

Official Results Pending Presentation to Council
No pending appeals

CSU General Election 2014

(Winners bolded and marked with an asterisk)

Executive Committee:

Vice-President of External Relations: Vice-President of Student Life:

***Brittany Barnes: 256**

Ian Hejdanek: 58

Oscar Blue 92

***Zofia Rodriguez: 235**

Vice-President of University
Relations and Services

***Sacha Fabry: 230**

Michaela Hanemaayer: 96

Vice-President of Internal
Development

Zack Renwick

***YES: 270**

NO: 24

Collectives:

Students of Colour Liaison

***Romila Barryman: 146**

Kevin Kapenda: 140

Queer Students Liaison

John Kinsley

***YES: 298**

NO: 18

This position had three recounts to ensure the
validity of the result

Students with Disabilities Liaison

Julian Kolstee

***Yes: 284**

No: 27

Womens Students Liaison

Taylor Smith

***YES: 284**

NO: 27

First Nations Students Liaison

Taylor George-Hollis

***YES: 274**

NO: 23

Environmental Issues Coordinator

Scott Knowles

***YES: 316**

NO: 14

International Student Liaison

***Rhita Hassar: 146**

Luis Rincon Garza: 84

Zainab Tayyab: 85

Social Justice Coordinator

Devyn Brugge

***YES: 279**

NO: 22

Regional Campus Representatives

No candidates nominated

Faculty Representatives

Arts and Sciences

***Kevin Adam: 53**

***Rebecca Gerber: 52**

Santana Gjaltema: 33

Fine and Applied Arts

Livia Du Hamel: 20

***Alexa Houle: 47**

Tyler Williamson: 17

***Taylor Wilson: 23**

This result was recounted once to ensure it's validity

Business and Professional Studies

Tomi Borejszo: 57

***David Fryer: 70**

***Emily Solomon: 97**

Global and Community Studies

Ben Glassen:

***YES: 40**

NO: 6

Kate Phifer:

***YES: 32**

NO: 6

Education, Health and Human Development

No Candidates Nominated

Campaign Complaints and Warnings

One complaint was received regarding posters being improperly placed overtop of other candidates posters. There was no evidence that the candidate in question intentionally placed their poster overtop of another poster and it is possible that this was done by someone else while re-arranging signs.

While the bylaws and policies are relatively silent on the issue of postering over other candidates materials, I felt it was not keeping in good conduct and violated the spirit of rules I verbally placed on candidates at the all candidates forum. As such, I gave that candidate a warning for their actions and mandated that they confirm to me that their other posters around campus were not also blocking other candidate posters.

This is an issue that primarily arises out of a combination of issues to do with the new organizational format. With a smaller structure and less total candidates, a limit of 15 large posters would be a functioning limitation, but with so many candidates and so few poster locations, it is unavoidable that a race to poster first will occur, future policy shifts may be able to mitigate this issue.

Executive Summary

The 2014 election was run successfully with nearly a full slate of candidates and a number of contested positions. A number of issues arose around the transition to a new structure, both for the candidate positions themselves as well as in the structure of the elections itself. Having a larger than normal amount of issues arise in an election following such sweeping structural changes is hardly surprising and many issues can be avoided in future with greater time for the CRO to take on their role and the benefits of comprehensive policy reform. The chief avoidable issue that arose was in training the incoming chief returning officer, both in how it was carried out and the short time frame between hiring and the election. Staff liaison's role was not made clear early in the process, and the actual explanation of past practices was carried out orally and was often incomplete. A clear, written hand book on past practices including clear explanation of the role of the CRO, and handling of staff resources would be very beneficial for future CRO's. In all, the elections were successfully run using as much of the outdated policies as possible while ensuring that the up to date bylaws were followed as closely as possible. This required a fair amount of understanding of the interaction of bylaws and policies that would not be as difficult with an up to date set of elections policies.

Election Timeline:

14 March:	CRO is hired
19 March:	Notice of Election is posted
26 March:	Nomination period opens
1 April:	Nomination Period Closes
1 April:	All Candidates meeting
2 April:	Campaigning begins
9-11 April:	Polling

Logistical details:

We held polling in the student space, which worked fairly well. Turnout was reasonably high given historical numbers and the space was a space we controlled and had good foot traffic. One concern that came up as in booking the space, a miscommunication caused the space to be booked for a private event at the close of one of the polling days, in its stead polling was moved into the hallway and polling continued for the remaining hour of the day.

