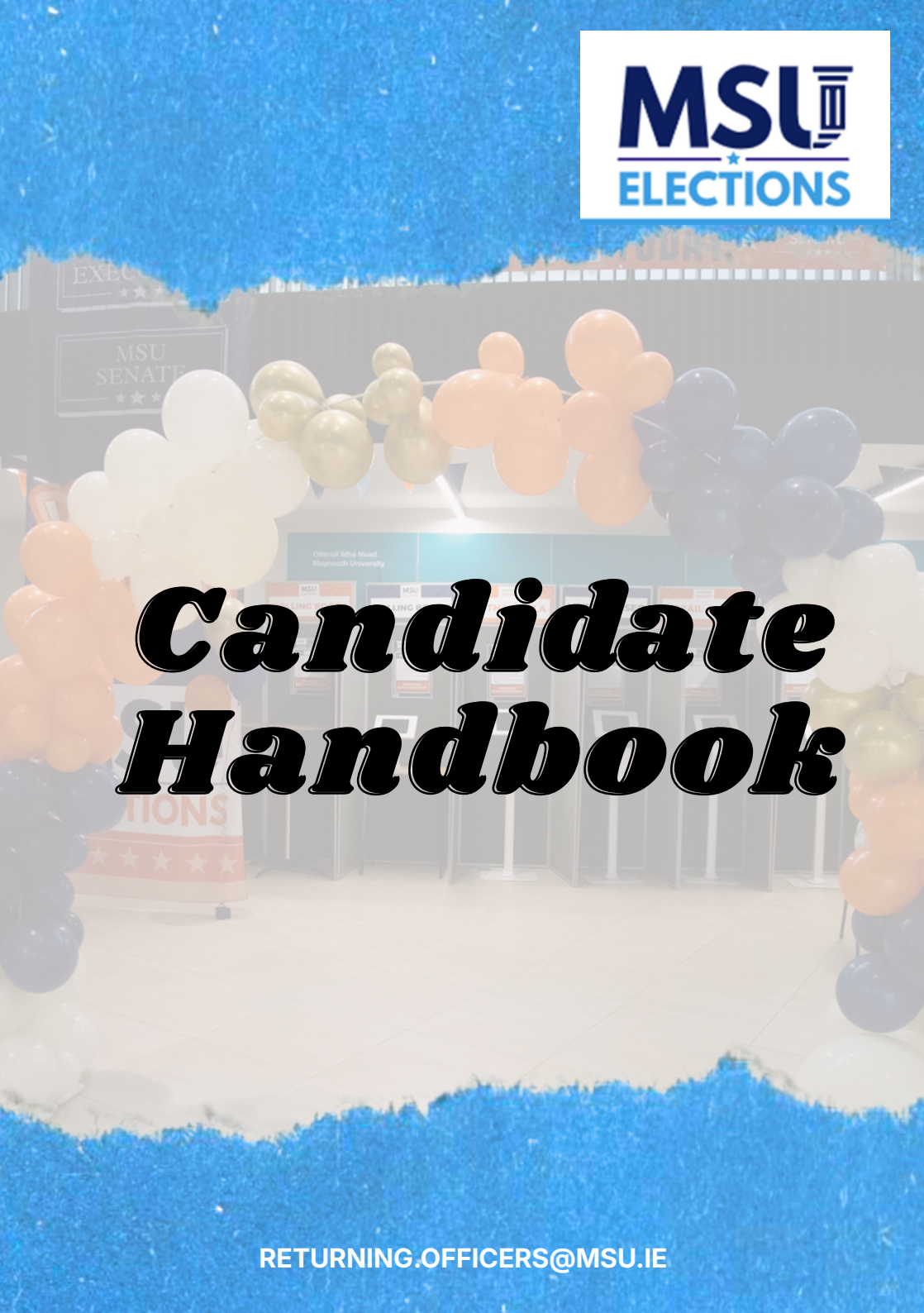


The background of the cover is a photograph of an election booth at Maynooth University. The booth is decorated with large clusters of white, gold, orange, and blue balloons. In the background, there are signs for 'EXECUTIVE', 'MSU SENATE', and 'MSU ELECTIONS'. A sign for 'Clinical Risk Ward Maynooth University' is also visible. The title 'Candidate Handbook' is overlaid in the center in a large, bold, black, italicized serif font.

