at the state convention must be active members for the duration of their term in office and must not be more than one year removed from high school graduation at the time of their nomination by their respective area association.
- (g) State FFA Officers shall serve from one state convention through the next succeeding state convention and shall not be reelected, nor eligible for election to another state office. In the event a state convention is not held in any given year, the State Board of Directors shall make provisions for the appointment of state officers for the next succeeding year. The State FFA Board of Directors shall have the power to appoint a qualified member to fill any office which becomes vacant between state conventions.

20.2 Selection of State Officers—Guiding Philosophies

- (a) The Texas FFA State FFA Officer Task Force (2005) identified traits and values essential for state FFA officers to maximize their effectiveness while fulfilling the tasks mandated by the Texas FFA Association constitution and board-adopted policies. Board policies related to officer selection are intended to identify and select members who are adaptable, approachable, creative, dedicated, dependable, effective communicators, genuine, honest, integral, knowledgeable, motivated, polished speakers, respectful, passionate, positive, self reliant, selfless, socially skilled and graceful, team players and who represent a complete, well-balanced agricultural education/FFA experience.

20.3 Administration

- (a) The chairman of the Board of Directors shall appoint a committee to review policy and procedure related to the state officer selection process and make policy recommendations to the board and management recommendations to the Executive Director.
- (b) With the advice and consent of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director shall appoint an agricultural educator to chair the state officer selection procedures. The said chairperson shall coordinate the efforts of the exam writers, interview committee, balloting committee and officer candidate committee in accordance to all relevant policies.

20.4 Candidate Evaluation

- (a) Candidates shall be evaluated and scored on a 100-point scale which includes a written exam score, an interview committee score and a popular vote score. The top 40% of candidates in the selection process shall advance to a run-off in preliminary voting rounds. Test and interview scores shall be applied to all election rounds. The top scoring candidate in the final run-off round shall be the state president; the second-place finisher shall be designated as the first vice president. In area selection processes, the top scoring candidate in the final run-off round shall be the area's state officer nominee; the second-place finisher shall be designated as the area's alternate to assume the duties of the nominee should he or she become unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities or be disqualified or deemed unfit for office pursuant to relevant Texas FFA Association policies.

- (b) Candidates for state office shall have opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of agricultural education, FFA, parliamentary procedure and the agricultural industry via an ~~a-written~~ exam administered in accordance to the provisions of this policy and a writing exercise to measure written communication skills using a prompt relevant to duties of a state officer. The exam shall comprise 20% of the candidate's score. The test, composed of 150 questions, shall comprise 85% of the exam section and the writing exercise 15%, the composite of which shall be scaled to a factor of 0.2. The numerical value that is the difference between the top indexed score and the number 20 shall be added to all scores. The exam score shall be applied in each of the election rounds.
- (c) A committee of agricultural educators representing each of the area associations and agricultural education stakeholders shall interview each candidate in accordance to procedures established by the Executive Director and approved by the Board of Directors. The interview score shall comprise 30% of the candidate's score and shall be applied in each of the election rounds. The interview process shall be conducted in conjunction with the state degree check and award selection process.
- (1) Each area shall be entitled to select and submit no more than one agricultural educators to serve on the evaluation committee. Area associations must certify committee nominees must as being free of any conflict of interest concerning the election of officers. All such certifications shall be reviewed and verified by the Executive Director. The state executive board shall reserve the authority to remove a member of the evaluation committee for conflicts of interest or conduct it deems to be detrimental to the selection process.
- (2) 30% of the interview shall be weighted to qualifications expressed in the candidates' application, resume and references, and 70% of the interview score shall be derived through a personal interview or series of personal interviews with the candidate. The interview section is scored on a 100-point scale and multiplied by a factor of 0.3. The numerical value that is the difference between the top indexed interview score and the number 30 shall be added to all scores.
- (d) Each candidate shall be given opportunity to present a campaign speech in accordance to the provisions of this policy and give an impromptu response to a thought question developed and asked in accordance to the provisions of this policy. The popular vote of the delegate body shall comprise 50% of the candidate's score.
- (1) Each delegate shall cast two votes in preliminary rounds of voting. The total number of votes received by a candidate shall be divided by the total vote cast and multiplied by 100. The numerical difference between the percentage of the top vote-getter and the number 50 shall be added to all vote total percentages.
- (2) Each delegate shall cast one vote in the final round of voting. The total number of votes received by a candidate shall be divided by the total number of votes cast and multiplied by 50 to derive the vote score factor. The numerical difference between the percentage of the top vote-getter and the number 50 shall be added to all vote total percentages.
- (e) In the event of a tie, the tied shall be broken by the following means. If the tie is unbroken by a tie breaker, the committee shall consider the next tie breaker until all means are exhausted.

