

Running for

USG

Campaign Guide

2020-2021



MEET USG

This guide contains information from past members of USG that have run in various Student Government elections. It contains tips and tricks for creating a successful team, an effective platform, and an exciting campaign. It's not meant to be comprehensive, as the election process is ever changing, and you may find new and innovative ways to run a successful campaign. If you're hesitant about running or are looking for guidance, this guide is a helpful first step. Beyond this, you may want to reach out to students who have run before and ask for guidance. Even if you don't already know them personally, they may be a helpful source of information and support. Remember, the most important component of a good campaign is your outreach to students to hear their voices and experiences and your actions to make change for them on campus.

CAMPAIGN BUDGET

The money you spend on your campaign is not provided by USG or the University. You will have to come up with whatever funds you need on your own or as a ticket. You may collect donations from friends and family, but make sure any fundraising you do is not public before the campaign period. You will be allowed to spend a certain amount of money based on what type of ticket you have and how many people are on your ticket.

With a limited budget, it is important to be smart with where you spend your money. Based on successful campaigns in years past, here are some smart ways to spend your budget:

- ✔ Customized buttons or laptop stickers with your ticket's logo or name
- ✔ Boosting your Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram posts so they reach more students' timelines
- ✔ Sidewalk chalk to draw your logo and write information about how to vote in approved areas on campus

CAMPAIGN BUDGET

Inefficient or unsustainable ways to spend your budget:

- ✓ T-shirts. The cost adds up quickly and cannot be distributed as easily as buttons and stickers
- ✓ Materials to just throw wherever you can – being intentional and strategic with what you buy/hand out will help you reduce your environmental footprint and save you money
- ✓ It may be better to spend a few hundred dollars on hiring a student photographer, videographer, and/or graphic designer rather than on t-shirts people will only wear for two weeks

TIMELINE (2021)

Wednesday Feb 10 - 1st candidate interest meeting (virtual)

Tuesday Feb 16 - 2nd candidate interest meeting (virtual)

Thursday Feb 25 - 3rd candidate interest meeting (virtual)

Sunday Mar 7 - Petitions due

Wednesday March 10 - 1st approved candidate meeting (virtual)

Thursday March 11 - 2nd approved candidate meeting (virtual)

Friday March 13 - Campaign plans due 1 week after approved candidate meeting

Sunday March 21 - Facebook kickoff events posted 1 week prior to the commencement of campaigning

Sunday March 28 - Campaigning starts at 8pm, and the vice-presidential and presidential debates take place during the 1st week of campaigning

Monday April 5 - Voting starts

Thursday April 9 - Campaigning and voting end

Sunday April 11 - Election results announced after completion of complaint processes, financial report verification, and vote certification

FORMING A TICKET

It's a good idea to start forming your ticket during the fall semester. You can always add folks you see at candidate interest meetings, but sometimes those meetings are too late if you want to have a large, representative ticket.

When you're forming a team of people to campaign with, ask around to find students that are passionate about the University of Iowa and making campus better for students. The most effective teams are diverse in majors, involvements, identities, and experiences. Some of the best USG members are those who didn't even know what USG was until someone asked them to be on a ticket!

Remember that under no circumstances should you ask someone to be on your ticket just because you think their identity or affiliations would help you win – that's tokenization.

CREATING A PLATFORM

A platform is a list of ideas you have for student government to make change on campus throughout the next year.

To create one, think of why you're running and what you want to accomplish. Ask other students and your team what they want to see changed on campus and incorporate their ideas into your platform. There are incredible student leaders across campus that have great ideas, so you can reach out to them by asking "What do you think USG should be doing better to represent or advocate for you?" You can also find ideas by looking at past or unfinished USG initiatives. Post your platform on your social media outlets, talk about it at events & meetings, and discuss it at debates and forums. Your platform is the "why" of your campaign and should be the best place for voters to learn about what you would do in office.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

You have the option of hosting virtual events throughout the campaign period to get students to learn about your campaign and have a little fun.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 USG election cycle will be held virtually with in-person campaign events being highly discouraged. If a campaign intends to host an in-person event, on or off-campus, it must be pre-approved by the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) and planned in accordance to university COVID-19 guidelines.

Submit an in-person event for approval [here](#).

The best way to advertise for events is by posting about them on social media and creating a Facebook event for students to share. Remember that all university sponsored events that invite public participation are required to be accessible. Be inclusive of individuals with disabilities in scheduling virtual events. Finally, do not culturally appropriate by hosting events that steal from a culture you or your team are not a part of to gain votes.

