2024

GENERAL ELECTION REPORT

SAIT Students' Association (Saitsa)

Prepared By: Ilene Burns – Chief Returning Officer

Prepared For: Saitsa Board of Directors

March 28, 2024

Contents

Executive Summary

The 2024 Saitsa General Election was met with good interest from students wanting to get involved with the Board of Directors. Votes were cast for fourteen candidates. Voting was conducted by way of Single Transferable Voting and it took fifteen rounds of counting to exhaust all votes and fill the nine positions.

Twenty-four students began the nomination process with seventeen students completing all the eligibility requirements to qualify to become candidates. Of these seventeen candidates, two withdrew from the election during the campaign period and one withdrew after voting commenced.

Voter turnout was 13.8% with 3118 out of a potential 22592 ballots cast. Due to the one candidate withdrawing after voting began, Simply Voting, an independent third-party service, required a Round to discount any votes cast for that candidate. Round 0 was used to eliminate this candidate and any votes cast for that individual were redistribute, in Round 1, to their next preference vote.

New election processes were successfully incorporated this year after consultation with independent third-party advisors who specialize in post-secondary elections. Set election periods, new submission formats, and changes to disciplinary procedures were undertaken.

Several complaints were submitted resulting in several written warnings and a monetary fine being levied. There were no disqualifications or appeals.

Saitsa hosted events and outreach opportunities were well received throughout the election. Three Candidates' Meeting were held during the nomination period to accommodate nominees' schedules. Candidates took full advantage of having their photo, video, and profile posted on the Saitsa website. Meet & Greet saw good candidate participation with candidates experiencing great engagement with their potential voters. Results Night was well attended by candidates and their supporters.

Overall, the 2024 Saitsa General Election was very success.

The administration of this election was conducted in accordance with current Saitsa Election & Referenda Policies & Procedures, Bylaws, and Board Policies.

Candidates Elected to the 2024-2025 Saitsa Board of Directors

Congratulations to the newly elected directors of the 2024 Saitsa General Election. Listed in alphabetical order, by last name, the successful candidates are:

Ahmad Baker	Lesi Nwielaghi
Varshit Barot	Lance Santiago
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	Sangram Singh
Nina Fabian	Rey Tacder
Ryan Ng	

Overview

This report will provide an overview of the election process, oversight, promotion, election periods, events, violations, voting, candidate expenses, and results.

Election Process and Oversight

The Saitsa General Election is conducted each winter semester to elect the representatives for the board. The board consists of nine directors who will choose from within a President and Vice President.

Voting is conducted by way of Single Transferable Voting (STV). STV is a voting method where voters rank the candidates in order of preference from most preferred to least preferred on one ballot. Candidates are either elected to or eliminated from the election in several rounds of counting ballots until all positions have been filled. To be elected, candidates are to receive a minimum number of votes, which is the quota. The quota is calculated using the Droop formula; number of voters having cast a valid ballot divided by the number of options (number of director positions) plus one, and then adding one to this number. An independent third-party company, Simply Voting, processes the ballots, calculates the quota, and calculates the results. The CRO verifies the quota and the results prior to the provisional results being announced.

The CRO, assisted by the Governance and Advocacy staff, is responsible for administering Saitsa's elections and enforcing Saitsa's policies & procedures, reporting to the Chief Executive Officer. For convenience purposes, this group of individuals is referred to as the Election Committee.

The Election Oversight Panel (EOP) is an oversight body to the election process. The EOP consists of three disinterested parties appointed by the Chief Executive Officer. This panel exists independently and acts as an adjudication panel in the event of someone appealing the decision of the CRO or the election results.

Together the CRO and the EOP are in place to oversee the general conduct and implementation of elections on behalf of Saitsa in accordance with policies, and bylaws.

> **2024 Election Committee:**
>
> **Ilene Burns** – Chief Returning Officer
>
> **Pooja Sigauke** – Manager of Governance and Advocacy
>
> **Dakota Rickman** – Student Support and Community Conduct Coordinator
>
> **Erin Mobberly** – Governance and Advocacy Administrative Assistant
>
> **2024 Election Oversight Panel**
>
> **David McIntyre** – Chair
>
> **Michael Watterston** – Panel Member
>
> **Sandra Penner** – Panel Member

Election preparation began shortly after the conclusion of the 2023 Saitsa General Election with a review of the election process. Consultation with independent third-party advisors was conducted to determine where changes should be considered to enhance the election process for the 2024 election. As a result of the review, the Saitsa Elections & Referenda Policies & Procedures was amended to allow for the implementation of new election process. These changes enabled the CRO to better administer the election ensuring equal opportunities for all interested parties.

