

**2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ELECTION REPORT**
SAIT Students' Association (Saitsa)

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Prepared For: Saitsa Board of Directors

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Executive Summary

The 2019 Board of Directors Election was a great success! A total of 16 candidates vied for the 12 Board of Directors positions. The election had a record voter turnout with 18.7% of eligible electors making their voices heard! The success of this election can be attributed to the candidates getting the word out to the student body to get out and exercise their democratic right to vote as well as the hard work of Saitsa's Governance and Advocacy office and Saitsa staff and volunteers. Keep up the good work!

As with any election there were minor issues encountered. Several demerits were issued with most being issued for minor poster infractions. However, two candidates were disqualified for failing to submit their expense forms by the deadline.

Saitsa is committed to maintaining the highest standards of fairness, equality, transparency and student interest in its elections. This report will highlight the candidate results, election process, issues encountered as well as recommendations to the Board of Directors and more.

All recommendations made within this report have been made in consultation with Saitsa's Manager of Governance and Advocacy, and are based on observations and experiences of the Political Committee. In efforts to continually improve Saitsa's election processes and to establish best practices, the Political Committee encourages the Saitsa Board of Directors to strongly consider all recommendations contained within this report.

Candidates Elected to the 2019 Board of Directors

Congratulations from the Saitsa Political Committee to all the candidates, their supporters and voters of the 2019 Board of Directors Election. The following are the 12 successful candidates in this year's election:

Tim Holowachuk

Alex Sutherland

Jessi Leippi

Candy Loo Tong

Charlson Reyes

Yatendra Solanki

Liam Hunter

Avneet Brar-Sran

Shawna LeBlanc

Tristan Ryan

Minh Phu Hoang

Jesse Wicks

Overview

This report will provide an overview of the Political Committee, nominations, Candidates' Meetings, campaign period, candidate expenses, demerits issued, voting and results. Issues encountered as well as recommendations are included at the end of each section.

Political Committee

There was a change within the Political Committee this year with the hiring of a new Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and Deputy Returning Officer (DRO). The current Political Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing CRO, Jennifer Dotchin and the outgoing DRO, David Jones, for their past contributions and commitment to this amazing election process at Saitsa. As well, thank you to Kelsey Tovell for her hard work and commitment as this will be her last election as the Student at Large (SAL).

Members of the Political Committee shall be, the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), the Student at Large (SAL) and the Saitsa Manager of Governance and Advocacy as Ex-Officio (non-voting member).

2019 BOD Political Committee Members:

Ilene Burns – Chief Returning Officer

AnneMarie Darichuk – Deputy Returning Officer

Kelsey Tovell – Student at Large

Rachel Paris – Manager of Governance and Advocacy, Ex-Officio (non-voting)

The members of the Political Committee made themselves familiar with the Election Policies & Procedures, conducted two Candidates' Meetings, responded to candidates' questions, enforced and provided direction pertaining to the Election Policies & Procedures and oversaw voting activities. They were a visible presence at the Meet & Greet as well as during both days of voting.

Issues and Recommendations

- As referenced in previous Election Reports, the Political Committee continues to deal with a cumbersome email system. While the main account is a Saitsa email (saitsa.elections@edu.sait.ca), the Political Committee (CRO, DRO & SAL) do not have direct access to this account and must rely on emails being forwarded from this account to Hotmail accounts. This results in the CRO, DRO and SAL not having the original sender's email address included in their email, as this is not forwarded with the email. In addition, as the CRO, DRO and SAL have individual Hotmail accounts, if one individual replies to an email from a member of the committee the respondent replies to a Hotmail

account rather than the Saitsa.Elections account. This becomes an issue because the respondent's reply then only includes the individual member's Hotmail account, rather than the Saitsa.Elections group account. As most of the emails require the attention of all the Political Committee members this creates a situation where the member then has to forward the 'reply' email to the Saitsa.Elections email which causes a delay in the communication process and requires extreme due diligence in what should be a simple email process.

The Political Committee is recommending that Saitsa work with SAIT to ensure that Political Committee members are issued access to an account that eliminates the challenges mentioned above. Further recommendations on how this process is to occur is out of the scope of the Committee, however the Committee does recommend that Saitsa's Manager of Governance & Advocacy be assigned the administrative control of the accounts, once established, to maintain the integrity of the election-related communication.

- This year the Political Committee was a visible presence at the Meet & Greet as well as on voting days. The members attended these days to observe, answer questions, deal with issues and fill in where needed.

