

# **Council of Graduate Students (COGS)**

## *Bylaws*

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### **General Powers & Responsibilities**

1. There may be one (1) retreat each Fall and Spring semester, collaboratively organized by with OSAL.
2. Senators are required to attend all COGS-sponsored meetings and events, but they are allowed to miss such meetings and events if they: (a) either have class or have to work and (b) have cleared their absence with the COGS President or Vice-President, five (5) days prior to the required meeting or event. Emergency circumstances will be handled on an individual basis.
3. COGS is encouraged to hold one (1) COGS-sponsored, university-wide event each Fall and Spring semester.
4. Each school shall have two (2) Senators and may have one (1) Representative/Chaplain for every one-hundred (100) students, up to a maximum of four (4) Representatives/Chaplains total. If a school with one representative chooses to have a representative instead of a chaplain, that representative will serve on the spiritual life committee.  
Ex: 1-100 Students- One -Representative or Chaplain  
101-200 Students- Two -Representatives or Chaplains  
201-300 Students- Three -Representatives or Chaplains  
301-400 Students- Four -Representatives or Chaplains
5. The Council shall have the authority to dissolve a standing committee, by a simple majority vote of the Council.

### **Executive Officers**

1. Every month of the Fall and Spring Academic terms, the Executive Treasurer shall present an updated school-specific budget statement to each of the schools' Senators upon receipt of the budget.
2. The Executive Treasurer shall provide an explanation of the uses for and the limitations of the Executive and each individual school budget. With this explanation, the Treasurer will outline the proposed expenditures of the Executive budget for that semester.
3. Each graduate school shall submit a proposed budget of the semester for approval to the Treasurer by the end of the first week that school is in session.
4. At the end of each Fall and Spring academic term, each school's account must have at least 5% of its initial budget remaining in its account. Similarly, at the end of each Fall and

Spring academic term, the Executive Council's account must have at least 5% of its initial budget remaining in its account.

5. To be elected to an executive board position a candidate must garner a three-fourths vote of the Council. In the event that a three-fourths majority cannot be attained, a run-off election will be held between the top two candidates for that Executive Officer position, with the winner being determined by a simple majority.
6. When calculating what constitutes a two-thirds or a three-fourths vote, round up to the nearest whole number.
7. All executive board members shall be elected to serve for either (a) the Spring academic term or (b) the Summer and Fall academic terms combined.
8. The COGS President shall receive a two thousand dollar (\$2000) scholarship for each academic term that falls during the President's elected term of service, but this scholarship shall cover only the cost of tuition and fees.
9. The COGS Vice-President shall receive a thousand dollar (\$1000) stipend, the Secretary, and Treasurer shall receive a five dollar (\$500) stipend, which shall be awarded for each Fall and Spring academic term that falls during their elected term of service, in addition to their five hundred dollar (\$500) Senator scholarship.
10. COGS executive board elections shall be announced during the Council meeting four (4) weeks prior to an upcoming general election.
11. The COGS President shall be elected in the COGS Senate meeting the week before both the Fall and Spring breaks.
12. The COGS general elections shall be held annually during the months of November and March, at the discretion of the COGS Constitution and Elections Committee.
13. COGS executive board elections shall take place at the COGS Senate Meeting one week after all general and runoff elections have been finalized.
14. Nominations for all executive board positions shall be e-mailed by the election chair, to the Council, by the day before the executive board elections.
15. When only one (1) person runs for an executive board position, that person shall win by default.
16. At the start of each Fall and Spring academic term, the President or Vice-President shall conduct a Council meeting in which the COGS Constitution and Bylaws are reviewed.
17. The COGS Secretary shall record minutes for each Council meeting and keep an organized record of these minutes in the COGS Office, for the Council's ease of reference.

18. Any vacated Representative/Chaplain position should be filled within one (1) month of vacancy.
19. Senators shall sign in at the beginning of each Council meeting and an organized record of these attendance sheets shall be kept in the COGS Office.