- (1) Popular Vote. The candidate with the highest vote factor shall win the tie. Vote factors shall be carried out to the nearest one-thousandth of a point.
- (2) Total Interview Section. In the event that the previous tiebreaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest total interview factor, the combined scores of the writing exercise, application and personal interview shall win the tie. Interview factors shall be rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a point.
- (3) Exam Score. In the event that the previous tie breaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest exam score factor shall win the tie. Exam factors shall be rounded to the nearest one-hundredth of a point.
- (4) Personal Interview. In the event that the previous tie breaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest personal interview score shall win the tie.
- (5) Application Score. In the event that the previous tie breaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest application score shall win the tie.
- (6) Writing Exercise. In the event that the previous tie breaker fails to break the tie, the candidate with the highest writing exercise score shall win the tie.
- (7) Run-Off Speech and Vote. Should the above tie breaks fail to break the tie, each of the tied candidates shall present a one-minute run-off speech and the delegates shall cast ballots. The winner of said run-off election shall win the tie.

20.5 Area state officer selection procedures

- (a) Each area association that employs state approved selection guidelines shall be entitled to seat an officer on the board of student officers.
- (b) Each area shall designate two state officer election officials who must receive appropriate training to conduct a state approved state officer selection process. The selection process officials need not serve on the area evaluation committee, but shall be responsible for coordinating schedules, committee training, and certification of results. No individual who has a personal or professional vested interest in the outcome of the process may be an election official.

20.6 State Officer Campaign Rules Prior to State Convention

- (a) Statewide mail outs or publicity by any person or entity mentioning candidacy outside of a candidate's home area prior to the convention is not permitted. Candidates should be aware that many districts and areas have the same rule. Any media, electronic or hard copy which solicits support for or promotes a candidacy is prohibited by this policy.
- (b) Candidates may not create any new, or utilize any pre-existing, groups, fan pages, networks or any other form of mass communication through social networking sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs or mass email services to promote their candidacy or have someone else conduct this form of campaigning on their behalf. Candidates may not, or knowingly have someone else, post status updates on Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, or any other social networking site that may be deemed as a solicitation for votes.
- (c) Business cards may only bear the candidates name, address, phone number and e-mail address and only indicate that the candidate is an "incoming state officer" from his or her respective area.
- (d) Officer candidates may not attend area conventions or degree checks other than their own area, in fairness to all candidates.
- (e) Officer candidates may not attend any area leadership camps or conferences other than those events held their own area.

- (f) In compliance with the state constitution, each candidate shall sign the state officer's commitment pledge and complete the state officer's application. These documents must be submitted to the Executive Director by the deadline stated in the application with a filing fee of \$50.00.
- (g) Violation of any campaign rule may result in the disqualification of a candidate from the state officer election. Serious violations which constitute issues of integrity or ethics may be addressed by the state executive board under the provisions of the officer discipline policy.

20.7 State Officer Campaign Guidelines for State Convention

- (a) Each candidate will have a head and shoulder picture taken in official dress by the convention photographer. Candidate photographs and resumes shall be published by the state FFA association and distributed to voting delegates. No handout material or wall posters will be allowed. No campaign material or paraphernalia will be allowed. Business cards may not contain any items or reference perceived to be campaign related.
- (b) No parties will be hosted by the candidates during the convention.
- (c) Candidates may not create any new, or utilize any pre-existing, groups, fan pages, networks or any other form of mass communication through social networking sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs or mass email services to promote their candidacy or have someone else conduct this form of campaigning on their behalf. Candidates may not, or knowingly have someone else, post status updates on Twitter, Facebook, MySapce, or any other social networking site that may be deemed as a solicitation for votes. During the election process, members will be directed not to post anything campaign-related to the web.
- (d) Violation of any campaign rule may result in the disqualification of a candidate from the state officer election. Serious violations which constitute issues of integrity or ethics may be addressed by the state executive board under the provisions of the officer discipline policy.

