

**FOR
INFORMATION**

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: Elections Committee

SPONSOR: Lauren Turner, Deputy Secretary of the Governing Council and Chief
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PRESENTER: Same as above
CONTACT INFO:

DATE: May 13, 2026 for May 20, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: 2

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Report for the 2026 Elections for the Governing Council, the Academic Board, University of Toronto Mississauga and University of Toronto Scarborough Campus Councils and their Standing Committees.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

4.4 To receive for information an annual report on the elections process from the Chief Returning Officer.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. Elections Committee [For Information] (May 20, 2026)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

Report for the 2025 Elections for the Governing Council, the Academic Board, University of Toronto Mississauga and University of Toronto Scarborough Campus Councils and their Standing Committees was presented to the Elections Committee for information on May 28, 2025.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The 2026 elections were successfully administered across all constituencies of the Governing Council, Academic Board, and the UTM and UTSC Campus Councils and their standing committees, with core elements of the election cycle delivered as planned and no material issues in the conduct of the elections or certification of results. The cycle was marked by several key enhancements, including the implementation of comprehensively revised *Election Guidelines*, continued development of the Nomination Management System (NMS), and the launch of the new “Get Involved” webpage, which

significantly improved the accessibility and clarity of elections information for prospective candidates and voters.

Targeted outreach efforts focused on constituencies with historically low engagement yielded mixed but notable results, including the successful filling of previously vacant Temerty Faculty of Medicine seats on the Academic Board, while persistent vacancies, particularly at UTSC, present ongoing engagement challenges that will inform planning for 2027. Overall, the elections benefitted from strong administrative continuity, including during a late-cycle transition in the role of Chief Returning Officer, and demonstrated a stable operational foundation on which further improvements will rest in 2027.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Report for the 2026 Elections for the Governing Council, the Academic Board, University of Toronto Mississauga and University of Toronto Scarborough Campus Councils and their Standing Committees.



Report for the 2026 Elections for the Governing Council, the Academic Board, University of Toronto Mississauga and University of Toronto Scarborough Campus Councils and their Standing Committees

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1.0 Introduction

This Report provides an overview of the 2026 Governing Council elections, highlights successes, identifies areas for improvement, shares anticipated future challenges, and describes plans for future process changes and revisions to the *2027 Elections Guidelines*.

2.0 Revisions of the Election Guidelines

The *Elections Guidelines 2026* were approved by the [Elections Committee at its meeting on November 27, 2025](#).

Revisions to the *Guidelines* were recommended by the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) in consultation with the Deputy Returning Officers (DROs). These revisions represented a comprehensive re-write of the previous version and aimed to eliminate redundancies, enhance clarity and user-friendliness, modernize balloting procedures, standardize expense limits, enhance candidates' accountability, and streamline the by-election process.

A comprehensive summary of the revisions is available here: [Elections Committee Meeting Nov 27, 2025](#)

The revised *Guidelines* became effective January 1, 2026, and were publicly posted on the Office of the Governing Council's *Elections* webpage.

3.0 New "Get Involved" Website

A key development of the 2026 elections was the launch of a new webpage on the Governing Council's website: "Get Involved." This represented a major overhaul of how elections information is communicated online. The new webpage prioritizes user-friendliness, plain language, and easy navigation. For example, individuals wanting to know which governance bodies have vacancies can select their constituency (administrative staff, graduate student, etc.) and campus affiliation, and the website will provide real-time information about opportunities to get involved. Navigation of the site is geared towards specific user groups (students, staff, faculty) and critical information, such as application links and deadlines, is clearer and easier to find. This new webpage was developed and launched in Fall 2025 and is a material improvement in accessibility and usability of elections information.

4.0 Outreach

Annual Outreach

Pre-Election Information Sessions

Six information sessions were hosted online via Zoom to provide general information about University governance and the elections process. University students, faculty, and administrative staff received an email invitation to register for a session. The sessions were also advertised on the “Get Involved” webpage.

Awareness Campaign Before and During Nomination Period

The nomination period was advertised via the following methods:

- Emails and reminder emails sent to all eligible constituents
- Emails sent to campus leaders and key stakeholders with requests to spread the word among their teams and constituents (e.g., targeted communications to department chairs for departments with Teaching Staff seat vacancies)
- Digital signage on campus TV screen across all three campuses
- Posts on University social media channels
- Notice on Office of the Governing Council’s “Get Involved” webpage
- Remarks made by chairs at meetings of governance bodies with requests that members reach out to their constituencies to speak about their experiences in governance and encourage others to run
- On the U of T student portal (Accessible Campus Online Resource Network - ACORN)
- Notice in Vice-Provost, Students’ weekly newsletter to students
- Notice in Provost’s Digest
- Notice in *UTSC Connect* newsletter
- Notice in *UTM Express* newsletter
- In targeted follow-up emails to potential candidates who had expressed interest and to those who started nomination applications online but had not yet submitted.

Targeted Outreach

This year, in addition to routine outreach activities, the elections team focused on two key areas for enhanced engagement: 1) UTSC governance elections (particularly graduate student seats); and 2) Temerty Faculty of Medicine’s seats on the Academic Board. The Temerty seats on Academic Board as well as graduate student seats on UTSC governing bodies had been vacant, with low engagement rates, for the last two years. There were

also concerns about low engagement generally for UTSC governance elections.

Regarding UTSC, the CRO and DRO, UTSC engaged in targeted outreach that included meetings with campus leaders and stakeholders, and providing governance and elections information sessions at Chairs' Council and the Campus Leadership Forum. After a September 2025 by-election, graduate student seats and teaching staff seats remained unfilled. As a result, the elections team continued its outreach among campus leaders with the goal of gathering information about how best to improve engagement in future elections. A significant amount of feedback was received from the campus community which will contribute to the elections team's summer planning process in advance of the 2027 elections.

Regarding Temerty, the CRO engaged in targeted outreach by engaging faculty leaders and stakeholders. As a result, the seats allocated to Temerty on Academic Board were successfully filled for the 2026-27 governance year.