### **Executive and Senatorial Meetings**

1. COGS Executive Board and Senators shall meet weekly at a designated time according to the schedule set at the beginning of each semester. Physical attendance at such meetings is mandatory, unless other arrangements are made with the COGS President or Vice-President.
2. Any absence of weekly COGS meetings must be approved prior to the meeting by the COGS President or Vice President, except in cases of emergency.
3. Special or emergency meeting of COGS may be called by the President or at the request of the majority vote of the members of COGS.
4. All COGS executive and senatorial meetings shall be closed to the public. An exception may be made by the majority vote of the members of COGS by request of student, staff or faculty of Regent University.
5. Open meetings must be limited to the students, staff or faculty of Regent University. Such individuals will be allowed to speak when the floor has been opened for comments.
6. The President has the authority to call for a vote for the dismissal of someone who disrupts a closed or open meeting.

### **Elections**

1. The only students who shall be allowed to vote in a COGS election are those students who pay COGS fees (that is, on-campus graduate students).
2. When both school-specific Senators are leaving office at the end of a Fall or Spring academic term, then the students in those Senators' school shall elect two (2) Senators during the next general election. In that general election, the candidate who garners the highest percentage of votes in that school's election shall serve a normal term (i.e., one full-year term of service). The candidate who garners the next highest percentage of votes in that school's election shall serve a special term (i.e., one combined Summer/Fall term of service or one Spring term of service).
3. When only one (1) person runs for a senatorial position, that person shall win by default and an election will not be held.

4. Any candidate in a general election or special election may receive a report on the voting results, upon request. Such a request must be made in writing to the Chair of the Elections Committee, who shall then give the candidate a report on the voting results.
5. Candidates for senator positions must meet all of the following eligibility requirements.
  - a. They are able to fulfill all the requisite Senator duties over the course of their desired term of service, including physical attendance at required meetings, events, and office hours;
  - b. They are currently enrolled in a minimum of six (6) credits in the school they desire to represent, three (3) credits of which are being taken on campus;
  - c. They plan to take a minimum of six (6) credits during each Fall or Spring academic term that falls over the course of their desired term of service three (3) credits of which must be taken on campus. When a senator is in the last semester of his/her degree program and/or has obtained the approval of both the Council (by a three-fourths vote) and the Executive Director of Student Services, he/she may maintain eligibility with only three (3) credit hours;
  - d. They must be in good academic, conduct, and financial standing with the University;  
They must not be graduating before the expiration of the one-year Senate term sought.
6. For graduate schools that have less than one hundred (100) on-campus students (e.g., School of Education, School of Business and Leadership), students who are primarily or exclusively a distance-education student shall be allowed to run as a COGS Senatorial candidate, provided that over the duration of their desired term of service: (1) They are able to fulfill all the requisite Senator duties, including physical attendance at required meetings, events, and office hours; and (2) They plan to take a minimum of six (6) credits during each Fall or Spring academic term. If elected, that candidate must maintain a minimum of six (6) credits during each Fall and Spring academic term, unless he/she is in the last semester of his/her degree program and/or has obtained the approval of both the Council (by a three-fourths vote) and the Executive Director for Student Services. No minimum enrollment during the Summer academic term is required.
7. If a student is working toward degrees in two (2) or more Regent graduate schools simultaneously (i.e., if the student is a joint-degree student), then he/she shall be eligible to run as a COGS Senatorial candidate for one (1) school, provided that he/she meets all regular eligibility conditions and: (1) They have at least six (6) credits remaining in the school which they desire to represent; (2) They plan to complete their elected term of service, continuing to serve the constituents in the school which they desire to represent, and (3) They agree to make their joint-degree status and its implications for COGS service explicitly clear to the voters in the school which they desire to represent.
8. Interim Appointments:
  - a. If a senator steps down, volitionally or is removed, from the Council of Graduate Students then the Executive Board can opt for replacing that school-specific senator through interim appointment instead of holding a special election.

- b. The current COGS representatives of that school are the only people eligible to fulfill the newly-vacated senator position.
- c. All representatives interested in running for the open seat will have an opportunity to be heard before the senate votes.
- d. A three-fourths vote of a senate quorum will be necessary to appoint a representative as a replacement for the available senator seat.
- e. A representative appointed to fill the senate seat becomes a senator immediately and will serve as a senator until the end of the semester during which they were appointed. If the appointment takes place in the Summer then the senator shall serve until the end of the Fall semester.
- f. During the next general election all open senator spots shall be filled. The recently-appointed interim senator will be able to re-run for any open senator seat as long as they otherwise qualify for service as a senator.