Candidate Handbook



AML MN-MSU ELECTORAL COMMISSION

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

Executive & Student Senate Elections



1.ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

If you are considering standing for election or supporting someone in their candidacy for the AMLMN-MSU Executive or AMLMN-MSU Student Senate, it is essential to understand the constitutional requirements, as well as the roles and responsibilities outlined in the AMLMN-MSU Constitution.

Candidates and their supporters play a crucial role in ensuring that every vote cast in an election count.

A. The Candidate Handbook

Before nominating yourself for a position, **you must read this handbook in full.**

This handbook provides detailed information about the election process, the roles available, and the regulations that candidates must follow.

AMLMN-MSU assumes that all nominated candidates have read and understood its contents.

Lack of awareness of the information contained in this handbook will not be accepted as an excuse for failing to comply with regulations or missing deadlines

HOW THIS HANDBOOK CAN HELP YOU

This handbook outlines the steps required to qualify as a candidate and comply with the AMLMN-MSU Constitution before, during, and after the election process.

While this document is intended to support candidates, it does not replace the AMLMN-MSU Constitution, which remains the ultimate authority on electoral matters.

MSU.IE/ELECTIONS WEBSITE

Election-related information may change over time. Therefore, the most up-to-date details, along with all necessary forms and publications referenced in this handbook, can be found at www.msu.ie/elections or by contacting the Returning Officer at returning.officers@msu.ie.

FEEDBACK WELCOME

The AMLMN-MSU Electoral Commission welcomes feedback on the Candidate Handbook. If you have any suggestions for improvement, please email Electoral.Commission@msu.ie.

FCONTACT DETAILS

For any queries regarding the election process, contact the Returning Officers at returning.officers@msu.ie.

2. ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION

The AMLMN-MSU Constitution establishes the Electoral Commission and the Returning Officer Team, which together oversee the management and implementation of MSU Executive and MSU Student Senate elections, as well as referendums.

Election procedures are determined by the Returning Officers, subject to appeal to the Election Appeals Committee of the Board of Trustees. Articles 23, 24, and 25 of the MSU Constitution contain mandatory provisions governing elections.

A. The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is responsible for regulating elections and issuing electoral regulations.

The Electoral Commission consists of at least five and no more than nine members, appointed by the Executive on the recommendation of the President and noted by the Student Senate. The Commission meets as necessary, with a minimum of two meeting per semester.

The Commission has sole authority to establish regulations governing the conduct of candidates and campaigners in elections and referendums. These regulations include requirements that candidates and campaigners must comply with University regulations and the law.

Under the AMLMN-MSU Constitution, the Electoral Commission may also:

- Require all election and referendum expenditures to be administered through the Returning Officers where a spending limit applies.
- Permit candidates to determine the content of their electoral materials, provided they comply with election rules and the law, as determined by the Returning Officers.
- Take appropriate action in response to breaches of electoral regulations. If a material breach occurs, the Returning Officers may impose penalties, including disqualification from the election.
- Authorise a refund of a portion of election expenses to candidates who meet a minimum requirements.

B. The Returning Officer Team

The Returning Officer Team is responsible for implementing and enforcing the Electoral Commission's regulations. They oversee and supervise all AMLMN-MSU Executive and AMLMN-MSU Student Senate elections and referendums to ensure a fair and transparent process.

AGENTS OF THE RETURNING OFFICER TEAM

To ensure the smooth and efficient administration of AMLMN-MSU elections, the Returning Officer may appoint agents to assist in executing their duties. These agents, comprising key AMLMN-MSU staff members, play a vital role in facilitating the electoral process and providing essential support to candidates.