5.0 Nomination Management System (NMS)

The Nomination Management System (NMS), introduced in 2024, continued to demonstrate its value during the 2026 election cycle. Designed to streamline the nomination process for candidates and reduce manual workload for staff, the system has become a critical component of election administration for the Office of the Governing Council.

In 2026, there were continued high levels of engagement with the system:

- 16,758 Page Views
- 1,991 Active users who engaged with the site
- 383 Candidate Submissions
- 859 Supporting Nominator Submissions
- 57 Uses of the new "Request Assistance" button

On the administrative side, substantial enhancements were made to the system's functionality, such as the "Request Assistance" feature for users; enhanced integrations with ROSI and Human Resources Information System (HRIS); and ongoing text revisions to enhance user-friendliness and plain language.

The NMS is a "living project" that is continuously improving. The Office of the Governing Council is diligent in soliciting feedback, creating new features, and finding new system efficiencies.

6.0 Elections Process

The administration of the 2026 elections for the Governing Council, Academic Board, and the UTM and UTSC Campus Councils and their Standing Committees was coordinated through the Office of the Governing Council. It was overseen by the then-CRO, Timothy Harlick, and delivered in collaboration with DROs Miranda Edwards – UTSC campus and Cindy Ferencz Hammond – UTM campus. As in previous years, the election cycle included structured candidate orientation, active promotion of voting opportunities, a nomination system administered through the NMS, and secure online voting using the Simply Voting platform.

Voting

Voting was conducted securely and anonymously using the University's account on the web-based voting platform [Simply Voting](#). Students and staff accessed their ballots using their UTORid. Candidate statements were published on the Elections website and on the Simply Voting platform. Voter engagement data is presented in section 7.4 of this report. Lists of eligible voters were compiled from ROSI (for students) and HRIS (for teaching staff and administrative staff.) Voting instructions and reminders were sent to all eligible voters via email, and comprehensive details were also posted on the Governing Council Elections website.

7.0 Nominations & Elections

7.1 September 2025 By-Election

A by-election was conducted from mid-September to early October 2025 to fill 4 vacancies on the Academic Board, 2 vacancies on UTM governing bodies, and 10 vacancies on UTSC governing bodies.

Results

Academic Board (4 vacancies, 4 seats filled)

- Teaching Staff (4 seats, 4 vacancies)
 - Andrea Williams (Faculty of Arts & Science) – Acclaimed
 - Joshua Kirk (Architecture, Landscape and Design) – Acclaimed
 - Reena Pattani (Temerty Medicine) – Acclaimed
 - Ali Salahpour (Temerty Medicine) – Acclaimed

UTM Campus Affairs Committee (1 vacancy, 1 seat filled)

- Administrative Staff (1 seat, 1 candidate)

April Forbes (Career Centre) – Acclaimed

UTM Academic Affairs Committee (1 vacancy, 1 seat filled)

- Administrative Staff (1 seat, 1 candidate)
Michelle Kraus (Office of the Registrar) – Acclaimed

UTSC Campus Council (1 vacancy, 0 seats filled)

- Graduate Students (1 seat, 0 candidates)
No candidates

UTSC Academic Affairs Committee (5 vacancies, 1 seat filled)

- Graduate Students (2 seats, 0 candidates)
No candidates
- Teaching Staff (3 seats, 1 candidate)
Thembela Kepe (Human Geography) – Acclaimed

UTSC Campus Affairs Committee (4 vacancies, 1 seat filled)

- Undergraduate Students (1 seat, 2 candidates)
Vina Robert Princely
- Graduate Students (1 seat, 0 candidates)
No candidates
- Teaching Staff (2 seats, 0 candidates)
No candidates

7.2 General Election

7.2.1 Governing Council Election

The nomination period for seats on the Governing Council, Academic Board and UTM and UTSC Campus Councils and their Standing Committees opened on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 12:00 noon and closed on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

As a result of low response rates to some seat vacancies, the Call for Nominations was re-opened on January 28, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. with a deadline of February 2, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. for the following seats:

Governing Council

- 1 Undergraduate Student seat

Academic Board

- 1 Teaching Staff (Faculty of Arts & Science) seat
- 1 Teaching Staff (Law) seat
- 1 Teaching Staff (UTSC) seat

UTSC Campus Council

- 1 Librarian seat
- 1 Teaching Staff seat
- 1 Graduate Student seat

UTSC Academic Affairs Committee

- 4 Teaching Staff seats
- 3 Undergraduate Student seats
- 2 Graduate Student seats

UTSC Campus Affairs Committee

- 3 Teaching Staff seats
- 4 Undergraduate Student seats
- 1 Graduate Student seats

The NMS was used to receive submissions for each constituency and access was made available both through the Governing Council website and e-mail notifications.

Upon the close of the nomination period(s), elections were required for:

- Eight student seats
- Two teaching staff seats in Constituencies II and VII

The elected and acclaimed candidates were:

Students

- Full-time Undergraduate Constituency I (2 seats, 38 candidates)
Samuel Kamalendran – Elected
Areeb Naeem – Elected
- Full-time Undergraduate Constituency II (2 seats, 5 candidates)
Kevin Li – Elected
Rithik Sreekumar – Elected
- Part-time Undergraduate (2 seats, 2 candidates)

Susan Froom – Elected
Humberto Santos – Elected

- Graduate Constituency I (1 seat, 11 candidates)
Daniel Ebrahimpour – Elected
- Graduate Constituency II (1 seat, 8 candidates)
Victoria Liu - Elected

Teaching Staff

- Constituency II (1 seat, 2 candidates)
Andrew Petersen (Mathematical and Computational Sciences – UTM) – Elected
- Constituency VII (1 seat, 5 candidates)
Colin Furness (Faculty of Information) – Elected
- Constituency VIII (1 seat, 1 candidates)
Angela Pyle (Applied Psychology & Human Development) - Acclaimed

7.2.2 Academic Board Election

Eighteen teaching staff seats and one librarian seat on the Academic Board were open for election in 2026. The majority of the seats were filled by acclamation, with an election required for four seats in the Temerty Faculty of Medicine.