The most significant change to the election process was separating the election timeframe into three set periods; Nomination Period, Election Period, and Voting Period. During the Nomination Period, interested students had to complete specific eligibility requirements to qualify to become a candidate. The last step in the nomination process was attendance of one of three Candidates' Meetings held throughout the nomination period. Once all nomination requirements were met, candidates were able to begin campaigning when the Campaign Period commenced. The Voting Period was extended to five days this election in an effort to increase voter turnout.

A new process for dealing with election violations was incorporated. The previous system of issuing demerits for election infractions was replaced with the issuance of written warnings and monetary fines for candidates found in violation of election policies.

Election promotion was conducted both on-campus and online beginning in January 2024 continuing through to the end of the election with the posting of election results. Posters, flyers, social media posts, the Saitsa bulletin, and the Saitsa website were used to advertise all stages of the election process.

Saitsa provided optional election outreach opportunities to all candidates to assist with their election promotion. Candidates were able to submit a candidate photo, video, and/or profile that was posted on a candidate page on the Saitsa website. This gave the student voters one convenient location where they could access information on all the candidates' campaign platforms for candidates who chose to take advantage of this resource. Saitsa also hosted Meet & Greet, a one day in-person event, for candidates to meet and directly engage with voters.

Nomination Period

Nominations were accepted from 8:00am on January 22, 2024 to 12:00pm on February 12, 2024. The nomination process was broken down into different stages and nominees had to complete set eligibility requirements before advancing onto the next nomination stage. Attendance of a Candidates' Meeting was the final requirement in the nomination process for nominees to be confirmed as a candidate.

To be considered as a candidate, students must be voting members of Saitsa who are active students in good standing and have paid their Saitsa and SAIT fees in full. They must submit a complete nomination package that includes the signing of a declaration agreeing to abide by the bylaws, election policies, and directives of the CRO. They have to obtain twenty nomination signatures from Saitsa members and they must attend a Candidates' Meeting.

Three virtual Candidates' Meetings were held to accommodate student schedules; one on each of January 29, February 6, and February 12, 2024.

Twenty-four students started the nomination process and seventeen of these nominees completed all requirements to become candidates.

Campaign Period

The Campaign Period ran from 8:00am February 13, 2024 to the close of voting at 4:00pm on March 7, 2024. During this timeframe candidates engaged in various types of campaign strategies such as posting campaigning material on campus, social media posts, classroom talks, conversations with students, and participation in Saitsa hosted outreach opportunities.

Saitsa hosted outreach opportunities were well received by candidates with most candidates choosing to participate. Students who submitted their campaign photo, video, and/or profile by the deadline of 12:00pm February 16, 2024, had these submissions posted on the Saitsa website. This gave voters one location where they could access information on all candidates and learn what each candidate was campaigning on. Meet & Greet provided candidates the chance to interact with a large number of potential voters in one setting. It was hosted in the Irene Lewis Atrium on February 27, 2024 from 11:00am to 2:00pm. Each candidate was provided with a space where they could present their campaign message and engage directly with students. Students had the opportunity to speak directly with candidates and ask any questions they had about a candidate's platform.

Complaints, Disciplinary Action, and Appeals

The complaint process required complainants to submit their complaint through the submission platform on the Saitsa website. Once the complaint was received the CRO opened a complaint file and if necessary sought further information to make an informed decision in determining if disciplinary action was required. If the CRO determined an election violation had occurred, the accused was notified in writing of the violation, advised what if any disciplinary action was being issued, and was directed to take corrective measures regarding the violation.

Disciplinary action that could be levied ranged from written warnings, monetary fines in the form of reductions to the amount of campaign expenses be reimbursed, to disqualification from the election. Several written warnings and a monetary fine were levied this election. There were no disqualifications.

The appeal process required appellants to submit their appeal through the submission platform on the Saitsa website. All appeals submitted would be received by the Election Oversight Panel to determine if the appeal warranted a hearing. If a hearing was warranted, the Panel would commence the hearing process. No appeals were submitted.

Voting

Voting began at 8:00am March 3, 2024 and closed at 4:00pm March 7, 2024. Students were sent an email with their secure link to access their ballot on the morning of March 3rd. Voters were able to cast their ballot at any time on their personal devices or they could cast their ballot in-person at one of the two physical voting stations from 10:00am to 4:00pm on March 6th & 7th. Physical voting stations were located in Stan Grad outside of MC 107 and in Senator Burns cafeteria area.

Voting was conducting by way of Single Transferable Voting using the Droop Formula via Simply Voting, an independent third-party provider.

Very simply, with Single Transferable Voting, electors cast a ballot ranking their preferred candidates from most preferred to least preferred. The quota of votes is calculated using the Droop formula. Simply

Voting calculates the formula and the CRO verifies the calculation. The quota of votes is calculated as follows:

In this example there are 1000 valid ballots cast for 9 board positions.

