



REPORT

From the office of the...

Elections Department

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Priya Gupta (CRO)
SUBJECT: Elections Department Report 5
DATE: Wednesday March 9th 2016

UPDATE

The Elections Department is currently finishing up SRA Generals and has successfully completed the Presidential and Referendum election. It's a bit difficult for me to truly sum up this semester in the Elections Department. These past two months have been some of the most stressful, yet rewarding months of the Elections Department and we are so thankful for all the support that we have received thus far! We were able to break records this year with having the highest voter turnout for Presidential/Referenda as well as the second highest number of candidates running for SRA Generals. We also faced great challenges throughout our elections; however, the Department has maintained their values of integrity and transparency throughout. Both the CRO and the DRO are extremely proud of all the hard work that our committee and Department has put into these past two months and we hope that the engagement and excitement we see from students surrounding elections only gets bigger and better in future years!

SERVICE USAGE

Our service was at its peak usage in these past two months. With the Presidential/Referenda election, SRA Generals, three potential Referenda, and over ten requests for our services from external groups, our Department has been very hard at work in meeting our demand. We saw five candidates running for Presidential and 73 candidates running for SRA! This truly speaks to the engagement and excitement that the student population has surrounding elections. With the Presidential and SRA Election, we have also seen a substantial increase in the usage of our office hours. The Elections Department has worked tirelessly to make themselves available to all the candidates and anyone who has any concern or questions about the electoral process.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

We had two extremely successful events during the Presidential campaign. The Presidential Meet n' Greet was held in 1280 a few days before the debate and we had a fantastic turnout! We received great feedback on the event with students commenting on how relaxing and inviting the event was. The candidates also enjoyed the experience. We

believe holding this event before the debate truly allowed students to get to know their candidates on a more personal level and become more engaged with the debate itself!

The Presidential Debate was also a successful event. We had probably one of the highest turnout for any debate on campus and students were very engaged in the atrium as well as on the livestream. Students commented on how much they enjoyed having an ASL interpreter there and we were glad we were able to make the event as accessible as possible. The debate did have a few challenges, especially surrounding the nature of the comments being made on the livestream. For future years we will have to work with AVTEK to see how we can monitor the comments better so that no candidate is being attacked maliciously. Regardless of a few setbacks, the debate was very well received and truly spoke to how engaged students were in the election!

The Elections Department has also submitted a recommended budget for the upcoming year as well as finalized our SimplyVoting contract for the next two years.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The Elections Department is currently finishing up the SRA election. Once the election is over, the Department will be working on developing a feedback survey to collect data on how the Presidential and SRA candidates felt about the electoral process. This will help to inform future changes to the process to ensure that candidates feel as safe and welcome to run for these positions. This will be in collaboration with the MSU Wants You working group and the information will be shared to the group. The CRO and DRO will begin transitioning the incoming CRO (Helen Zeng) and DRO (Kritika Seth) and begin planning for next year.