The elected and acclaimed candidates were:

- Susan Bondy (Dalla Lana School of Public Health) – Acclaimed
- I. Daniel Posen (Civil & Mineral Engineering) – Acclaimed
- Shyon Baumann (Sociology, Faculty of Arts & Science, (FAS)) – Acclaimed
- Gracia Dong (Human Biology, FAS) – Acclaimed
- Sali A. Tagliamonte (Linguistics, FAS) – Acclaimed
- Odilia Yim (Psychology, FAS) – Acclaimed
- Matt Ratto (Faculty of Information) – Acclaimed
- Mohammed Fadel (Faculty of Law) – Acclaimed
- Sandra Merklinger (Lawrence Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing) – Acclaimed
- Julie C. Garlen (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)) – Acclaimed
- Daniel Burd (Family & Community Medicine, Temerty) – Elected
- Pier Bryden (Psychiatry, Temerty) – Elected
- Julia Kfoury (Obstetrics and Gynecology / Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine, Temerty) – Elected
- Brenda Mori (Physical Therapy, Temerty) – Elected
- Sergio Tenenbaum (Department of Philosophy, UTM) – Acclaimed
- Tarun Dewan (Department of Management, UTSC) – Acclaimed

One (1) seat remained unfilled for a Faculty of Arts & Science seat.

Librarian

- Tys Klumpenhower (Archives and Records Management Services) – Acclaimed

All elected and acclaimed candidates will serve from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2029, unless otherwise noted.

7.2.3 UTM Campus Council and Standing Committees Election

UTM Campus Council

- Administrative Staff (1 seat, 1 candidate)
Ron Wener – Acclaimed
- Undergraduate Students (3 seats, 14 candidates)
Mahi Mukati – Elected
Vaibhav Kaushal – Elected
Mekayel Omier – Elected
- Graduate Students (1 seat, 2 candidates)
Kelly Cheung – Elected
- Teaching Staff (2 seats, 2 candidates)
Rosa Hong (Department of Language Studies) – Acclaimed
Aaron Weisbrod (Department of Economics) – Acclaimed

UTM Academic Affairs Committee

- Undergraduate Students (5 seats, 11 candidates)
Rusul Alajmi – Elected
Ericsson Cui – Elected
Ayman Kashif – Elected
Yassmina Mostafa – Elected
Nabeeha Shamim – Elected
- Graduate Students (2 seats, 4 candidates)
Brittany Mascarenhas – Elected
Joaquin San Agustin – Elected
- Teaching Staff (4 seats, 4 candidates)
Hai-Ying Mary Cheng (Department of Biology) – Acclaimed
Pierre Desrochers (Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment) – Acclaimed

Jaimal Thind (Department of Mathematical and Computational Sciences) – Acclaimed
Anna Thomas (Department of English and Drama) – Acclaimed

UTM Campus Affairs Committee

- Administrative Staff (1 seat, 1 candidate)
Carolyn Loos – Acclaimed
- Undergraduate Students (5 seats, 10 candidates)
Apreet Bhullar – Elected
Ericsoon Cui – Elected
Saad Hussain – Elected
Salaar Khan – Elected
Nabeeha Shamim – Elected
- Graduate Students (1 seat, 1 candidate)
Michael Ge – Acclaimed
- Teaching Staff (2 seats, 2 candidates)
Marc Laflamme (Department of Chemical and Physical Sciences) – Acclaimed
Christina Lamparter (Department of Anthropology) – Acclaimed

7.2.4 UTSC Campus Council and Standing Committees Election

UTSC Campus Council

- Undergraduate Students (3 seats, 5 candidates)
Anisa Persaud – Elected
Kiera Rasheed – Elected
Shennel Simpson – Elected
- Graduate Students (1 seat, 0 candidates):

No nominations were received; the seat remains vacant.
- Teaching Staff (1 seat, 0 candidates)

No nominations were received; the seat remains vacant.
- Librarian (1 seat, 1 candidate)
Lola Rudin – Acclaimed

UTSC Academic Affairs Committee

Undergraduate Students (5 seats, 2 Acclaimed from General Election, 7 candidates from re-opened nomination period):

Omar Ayyad – Acclaimed
Vazgen Ogannisian – Acclaimed
Niyonta Zulfiquar – Elected
Maggie Ping – Elected
Riyanna Ram – Elected

- Graduate Students (2 seats 0 candidates):
No nominations were received; both seats remain vacant.
- Teaching Staff (5 seats, 1 candidate):
Elizabeth Acorn (Political Science) – Acclaimed
Four (4) teaching staff seats remain vacant.

UTSC Campus Affairs Committee

• Undergraduate Students (5 seats, 1 Acclaimed from General Election, 7 candidates from re-opened nomination period):

Summayah Omar – Acclaimed
Danae Mohamed – Elected
Isaac Yan – Elected
Charlotte Gao – Elected
Arthur Li – Elected

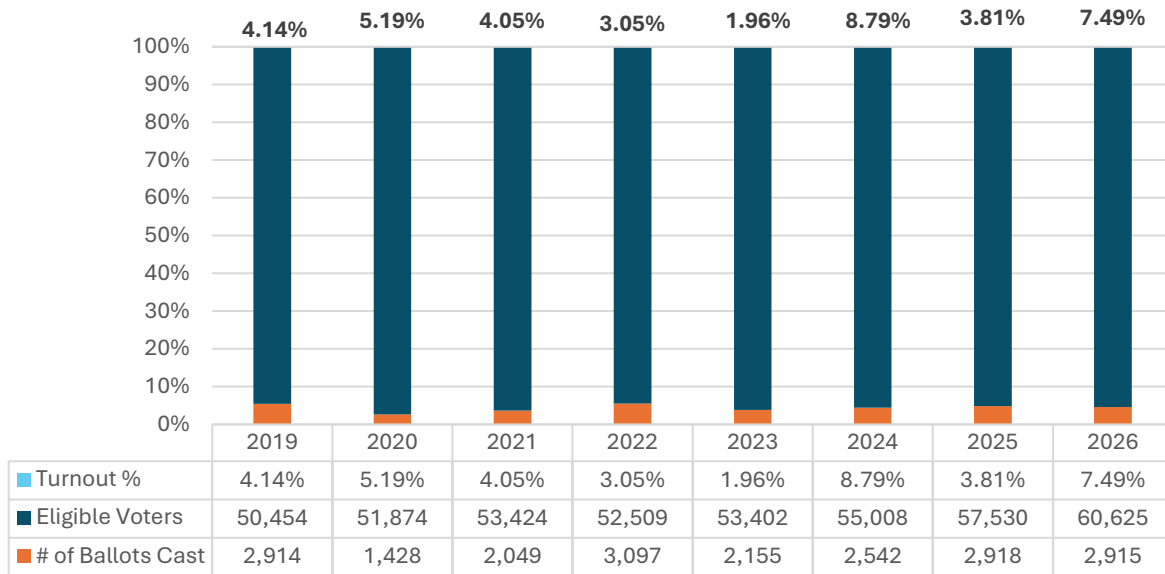
- Teaching Staff (3 seats, 0 candidates)
No nominations were received; the seats remain vacant.
- Graduate Students (1 seat, 0 candidates):
No nominations were received; the seat remains vacant.