### **Fees**

1. Student COGS fees shall be collected from all on-campus students at the beginning of each Fall and Spring academic term. Following approval by the Office of Student Services, the student COGS fee shall be assessed using to the following formula: COGS Fee per Student = Average Tuition Charge per Credit Hour x 2%.

### **Committees**

1. Standing committees are as follows: Constitution, Elections, Events, Finance, Media, Housing, and Spiritual Life.
2. There shall be a written set of operating policies, procedures, and job descriptions for each standing committee. These documents must be maintained in the COGS Office, for the Council's ease of reference. Before adherence to the contents of any of these documents becomes mandatory, the document's contents must be approved by a majority vote of the Council. Once those contents are approved, all committee chairpersons and members must abide by them, unless they are excused from that obligation, either by the President or by a majority vote of the Council.
3. A Senator may not be the Chair of a committee unless he/she has served at least one (1) semester as a Senator, unless the Council approves that appointment by a two-thirds vote.
4. Committee preferences may be submitted to the President prior to each semester. The President will assign each Senator to a committee. If two Senators wish to trade committee assignments, it must be brought to the President first for approval.

### **Senator Scholarships**

1. Except in the case of Senators who are joint-degree students, each Senator's scholarship shall only cover the tuition costs of classes taken toward a degree in the school which they represent. The Senator's scholarship may be applied to the tuition costs of classes

taken for elective credit but going toward a degree in the school which the Senator represents, even if such elective classes are taken in another Regent graduate school.

2. The Senator's scholarship for Senators who are joint-degree students shall not cover the tuition cost of classes taken toward a degree in a school that the Senator does not represent, except with the approval of the Vice-President of Student Services and the Dean of the school which the Senator has been elected to represent. If approved, such scholarship monies shall still be dispersed according to the tuition cost per credit hour in the school which the Senator represents.

## **Responsibilities of Officers and Advisor**

1. President
  - a. Leadership in prayer, decision-making, and outreach activities.
  - b. Attend scheduled Student Organization Leaders meetings held by Student Services or assure that a representative is present at these meetings.
  - c. Communicates regularly with each Senator team concerning All-COGS, School-Specific and Personal Goals for each semester.
  - d. Holds regular meetings with the Executive Board, Senate and ALL COGS to discuss and work through any pertinent business items
  - e. Appoints Senators to at least one Standing Committee and appoints a committee chair.
  - f. Once the new COGS Executive Board is selected, actively begins mentoring and training them for their upcoming leadership roles.
  - g. Works closely with the Vice President to collaboratively come up with appropriate disciplinary action plans that are necessary, in order to provide consequences for a) unexcused absences from required events or meetings; b) failure to respond to action items within the specified timeframe and c) any other disciplinary matters that arise
  - h. Serves as an ex-officio member of all committees.
  - i. Familiarizes Executive Board with various forms, policies and procedures that need to be adhered to with particular attention to a) event planning, coordination and implementation; b) finances, purchasing and accounting; and c) the leadership hierarchy and conflict resolution procedures.
  - j. Exhorts the Senators to actively recruit and interview potential candidates for the Rep and Chaplain positions available at their school
  - k. Looks for leadership-development opportunities, and gives Senators the support they need to grow in the midst of those opportunities.
  - l. Cultivates and maintains strong relationships with the Regent administration and staff while encouraging the Senatorial team to do the same.
  - m. Works closely with Director of Student Services, Director of Student Activities and Leadership, and Director of Campus Ministries as well as with other key administrative personnel.
2. Vice President
  - a. Works closely with COGS President to ensure the smooth and efficient running of COGS.

