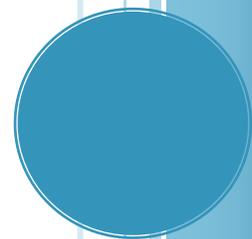# BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION REPORT 2018

SAIT Students' Association (SAITSA)

Jennifer Dotchin – Chief Returning Officer

Board of Directors Election Report 2018

Executive Summary

This year the election process was followed exceptionally well, and all candidates' participation was commendable. The election did not have any major challenges, and the overall voter turnout was noteworthy. The SAIT Students' Association (SAITSA) Board of Directors (BOD) election was based on a new set of Policies and Procedures. This new document was revised and undertaken in the summer of 2018 and approved by the previous elected Board. The most notable changes include the inclusion of 'election guiding principles' of: fairness, equality, transparency, and student interest. Other than the streamlining of the policies and procedures, one final item of noteworthy mention is that SAITSA's elections now have a formalized demerit system within the governing document.

This report highlights recommendations and concerns with regards to SAITSA's election processes, election promotion, and revisions to current policy and procedure documents and voting issues. These issues and recommendations relate to the candidate meetings, management of campaigns and campaign period, voting, expenses and poster tear down, and results. These recommendations are for consideration only.

On September 4th nominations opened for students seeking to join the BOD. Candidates were required to obtain 50 signatures from students who were SAITSA members. To become a qualified candidate a completed nomination package was to be submitted by September 19th for the 1st nomination period, or September 26th for the 2nd nomination period.

The same day candidates submitted a completed nomination package they were able to attend a Candidates' Meeting. Once a candidate completed the two steps of submitting a nomination package and attending a meeting, they became eligible for campaigning. There were 11 candidates in attendance at the first candidates' meeting and 8 at the second, one candidate withdrew their candidacy following the meeting, which left a total of 18 candidates.

SAITSA was provided a voter list from SAIT prior to the add/drop deadline. Voting opened on October 3rd at 8am. Due to challenges from previous elections a new voting vendor, Simply Voting, was contracted, and voting went smoothly. On October 4th voting ended at 4:00pm with 1,502 of 13,377 of eligible student voters having cast a vote (11.2%). This is a distinct increase in Board election voter turnout, from 2017 (5.74%) and 2016 (7.84%). The increase has been attributed to improved marketing campaigns, engaged and informed candidates, and improvements made with the setup of official polling stations.

Overall, the SAITSA BOD election process was a success. The election was both open and fair, with excellent accountability of all candidates.

Candidates Elected

The SAITSA Political Committee would like to congratulate all of the participants, supporters and voters of the 2018/2019 SAITSA Board of Directors. The following 12 candidates were successful in their campaigns:

Name	Number of votes/ Percentage
Bekah Callaghan	498 (8.6%)
Ryan Morstad	446 (7.7%)
Matthew Busby	436 (7.5%)
Chloe Fleury	414 (7.1%)
Zain Bukhari	413 (7.1%)
Alex Sutherland	390 (6.7%)
Paramvir Gill	377 (6.5%)
Ben Goud	323 (5.5%)
Kaylee Taylor	303 (5.2%)
Lief Garret	281 (4.8%)
Elaina Chaput	261 (4.5%)
Tola Jimoh	254 (4.4%)

Overview

This report will provide an overview of Political Committee activity, nomination periods, candidate meetings, campaign period, voting, and results. Issues will be identified, and recommendations 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 ex-officio, non-voting member.

>**Jennifer Dotchin**: Chief Returning Officer
>**David Jones:** Deputy Returning Officer
>**Kelsey Tovell**: Student at Large
>**Rachel Paris**: Ex-Officio, Governance and Advocacy Manager

The members of the committee discussed candidate questions, reviewed campaign materials, voting activities and enforced policies & procedures pertaining to the election.

Issues and Recommendations
- The Political Committee uses both the SAITSA email system, as well as Hotmail accounts. This continues to be cumbersome, as the sender email addresses did not transfer to the Hotmail accounts which resulted in the Committee member needing to find the email address. It is once again recommended that the Political Committee be allocated temporary SAIT/SAITSA emails.