BUDGET

<i>McMaster Student's Union</i>							
<i>Dept. 0303 - Elections Committee</i>							
<i>For the Nine Months Ending January 31, 2016</i>							
	Current	Prior Yr.	Current	Prior Yr.	Prior Yr.	Approved	% Budget
	Month	Month	YTD	YTD	YE	Budget	Used
	January	January	2015-16	2014-15	2014-15	2016	To Date
All:							
3801-0303 ELEC - OTHER REVENUE	(550.00)	(60.00)	(1,320.00)	(639.00)	(1,394.00)	(1,000.00)	132.00%
5101-0303 ELEC - TELEPHONE	28.30	14.15	84.90	127.48	169.93	180.00	47.17%
5201-0303 ELEC - PHOTOCOPYING						24.00	0.00%
6102-0303 ELEC - PRESIDENTIAL REIMBURSEMENT		976.87		976.87	2,865.50	2,500.00	0.00%
6151-0303 ELEC - POLL BOOTH SET-UP					4,853.81	5,500.00	0.00%
6201-0303 ELEC - ELECTION REFUNDS			726.70	220.00	220.00	2,500.00	29.07%
6402-0303 ELEC - AWARDS & MEETINGS	382.39	125.87	406.53	143.67	526.13	300.00	135.51%
6501-0303 ELEC - ADV. & PROMO.		3,076.90	1,440.57	3,286.90	4,056.40	2,500.00	57.62%
6512-0303 ELEC - ADVERTISING - PRESIDENTIALS	3,246.63	793.50	3,246.63	808.50	1,631.52	2,000.00	162.33%
6513-0303 ELEC - PROMOTIONS - SRA MARCH					77.90	500.00	0.00%
7001-0303 ELEC - WAGES	720.28	702.68	7,778.61	6,806.81	10,962.33	12,000.00	64.82%
7101-0303 ELEC - BENEFITS	54.25	55.42	565.96	500.58	833.65	1,200.00	47.16%
8001-0303 ELEC - DEPRECIATION EXPENSE			169.90	181.24	271.86	270.00	62.93%
Total All	3,881.85	5,685.39	13,099.80	12,413.05	25,075.03	28,474.00	46.01%

VOLUNTEERS

The Elections Committee has been amazing in their role as volunteers these past few months. Our fines meeting for the Presidential Election extended until 4am, and

throughout the entire process they put in an incredible amount of thought and consideration to each and every decision they made. After the disqualification and throughout the appeals process, they were also very conscientious, fair, and discrete when dealing with the public and candidates/teams. The committee saw that many people were frustrated with the appeals process and took initiatives to suggest ways in which the Elections Department can better communicate with the public. These ideas of which could be immensely beneficial for future elections! The Committee was very active in promoting Presidential/Referendum as well as the SRA General Election. The amount of dedication and effort put into the elections by the committee has been extremely heartwarming to see and the CRO/DRO are very proud to have been part of the elections family. We unfortunately lost one Committee member Ashley Eom, who decided to give up her position in order to run for a SRA seat. At the SRA meeting on March 6, 2016 a new member, Robert Redelmeier, was elected and will be joining us for the SRA Generals fines meeting.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Some current challenges that Elections is facing are regarding petitions and the Registrar's Office. During the Presidential Election voting period, the list that was provided to us included some 1000 Nursing students who attended Mohawk College and McMaster University (MoMac) but were not MSU members. These names had to be individually removed from the list, as well the SRA seat allocation had to be re-run due to these inaccuracies. This was both a time-consuming and frustrating process and should not have been necessary. Furthermore, due to a new policy that the Registrar's Office has adopted, we have had to send in petitions to be verified, which takes much longer than it did previously. With these changes, there have been difficulties in communicating with potential Referendum sides about the timelines in submitting and verifying petitions in time for an election and they were upset that their referendum would not run concurrently with the 2016 SRA General Election. However, we spoke with them and were able to deal with the issue. Finally with an incredible 72 candidates in the SRA General Election, there have been some issues with the large amount of posters that have been put up around campus. Many of them fell down within a few days and not only are causing litter but we have heard that the custodial staff is removing many of the posters from areas such as the Arts Quad. The poster policy is something that we may need to reevaluate for next year's SRA General Election.

SUCSESSES

Through all of our challenges, the Elections Department has been able to continuously maintain our values of integrity and transparency throughout. With the highest voter turnout in Presidential/Referenda history as well as the second highest number of candidates running for SRA, we are all very proud of the way we've been able to get students engaged with the MSU. We have also taken great strides in making our elections more financially accessible by lowering the spending limit for the Presidential election. Candidates also no longer have to pay out of pocket at the Underground and this

definitely helps alleviate some of the financial burden some candidates might face during elections. Throughout these past few months, the elections committee members have been able to form great bonds with each other and the CRO/DRO are very proud of the way our committee has stayed engaged and professional in our elections. Despite the challenges we faced in the Presidential election, we believe that ultimately it was a very successful experience and we hope that students get even more engaged in future years!