

# THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FOR OFFICER ELECTIONS



TAU KAPPA EPSILON

— Better Men for a Better World —

## NOMINATIONS

HOW TO SET UP THE NOMINATIONS PROCESS

## RUNNING YOUR ELECTION MEETING

THE OUTLINE FOR AN EFFICIENT, PRODUCTIVE PROCESS

## WHAT'S NEXT?

GETTING YOUR NEW OFFICERS ON THE SAME PAGE



# Introduction

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Officer elections can be a long, tedious process that leave a group both divided and exhausted. This manual is meant to serve as a guide that will allow your chapter/colony to execute effective elections without wasting a full day and creating cries of unfairness and fixed results.

As with all of our resource guides, we do not mean to eliminate a group's ability to execute elections based on their own experiences and past methods. Instead, keep this handy while you move through the process of electing new officers for suggestions and best practices. While the manual contains a full timeline, start to finish, for how to conduct elections, we know you may already have a smooth, refined process. In that case, use the Officer Election Manual to make small tweaks to your elections for an even better product. Within this document, you will find:

- 03** Planning for Election Day
- 07** Executing your Election Meeting
- 10** Next Steps with your New Officers

If you are a current officer, interested in running for office, or a general member looking to ensure elections are run fairly and efficiently, the Officer Election Manual will provide the details to ensure officers are being chosen in the most effective manner possible.



## Planning for Election Day

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Elections should not simply be tossed together at the last minute. In order to get the most of this process, steps should be taken months out to begin preparing.

While every group has its own preference as to when elections take place, we suggest a late-November or early-December date for calendar-year based officer terms and a mid to late-April or early-May date for school-year based officer terms. This allows new officers to spend time with outgoing officers before school lets out for the holidays or summer while not placing candidates in a time crunch with finals and vacation plans.

Your officer election plans should look similar to the below timeline.

### Four Months Out

This should be roughly the start of the semester. At this time, you should:

- Agree upon a date for elections and nominations at an officer meeting.
- Share said dates with the rest of the membership.
- Encourage members to begin thinking about the positions for which they plan to run and how they can best prepare themselves for these roles.

### Three Months Out

This should be roughly the beginning of education for your new member class. At this time, you should:

- Explain the election and nomination process to new members.
- Explain to new members that they are able to both run for office and vote in officer elections.
- Encourage new members to learn as much as they can about the different offices and connect them with any officers in positions for which they are interested in running.
- Remind your members of election and nomination dates at a chapter/colony meeting.

## Planning for Election Day (cont.)

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### One Month Out

Two major events should take place roughly one month away from officer elections: nominations and the appointment of an election chairman.

### Nominations

These should take place during the course of normal business at a chapter/colony meeting and proceed as follows:

- Prytanis (or presiding officer) requests nominations for the office of Prytanis.
- Any member can nominate any other member, provided it is not himself he is nominating.
- The nominated member should respond with either 'I accept the nomination for the office of Prytanis' or 'I respectfully decline the nomination for the office of Prytanis'.
- Process continues until all nominations have been submitted for the office of Prytanis.
- Grammateus maintains accurate record-keeping for each nomination and its acceptance or lack thereof.
- Presiding officer repeats the process for the other seven offices, in the order of Epiptytanis, Grammateus, Crysophylos, Histor, Hypophetes, Pylortes, Hegemon.

### Election Chairman

The appointment of the Election Chairman (EC) should take place at an officers' meeting, either through a formal vote or acclamation among officers. A member must obtain a majority vote among officers to serve as EC, with the Prytanis vote serving as the tiebreaker.

The EC is a member of the chapter who will oversee all proceedings during officer elections. The EC should:

- Be unbiased, and without reason to be suspected he is in favor of any candidate over any other candidate.
- Not speak his opinion during election discussions, but rather mediate the conversations among the group.
- Under no circumstances be running for any office during elections.
- Be willing to potentially not cast a vote.
  - » The vote of the EC should not be cast in the case of an odd number of total members voting for a given elections.
  - » The vote of the EC should not be cast and instead used as a tiebreaker in the case of an even number of total members voting for a given election.

## Planning for Election Day (cont.)

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### Election Chairman (cont.)

*For example, if 50 total members are present for elections, including the EC, and three are running for Prytanis, the EC should not cast an initial vote, as there are 46 voting members for that position. Should the field be trimmed to two candidates after the first round of votes and the second vote result in a 23-23 tie, the EC should, confidentially, submit his vote in writing as the tiebreaker.*

*If only two candidates are running next for Epiprytanis, the EC should not have to cast a vote, as there will be 47 voting members for that position, eliminating the possibility for a tie vote.*

- The first recommendation for the EC is the outgoing Prytanis, provided he is not running for office.
- The second recommendation is an outgoing senior who can be trusted to run a prompt, fair election process. This could potentially be another outgoing officer.
- If no such person fulfills the first two recommendations, officers should agree upon another upperclassman who fits the EC criteria.

### EC should select two or three election assistants prior to election day.

- Assistants preferably should include a representation of each grade level.
- Under no circumstances should an election assistant be running for any office during elections.
- Election assistants are able to cast votes with the rest of the chapter/colony and submit questions during the election but should not share their preference or opinions during discussion time in order to stay fair and unbiased.



# Executing Elections

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## Requirements for elections, day-of:

- Enough time blocked to complete all eight officer elections. Suggested 4-5 hour timeframe for planning purposes, although 2-3 hours is realistic with the proper preparation and strict oversight.
- At least two-thirds of the current active membership (including candidates for membership) of the group must be present to vote throughout the entire process.
  - » If you begin with two-thirds but departures drop you below the mark, elections should be suspended until two-thirds quorum can be reached.
  - » Two-thirds should be present *for each vote*. If 44 of your 66 members attend elections but only 40 are able to vote for a position due to the EC and candidates for office not voting, elections should be suspended until two-third quorum can be reached.

