



REPORT

From the office of the
**Chief and Deputy Returning
Officers**

TO: Executive Board
FROM: Helen Zeng and Kritika Seth, Chief and Deputy Returning Officers
SUBJECT: Space Audit
DATE: August 23, 2016

Dear Executive Board,

Upon receiving the recommendations of the MSU Space Audit 2016, we at the Elections Department would like to voice our strong objections to recommendation #2, which cites the removal of the Elections Office. We hope that in providing the perspective of a Part Time Manager the Executive Board will better understand why we need the space that we currently have.

Through the office, we can conduct meetings in a closed office space. This is a very important part of the Elections Department, as confidentiality is one of our pillars and crucial to our proper functioning. This is especially relevant during high activity times, such as in January during the Presidential Election. Since many candidates and campaign managers consult with the DRO/CRO during this time, privacy is key to a successful and confidential election. Furthermore, without this space, it would make our jobs increasingly difficult and stressful to find an alternate location to conduct meetings in, especially with the hectic nature that surrounds elections such as Presidentials.

Moreover if there are concerns about secure documentation, removing our office space only puts us at greater risk of exposing potentially sensitive documents. Even working under the assumption that we are to lock everything away, the reality of our job dictates that we need easy access to a variety of resources and documentation over a period of time. Placing the Department in a completely exposed space while still expecting us to maintain the confidentiality creates huge roadblock in terms of our efficiency and adds more stress in what are already difficult times. In addition, moving all our important documents from one location to another with the FYC election right around the corner adds extra stress to our job come September, when we should really be focused on increasing voter turnout for what is usually our weakest election. In addition, the CRO/DRO are still in the process of properly archiving all documents that have been arbitrarily stored in the Elections Office over the past decade. On such a short time notice, we will not be able to finish archiving these documents in the best possible manner.

Furthermore, with the recent addition of twelve more elected positions onto the First Year Council, the potential for Vice-President Elections to go at large, and our expanding role in MSU Wants You our service is dealing with more changes and a greater workload than ever. It is essential for us to have a centralized workstation that affords privacy and security. To this point, we will add that while finding alternative options was probably not easy for the Space

Audit team, the intention to book Meeting Room B during election periods is not a viable option. This will remove resources from other services, committees, and disrupt BoD functions such as hiring that normally happen in January. Moreover, the constant shuffling of resources back and forth is not sustainable for the Elections Department and the MSU office as a whole. Lastly, meetings sometimes must be held on a very short-term notice to consult with a candidate or their campaign manager, such as during Presidentials. In cases as such, booking a Meeting Room in advance is not a viable option, and it puts Elections in a tough spot if we are unable to find a Meeting Room in a timely manner.

Finally we would like to ask the Executive Board to consider our mental health as Part Time Managers. Elections comes under a great deal of scrutiny and publicity: some good, many bad. The office not only provides a workspace, but a safe space for us to decompress and continually pursue our values as a service. Removing this buffer will exponentially increase the stress of the job and impact our ability to perform our duties to the best of our ability. Though we understand that space reallocation is a key component of the MSU functioning optimally, we strongly feel that removal of the Elections office for the 2016-2017 school year would greatly impact the nature of the services' performance. This is especially the case as this change would be implemented come September, right before a major election, which adds additional stress to the CRO/DRO in an already demanding time.

We are not against relocating the Election Department at some point in the future; however, we strongly feel that doing it hastily right before the school year starts on such short-term notice would be harmful to the functioning of the service. Perhaps a better alternative would be to look into viable spaces for the Elections Office to move into for the 2017-2018 school year. This would give the committee a year to look at the best way to restructure, do consultations with the CRO/DRO and make infrastructural changes if necessary, as opposed to having a makeshift space for this year.

Sincerely,

Helen Zeng and Kritika Seth
Chief and Deputy Returning Officers
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