- b. Runs COGS elections in accordance with the guidelines.
  - c. Works closely with the COGS President to collaboratively come up with appropriate disciplinary action plans as necessary.
  - d. Serves as Chair of Constitution and Elections Committee
  - e. Uses the first Senatorial meeting to review the COGS Constitution.
  - f. Attends all mandatory COGS meetings
3. Secretary
- a. Works with COGS Executive Board to ensure smooth communication to the other senators.
  - b. Keeps regular contact with all COGS members to guarantee the accurate dissemination of important information.
  - c. Ensures that deadlines for action items are clearly specified in all written correspondence from the Executive Board
  - d. Makes a copy of the COGS Constitution and COGS Bylaws available to all Council members.
  - e. Ensures that an updated copy of the COGS Constitution and COGS Bylaws are available on the COGS website.
  - f. Records minutes for each Council meeting and keeps an organized record of these minutes for the Council's ease of reference.
4. Treasurer
- a. Presents an updated budget statement to each school's Senator
  - b. Serves as the Chair of the Finance Committee
  - c. Regularly updates and maintains accurate financial statements
  - d. Communicates proper financial, budgeting and accounting procedures to COGS Senators. This information is to be communicated to Reps and Chaplains through their respective Senators
  - e. Adheres strictly to the guidelines outlined by the Purchasing Office and communicates that information to Executive Board
  - f. Verifies the accuracy of Expense reports and acts accordingly. Correct Expense Reports are signed by the Treasurer and turned in to the Executive Director of Student Services.
5. Advisor
- a. Meet regularly with COGS Executive Team
  - b. Provide general oversight to COGS
  - c. Assist COGS with mission, goals and objectives.
  - d. Provides guidance and counsel for COGS with its mission and vision as it relates to the University's mission of "Christian Leadership to Change the World."
  - e. Assist with transition and development of new leadership within the organization

**Incorporated by Reference:**

- 1. COGS Elections Procedures and Guidelines (presented in COGS Senator Application Packet)**
- 2. COGS Statement of Integrity (presented in COGS Senator Application Packet)**
- 3. Senator Job Description (presented in the COGS Senator Application Packet)**
- 4. Representative and Chaplain Job Descriptions (presented in the COGS Representatives and Chaplain Application Packet)**

**Council of Graduate Students (COGS)**  
*Elections Procedures and Guidelines*  
(Voted into effect as a COGS bylaw on 4-06-09)

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**PURPOSE:**

- A. To provide a foundational understanding of the Lord's calling to servant leadership, based on the humble example of Jesus, as described in Philippians 2:5-11.
- B. To create a clear set of procedures and guidelines to guide COGS elections.
- C. To provide a system of accountability to guide the actions of election candidates and monitoring officials.

**DEFINITION:**

- A. **General Elections** shall be defined as the annual November and March COGS Senator Elections, as described in Articles I IV of the COGS Constitution.
- B. **Special Election** shall be defined as the as-needed elections that are held in order to fill a vacated Senatorial seat, as described in Article IV, Section 2 of the COGS Constitution.
- C. A **Week** shall be defined as seven (7) consecutive days.
- D. **Ethical** shall be defined as conformity to accepted standards of fairness, integrity, equal opportunity, and moral and Christian conduct.
- E. **Run-off** Elections shall be defined as the follow-up elections that are held after a general or special election in which no single candidate garnered a majority vote, as described in Article IV, Section 1 of the COGS Constitution.
- F. A **Mass Email** shall be defined as any form of electronic communication that contains more than one recipient.

**Section I**  
*Notification and Purpose*

The legislative intent of this section is to outline the process of giving the student body notification of the elections, with reasonable time for students to take action.

- A. General Election:
  - a. General elections shall be held annually during the months of November and March, at the discretion of the COGS Constitution and Elections Committee.
  - b. Notification shall be made by email at least two (2) weeks prior to the election date.
  
- B. Special Election:
  - a. Notification shall be made by email within five (5) days of the vacancy and at least two (2) weeks prior to the special election.



C. Run-off Election:

- a. Notification shall be made by email within five (5) days of the close of the general election and at least two (2) weeks prior to the run-off election.

**Section II**

***Candidate Election Procedures: Applying for Office***

The legislative intent of this section is to set reasonable procedures and guidelines for guiding the determination of candidate eligibility, the process of application submission, and the sharing of election procedures and guidelines.

