



EXECUTIVE BRANCH

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINION

Jorge Altuna

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To: Andrew Collazo Borges, Assistant Supervisor of Elections
Amarah Presley, Supervisor of Elections

CC: Luci Blanco, Student Body President
Jarib Benitez, Student Body Vice President
Kirsten Courts, Speaker of the Senate
Jason Hameed, Senate President Pro Tempore
Bella Pazera, Chief Justice
Collin Hoffner, Internal Assistant Chief Justice
Victoria Marie Villadarez, External Assistant Chief Justice
Anna Reed, External Legislative Assistant
Grace Rudie, Internal Legislative Assistant
Ryan Kaufman, Deputy Pro Tempore of Legislative Affairs
James Kapinos, Deputy Pro Tempore of Senate Relations
Zachary Gaudio, Legislative, Judicial, and Rules Committee Chair
Owen Sherman, Conference, Registration, and Travel Committee Chair
Niklas Luecht, Financial Allocations for Organizations Committee Chair
Samuel Rose, Operations Review & Sanctions Committee Chair
Nghì Chau, Elections and Appointments Committee Chair
Juan Varela, Government Affairs and Policy Committee Chair
Mila Teodorescu, Student Body Advocacy Committee Chair
Jordan Lipner, Caucus Leadership Committee Chair

From: Jorge Altuna, Attorney General and Judicial Advisor

Date: September 18, 2025

Subject: Opinion on Candidate Presence at Tabulation

Time: 7:00 PM EST

I. Foreword

I, Jorge Altuna, the Student Government Attorney General, in accordance with the Student Body Constitution, Statutes, and Senate Rules, hereby issue the following opinion:

For the reasons explained below, it is the opinion of this Office that the right of candidates to be present during the tabulation of election results, as provided in §604.8(B) of Title VI, is strictly a right of observation, not a right of participation or intervention in the process. Candidates are entitled to be in the room for transparency purposes, but they may not disrupt, direct, or interfere in any capacity with the officials conducting the tabulation. Importantly, the Student Government Advisor and the Supervisor of Elections retain exclusive authority over this process.



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II. Question Presented

This opinion is issued in response to an inquiry from the Assistant Supervisor of Elections, Andrew Collazo Borges. The question presented is: Section 604.8(B) permits candidates or tickets to be present during the tabulation of results. What is the scope of this entitlement? Specifically, does it confer the right to observe, to remain within the tabulation area, or to engage in any additional role during the process?

III. Background and Statutory Framework

Section 604.8 of Title VI governs the process of tabulating votes and certifying results after the conclusion of voting. Two subsections are important to discuss:

- **§604.8(A):** This section stipulates that the Supervisor of Elections and the Student Government Advisor must certify the election results upon receiving the vote totals from myUCF and UCF IT before announcing those results publicly. In practice, this means that immediately after the polls close and the electronic voting system generates the tally, the Supervisor and the Student Government Advisor sign off to formalize the outcome.
- **§604.8(B):** This is the key subsection at issue, which states: “Each candidate/ticket may be present at the tabulation of results.” By its plain terms, this provision entitles every candidate to be present during the counting of votes. Notably, the statute strictly uses the word present, it does not elaborate on any role that candidates have in the tabulation and certification process.

Consequently, the statutory framework establishes a right for candidates to be physically present during vote tabulation and any recount; however, it does not describe an active role for those candidates in the counting process. The candidates are granted an opportunity to witness the proceedings firsthand, which is a commitment to transparency in Student Government elections. This setup is similar to the concept of election observers in public governmental elections, where observers (often candidates or their campaign staff) are allowed to be in the room to watch the count, even though they do not conduct the count themselves.



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IV. Analysis

Clearly, there is no statutory basis to infer that candidates can actively participate in, or intervene in, the tabulation process itself. First, there is the plain meaning of the term “present.” This simply denotes physical attendance. Specifically, §604.8(B) uses straightforward language that each candidate may be present during the tabulation. If the Student Body Senators who drafted this provision intended to give candidates a participatory role, the statute would contain additional language to that effect. It does not.

Second, the context within §604.8 supports this limited role. The surrounding provisions outline duties and the sequence of actions in the tabulation process, and none provide any decision-making power to candidates. Section 604.8(A) makes it clear that the actual work of certifying and preparing the results for release lies with the Supervisor of Elections and the Student Government Advisor. This is a task for election officials, not candidates.

Third, §604.8(C) illustrates how candidates are expected to address any issues they perceive with the count. It explicitly gives each candidate the right to request a recount of votes after the official count. During that recount, as well as during the initial count, the candidate observe, nothing more. This provision further solidifies that the results are certified by Supervisor of Elections and the Student Government Advisor, whereas the candidates simply watch.

V. Conclusion

For the above reasons, it is the opinion of this Office that §604.8(B) of the Student Body Statutes guarantees candidates the right to observe the vote tabulation process in person, but does not grant them any participation. Candidates may observe the Election Commission certify the votes to ensure themselves that the procedure is conducted properly. However, they may not influence the counting or disrupt the proceedings.

Issued with due consideration and in service to the Constitution,

Jorge Altuna
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VI. References

University of Central Florida. (2025). UCF Student Body Constitution. University of Central Florida Student Government. Retrieved from <https://studentgovernment.ucf.edu>

University of Central Florida. (2025). UCF Student Body Statutes. University of Central Florida Student Government. Retrieved from <https://studentgovernment.ucf.edu>