



REPORT

From the office of the...

Elections Department

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Helen Zeng (CRO), Kritika Seth (DRO)
SUBJECT: MSU Elections Department Report 4
DATE: Tuesday February 7, 2017

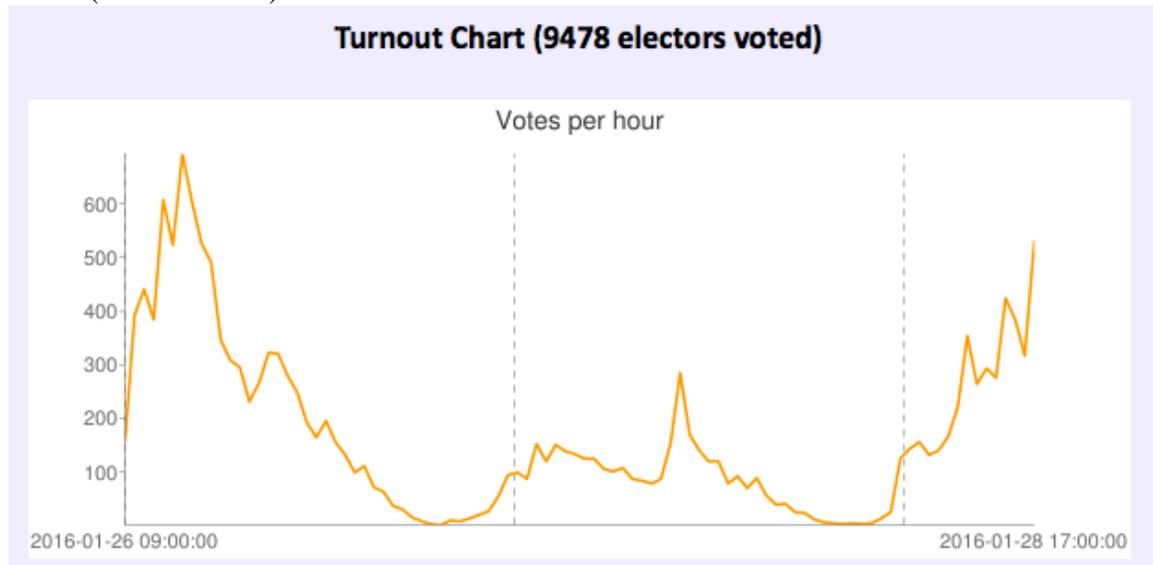
UPDATE

2017 has been busy so far; we have just ended our biggest campaign-Presidential Election and January Referenda. We had a total of three referenda-Athletics & Recreation and Student Activity Building, Hamilton Street Railway Bus Pass, and Syllabus Repository Referendum- as well as six candidates run for President. We held two events for Presidentials as per usual, which both went well. The Meet n' Greet on January 16 had a decent turnout, and the debate had reasonably greater attendance with the atrium more or less filled throughout. It was 30 minutes longer than last year, which although tiring, allowed us to ask more questions from the audience.

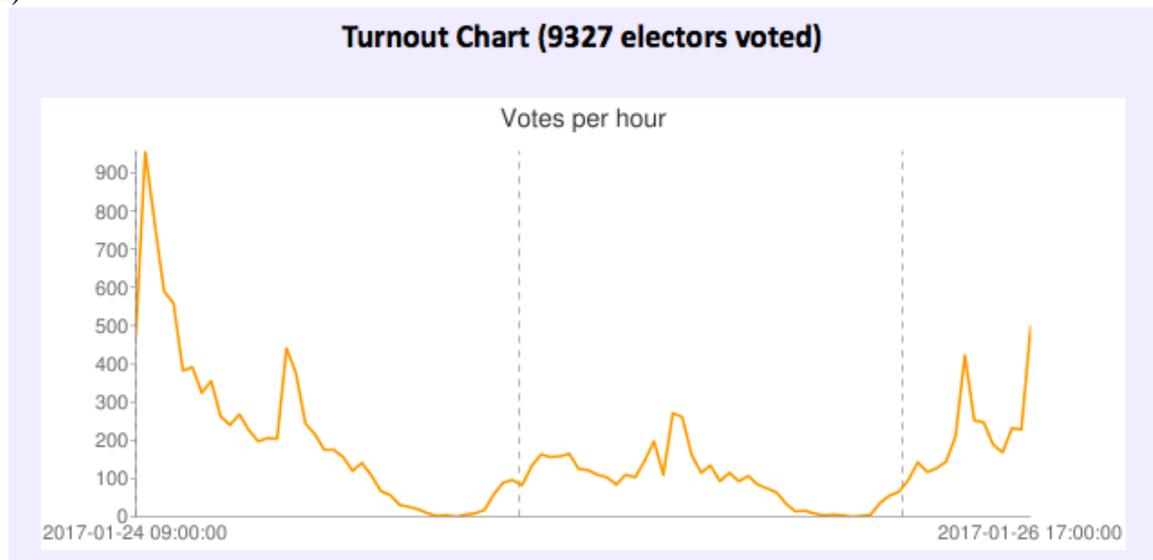
Communication with candidates/campaign managers was consistent and although the campaign period was busy overall, we were surprised by the relative lack of controversy throughout the two weeks. However, this did not manifest in the fines meeting as we received up to 70% of complaint forms within the last 1-2 hours before the deadline. As a result, a fines meeting that was estimated to take until midnight at most ended up finishing around 3am, with results released at 4am. There was not much we could do to mitigate this problem, although I would recommend either moving the fines meeting to later, or ending the period for complaints at 5pm rather than 5:30pm. We originally gave them until 5:30pm in case anything were to happen in the last minutes of campaigning, but evidently this rule is being taken advantage of.