For the satellite campuses, several hours of polling was conducted at each, but this proved difficult to coordinate and should be planned well in advance. Additionally, **effort beyond what is outlined in the bylaws should be made to attempt to recruit candidates as no one contested the campus representative positions.**

The website for elections was not updated until well into the elections process as its existence in past elections had not been made known to the Chief Returning Officer. **In future, the elections website should be placed in policies in terms of content requirements and information passed on, as well as including the websites URL in the list of mandatory poster information alongside polling booth locations and days.**

The notice of election being mandated to go up fully a week prior to nomination packages becoming available may be a redundant and unnecessary length of time. There is no perceived negative to having nomination packages available at the beginning of the notice period.

An entire cabinet of elections committee materials was not utilized for the election due to the existence of the cabinet not being made known to the Chief Returning Officer until the final days of the election.

A complete inventory of elections materials should be maintained for the incoming CRO to be able to

understand what is available. There was a consistent issue throughout the campaign with passage of information regarding elections materials and past practices. Should these be in written form, potential and perceived biases would be filtered out and a more transparent process obtained.

In previous elections, the ballot box has been locked with a combination lock that is registered through the student union and stored in a staff lunch room or similar location. For this election, a key lock was purchased and only the Chief Returning Officer held a key for it, when not being monitored by poll clerks, the ballot box was stored in a room with which the Chief Returning Officer did not have access to, thus creating a double barrier of entry to the ballot boxes. This is important for the integrity of the election, but more important for **ensuring a perception of integrity and that there is no avenue for accusation against staff of the society** who would have had access to that staff room.

Campaign Materials

This election saw an opening up in the rules around campaign materials. Part of this is due to poor transition for the CRO, many of the previous practices were not effectively communicated early on and so rules were based on interpretation of often vaguely worded policies. Additionally some policies were ruled out of order due to conflicts with the bylaws. In the end, I believe that these changes made for a better process that allowed for greater flexibility.

Electoral policies dictate that each candidate is to be assigned a colour of paper to campaign with, however given the large number of candidates and the rule in bylaws around slates and slate like behaviour, I felt that there were not enough distinct colours of paper to hand out that would not create a perceived slate due to similar or the same colour of paper for multiple candidates. In the end, this opened up a great deal more creativity and likely allowed for much greater variation in candidate poster style.

Past practice had apparently been that all materials must be produced and stamped by the student union. This was a fact that I learned from candidates very near to the start of campaigning and was not effectively communicated to me prior to campaigning. Due to a strict reading of the language in the bylaws and policies, I ruled that materials could be produced outside of the CSU offices provided they be approved by the CRO in advance.

Here is the section of the policies in question that brought out the ruling around materials produced outside of the student union, with relevant wording bolded:

*4.1: Candidates **may** use the Union computers, photocopiers, and scanners for the creation of their campaign materials. If a candidate **wishes to use other equipment**, the campaign materials must be in accordance with the Bylaws and policies of the Union.*

All of the rules surrounding campaign materials were entirely focused on photocopied materials, with no limitation or regulation of non-photocopy based campaign materials. As such, the policy was given to candidates that all materials must be approved and that, as much as possible, a similar rubric would be used to apply to each, with some minor alterations. Rules around what needed to be included on posters were ignored for purposes of some campaign mediums that would not allow it for space such as twitter or sidewalk chalk for example. **Future campaign policy should include sections for both web based and non-poster based physical campaign material like hand bills.**

Particularly in the form of web based campaigning, rules must become quite a bit different from static poster based campaigning. On the web, regardless of if it is email, twitter etc, it operates far more like verbal communication than poster, prior approval of individual tweets is both draconian and silly.

There was concern raised by some candidates around ensuring a level playing field financially. This proved itself as an issue that had to be ruled on when one candidate requested the ability to give food and beverages as part of their campaign.

It is important to note that **presently no rules exist preventing candidates from handing out food or other free things**. There exists some language around candidates not having unfair advantage over others, but that is in regards to leveraging pre-existing positions in the society, ie. Student union computers, rather than a financial implication.