7.3 March 2026 By-Election

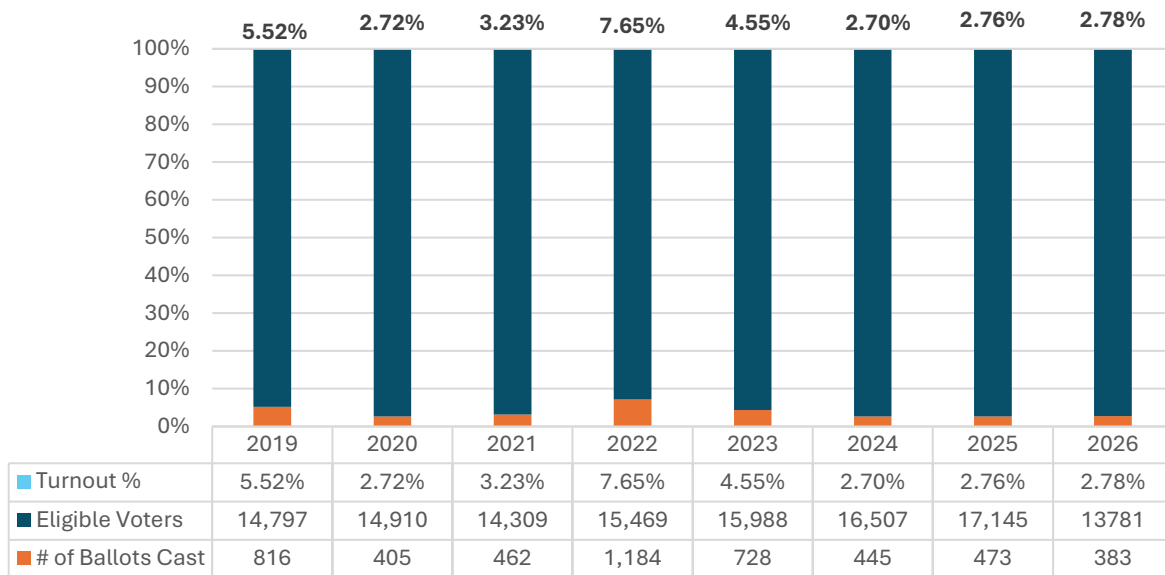
The administration of a by-election was held from March 2-10, 2026, to fill an Administrative Staff seat vacancy on the UTSC Campus Affairs Committee due to a resignation. The timing of the resignation was such that the Administrative Staff seat could not be included in the Call for Nominations and therefore a by-election was required. Kendel Chitolie was acclaimed to the seat.

7.4 Voter Turnout

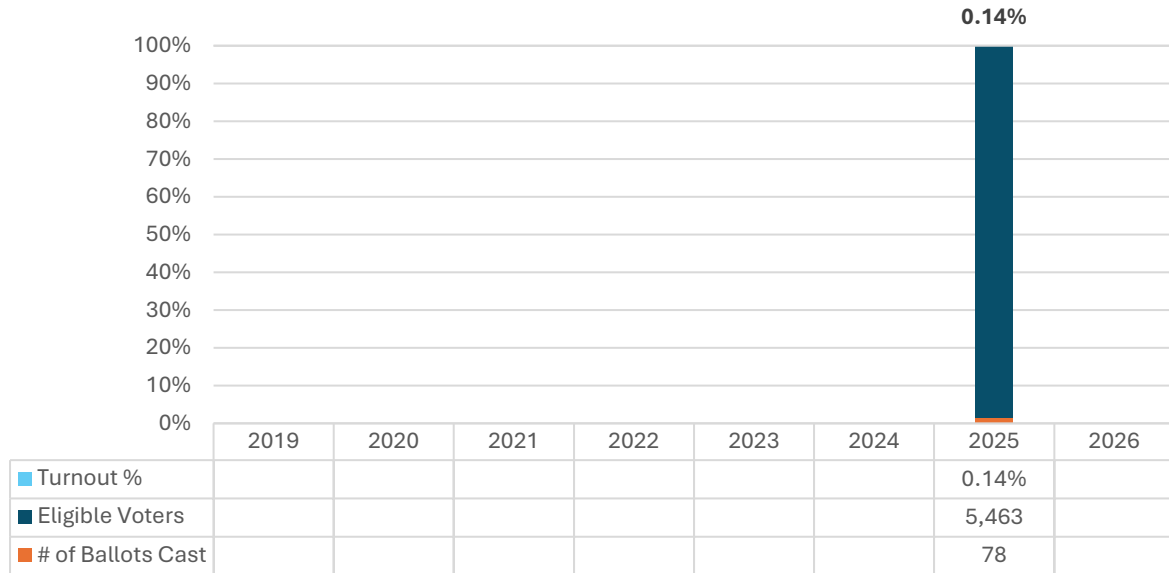
Governing Council - Full-time Undergraduate Students - Constituency I