The Committee therefore recommends that the Political Committee continue in this visible role as it proved to be a valuable resource to the candidates, Saitsa staff and volunteers.

Nominations, Candidates' Meeting, Campaign Period & Demerit Issuance

In order for a nomination to be considered valid, students have to be members of Saitsa in good standing who have paid their Saitsa and SAIT fees in full. They have to obtain 50 signatures from active Saitsa member students and they must attend at least one Candidates' Meeting. Nomination packages for the Board of Directors election were once again available online and in print. The nominations opened on September 3 and ended on September 25. Nominees were required to have their nomination packages submitted to the Political Committee by 4pm on September 18, for the first nomination period, and 4pm on September 25, for the second nomination period. In total, 22 nomination packages were received. There were 4 nominees who decided to not attend the Candidates Meeting for personal reasons, thus they were not eligible to become candidates.

There were 18 nominees in attendance for the Candidates' Meetings, with 11 attending the September 18 meeting and 7 attending the September 25 meeting. After the Candidates' Meetings 2 candidates withdrew from the election leaving 16 qualified candidates to run for the 12 BOD positions. Upon attending their respective Candidates' Meeting the candidates were allowed to begin their campaigning.

Saitsa hosted a Meet & Greet on October 1st for all the candidates to be able to meet with the student body. This is the 2nd time that Saitsa has hosted this event for the BOD election and it

was once again very well received. One candidate was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict and was excused by the committee; 15 of the 16 candidates participated in the Meet & Greet. Approximately 200 students attended to get a chance to meet the candidates and to hear about the candidates' platforms. Due to the Irene Lewis Atrium being unavailable for booking, Saitsa organized the candidates into two groups and divided them equally among two locations across campus (Senator Burns Cafeteria & outside the Library/MC107); each group of candidates had one hour in each location.

There were 9 candidates who were issued demerits ranging from 1 demerit issued up to 10 demerits issued. 6 of these violations were for minor poster placement infractions, 1 was for copyright violation and 2 were for late submission of their expense forms.

Issues and Recommendations

- There was a change to the nomination package submission deadline from the previous year. The deadline was extended to 4pm for this year's election due to late submissions (ie: submissions between 12-4pm) being accepted by the Committee in previous years. This created a situation where the Manager of Governance and Advocacy did not have time to review the last-minute submissions before the Candidates' Meetings.

Review of the nomination packages is an imperative part of confirming the eligibility of the nominees to become candidates. It is important to allow the Manager of Governance and Advocacy sufficient time to process this step. Effective for the 2020 BOD election the deadline should revert back to 12pm, noon, as the deadline for submitting the nomination packages as per the Election Policies & Procedures. Saitsa is encouraged to ensure the 12pm deadline is communicated to students effectively; and the Committee is to continue to support the Manager of Governance and Advocacy in any instances of late submissions.

- It came to the attention of the Committee that some SAIT students are not enrolled in the typical academic year, which occurs from September-May, with a summer break occurring from May-August. Instead, Winter Intake students experience an academic year that occurs from January-August, and a 'summer' break that occurs in the Fall Semester.

This creates a challenge in confirming whether a Winter Intake student/nominee is eligible to become a candidate or not as when the Governance and Advocacy Manager confirms the 'good standing' of nominees, the Office of the Registrar indicates the Winter Intake student has not paid their Saitsa fees for the current academic year.

As typical-academic year students are considered full Saitsa members during the summer break, the Committee determined through substantial consultation, that should a Winter Intake student wish to participate in the Board election, they should be considered eligible as they have paid their Saitsa fees for their academic year and are therefore still a Saitsa member and eligible to participate.

It is recommended that in these rare instances, the Political Committee consult with the Manager of Governance & Advocacy as well as the Executive Director and Office of the Registrar to confirm the students' eligibility to participate in the election.

- Students are placing their campaign posters in close proximity to the official Saitsa bulletin boards. This is causing concern that these candidates are endorsed by Saitsa.

It is recommended that the Election Policies & Procedures, section 9.4.2 m), is updated to “on SAIT and Saitsa bulletin/posting boards or within 1 metre of these areas”.