- The following AMLMN-MSU staff members support the Returning Officer Team:

Name	Role
Ann Marie Cudden (Front Office Manager)	• Receives and processes nomination forms • Facilitates candidates' printing allowance • Responds to election-related queries
Nathan Murphy (Representation Administrator Democracy)	• Serves as the intermediary between candidates and the Returning Officer • Oversees electoral administration and logistics • Manages election-related correspondence (emails) • Responds to election-related queries • Receives and processes nomination forms

3. NOMINATION PERIOD

A. Notice of Election

The Notice of Election sets out the:

- positions up for election
- method of nomination
- nomination period
- minimum proposer requirements
- latest time for receiving nominations
- time at which the full list of nominations received will be published
- polling date and times

B. Nomination

Any ordinary member of the Union seeking nomination as a candidate must complete the official nomination form, as issued by the Returning Officers. The form must include the candidate's name, student number, and any additional information required by the Returning Officers.

NOMINATION PERIOD

- During the nomination period no candidate is permitted to canvass for their election. They are solely allowed to collect signatures for their candidacy.

WHO CAN NOMINATE AS A CANDIDATE?

All ordinary members of the Union are eligible to run for and hold office, subject to the AMLMN-MSU Constitution and electoral regulations. A candidate's nomination is only valid if:

- They have been nominated in accordance with the MSU Constitution
- Their nomination form has been reviewed and approved by the Returning Officer or one of their designated agents.

C. Nomination Forms

OBTAINING A NOMINATION FORM

Persons seeking nomination must first complete a Nomination Form.

Nomination Forms may be obtained:

- The Info Centre, Maynooth Students' Union, The Student Centre, Maynooth University, during office hours.
- Online at www.MSU.ie/elections

Completed nomination forms must be submitted to the Returning Officer or their designated agent within the nomination period.

DEFECTIVE NOMINATION FORMS

Upon submission, election officials will review each nomination form for completeness and accuracy. This includes verifying that:

- The candidate is listed on the Electoral Register.
- The candidate's name and student number match those in the Electoral Register.
- The candidate has secured the required number of proposers.
- The form was submitted before the nomination deadline.
- All other necessary fields are completed.

If a form is found to be defective, the candidate will be notified. It is the candidate's responsibility to rectify any errors and resubmit the form before 1 PM on the final day of nominations.

Candidates are encouraged to submit nominations early to allow time for corrections if necessary. Any form that remains non-compliant by the deadline will be rejected.

The Returning Officers have the authority to reject any nomination that does not comply with the AMLMN-MSU Constitution.

D. Disqualification to stand under the AMLMN-MSU Constitution

Any individual who has been impeached is prohibited from running for election within the Union for a period of three years from the date of impeachment. This restriction overrides all electoral mandates.

E. Candidate Briefing

A candidate briefing session will be organised to provide an overview of the election process, outline key election rules, and explain the next steps.

F. Publication of Nomination Forms

Nomination forms are not available for public inspection. However, the following documents will be published by 5 PM on the day following the close of nominations:

- A full list of nominations received (Statement of Nominations Received)
- A full list of candidates contesting the election (Statement of Candidates)

These statements will include:

- Each candidate's name as they will appear on the ballot paper
- The position each candidate is contesting

G. Nomination Penalties

Disciplinary action, including potential penalties, may be imposed for the following offenses:

- Submitting a forged nomination form to the Returning Officer or their agent.
- Nominating another individual without their consent.
- Withdrawing a candidate's nomination without their consent.
- Making a false declaration regarding a candidate's eligibility for election.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that all nomination procedures are followed accurately and honestly

4. CAMPAIGN PERIOD

A. Hustings

All hustings or public debates organised by the Union with or between candidates or interested parties in an election are an opportunity for candidates to present their manifestos to the student body and answer any questions students might have. This is a chance for the student body to get to know you better as a person and what you stand for.

Only positions on the AMLMN-MSU Executive have hustings.