We recognize that it may be difficult to connect with students during our virtual environment, so here are a few event ideas to help your campaign engage safely:

- ✔ **Kickoff party** Kickoff parties occur the first night of the campaign and typically take place at a local restaurant with live music, free food, and candidate speeches. The events generally begin in the evening a few hours before the announcement at 8 pm. Once 8 pm hits, you can announce your candidacy and post on social media. Amid COVID-19, it is still possible to reflect this event in a virtual format. Candidates could host public Zoom gatherings with videos, student musical performances, and speeches to help kickoff the campaign.
- ✔ **Other virtual events** You can turn a Zoom meeting into fun event by including elements like music, games, and other engaging activities. Hosting events throughout the campaign period is a great way to draw in potential voters, listen to their concerns, and talk about your platform. Be creative!

DEBATES AND FORUMS

There is one Presidential Debate, one Vice-Presidential Debate, and one Forum for Independent Senators during the election period.

These events are a chance for you to display to voters that you are the best candidate for the position. Members of the Student Judicial Court will ask you questions, and you'll have a certain amount of time to respond.

To prepare, you can review past USG initiatives, recent campus issues, and recent issues in the state legislature. Be confident in and knowledgeable about your platform and why you're running.

We believe there will also be an event for voters to "meet and greet" senatorial candidates during the campaign period.

Are you interested in running for student government?

Attend a candidate interest meeting to learn more! (You must attend a meeting to run.)

Wednesday, February 10th @ 6pm

Tuesday, February 16th @ 6pm

Thursday, February 25th @ 6pm

ID: 992 4017 0510 Code: 744053

ID: 910 0792 1734 Code: 348531

ID: 931 3507 9658 Code: 905187

IOWA
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Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact Andrew Swiston III at andrew-swiston@uiowa.edu.



MARKETING

You'll have a chance to advertise your candidacy in ways beyond just events.

Below are examples of ways you can increase your outreach to voters:

- ✔ **Physical materials.** Some examples include business cards, small flyers handed out on campus, flyers posted in businesses downtown, t-shirts, buttons, and laptop stickers. Remember to follow COVID-19 guidelines.
- ✔ **Headshots & videos.** It's effective for all ticket members to have headshots that look cohesive and are easily identifiable as affiliated with your ticket.
 - Handling headshots, group photos, and videos well before the campaign period starts will reduce stress and help you pre-load content onto social media
 - All ticket members should change their profile pictures on all social media platforms to their headshot as soon as the campaign period starts
- ✔ **Social media.** Rely on this as an affordable and sustainable option. Make social media accounts for your ticket and utilize your individual accounts.
 - Pre-load content onto your ticket pages and keep it private until the campaign period commences (make sure to keep your profile picture and "name" something anonymous so people can't search you and file a complaint)
 - Profile picture frames on Facebook that say "I'm voting (ticket name) on (voting dates" and match your ticket brand are an effective way for voters to endorse you
- ✔ **Marketing team.** Create a marketing team as soon as possible – a mix of ticket-members and outside "experts" is helpful in creating the perfect aesthetic.
 - This team will help create a party name, logo, social media accounts (that must be kept private until the beginning of the campaign period), etc.
 - Ask students studying in these majors or in organizations that produce this kind of art to help with photography, videography, and graphic design
 - Offer to pay these people – they're providing a service to you!

MARKETING

- ✓ **Chalking.** Using chalk to share information about your ticket/candidacy on sidewalks around campus.
 - You can only chalk on the T. Anne Cleary Walkway and the sidewalks around Hubbard Park.
- ✓ **Student organization connection.** Reaching out to student organizations is a great way to garner support and build trust.
 - Giving a short presentation about your team/platform and hearing about their concerns and suggestions is a good way to format your time.
 - You can find their contact information on Engage at <https://uiowa.campuslabs.com/engage>.
- ✓ **Class presentations.** Giving a short slideshow presentation at the beginning of classes your ticket members are in can help reach people outside the student leadership circle.
 - You can reach out to professors of large lectures to give presentations there too Be sure to explain WHAT student government is during these presentations – some people won't know
- ✓ **Accessibility.** You should always put captions on any videos with audio (can be done with apps or in video editing software), put image descriptions on social media posts, make platform readable by a screen-reader (DOC format, not a PDF).

QUESTIONS?

Do not hesitate to reach out or use the resources available to you.

Student Elections Commissioner Andy Swiston (andrew-swiston@uiowa.edu)

USG website usg.uiowa.edu/elections

UI COVID-19 website coronavirus.uiowa.edu