This year, we wanted to tackle the issue of candidates setting up tables in the cafeteria area and thereby creating congestion for students and the administration. This is a problem that has occurred year after year, and so we decided to have Atrium days where the candidates were provided tables for three days to table in the atrium. This was received with mixed feedback. On one hand, teams found it harder to engage students as the gap between them and the general traffic of students was wide. I suggested in moving tables closer, which may have helped a bit. On the other hand, team members expressed it was more equitable to provide tables so campaign members would not have to stake out tables in the cafeteria at unreasonably early times. As well, a mere three days in the atrium was ridiculously expensive, costing us around \$500 per day. This should be taken into consideration for future and working with the administration to negotiate a better situation. We discussed having a few days at the beginning of each week to relieve the congestion and build up of stress throughout the campaign period. And perhaps better communicating to campaigns that the space is theirs to use for whatever, as they did not seem to know that they could use the entire atrium and stayed within their table space.

Voter turnout for this year's Presidential election was similar to last year in numbers, however due to the greatly increased student population, the percentage of students who voted decreased. Compared to last year's 2016 Presidentials saw 44.5% of students vote (9478 electors):



This compared to the most recent election, we saw 41.6% of student vote (9327 electors):



Patterns are similar, with many more people voting within the first few hours of polls opening this year. Referenda were presented on separate ballot this year, but voter turnout was significantly lower than the Presidential ballot.

Nominations for SRA Generals have opened and will remain open until February 28th at 5pm. We encourage everyone to nominate themselves and to represent their faculties. We have also just finished the MSU: A How-To conference, which was born from the MSU Governance and You committee. There were approximately 15 people in attendance who intend to apply, and we are posting resources online for those who were unable to attend. I think this conference was a great starting point in closing the gap between those who have campaigned before/have been involved in the MSU before and

those who are running for the first time. The timing was unfortunate since we had to move the conference up a week (originally planned to take place February 11) and so the preparation period overlapped considerably with Presidentials and Kritika and I were not able to be as involved as we would have hoped to be. I hope this initiative continues for next year and continues to develop into something even better and greater and earlier promotions.

We have also been working with Jess Bauman and Jonathan Davis from Clubs to set up a SimplyVoting log in for clubs elections. Hopefully, they can take full advantage of the system the MSU pays for to better streamline Club elections.

SERVICE USAGE

We have had a large amount of usage over the past month or so, people came in regularly for meetings and consultations. Moreover, we were sending and receiving a great deal of e-mails regarding Referenda and Presidentials. As of now, things have calmed down considerably, which is a nice break for us. We have run 2 faculty elections in 2017 with many more to come in the next few weeks. We have run the McMaster Engineering Society Presidential and B-Tech Representative election as well as the Bachelor of Health Sciences Society election. We have the McMaster Science Society and McMaster University Nursing Students' Society election coming up this month and in March.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

As mentioned previously, Elections held two past events and organized another in conjunction with the Governance and You Committee. The Meet n' Greet was held in TwelvEighty Bar & Grill with all Presidential candidates on January 16. This event was to start the campaign period off with a more relaxed event and give students the opportunity to get to know the candidates. We are grateful to Ryan MacDonald who acted as the host and took us through the night. I still think this event was appropriate for it's purpose. Livestreaming is recommended for next year as well as any other event we hold. The Meet n' Greet was well attended with roughly 50-60 people coming through at one time or another. We were afraid it's timing so close to the beginning of the campaign period would have affected turn out, but everything seemed to have been okay.

The debate ran smoothly as well. We worked with Michael Wooder to craft the questions based on submission from the public. Same as before, I would always suggest promoting questions earlier to get more feedback from the general population and avoiding campaign team plants. The Speaker, Genya Oparin, moderated which I think is an appropriate choice once again. This years debate was longer than last year, and I would suggest in shortening it to two hours next year. Especially given the Livestream, I do not think the students lose much if the debate was more compact. Also, the lighting was strange and was only fixed near the end once Avtek was alerted.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Our greatest upcoming campaign is SRA Generals. We have just opened nominations and will continue to promote the election for the next few weeks. We are excited to see the next roster of candidates. We may also use this time to work with faculty societies or SRA members not returning to create faculty-specific candidate events. This can take on many forms-from an online collection of platforms, to a

candidate meet n' greet-and is up to the associated bodies how much time they wish to invest in SRA Generals.

