SAIT Students' Association (SAITSA)

2015 Fall Board of Directors

Election Report

Written by:

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Chief Returning Officer

Executive Summary

The SAIT Students' Association (SAITSA) recognizes the need to hold open and fair elections for the positions on the Board of Directors (BOD).

On September 8, 2015 nominations opened for students seeking a seat on the BOD. Candidates were required to obtain 25 signatures from students that had paid their SAITSA membership fees in full. To become a qualified candidate, a completed nomination package was to be submitted by September 11, 2015 at 12:00pm.

On September 11, 2015 candidates that submitted a completed nomination package were required to attend a Candidates Meeting at 5:00pm to discuss the policies and procedures with the Political Committee. There were 7 candidates in attendance. Each candidate and campaign manager signed a copy of the policies and procedures, and initialed each page indicating they have read and understood the document. After the meeting, candidates were allowed to officially campaign.

A secondary nomination period was approved for students that missed the September 11, 2015 deadline. The secondary nomination period concluded on September 18, 2015 at 12:00pm. There were 8 candidates in attendance, bringing the total number of candidates to 15. Again, candidates were required to obtain twenty-five signatures and meet the criteria. The second Candidates Meeting was held on September 18, 2015 at 5:00pm. The same proceedings took place as in the first meeting.

Voting opened on Thursday, September 24, 2015 at 08:30am. Emails were sent to all eligible student voters and the voting began. On Friday September 25, 2015 the voting came to a close at 4:00pm with 963 of 12606 eligible student voters having cast a vote. All candidates were to drop off all campaign expenses to V204 by this time as well.

Following the elections, the Political Committee met to review various occurrences. Three candidates were disqualified for Election Policies and Procedures Breaches. These candidates are able to run in future elections, however pursuant to Policy Elec-7 # 8 they are not eligible for board appointments until after the next elections.

The Political Committee has provided a list of recommendations following each section of this report. The recommendations are for consideration only.

Candidates Elected:

Jeromy Deleff

Alex Dimopoulos

Connor Goodfellow

Alexander Ho

Jacy Letendre

Muna Saeed

Mikayla Schaffer

Alex Stoppa

Sarah Walker

Introduction

The SAIT Students' Association (SAITSA) recognizes the need to hold open and fair elections for the positions on the Board of Directors (BOD) and the Executive Council (EC).

The *Post-Secondary Learning Act of Alberta* states that the business and affairs of SAITSA shall be managed by the BOD, the members of which shall be elected by and from the members of SAITSA. BOD meets twice a month with the EC to discuss student concerns, issues, and the overall operations of SAITSA; BOD is the governing body of the organization.

SAITSA holds two elections a year; a general election in the winter semester and a by-election in the fall semester. The general election is comprised of electing the President, Vice President Academic, Vice President External, Vice President Student Life and six seats for the Summer BOD. The fall election for BOD is dedicated to filling nine remaining seats. The EC and the BOD work together to represent students' academic rights and to make the students time on campus fun and rewarding.

This report will provide an overview of the Political Committee, nomination periods, candidate meetings, campaign period, voting, and results. Issues identified and recommendations will be provided following each section of the report.

Political Committee

The Political Committee is comprised of four members, the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), Student at Large (SAL), and the SAITSA Governance and Advocacy Manager as an ex-officio, non-voting member. In previous years the committee was comprised of the CRO, DRO, SAL and the SAITSA Resource Centre Manager as an ex-officio, non-voting member. For this election, the Resource Centre Manager participated in an ex-officio capacity to provide assistance with the transition.

The Political Committee was comprised of the following:

Valerie Caden-Baptiste – CRO

David Jones- DRO

Selena Narsing- SAL

Rachel Paris- Ex-Officio, Governance and Advocacy Manager

Natasha Lundrigan- Ex-Officio, SAITSA Resource Centre Manager

The members of the committee discussed candidate questions, reviewed campaign material and enforced policies & procedures pertaining to the election. The committee would only accept questions or concerns in the form of email. All candidates were provided contact information for the Political Committee. The CRO provided written, emailed responses within twenty-four hours (maximum).

The official results of the election are read to the students and candidates by the CRO one hour after polls close.

Issues Identified

The Political Committee has a general email address which candidates, students and staff can email with concerns. This email reaches all members of the political committee but the CRO is responsible for replying to the emails. There were some instances where individuals would

directly email the CRO and leave out the Political Committee. This was resolved by having the CRO forward the email to the remainder of the committee but could result in a delay in response.

The Gmail account went down and as a result the Governance and Advocacy Manager had to email all candidates notifying them of the outage. The issue was resolved by candidates being able to email GAM and GAM would then forward the email on to each individual email account set up for the PC. To avoid this issue in future election, a separate saitsa.elections@edu.sait.ca email account could be created. This way if there's ever concerns with the server it would be easier to get support directly with SAIT, instead of just waiting on Gmail or Hotmail.

Nomination Period

A nomination can be defined as an act of being formally entered as a candidate into an election. In order to be nominated for SAITSA's BOD Election, the student must receive 25 signatures of students whose SAITSA membership fees are paid in full. Students who did not meet the criteria for official nomination were not entered into the election.

There were two nomination periods for this election. Students who were unable to make the first nomination deadline were given the opportunity to still participate but had a reduced campaign period. Students who were nominated by the deadline for the first nomination period received an extra week of campaigning. The first nomination period ran from September 8-11, 2015, closing at 12:00pm. The total number of nominated candidates for the first nomination period was 7.