Governing Council - Full-time Undergraduate Students - Constituency II

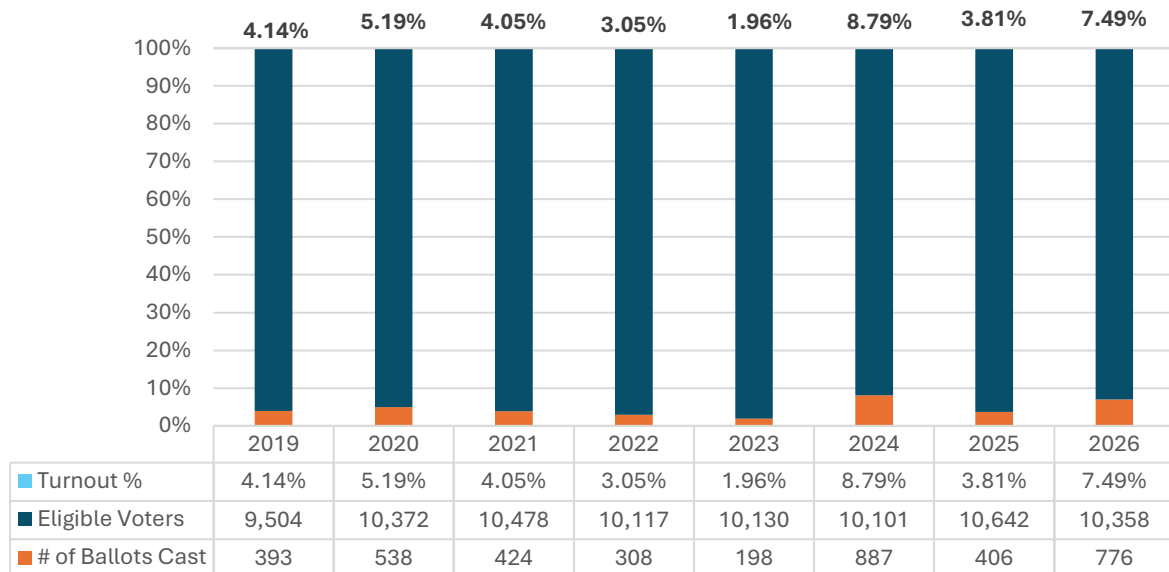


Governing Council - Part-time Undergraduate Students

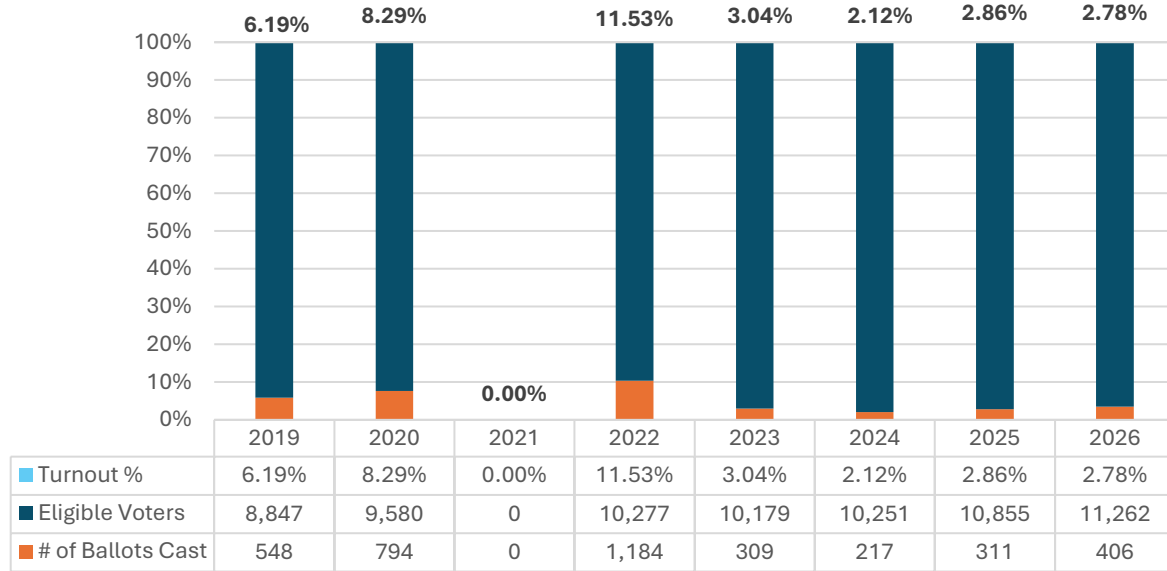


Note: Elections were not held in 2019-2024 and 2026 for this. Seats were won by acclamation or remained vacant.