Nomination and Campaign Period

In order to be nominated for SAITSA's BOD Election, the student must be SAITSA members in good standing (not on academic or non-academic probation) who have paid their fees in full; they must also receive 50 signatures from SAITSA members and submit their completed nomination package by the deadline. Those who did not meet the criteria for official nomination were not entered into the election. There were two nomination periods for this election. On September 4th nominations opened for students seeking a seat on the BOD. To become a qualified candidate, a completed nomination package was to be submitted by noon on either September 19th or September 26th.

There were 11 candidates in attendance of the Candidates meeting. The secondary nomination period concluded one week following September 28th at 12:00pm. There were another 8 candidates in attendance here as well, bringing the total number of candidates to 19. However, one candidate withdrew, leaving a remaining 18 candidates for 12 positions.

There were two campaign periods for this election. All candidates were eligible to start campaigning after attending the Candidates' Meeting. Each candidate conducted their own independent campaign with a maximum budget of two hundred dollars.

SAITSA organized and executed a Meet & Greet event for the BOD elections, this event has previously been executed for the Executive Council elections but not the BOD election. It was a massive success, with 15 of 18 candidates attending, and over 400 students interacting with the candidates in attendance.

Issues and Recommendations

- Allow nomination applications until the 5:00 PM Candidates' Meeting. To ensure a broad and inclusive Board, the Political Committee accepted two packages past the noon deadline. It is noted that the first set of candidates who campaign, creates awareness of the election and therefore encourages others to run.
- There were 4 demerit points issued for minor poster violations.
- There was one candidate who did not meet participation requirements, and was therefore disqualified.

Voting, Poster Tear Down, Budgets

The SAITSA BOD Election 2018 used a new online voting provider, Simply Voting is an independent third-party company whose IT support is located in Canada. The voter list was requested from SAIT on September 18th, and was to include all SAITSA members. The voter list was provided by SAIT on September 27th. To participate in voting, eligible students were sent an email to their SAIT email address with voting information.

Voting opened at 8:00am on October 3rd with no issues. On October 4th voting ended at 4:00pm with 1,502 of 13,377 of eligible student voters having cast a vote (11.2%). This is a distinct increase from 2017 (5.74%) and 2016 (7.84%). The increase has been attributed to improved marketing campaigns and polling stations established by SAITSA; this year marked the launch of a new marketing campaign for elections and it appears to have been successful with much positive feedback. Finally, the voting booths were redesigned to ensure privacy and an official appearance.

Candidates were required to submit their Campaign Expense Forms (Budget) to the Political Committee. Candidates must disclose all expenses incurred during their election.

Issues and Recommendations
- Some candidates were confused about the requirements needed and deadlines. It is recommended that SAITSA set up calendar invites to ensure compliance.
- Over 300 voting emails were not delivered to members, as the email account had not yet been created by SAIT IT; SAIT informed the committee that these 300+ emails were of apprentices who had paid their SAITSA fees but had not yet started classes. It was determined by the committee to adjust the public reporting of voter turn out to reflect that 306 members did not receive the voting email. Thus a voter turnout of 11.5% was reported as the voter turnout.

> *Breakdown is as follows:*
> 13,337 – 306 = 13, 071
> 1,502/13,071 = 11.5% voter turnout

- It is recommended that SAITSA work with SAIT to refine the voter list development process.

Official Results

Name	Number of votes/ Percentage
Bekah Callaghan	498 (8.6%)
Ryan Morstad	446 (7.7%)
Matthew Busby	436 (7.5%)
Chloe Fleury	414 (7.1%)
Zain Bukhari	413 (7.1%)
Alex Sutherland	390 (6.7%)
Paramvir Gill	377 (6.5%)
Ben Goud	323 (5.5%)
Kaylee Taylor	303 (5.2%)
Lief Garret	281 (4.8%)
Elaina Chaput	261 (4.5%)
Tola Jimoh	254 (4.4%)
Robert Colmenares	246 (4.2%)
Omar Mazouzi	239 (4.1%)
Mahtab Khakhiani	220 (3.8%)
Reza Meghdadi	206 (3.5%)
Alex Yoseph	184 (3.2%)
Elle Caron	Disqualified