## Order of Officer Position Elections should be as follows:

1. Prytanis
2. Epiprytanis
3. Grammateus
4. Crysophylos
5. Histor
6. Hypophetes
7. Pylortes
8. Hegemon

## A typical contest for any given office should proceed as follows:

1. All candidates for the office being contested are stationed outside of the election room and brought in one-at-a-time for their opportunity to address the voting membership.
  - The order in which the candidates speak should be determined ahead of time. We suggest alphabetically, by last name.
2. Candidates each receive a pre-determined allotment of time to deliver opening remarks.
  - We suggest two to three minutes for each of the final seven offices and three to five minutes for the Prytanis remarks.
  - The Election Chairman (EC) is responsible for providing a HARD stop time to all candidates.
  - Candidates may request warnings (One minute, 30 seconds, etc.)
3. Following opening remarks, the candidate will have a set time limit (3-5 minutes) to answer questions from the voting membership, under direction of the EC.
  - Questions should be fair and direct.
  - The EC reserves the right to eliminate a question from consideration if it is inappropriate or he feels it has been addressed.

## Executing Elections (cont.)

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- Candidates can spill over the allotted time limit to answer the final question, provided it is asked before time has expired.
4. Once all candidates have been given an opportunity for remarks, Q&A and has left the room, the EC will oversee five to seven minutes of discussion, using the pro/con format as a guideline.
    - Members can cite up to three pros and three cons about each candidate.
    - Points should be clear, concise, and unemotional, relating directly to how the candidate will function in the office at stake.
    - EC reserves the right to disregard any point if it is not a true pro or con or to stop discussion if a point has already been made or is unrelated to the contested office.
    - EC will keep a running list of pros/cons on each candidate and review the list aloud once time has expired.
  5. Closed-ballot vote takes place.
    - These can be done on scraps of paper distributed and collected by the EC and election assistants.
  6. Ballots are tallied privately by the EC and election assistants.
    - See **page two** for an explanation of the EC's voting role.
    - EC should take a count of total voters prior to ballot distribution for each office to both know what number constitutes a majority and to understand his role in the vote.
  7. Election chair determines if a winner is named or if another closed-ballot vote must take place.
    - If a single candidate receives the vote of *more than 50%* of present voting members, he shall be declared the winner.
    - If no single candidate receives the vote of more than 50% of present voting members, the candidate receiving the lowest total of votes is removed from consideration, and another closed-ballot vote takes place.
      - If a two-way tie exists for last place, the EC should privately cast his own closed-ballot vote for one of the two candidates, determining which is dropped, and a re-vote takes place.
      - In the event of a tie among three or more members at any time, members should be informed of the tie by the EC. Ballots should be re-distributed, this time with all members voting for their top-two choices. Once votes are submitted, a re-vote will take place for the two candidates whose names appear most often.
    - This process of elimination and re-voting continues until one candidate receives a majority of the vote.
  8. All candidates are called back into the room, and the EC verbally declares the winner.
  9. This process repeats until all eight officer positions have been filled.

*Losers of previous elections are permitted to enter no more than two other contests for which they were not previously nominated.*

- This prevents the trickle-down effect of one individual running for eight offices as he continually loses out on open positions.

## Election Reference Page

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**This page quickly outlines election procedures. The EC is encouraged to keep this page with him throughout elections as a quick reference if needed.**

- Two-thirds of membership required to vote on a given office.
- All timing regulations should be pre-determined and communicated with everyone present, before the elections begin.
- Order of elections is Pry, Epi, Gram, Cry, His, Hyp, Pyl, Heg
- All candidates for a given office should depart the room before that election begins.
- One-by-one, candidates enter the room for remarks (2-3 min.) and Q&A from the voting membership (3-5 min.)
- Once all candidates have spoken, EC leads discussion (5-7 min.), tracking pros/cons for each candidate. No more than three pros/cons should be included per candidate.
- Closed-vote ballot takes place.
- Majority of voting members present is needed to win. If no majority exists, the lowest vote-getter is dropped and another closed-vote ballot is administered.
- Candidates return to the room and EC announces the winner.





## Next Steps with your New Officers

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It is vitally important that your new officers begin to connect immediately to ensure a successful, cohesive term.

Following the officer election meeting, the newly elected officer group should stay behind with the current officers to discuss the following:

- New officers' involvement in upcoming meetings
  - It is highly encouraged to include the new officers as a part of both officer and chapter/colony meetings. If not already serving as an officer, the new officers should be paired with the outgoing officer as he prepares and delivers his reports at all meetings until the end of the semester.
- Officer roles and responsibilities
  - Detailed explanations of officer roles can be found in the TKE Officer Transition Resource Guide. New officers should print these out and begin studying their new position.
- Officer transition retreat
  - An outline of a successful transition retreat can be found in the TKE Officer Transition Resource Guide. Dates should quickly be considered and proposed for the retreat among both incoming and outgoing officers, and the incoming and outgoing Prytani should collaborate in the coming days to select the best possible time for the meeting.

***This may be a difficult time for some, as inevitably, some members will have been voted out of office or not selected for the office they desired. However, for the good of the chapter/colony and its success moving forward, grudges and hard feelings should be put aside for the near future, as a successful officer transition process is vitally important for your group's success.***



# TAU KAPPA EPSILON

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