20.8 Incoming Officer Convention Speeches

- (a) Transcript of campaign speech shall be submitted to Executive Director prior to July 1. The Executive Director shall reserve the authority to disallow any speech with material deemed inappropriate. Candidates who alter deviate from submitted transcripts and insert inappropriate statements or inferences shall be disqualified.
- (b) Speeches will be a maximum of five minutes in length. Time will be called at the end of Five minutes and microphones will be turned off at the end of the time allotted.
- (c) Run-off speeches will be a maximum of one minute in length. Time will be called and microphones will be turned off at the end of the time allotted.
- (d) Candidates will not use any props or other materials. Audience participation by the general corporate audience without reference to any individual is not considered use of a prop. Having a specific member or group of members identified by proper name participate is considered to be use of a prop.
- (e) Candidates will choose the style of microphone desired for their candidate speech at the designated stage practice and will be given an opportunity to test the microphones.
- (f) Candidates may use a podium or walk the stage area but may not kneel, squat, or be seated on stage, or leave the stage during their candidate speech. The entire presentation must begin and end on stage.

20.9 Candidate Testing Procedures

- a) State officer candidates shall take a state-approved test in both area and state level selection processes to determine their knowledge and understanding.
- b) The test shall follow the same format as the current senior division FFA quiz leadership development event. References for agricultural issues and current events will be updated and posted on or before the Friday of the first full work week of January. The exam shall be proctored at a time set by the Executive Director and the state officer selection committee chairperson at the state degree check and award selection process in June. Examinations administered at the area level shall be given in conjunction with respective area processes.
- c) Questions may be multiple choice and/or true/false and may be administered on hard copy or electronically.
- d) The exam shall be formulated by the Executive Director's designee and shall be a party with no vested interest in the outcome of the election. No party with an interest in the outcome of the election shall have access to the exam.
- e) Candidates will have 150 minutes to complete the exam.
- f) The number of questions will be based on percentages of emphasis placed on certain areas listed above. Scores will be reported on a percentage basis and entered into the officer selection scoring formula.
- g) All hard-copy testing materials shall be returned to the state FFA office. Exams may not be taken from the test areas or photocopied. Violation of this provision shall result in disciplinary action.
- h) Candidates shall complete a writing exercise in both area and state-level selection processes to demonstrate written communication skills. The same state-approved writing prompt shall be given all candidates competing in a given process. Responses shall be handwritten unless a candidate has a condition which precludes a handwritten response. All exceptions at the area or state levels must be approved by the state officer selection chairperson. Written responses shall be scaled to a ten-point scale.

20.10 Questioning Procedures

- (a) Thought questions are important to allow the delegates see the officer candidate's ability to speak extemporaneously. One thought question will be asked on stage after each campaign speech. The thought question will be developed by the respective agriscience teacher-led candidate committee at the state convention as mandated by this policy.
- (b) Questions should be straightforward, unambiguous, challenging, thorough, and test the candidate's knowledge of principles and procedures (especially those that may arise during the course of the year's duties). Questions should allow the candidates to respond in a positive atmosphere.
- (c) Each member of the candidate committee shall prepare and submit one thought/opinion question.
- (d) Each question shall be written on a separate piece of paper.
- (e) A committee of not less than three persons from the candidate committee shall screen the questions for completeness, fairness, and accuracy. Committee members with a conflict of interest concerning the election shall be not included in the screening process. Questions concerning conflicts of interest shall be resolved on-site by the state executive board.
- (f) The post-screening, submitted questions will be combined and a single question will be selected through a blind drawing.

- (g) The selected question will be placed in an envelope and sealed by the candidate committee chairperson until immediately prior to the election.
- (h) The state or national officers conducting the election will open the envelope on stage and read the question to the delegate body immediately prior to the election.
- (i) The question will be read to the candidates in the same manner, exactly as written, and may be repeated if requested by the candidates.