Governing Council - Graduate Students - Constituency I

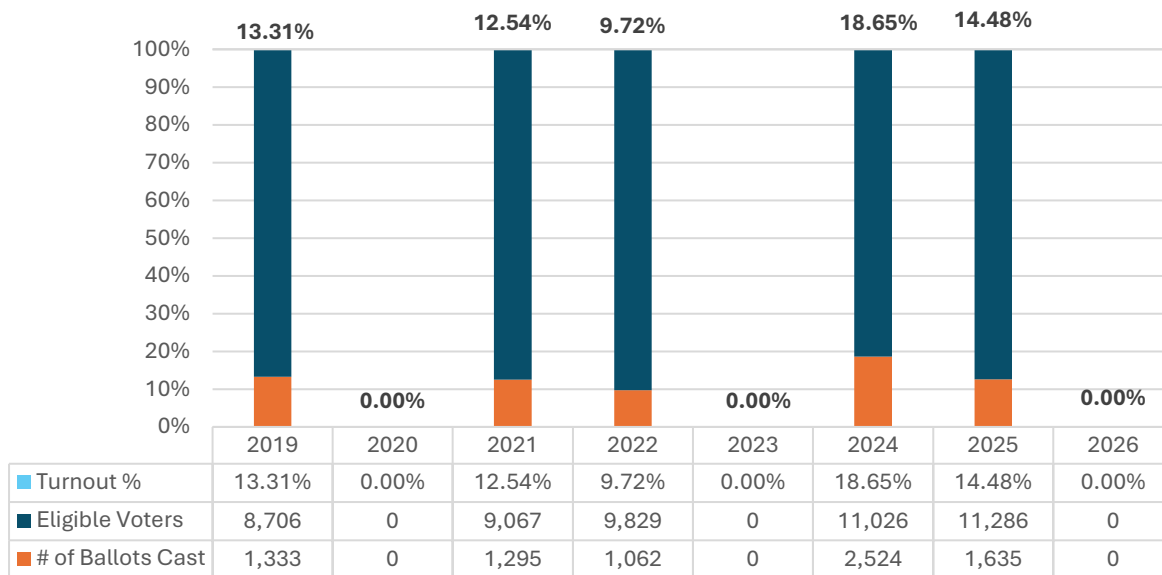


Governing Council - Graduate Students - Constituency II



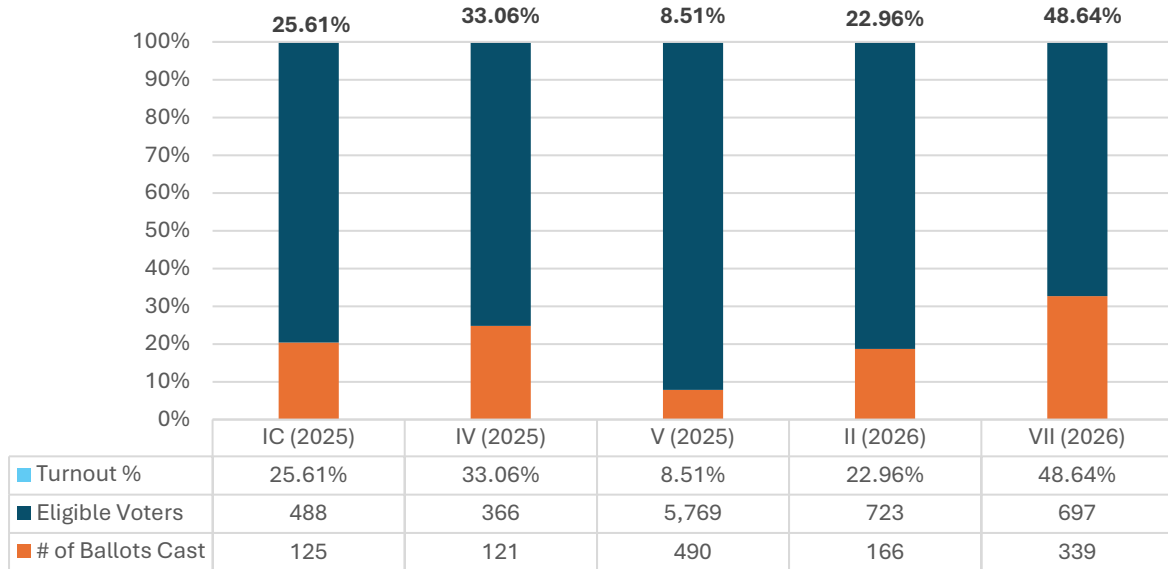
Note: In 2021, the seat was acclaimed.

Governing Council - Administrative Staff

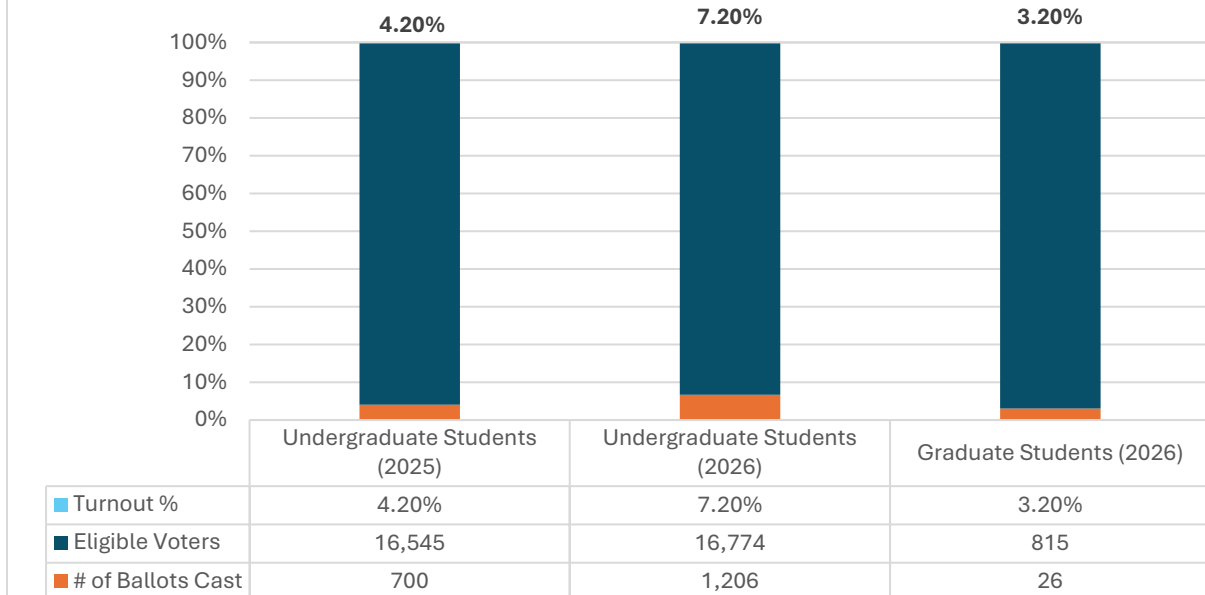


Note: No elections were held in 2020, 2023, and 2026. No seats were vacant during those years.

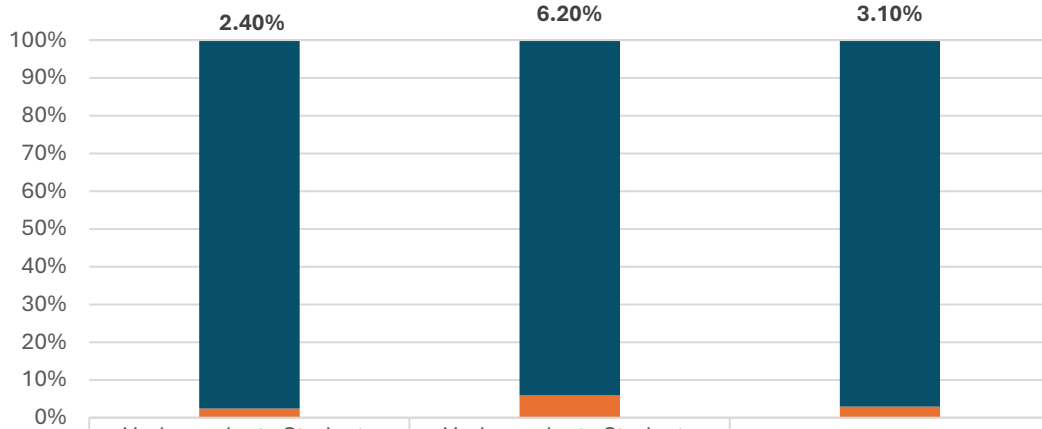
Governing Council - Teaching Staff by Constituency