The ruling around food that was such that as the rules were silent, the CRO had the discretion to create rules. As food and beverages can be considered an inducement rather than an informative tool, it was decided to not allow it on those grounds rather than weigh in on grounds of financial burden. In analyzing campaign policy reform, **ensuring financial restrictions exist and are capable of creating a reasonably level playing field for all candidates is vitally important**. This can be done quite easily, and is done at other institutions, establishing a need to report campaign spending and assess all costs at established market rates with a spending cap and restrictions on certain things deemed to be too expensive, while requiring a certain amount of honesty, is fairly easily checked for authenticity using common sense estimations.

In the event of a CSU election taking place simultaneously with other campus elections such as for board of governors, a **clarification should be made as to how slate rules apply to those running in CSU elections that may appear as an apparent slate with a non-CSU run election candidate**. There was a question raised on this during the election and the ruling that came out was that the CRO has no authority over that election, however the CRO would have authority over the conduct of those running in the CSU election. That said, the bylaws are ambiguous as to whether or not slate rules apply in this case.

All Candidate's Forum

Holding an all candidates forum is an excellent practice, and one single period of time likely sufficed well for the smaller CSU structure that previously existed. However, with the sheer number of positions and candidates, it became quite difficult to give each candidate sufficient speaking time or exposure without having a full day affair. **In future, holding multiple forums, geared towards different positions, would ensure candidate's have a reasonable speaking time**.

Additionally, there is no reason why the all candidate's forum cannot be uploaded to the internet, potentially as part of a broader more developed CSU elections website.

Balloting

For this election, ballots were on two forms. One form had all of the general positions, executives and collectives, and a second sheet was handed to the voter based on their faculty. In future, faculty sheets should each be on different colour paper, to allow for easier separation and counting.

The bylaws do not specify who is eligible to vote for each position. The decision taken was that each voter would receive all collective votes and they would be able to decide for themselves which applied to them for the collective positions. The faculty positions are not enshrined in the bylaws as being only voted on by members of that faculty, and so the interpretation was made by the CRO that the intent was to be representatives of that faculty, and so voted on by that faculty. **The voter list obtained by the CSU was critically missing the faculty that each voter was a part of**, meaning that we operated on the honour system to decide who received faculty representative ballots. This was likely not an issue in this election, however it creates a loop hole that would allow candidates to seek out voters who are willing to lie about their faculty to the poll clerks. **Discussions should begin immediately with the University to ensure that future member lists include the faculty**.

Violations

As exists presently in the rules, there are only two levels of punishment, warning and disqualification. This leaves little room for levelling restrictions in campaigning to candidates, essentially no middle ground

enforcement. **The society should look at what it would consider effective punitive action**, be it ordered removal of all posters, ban from campaigning for a set number of days or others based on what works at other student union elections and at what is felt appropriate at the CSU.

The ability to enforce punitive measures to candidates ensures that the CRO has a level of enforcement between a slap on the wrist style warning and full disqualification.

Elections Policies

Obviously as stated, a difficulty with this election was the outdated policies that did not reflect the bylaws. It is understood that a comprehensive overhaul is intended. The suggestion would be to include an analysis of how elections are carried out at other institutions, as well as a thorough discussion on the principle of what the society would like to see in the form of its elections.

The current model of CRO with staff support is a functional model provided the CRO is experienced in their role and the staff involved are capable of maintaining a flexible, open mind. These roles however must be made clear from the beginning. The CRO should be brought in to have preliminary meetings with the general manager to understand the structure of the organization and the role that the general manager and staff support will have. This would alleviate much of the confusion that occurred early on where I was unsure as to the role of staff support in terms of how much I could ask of them, and also better understand what was expected.

Concluding Remarks

It was both a pleasure and an honour to be the Chief Returning Officer for the Capilano Students Union. I thank the board for placing their faith in me and hope that I did not disappoint. This report is delivered in the hope of assisting in what I know to be an already intended overhaul of the election policies. Following the conclusion of the contract, I would be more than happy to return to assist the CSU in their reform efforts, and am always open to being contacted with questions.

Thanks,

Patrick Meehan