- A. As defined by Article I, Section 4 of the COGS Constitution: “To be eligible for election as a Senator, a graduate student must be in good academic and financial standing with the University and must not be graduating before the expiration of the one-year Senate term sought.” Additional requirements are listed in Section IV, Number 5 of the Bylaws.
- B. Candidate application packets must be submitted at least one (1) week prior to a general or special election.
- C. All COGS Senator candidates must attend a mandatory Candidate’s Meeting, which shall be conducted by the Chair of the COGS Constitution and Elections Committee.
- D. No application shall be accepted after 5:00 pm on the day of the application submission deadline, which will be advertised along with the election dates.
- G. As part of their required application for candidacy, candidates must sign the following statement of integrity: “On my honor I hereby certify that I have read and will adhere to the requirements set forth both in these Election Procedures and Guidelines and at the mandatory Candidate’s Meeting.”

**Section III**

***Candidate Election Procedures: Campaign Definitions and Deadlines***

The legislative intent of this section is to provide reasonable guidelines for campaigning in ethical ways that do not interrupt or create a distraction from normal University operations. In addition, the intent is to have the candidates seek election committee approval before taking any campaign action so they can get a clear understanding of how to apply specific election rules.

- A. During the campaign period, candidates shall be allowed to campaign by:
  - a. Word-of-mouth, personal emails, personal phone calls, and two (2) mass emails from the candidate to potential constituents.
    - i. Personal emails should be used with discretion and with a view to not tarnishing the reputation of COGS. Valid complaints in this regard can be grounds for a candidate to be disqualified from the election.

- ii. A mass email shall be defined as any form of electronic communication that contains more than one recipient.
    - iii. Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Etc..) is permitted and will be held to the same ethical standards as other campaigning outlets.
  - b. Handouts such as flyers, stickers, and other campaign paraphernalia, each of which must be 8 ½ x 11 inches or smaller in its size.
  - c. Only one (1) flyer per candidate may be posted in University classrooms, and such flyers must be posted during non-class hours. Flyers may be posted on corkboard strips within classrooms.
  - d. Classroom announcements are permitted, with the prior permission of the professor.
  - e. Participating in one (1) school-specific Election Forum, which may be held and facilitated by the school's two (2) current Senators.
- B. Candidates will NOT be allowed to campaign as follows:
  - a. No campaigning paraphernalia is to be left on non-campaign tables, on walls, or on any campus property, except as described above.
  - b. No campaigning that is either slanderous or libelous in nature will be tolerated. In fact, negative campaigning shall be grounds for a candidate to be disqualified from the election.
- C. All supporters of candidates are expected to adhere to and follow the campaign guidelines that are stated in this document.
- D. Campaigning shall be restricted to the time between the mandatory election meeting and the close of the polls on the second day of elections.
- E. Any violation of the Campaign Procedures and Guidelines will be reviewed by the COGS Constitution and Elections Committee. A determination of any needed disciplinary action shall be decided by the current COGS Council.

#### **Section IV** ***Protesting the Election***

The legislative intent of this section is to describe the terms under which someone can protest an election, and the procedures to be followed when a protest is filed.

- A. The grounds for protesting an election shall be as follows:
  - a. Election misconduct by a candidate or his/her representatives (must be verifiable)
  - b. A procedural mistake made by either COGS or Student Services (must be verifiable)
  - c. Failure of a candidate to meet the eligibility requirements for service, as stated within these Election Procedure Guidelines (see Section II) and as stated in the COGS Bylaws, Article IV, Section 5.

- B. Any alleged violation of these Election Procedure Guidelines, or any other complaint, must be submitted to the Chair of the COGS Constitution and Elections Committee in writing, by 12 pm on the day immediately following the close of the election.
- C. The Chair of the COGS Constitution and Elections Committee shall consider all complaints and make a determination regarding their validity.
- D. Based on that determination, the COGS Constitution and Elections Committee shall then determine whether any further action should be taken, by a simple majority vote.
- E. If further action is deemed necessary, the COGS Constitution and Elections Committee shall present their recommendation(s) to the entire Council, in order for the Council to vote on whether to approve the recommended action(s). Approval is granted if the Council reaches a simple majority vote.

**Section V**  
***COGS Election Procedures: Hosting the Elections***

The legislative intent of this section is to provide procedures and guidelines that will help the COGS Constitution and Elections Committee Chair directly monitor each election and campaign process, oversee all candidate campaign-related actions, seeking to ensure adherence to election procedures and guidelines. The procedures and guidelines that follow are intended to help guide and inform candidate behavior, ensuring that all elections are ethical and do not interrupt the University's operations.

