



REPORT

From the office of the...

Chief & Deputy Returning Officers

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Chloe Deraiche & Sarah Figueiredo
SUBJECT: Elections Department Report #4
DATE: Wednesday January 31st, 2018

UPDATE

This month has been very busy for the elections department. With presidentials, the referendum and a by-election, we have been kept very busy. We are overall pleased with how our department handled presidentials and are currently beginning the appeals process.

SERVICE USAGE

During the January SRA by-election, we saw a higher candidate turnout compared to the October by-election. Two candidates ran for Kinesiology, as well as Engineering. Science was acclaimed. We are hoping this trend of increasing candidacy continues for SRA Generals.

For Presidentials, we had a very high candidate turn out with 7 candidates. We found that candidates were very comfortable using us as a resource. Voter turnout was 28.8%, much lower than in previous years, but still above the national average. The referendum saw a slightly lower turnout with 5,003 votes being cast.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

During the camping period, we held the Presidential Debate and the Candidate Meet and Greet. In addition, we had several logistical events including the all-candidates meeting for presidentials, the referendum and the SRA By-Election, as well as the fines meeting for the respective elections. Independently, First Year Council and Mac BreadBin held fantastic presidential events that aided in the promotion of the election.

The Meet and Greet was extremely well attended, with many individuals staying the entire time. Chukky attended as our moderator, and the candidates enjoyed the event. In our transition reports, we are going to suggest holding the event half an hour later, as many individuals attended after their 6:30 classes had finished, so initial turn out at the start time was low.

The Debate proved to be a big task for the elections department, as timing and budgets to be tight with seven candidates. Overall, we were able to ask all seven questions, plus two crowd questions and still finish early. This was an optimal outcome as it (hopefully) allowed candidates some rest time. The event was well attended in person and was also live streamed. Unfortunately, there was an issue with finding a sign language interpreter for the debate, as we had been searching with no luck. We will continue to research and include possible resources in our transition reports.

Hiring for the incoming CRO has finished and hiring for the incoming DRO is currently underway.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

We have started working on promo for SRA generals, which will be launching on Monday. Along with our online promo, we will be doing in person promotions during SRA Generals. This includes pop-up info booths in different building. This will be done in partnership with different faculty societies.

BUDGET

Our Candidate Meet and Greet that occurred at TwelvEighty cost us \$550 for food/venue, and \$112.50 on Avtek Equipment. The Debate cost significantly more this year due to the increased cost of labour, with the space rental totaling \$402.06 and the tech costing \$1,138.51. We are currently communicating with the MSU Underground to find out the promo grand total for elections, as shirts were downgraded in quality to lower costs (we are awaiting the update).

Our fines meeting led us to using our meeting and awards line for the first time, spending \$167.12.

Due to an increase in enrollment, we have had to upgrade and renew the Simply Voting software earlier than expected. This is a cost of \$16,893.32, to be spread over the length of the license (3 years).

As we are currently in the midst of the appeals process for presidential and referendum fines, we cannot provide an updated revenue total.

VOLUNTEERS

We had good attendance for our presidential fines meetings, with only two committee members absent. Food was provided, as the meeting ran for 10 hours. Finding a time for our appeals meeting has been difficult for our committee as schedules of our members are getting very busy. We are looking to hold the meeting early next week, and will be providing snacks due to the likelihood of the meeting being lengthy.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

One current challenge we are experiencing is communication within the MSU. Emails tended to get lost, and a disconnect between the ordering stage and the production stage. To overcome this challenge, we have been sending more frequent check-in emails with our partners and recording successful methods in our transition reports.

The location of our space has continued to be a large issue. During presidential we often had to use meeting room B for confidential conversation, which was difficult due to hiring going on at the same time. This location is also not ideal due to it being in a high traffic area. Individuals often stop at the desk to chat, which is lovely, but can become a conflict when confidential information is on the desk. Though there is no short-term solution, we would suggest that the elections desk is moved to a more private space.

As the digitization of the files have been put on hold for the election season, we have decided to dedicate an entire day to digitization to ensure they are completed by the end of our term. All files will be sorted and digitized on Sunday, March 11th.

SUCSESSES

We survived presidentials (almost).

Though the voter turnout may be discouraging, if we look to the number of candidates participating in elections, we can see a slightly different story. Having a higher than normal number of candidates to us means that we are reaching out to new sectors of the McMaster

community, and that students at McMaster feel empowered enough to act on their right to run. To us, this is a success.