

The Graduate Students' Association Election Welfare Draft

You've decided to get involved in Graduate Students' Association Elections, Congratulations!

The experience of being part of an election campaign will be very fun and exhilarating but it can also be quite demanding and tiring. Remembering to look after your own wellbeing is equally important as running for election and keeping healthy will make you a more resilient candidate.

Here are some useful tips to keep you and your team going strong throughout the election period.

Don't take things personally

Not every student will want to talk to you, and some may be disinterested or even impolite. Try not to be disheartened by this as many students will want to know what you have to say and why they should vote for you.

Remember to be respectful to others and that your campaign team are your responsibility.

However, if you feel that there is a breach of the Leadership Election Rules and Regulations 2022 you should follow the complaints procedure.

Plan your time

Make a campaign time plan that includes other commitments such as studies and work to ensure you organise and prioritise effectively. Ask for help from friends and your campaign team when you have other obligations.

When planning campaign tasks, ask yourself:

- How does this impact on my campaign, or relate to goals and objectives?
- Who is impacted by this task?
- What will happen if I don't do this?
- Can someone else in my team do this task? What do they need in order to do this?

It might also be an idea to cook some meals in advance to make sure you have a lunch break while campaigning or so that you don't have to cook a meal after a hard day. Takeaways are expensive!

Don't forget to make time to check in with your mentor.

Be realistic

There is no other way to say it...winning an election is going to be challenging and although it is exciting, try not to get overly sucked into the campaign hype and end up setting expectations you can't achieve (speaking to every possible voter is an admirable challenge, but it's not realistic).

Being aware of your own limits is crucial in keeping perspective so try not to burn yourself out by over doing it and attempting to do everything. Build a campaign team to help you. Everybody is different and you should choose a style of campaigning that works for you. Knowing what your strengths are, and your boundaries will make you a great campaigner.

Eat, Sleep, Campaign, ~~Repeat?~~

Being tired and lack of sleep can influence your perspective and can make you irritable, and no one wants a snappy candidate. Make sure you stay well rested and take time out when things are getting a stressful.

You might feel that taking time away from campaigning may have a negative impact on your votes, but not winding down and switching off can be more detrimental to your physical and mental wellbeing.

Healthy campaign/self-balance plan:

- When you go home, wind down and get a good night's sleep
- Exercise is a great way to realise adrenaline and shift your mood
- Spend time with friends doing non election stuff
- Keep a diary of what happened that day, positives and negatives, no matter how large or small
- Talk about your experience. If you don't want to talk to your friends and campaign team remember that you have mentor who is there to listen
- Make sure you take breaks, eat and stay hydrated whilst campaigning
- Don't forget about your degree

When it is all over

Whether you win the election or not, you have worked hard and been fantastic. Now you need to take some down time to process everything. Speak to your friends and mentor, that's what they are there for.

If you're not successful, you have a degree that you have been working really hard for to complete. This is just the start of things to come.