The second nomination period ran from September 11-18, 2015, closing at 12:00pm. The total number of nominated candidates for the second nomination period was 8.

Issued Identified

There were a total of 15 candidates for this election. Following the election, three candidates were disqualified for procedural breaches. This reduced the total number of overall official candidates for BOD to 12. The three candidates who were disqualified were not successful in their campaigns prior to disqualification so they did not receive a seat.

One potential candidate handed in their nomination package after 12:00pm on September 18 and requested to participate in the election. The Political Committee decided it would be unfair to let this individual run when the other candidates had their packages in on time.

A candidate requested to use their nickname as opposed to their given name. The Political Committee decided to let the candidate use the nickname for their campaign, including in

SAITSA promotions and on the ballot. Having a preferred name section on the nomination form could ease this process in the future.

A records check was performed to ensure that all candidates had their fees paid in full prior to campaigning. There were two instances where the candidates had not. The Governance and Advocacy manager contacted the candidates to notify them of the issue regarding their fees and requested that the contact the PC once they resolved the issue. The records were checked again closer to the end of the campaign period and all candidates had paid their fees in full. The campaign period started prior to the add-drop date, which complicated fee payments since schedules had not yet been finalized. It is recommended that future campaign periods begin after the add/drop deadline.

Two candidates had requested Campaign Managers that were already affiliated with SAITSA. One was a volunteer and the other was a member of the BOD. The Political Committee determined this is against the Elections Policies and Procedures as all SAITSA staff and volunteers are required to remain impartial during elections. Those involved were understanding but should have been aware of these policies prior to campaign commencement.

Candidates Meeting

The Candidates Meeting was held at the end of each nomination period. Candidates who attended the first meeting did not have to attend the second meeting. This was a mandatory meeting for all candidates. Candidates met the Political Committee and received the rules to abide by during the elections in the form of Policies and Procedures.

During the meeting, candidates and campaign teams were given the opportunity to read the Policies and Procedures and ask questions pertaining to the information provided. Candidates were asked to initial each page of the Policies and Procedures which signified an understanding of the information provided. Candidates who had questions following the meeting were asked to send an email to the Political

Issues Identified

Prior to the meeting candidates got their photo taken, after they were given the opportunity to record a video. This was a time consuming process and opportunities to streamline it could be considered in the

An idea was brought forward to have potential candidates learn more about SAITSA prior to the Candidate's Meeting. For example, this could be done through an information session.

There were many questions about the budgets. Some candidates were unclear on how to appraise donations. Future candidates may benefit from more clarity or examples.

There is a lot of technical information provided in the meeting. There are concerns that the delivery may not be sufficiently effective or engaging.

It could be beneficial to have minutes recorded during the meeting.

Campaign Period

There were two campaign periods for this election. Candidates that were eligible for the first Candidates Meeting were given an extra week of campaigning starting September 11, 2015. The remaining candidates were allowed to start campaigning on September 18, 2015. All candidates were eligible to start campaigning after the Candidates Meeting concluded.

Each candidate conducted their own independent campaign with a maximum budget of two hundred dollars. All candidates were directed to inform the Political Committee of all messages and content being used in their respective election.

Issued Identified

There were issues regarding conflicts of interest during the campaign period. These issues involved SAITSA staff and were resolved internally since staff violations are not under the purview of the Political Committee.

Voting

The SAITSA BOD Election 2015 utilized online voting through an independent third-party company, Votenet. Electronic voting has dramatically cut down on physical resources needed to run an election. Previously, paper ballots were utilized for eligible students to cast votes. This process proved to be time consuming and costly.

TO participate in voting, eligible students were sent an email to their SAIT email address with voting information. From here they could find information about the candidates and place their vote(s).

Online voting provides real-time information and is a proven method of conducting fair and transparent

Issues Identified

There was a delay in the opening of the polls on September 24, 2015. At this time details are unavailable but an investigation is currently underway to determine the cause. A supplementary report will be drafted by the Governance and Advocacy Manager to report the cause and look for solutions moving forward.

The voter list was finalized prior to SAIT's add/drop date. As a result, there may have been discrepancies in voter list since many emails were bounced backed.

Results

The polls closed at 4:00pm on September 25, 2015.

Election: SAITSA BOD Election 2015

Name	Votes	Percentage
Jeromy Deleff	452	13
Alex Dimopoulos	202	6
Srini Ganti	116	3
Connor Goodfellow	307	9
Alexander Ho	254	7
Jordan Johnston	156	4
Jacy Letendre	423	12
Joshua Neumann	158	4
Dai Nguyen Huu	124	3
Sourav Roy	119	3
Muna Saeed	281	8
Felipe Salinas	128	4
Mikayla Schaffer	217	6
Alex Stoppa	285	8
Sarah Walker	341	10

There were multiple disqualifications this election.

At 4:00pm on September 25, 2015 the polls for the SAITSA BOD Fall Election closed and voting was made inactive. Prior to polls closing, candidates were required to submit their Campaign Budget Forms (Budget) to V204 care of the SAITSA Governance and Advocacy Manager. Candidates must disclose all expenses incurred during their election. Eligible expenses are reimbursed up to 50%.

Following the elections results the Political Committee met to discuss budgets and poster teardowns. Three candidates were disqualified.

Pursuant to Policy Elec-4#9, a candidate was disqualified for failing to submit a budget

Pursuant to Policy Elec-4#10, a candidate was disqualified for exceeding the $200 budget.

Pursuant to Policy Elec-5#21, a candidate was disqualified for failing to attend poster tear-down without arranging it with the Political Committee.