Candidates will have the opportunity to make an opening statement, answer questions, and make closing remarks.

The opening and closing remarks are a time to introduce yourself, summarise your manifesto, and explain why you're a good candidate for the position.

Candidates can then answer questions from students which will have been submitted in advance of the hustings. All candidates will be asked to answer each question. These questions will not be given ahead of time.

Please make sure that you, and anyone in your campaigns team, remains respectful during these hustings. Please give everyone the ability to talk and get their points across.

B. Campaigning & Publicity

Your campaign is the most important part of the entire election process. It will ultimately decide the success or failure of your attempt to be elected. Your campaign **MUST** in the interest of fairness for all concerned follow strict guidelines and procedures.

Most candidates gather a team of friends and supporters to help with their campaign. A campaign team can be invaluable to spread your policies throughout the college. When picking your team however, you should take care that they are people you trust to carry out your campaign, as you would want. You should try not to take your campaign to extremes. Posters including offensive or vulgar material, as well as campaigning in a "hassling" way is more likely to harm than help your campaign.

Reports of inappropriate conduct through a campaign will be looked upon very harshly and may carry penalties including fines or disqualification.

Campaign **MUST NOT** begin until the close of nominations, through any guise i.e. Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok etc.

Almost everything on campus is advertised using posters – make yours stand out – use coloured paper or novel designs.

Try to include a picture of yourself on your election material – think about all the election material you've seen for the national elections.

Talk with students and find out what they want an officer in your position to do – give the people what they want!

Please show respect for fellow candidates in all manners of your campaign.

LECTURE ADDRESSES

If you wish to address a lecture you should always seek the permission of the lecturer first and keep your speech to the point (less than 1 minute). You should not take questions, but instead point out where you will be available to talk at a later point should they wish. Disrupting lecturers or other academic activities is a serious offence and should potentially result in the University authorities becoming involved. Care must be taken that campaigning inside or outside the lecture theatre does not create a distraction for those engaged in academic activities.

POSTERS & BANNERS

Care should be taken to ensure that any images or content will not cause undue offence to the University population, or to a specific grouping within the University. Attention is hereby drawn to the national legislation in the area, including inter alia the Equal Status Act (2000), the Employment Equality Act (1998) and the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act (1989).

It is the policy of the University to protect freedom of expression and intellectual enquiry and to ensure that they are exercised in such a way as they do not interfere with the rights of others or breach the laws of the state

POSTERS:

- The name of the sponsoring candidate must be clearly displayed on any poster.
- Posters may only be displayed on designated notice boards throughout the buildings.
- Posters must not be hung on walls, on doors, on glass, in lecture theatres or from ceilings.
- Posters may not be attached to lampposts or the external fabric of the buildings
- Blanket coverage of noticeboards by posters for any candidate will not be allowed.
- The use of stickers or adhesive material is strictly prohibited.
- The use of freestanding panels or stands for advertising events and the location of these in designated areas must be sanctioned in writing in each instance by Campus Services.
- It is the responsibility of the sponsoring candidate to remove their posters after the close of the polls.
- You may not include the AMLMN-MSU logo, Election logo or any logo associated with Maynooth Students' Union
- Promotional flyers must be handed directly to recipients; flyers may not be left on desks or seats as a means of distribution.

LITTER

All campaigning must finish by the close of polls on Tuesday, 13 October 2026. After this point any leaflets, banners, or manifestos will be considered litter. During the campaign period any leaflets and manifestos left in lecture theatres and public areas, such as the common room, can be considered litter. Areas which have been canvassed by campaign teams should be regularly swept by members of that campaign team to ensure litter does not build up.

For example, areas housed not be blanketed with material in the evenings / night for the next morning / day. Campaigns found to be littering will incur the same fines as those explained in the Poster section of this Handbook

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is changing the way we work, offering an on-demand model to interact with the student population. We believe this kind of interaction can help you to engage meaningfully with our membership. And it's a way for you to take instigate conversations related to the work we are doing at AMLMN-MSU and the things we care about.