BUDGET

McMaster Student's Union							
Dept. 0303 - Elections Committee							
For the Eight Months Ending December 31, 2016							
	Current	Prior Yr.	Current	Prior Yr.	Prior Yr.	Approved	% Budget
	Month	Month	YTD	YTD	YE	Budget	Used
	December	December	2016-17	2015-16	2015-16	2017	To Date
All:							
3801-0303 ELEC - OTHER REVENUE	(100.00)	(150.00)	(1,734.00)	(770.00)	(3,030.00)	(1,400.00)	123.86%
5003-0303 ELEC - OFFICE SUPPLIES			46.79			180.00	25.99%
5101-0303 ELEC - TELEPHONE			70.75	56.60	141.50	24.00	294.79%
5201-0303 ELEC - PHOTOCOPYING					0.56		#DIV/0!
6102-0303 ELEC - PRESIDENTIAL REIMBURSEMENT			(209.77)		2,148.38	2,500.00	(8.39%)
6151-0303 ELEC - POLL BOOTH SET-UP					5,277.28	5,500.00	0.00%
6201-0303 ELEC - ELECTION REFUNDS	(2.35)		1,989.57	726.70	3,350.67	2,500.00	79.58%
6402-0303 ELEC - AWARDS & MEETINGS				24.14	503.30	300.00	0.00%
6501-0303 ELEC - ADV. & PROMO.			2,070.10	1,440.57	2,003.05	1,500.00	138.01%
6512-0303 ELEC - ADVERTISING - PRESIDENTIALS					4,799.31	3,000.00	0.00%
6513-0303 ELEC - PROMOTIONS - SRA MARCH						200.00	0.00%
6514-0303 ELEC - ONLINE ELECTION EXP.					124.84		#DIV/0!
6901-0303 ELEC - TRAVEL & CONFERENCE					9.10		#DIV/0!
7001-0303 ELEC - WAGES	1,804.98	1,783.78	7,294.78	7,058.33	12,388.60	12,000.00	60.79%
7101-0303 ELEC - BENEFITS	139.07	136.91	549.99	511.71	912.40	1,200.00	45.83%
8001-0303 ELEC - DEPRECIATION EXPENSE			181.24	169.90	271.85	300.00	60.41%
Total All	1,841.70	1,770.69	10,259.45	9,217.95	28,900.84	27,804.00	36.90%
							66.67%

December statement is a bit dry as nothing much was happening in that month. January will see a larger amount of expenses for:

- Promotions (Underground expenses)
- Atrium bookings
- Avtek expenses
- TwelvEighty booking
- Union Market booking

Exact totals will come out with the January Statement.

VOLUNTEERS

The Elections Committee has been good so far, we are losing two members after Presidentials. One, who is running in the upcoming SRA Election and one who cannot make the next meeting time. However, Ashley from EC has been hired as the next CRO and will sit on any other meetings that happen in the year for the purposes of transitioning. We provided food for the Presidential fines meeting, as per usual, which was appropriate since it went so late into the night.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Some current challenges include figuring out what role elections will play in the Governance and You Committee. We have always agreed that Elections should have a seat on the committee, however it seems more appropriate that the chair role is elected in an internal election (similar to the other governance committee) or appointed to the DRO. This would be more appropriate given the job description of the DRO. There is also an aspect of impartiality that Elections has struggled with in chairing this committee. A chair by virtue of the role projects their vision onto the committee, however the CRO cannot do that as that could suggest bias towards certain groups and using MSU resources to reach out these groups. At the same time, playing a purely administrative role has its struggles

as the committee may suffer if the chair is not actively involved in driving the vision. We saw that this year in member attrition, people missing meetings and deadlines, and lack of follow through with proposed ideas. Having said that, I think the committee did a fantastic job with the conference and has a lot of potential in the future. We will hold another meeting to collect feedback and discuss the future structure of MSU Governance and You soon.

Another struggle that we have every year is creating events within campaigning for SRA Generals. As mentioned previously, we will try to reach out to Faculty Societies and SRA members to organize outreach, but the nature of SRA Generals and the specific faculties dictates that programming should be very different depending on the caucus (eg. Science had 16 candidates, where Arts & Science had 3). Perhaps merely encouraging these groups to promote the election is enough, but we shall see what we have the time, resources and collaborate to make happen.

SUCCESSSES

A huge success for us is even finishing the Presidentials cycle and beginning SRA Generals on schedule. We had fantastic engagement and turnout throughout the two weeks, and we are very proud of that. Moreover, finishing the conference was a huge success in that it provided the space for people to come out and learn how to run in an at-large election rather than being thrown into it without any direction.

OTHER

N/A