UTM Campus Council by Constituency

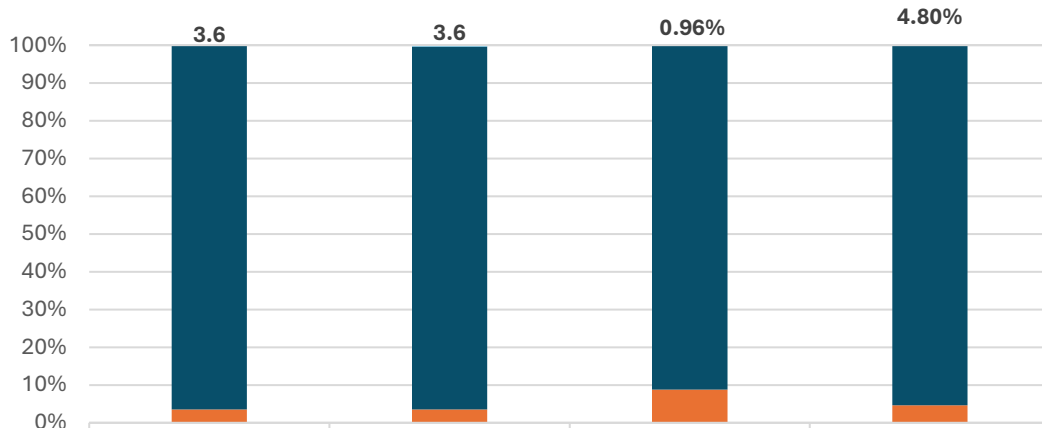


UTM Academic Affairs Committee by Constituency

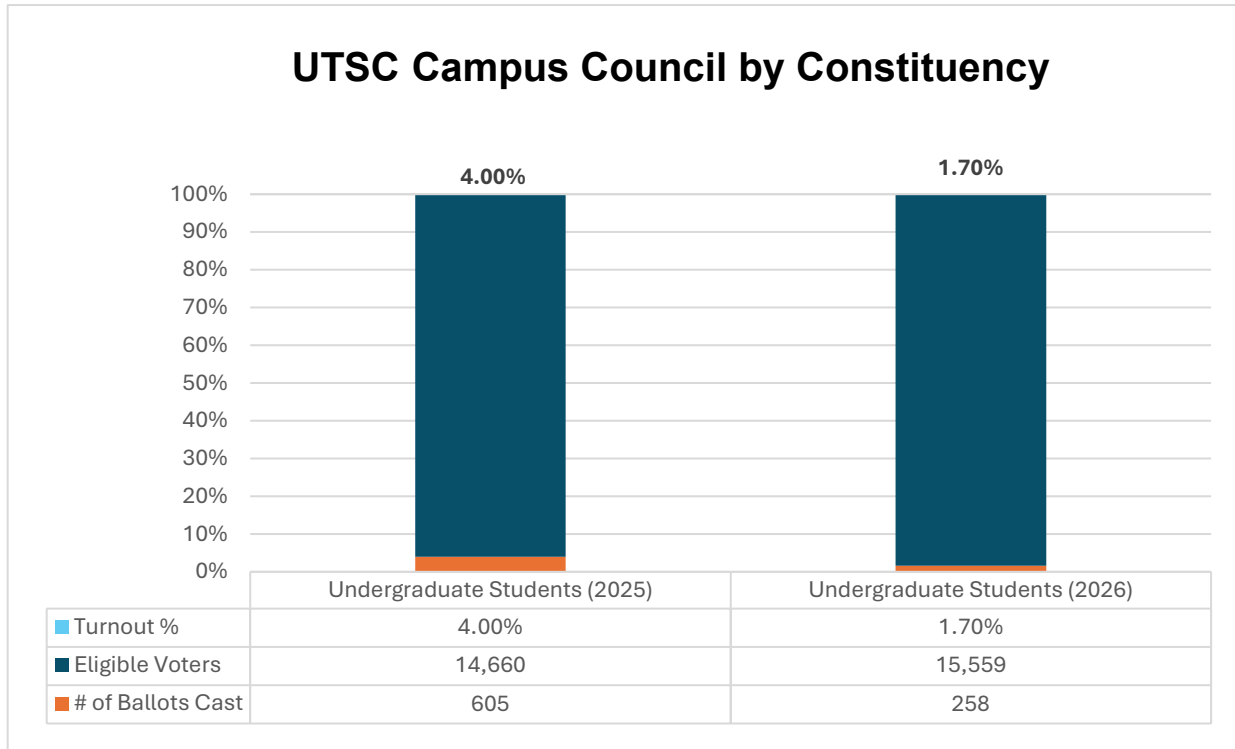


	Undergraduate Students (2025)	Undergraduate Students (2026)	Graduate Students (2026)
Turnout %	2.40%	6.20%	3.10%
Eligible Voters	16,545	16,774	815
# of Ballots Cast	411	1,046	25

UTM Campus Affairs Committee by Constituency



	Undergraduate Students (2025)	Graduate Students (2025)	Teaching Staff (2025)	Undergraduate Students (2026)
Turnout %	3.6	3.6	0.96%	4.80%
Eligible Voters	16,107	921	716	16,774
# of Ballots Cast	586	34	69	810



UTSC Academic Affairs Committee, Undergraduate Students Election:

227 (1.5%) of **15559** electors voted in this election.

Note: No elections held in 2025. No prior years data.

UTSC Campus Affairs Committee, Undergraduate Students Election:

191 (1.2%) of **15559** electors voted in this election.