Users must always use social media sites in a responsible manner, having due regard to the rights and reputation of AMLMN-MSU, Maynooth University and of others. Users are required to comply with the following rules:

- Do not post material that could reasonably be deemed threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, or defamatory towards any individual or entity.
- Do not post information which is confidential and/or proprietary to AMLMN-MSU or Maynooth University. Users should not post confidential or proprietary information about Maynooth University, its students, employees, or alumni. Care should be taken to use good ethical judgment and to ensure that all AMLMN-MSU and University privacy and confidentiality policies are adhered to.
- Do not use pseudonyms or seek to impersonate any other person.
- Do not promote or advertise a commercial product or solicit business or membership or financial or other support in any business, group, or organisation except those which are officially approved by AMLMN-MSU or the University
- Do not respond to, repost, or comment upon material that could reasonably be deemed threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, or defamatory towards any individual or entity. Remove this material where possible and report where necessary

Failure to abide by the above may lead to sanctions being imposed by the Returning Officer. By practicing the following '3 Rules of Engagement' you will be ensuring that your social media engagements are considered and of value to you.

Rule One: Represent

- Remember, if you're online, you're on the record—everything on the Internet is public and searchable. And what you write is ultimately your responsibility. Never forget that you were elected by the students that you represent. Represent them faithfully.
- Be Transparent: What you say on social media directly reflects on AMLMN-MSU as an organisation.
- Add Value: Make sure your posts really add to the conversation. In general; you don't post because you want to say something, you post because you have something to say.

Rule Two: Respect.

- Your honesty—or dishonesty—will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. Please represent students ethically and with integrity. Respect is earned.
- Play Nice: Be responsible; no trolling, troll baiting or flaming anybody.
- Think Before you Post: There's really no such thing as 'delete' on the Internet, so please- think before you post. If in doubt, get a second pair of eyes to look over what you plan to post.
- Respect your Audience: AMLMN-MSU's membership encompasses people from many backgrounds and ethnicities. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity or engage in, or promote, any conduct that would not be acceptable in AMLMN-MSU's community.

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Rule Three: Reflect.

- Social media works best when there are real people, with genuine intentions and quality content, behind every profile, tweet, and tag.
- Be Accurate: Any messages that act as the 'voice' of AMLMN-MSU must be accurate. If you are responding to someone about a political issue, check in with the President. If it's a casework or business-related issue, then check in with the relevant elected officer or staff member.
- Do Not Feed the Trolls: Fight the urge to immediately respond to an offensive or negative post. There's no winner in that game. Instead, invite the poster to email you directly or contact AMLMN-MSU to set-up a meeting.
- If you mess up? If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If it's a real doozy, please contact returning.officers@msu.ie as soon as possible so we can help support.

C. Student Union Neutrality

AMLMN-MSU remains completely impartial during elections. Any attempt to alter to breach this stance will result in action being taken by the Returning Officer.

During your campaign, you may not use any AMLMN-MSU facilities that are available to you by virtue of your position within the Union.

You also may not approach current members of the Board of Trustees or Chief Returning Officer for help with your campaign. These people must maintain impartiality and any attempt to change that is a serious offence, punishable by up to disqualification as a candidate.

5. BREACHES OF ELECTORAL REGULATIONS

The provisions governing elections are outlined in the AMLMN-MSU Constitution and the regulations contained in this Handbook. A copy of the AMLMN-MSU Constitution is available on the AMLMN-MSU website.

These rules are supplemented by this handbook

Incident	Action
1st Breach	Verbal Warning from Returning Officer
2nd Breach	Written Warning from Returning Officer
3rd Breach	Final Written Warning from Returning Officer

After the final written warning has been issued the matter will be forwarded to the Election Appeals Committee for a ruling.

At the discretion of the Returning Officer, the Returning Officer may decide that the nature of the infraction warrants that the warning given skip verbal and go straight to written.

During any election, candidates must not breach University regulations or the law.