- A. A Constitution and Elections Committee shall be appointed from the Council.
- B. Potential communication mediums that may be utilized to provide each school's students with a notification of election results shall include: posted flyers, email listservs (i.e., the university listserv and/or school-specific listservs), or verbal announcements.
- C. Each university-wide general election shall be held on the same two (2) consecutive school days. Likewise, any special election shall be held on two (2) consecutive school days. If multiple schools are participating in a special election, then that election shall be held on the same two (2) consecutive school days.
- D. The proposal for an Election Forum must be submitted to the Chair of the Constitutions and Elections Committee, by one of the current Senators from the school that is seeking to have the Election Forum.
- E. Before the Election Forum may occur, it must be approved by the Constitution and Elections Committee, by a simple majority, as well as the Office of Student Activities and Leadership.

- F. Each qualified voting student shall be allowed to cast one (1) vote during a general or special election, but they may only vote in an election that is being held in their primary school of record, as stated on their registration sheet.
- G. Polls shall be open for no less than four (4) hours on each day of an election.
- H. No ballots shall be accepted after an election is officially closed.
- I. COGS Senatorial candidates who receive a simple majority vote (i.e., at least 50% plus 1 of the votes cast) shall be deemed the winner of their school's election.
- J. Election results shall be emailed to each candidate within 3 business days of the close of the election, and voting margins shall be available to any candidate, upon request.
- K. For special and general elections, if a candidate does not receive higher than fifty percent (50%) of the votes, then pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the COGS Constitution, a new, separate run-off election shall be held, with the winner being determined by a simple majority vote.
- L. Any necessary run-off election shall be held within two (2) weeks of the general election. If either of the candidates in that run-off election eliminates him- or herself during the campaign period or is disqualified for some reason, then the remaining run-off candidate shall be declared the winner by default.

**COGS Statement of Integrity**

On my honor, I hereby certify that I have read and will adhere to the requirements set forth both in these Election Procedures and Guidelines and at the mandatory Candidate's Meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name/ Date

## **Regent University Statement of Faith**

I believe that the Holy Bible is the inspired, infallible and authoritative source of Christian doctrine and precept.

I believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe man was created in the image of God but, as a result of sin, is lost and powerless to save himself.

We believe that the only hope for man is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the virgin-born Son of God, who died to take upon Himself the punishment for the sin of mankind, and who rose from the dead so that by receiving Him as Savior and Lord, man is redeemed by His blood.

I believe that Jesus Christ will personally return to earth in power and glory.

I believe that the Holy Spirit indwells those who receive Christ for the purpose of enabling them to live righteous and holy lives.

We believe that the Church is the Body of Christ and is composed of all those who through belief in Christ have been spiritually regenerated by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The mission of the Church is worldwide evangelism, and nurturing and discipling of Christians.

**I certify that I endorse Regent University's Statement of Faith. If I have a question about the statement of faith and my beliefs, I will address that difference with Campus Ministries before moving forward as a candidate.**

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Signature

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Printed Name/ Date

## **COGS ELECTION ONLINE VOTING GUIDE**

The COGS Senator General Election will take place **online on Genisys** from 12:00am on **DATE** until 11:59pm on **DATE**.

To vote for the school-specific COGS Senator candidate of your choice, follow these step-by-step instructions:

- 1) Visit <http://my.regent.edu> and log into the MyRegent Portal.
- 2) Click on “Genisys”.
- 3) Click on “Personal Information”
- 4) Click on “Answer a Survey”
- 5) Click on “COGS Election”
- 6) Cast your vote
- 7) Click on “Survey Complete”
- 8) Once you have voted, the “COGS Election” link will disappear.

If you have any questions about the voting process, you may contact the COGS Executive Board at [cogs@mail.regent.edu](mailto:cogs@mail.regent.edu) or your current COGS senators. Their contact information is available on the COGS website: [www.regent.edu/COGS](http://www.regent.edu/COGS).

### **Genisys Problems**

If you have any problems with the voting on Genisys, contact Carolyn Hughes by email at [chughes@regent.edu](mailto:chughes@regent.edu) or 757-352-4927.

If you have any questions about the school-specific COGS candidates who are currently running for office, please contact them directly. Their contact information should be available on any publicity materials they have either posted or sent out to students in your specific school.