



REPORT

From the office of the...
Elections Department

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Priya Gupta, CRO; Helen Zeng, DRO
SUBJECT: Reporting to the proposed amendment to change Bylaw 10.1.6
DATE: November 24, 2015

Dear Assembly,

The purpose of this memo is to outline the opinions of the Elections Department on the proposed amendment to change Bylaw 10.1.6 to reduce the 10% requirement for reimbursement to 5%.

The Chief Returning Officer (Priya Gupta) is open to the proposed amendment. The CRO is willing to try out the 5% requirement for reimbursement and monitor how it will affect future elections, specifically Presidential and SRA Generals. However, the CRO recognizes that the 5% might negatively impact the Elections Department's values of upholding integrity in all of our MSU elections. As mentioned in our previous memo, since expanding Bylaw 10.1 to include reimbursement for all elections, only one out of 22 candidates did not receive full reimbursement for their campaign costs. Therefore, it is clear that the 10% requirement for reimbursement has not been a significant financial barrier to the students who have chosen to run for First Year Council and SRA By-Elections. Reducing the requirement from 10% to 5% might result in candidates taking advantage of our system and spending money unwisely, especially for elections where the spending limit is high.

The Elections Committee is against the amendment to change Bylaw 10.1.6. They believe that reducing the requirement for reimbursement from 10% to 5% does not address the issues of financial accessibility and will only negatively impact the integrity of the elections. Reducing the requirement for reimbursement does not reduce the amount of money students have to pay upfront to run their campaigns. While students are able to receive a loan if need be, majority of candidates spend money out of their own pockets to fund their campaigns, and only after the election will they receive reimbursement. For elections like Presidential, where the spending limit last year was \$600, reducing the requirement for reimbursement from 10% to 5% does not address the fact that only students who are able to spend up to \$600 for their campaigns can run for these elections. Therefore, the proposed amendment to change Bylaw 10.1.6 does not fully address financial accessibility of our elections. The Elections Committee believes that the best way to tackle the financial barriers of our elections is to reduce the

spending limit of the elections and make our loan program more accessible, rather than reducing the requirement for reimbursement.

While the CRO is cautiously open to the proposed amendment, the Elections Committee is not in favour of this amendment for the reasons listed above. We believe there are other, more meaningful ways to reduce the financial barriers to our elections. Instead of reducing the requirement for reimbursement, the Elections Committee believes that reducing the spending limit of our elections and making our loans more accessible will better address the issues of financial accessibility within the Elections Department without negatively impacting the integrity of our elections.

Best,
Priya Gupta (CRO) & Helen Zeng (DRO)