6. BALLOT PAPER

A. Ballot Paper Format

In all elections to the Executive there shall be an option with the statement "Re-open Nominations". For counting votes, the "Re-open Nominations" option shall be treated as a candidate. If the "Re-open Nominations" candidate is elected, the Returning Officers shall declare the position unfilled and hold a bye-election and the procedures set out in the AMLMN-MSU Constitution shall be followed.

Ballot papers will show candidates' own names, with surname and the first name. (Eg Mr John Smith would appear on the ballot as Smith, John). A photograph of the candidate's face will also appear opposite their name. Instructions to voters will also be shown on the ballot paper.

B. Candidates' Names on Ballot Papers

A candidate's surname and one given name will appear on the ballot paper. The surname will appear as it is on the electoral register.

The given name can be:

- any one of the candidate's given names (as registered)
- a commonly accepted variation of the name (including an abbreviation or truncation of that name or an alternative form of that name, for example, Tom for Thomas, Jack for John, Peggy for Margaret)
- a commonly used other name specific to the candidate by which the candidate is usually identified. In this case the Returning Officer must be satisfied that the candidate is usually identified by the proposed name
- an initial standing for any of the candidate's registered given names can also be used.

No titles, for example Dr, are permitted.

7. OBSERVATIONS

Democratic election processes include systems for the resolution of Observations.

WHO CAN MAKE AN ELECTION OBSERVATION?

Any ordinary member of the Union who believes that there was an irregularity of any kind regarding the conduct of an election can submit an observation in writing by emailing returning.officers@msu.ie.

An observation made to the Returning Officers must contain:

- all the details relevant to the complaint
- the contact information of one person willing to speak in support of the complaint
- any evidence if available

This observation must be lodged within a three-day period from the declaration of the results of the election.

On receipt of a complaint, the Returning Officers shall deal with the complaint and will respond with a ruling within 3 working days.

A decision on a complaint by the deputy returning officer may be appealed to the Chief Returning Officer. The ruling of the Chief Returning Officer may be further appealed to the Board of Trustees, whose decision shall be final.

8. REIMBURSEMENT OF ELECTION EXPENSES

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF ELECTION EXPENSES?

To be eligible for any reimbursement, a candidate must put in genuine effort into their election and they provide actual election expenses vouched with receipts.

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF THE REIMBURSEMENT?

The reimbursable election expenses cannot exceed the limit on election expenses set by the Electoral Commission. Moreover, the reimbursement cannot exceed the amount of the debts arising from the candidate's election expenses.

The election expense limits are as follows:

Representative Body	Type	One Candidate	>One Candidate
Executive	Full-Time	€75	€150
Executive	Part-Time	€40	€75
Student Senate	Part-Time	€15	€30

HOW IS THE REIMBURSEMENT MADE?

To claim your reimbursement, you must complete and submit the Reimbursement of Election Expenses Form along with receipts for valid election expenses. The Reimbursement of Election Expenses Form and receipts can be emailed to returning.officers@msu.ie.

The reimbursement of election expenses is made by electronic funds transfer to a bank account nominated by the official representative

9. CHANGES TO THIS HANDBOOK

Due to the nature of elections, the Returning Officers may need to make changes to the Candidates Handbook from time to time. You will be informed of any changes.

Scan for
Updates



10. DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING

Each candidate must sign this declaration of understanding in the presence of the Returning Officer (or their agent).

By signing this declaration, you are acknowledging all the information contained within. You as the candidate are fully aware of the rules and regulations set forth and understand the penalties for any breach you or your campaign team might incur.

DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING

I _____ (Candidate) acknowledge and understand the regulations of the election procedure set forth in this handbook. I understand the obligations that I must adhere to and I am fully aware of the penalties involved in such breaches of policy or rules that I individually or my campaign team might incur

SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF CANDIDATE

[Signature]

[Print Name]

[Date]

SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF RETURNING OFFICERS:

[Signature]

MSU ELECTIONS



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