- Lack of understanding regarding copyright and commercial licensing laws can prove to be a hurdle for candidates. Changes to how information is presented to the candidates during the Candidates’ Meeting should help alleviate this issue.
- It is recommended that it is included in the Election Policies & Procedures that “all current sitting elected officials are to treat all candidates respectfully and fairly, and that they remain non-partisan during the campaign period”
- It is recommended that the word “moderating” be removed from section 4.1.2 c) of the Election Policies & Procedures as there is a potential conflict of interest with the Political Committee if they have to rule on something that took place during a forum/panel.
- The Political Committee will continue to discuss to see if they should keep the 2 Candidates’ Meetings a week apart or if both could be hosted in the same week, a few days apart. This would allow more time for the candidates who are attending the 2nd meeting to campaign as well as more time for the Political Committee to deal with any issues that could arise with verifying if a nominee qualifies to be a candidate.
- The Political Committee is reviewing how the Candidates’ Meeting is presented. They will look at different ways as to how best to communicate the necessary information to those attending. This will be done in collaboration with the Manager of Governance and Advocacy prior to the 2020 EC Election.
- The Political Committee will look at ways to promote the BOD election at the end of the Spring semester to 1st year students expecting to return in the Fall semester. This would be an attempt to get students to start thinking about running in the BOD election when they return from their summer break.
- The Political Committee is considering if it needs to begin the process of affixing a Political Committee digital authorized stamp on candidates’ posters before the candidates and their teams are permitted to display them.

Voting, Poster Tear Down and Expense Forms

Saitsa utilized the services of Simply Voting, an independent third-party company, again for this year’s BOD election. The Manager of Governance and Advocacy requested a list of eligible voters from SAIT. This list was used to provide eligible voters with voting information via their SAIT student email to enable them to vote on election days.

Due to changes and upgrades within SAIT’s information system, the voter list was not able to be provided two weeks in advance of voting days; this delay caused challenges for the Manager of Governance and Advocacy in the development of the ballot and caused delays in preparations

for the election. However, as only 3 instances of members not having received the voting email were received, and rectified, by the Manager of Governance and Advocacy, it is the opinion of the Committee that the voter list was prepared as per the guidelines provided to the Office of the Registrar and is seen to be an accurate reflection of Saitsa's membership as of September 27th, 2019.

Voting began at 8am on October 2 and closed at 4pm on October 3 with no issues. This year was the highest voter turnout in Saitsa history with 18.7% of all eligible voters casting their ballots! 2304 voters out of a possible 12296 voters chose to make their voices heard. The improved marketing campaigns established by Saitsa and the use of polling stations has continued to prove successful.

Once again the use of private voting screens on election days, at the set polling stations, was well received by the voters. Set polling stations were located by MC107 (Stan Grad) and NN118 (Senator Burns) on October 2 and by MC107 (Stan Grad) and V204 (Campus Centre) on October 3. Mobile Pollsters with tablets travelled to the Aero Centre and the residence towers as well.

Poster tear down was well attended and went without any issues.

Candidates were allowed to expense up to \$200 each on campaign expenses, all inclusive. They were required to disclose all expenses incurred for their campaign. Expense forms were to be submitted to the Political Committee no later than 4pm on October 3. There were 2 candidates that did not submit their expense forms on time and they were disqualified from the election as per section 8.8.4 of the Election Policies & Procedures.

Issues and Recommendations

- While observing at the set polling stations, Political Committee members noticed that some electors were walking behind other electors, who were seated behind a private voting screen marking their ballot, in order to get to a vacant voting screen to cast their ballot. This was a result of 3 voting screens set up side by side with no space between them to allow for direct access to the middle voting screen without having to go behind another elector. At this point voter privacy was not being maintained.

In order to provide for voter privacy, the Political Committee recommends that voting screens are limited to 1 or 2 per table, depending on the size of the table, and that the tables are spaced approximately 2-3 feet apart to allow electors direct access to a voting screen without having to walk in behind another elector marking their ballot.

- Candidates continue to have issues with how to complete their expense forms.

The Political Committee will be undertaking a new approach in the 2020 EC Candidates' Meeting to explain expenses; the new approach will include examples that demonstrate the different types of expenses, proper completion of the form and when and how to submit the form. Discussion is ongoing as to how best to send a reminder to the candidates on the submission deadline. This may be done via an email, calendar invite or potentially requesting the Saitsa Marketing team to develop a Candidate-specific 'Saitsa Bulletin'.

Official Results

CANDIDATES	NUMBER OF VOTES
Tim Holowachuk	891
Alex Sutherland	702
Jessi Leippi	686
Candy Loo Tong	636
Charlson Reyes	628
Yatendra Solanki	605
Liam Hunter	594
Avneet Brar-Sran	539
Shawna LeBlanc	506
Tristan Ryan	498
Minh Phu Hoang	487
Jesse Wicks	477
 	
Taran Hurley	472
Evgeny Shkola	355
Dongyi Chen	Disqualified
Shana Froom	Disqualified