Note: No elections held in 2025. No prior years data.

8.0 Campaign Violations and Appeals

All candidates were sent an email during the campaign reminding them of the relevant sections of the *Election Guidelines 2026*, in particular Appendix A (*Guidelines for Campaigning and Enforcement of the Elections Guidelines 2026*). Candidates were educated about campaign standards of conduct during the online information sessions that were held in January 2026.

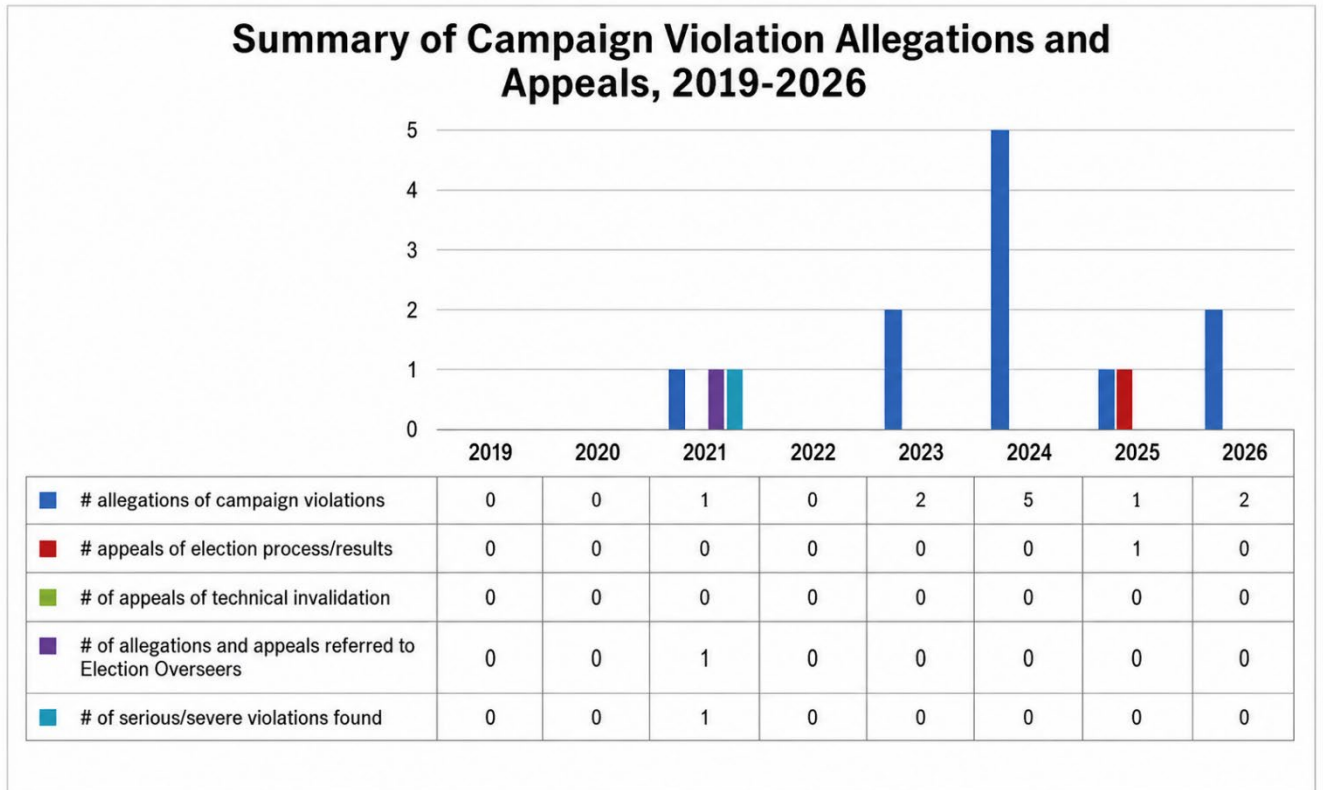
Two allegations of campaign violations were received concerning posters placed in prohibited areas. The CRO and DRO addressed the issue by speaking with the

candidates and ensuring the posters were removed and placed in authorized areas.

There was no requirement for the Elections Committee of the Governing Council, in accordance with Section 7.8(b) of the *Election Guidelines 2026*, to meet as Election Overseers in 2026.

For historical reference and context, the number of allegations of campaign violations and appeals that have been made since 2019 are summarized in the chart below.

Summary of Campaign Violation Allegations and Appeals, 2019-2026



9.0 Year-in-Review Summary & Recommendations for 2027

The 2026 elections were successfully administered across all constituencies of the Governing Council, Academic Board, and the UTM and UTSC Campus Councils and their Standing Committees. Core elements of the election cycle, including candidate information sessions, nomination intake, and secure online voting, were delivered as planned, with no material issues arising in the conduct of the elections or the administration of results.

The 2026 cycle also included several targeted enhancements. These included focused outreach to constituencies with historically low engagement and high vacancy rates, and the launch of the “Get Involved” webpage, which improved the accessibility and clarity of

elections information for prospective candidates and members of the University community. The continued development of the NMS further supported both user experience and administrative efficiency.

A transition in the role of Chief Returning Officer occurred in March 2026. Lauren Turner, Deputy Secretary of the Governing Council, was appointed by the Executive Committee as Chief Returning Officer effective March 18, 2026. The transition was managed without disruption, and continuity of operations was maintained.

Planning for the 2027 elections will build on the established foundation that has consistently supported successful electoral processes, including those demonstrated in 2026. In the context of broader fiscal restraint across the University, the Office of the Governing Council will prioritize the effective use of existing resources, including in-house project management and technology expertise. This will include continued attention to process efficiency, system optimization, and the responsible exploration of emerging tools, including AI, where they support the effective administration of elections.

The elections team will continue its work on the following priority areas:

- i. strengthening record-keeping practices to support continuity and consistency in election administration;
- ii. enhancing constituency outreach and education to improve engagement in University governance;
- iii. further developing the NMS to improve both user experience and administrative efficiency; and
- iv. undertaking targeted, incremental updates to the *Election Guidelines*, informed by operational experience from the 2026 election cycle.

Lauren Turner
Chief Returning Officer
May 12, 2026