(1000 voters / (9 board positions + 1)) + 1 = 101

(1000 / 10) + 1 = 101 quota

Candidates are elected or eliminated during rounds of counting votes. In order to be elected in a round of counting, a candidate must meet or the exceed the quota of votes and must receive the highest number of votes. If no candidates receive the minimum number of votes to meet or exceed the quota of votes then the candidate with the least number of votes in that round will be eliminated. This will continue until all seats have been filled.

Voter turnout for the 2024 Saitsa General Election was 13.8% with 3118 Saitsa members submitting their ballots. Thirty-nine students abstained from ranking any of the candidates resulting in 3079 valid ballots cast. Based on 3079 valid ballots cast the quota was calculated to be 308. At the close of polls, the CRO verified the election results and confirmed the quota was correctly calculated by Simply Voting. To fill all nine positions on the board and exhaust all valid votes cast, it took fifteen rounds of counting. Due to one candidate withdrawing from the election after voting had commenced, the first round of counting, Round 0, was required to eliminate this candidate from the ballot and to redistribute their votes to the next preference votes.

Poster Tear Down, Results Night, and Expense Forms

Candidates were invited to begin Poster Tear Down, between 4:00pm and 5:00pm on March 7th, while they waited for provisional election results to be verified. Any election material that was not removed during this timeframe was required to be removed no later than 4:00pm March 9th. Failure to ensure all their campaign material was taken down by the deadline would result in disciplinary action being levied against the candidate.

Candidates and their supporters were invited to attend Results Night on March 7th between 5:00pm and 6:00pm on the second floor of the Johnson Cobb building. This event was hosted by the Chief Executive Officer and the provisional election results were announced by the Assistant Manager, Student Experience. Marketing posted the provisional results on the Saitsa website and the CRO followed up with emails to all the candidates announcing the results. At the close of the appeal submission process, 4:00pm on March 12th, the election results became official.

Expense forms submissions were due no later than 4:00pm March 8, 2024. Candidates had to submit an accurate accounting of all their expenses along with copies of their receipts through the submission platform on the candidate election portal. The CRO, assisted by the Manager of Governance & Advocacy, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Chief Executive Officer verified the expenses. All candidate expense forms were submitted on time and only a few submissions required the CRO to follow-up with the candidate to seek clarification or missing details on an expense entry.

Official Results

2024 Saitsa General Election

Results

Turnout: 3118 (13.8%) of 22592 electors voted in this ballot.

I am enrolled at SAIT as a:

Option	Votes
Full Time Student	2998 (96.5%)
Part Time Student	70 (2.3%)
Apprentice	25 (0.8%)
Other	15 (0.5%)
VOTER SUMMARY	
Total	3118
Abstain	10 (0.3%)

Candidates

Option Rahul Chaudhari has been withdrawn from this ballot.

Votes required to elect an option: 308

ROUND 0	
Lance Santiago	771.00 votes
Ryan Ng	492.00 votes
Varshit Barot	295.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	280.00 votes
Sangram Singh	266.00 votes
Ahmad Baker	217.00 votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	215.00 votes
Gagan Lehra	172.00 votes
Nina Fabian	103.00 votes
Rey Tacder	88.00 votes
Devanshu Jamwal	59.00 votes
Eman Khan	48.00 votes
Hridhika Hridhika	31.00 votes
Aman Sharma	26.00 votes
~~Rahul Chaudhari~~	16.00 votes
Eliminated withdrawn candidates	

ROUND 1	
Lance Santiago	774.00 (+3.00) votes
Ryan Ng	494.00 (+2.00) votes
Varshit Barot	295.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	281.00 (+1.00) votes
Sangram Singh	266.00 votes
Ahmad Baker	217.00 votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	216.00 (+1.00) votes
Gagan Lehra	172.00 votes
Nina Fabian	103.00 votes
Rey Tacder	89.00 (+1.00) votes
Devanshu Jamwal	60.00 (+1.00) votes
Eman Khan	48.00 votes
Hridhika Hridhika	32.00 (+1.00) votes
Aman Sharma	26.00 votes
Exhausted votes	6.00 (+6.00) votes
Elected Lance Santiago due to: highest 1st preference	
Lance Santiago next preference votes redistributed at 0.60 discount	
ROUND 2	
Ryan Ng	571.67 (+77.67) votes
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 (-466.00) votes
Varshit Barot	301.02 (+6.02) votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	283.41 (+2.41) votes
Sangram Singh	267.20 (+1.20) votes
Nina Fabian	252.91 (+149.91) votes
Ahmad Baker	235.66 (+18.66) votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	228.04 (+12.04) votes
Rey Tacder	173.89 (+84.89) votes
Gagan Lehra	173.81 (+1.81) votes
Devanshu Jamwal	64.21 (+4.21) votes
Eman Khan	52.21 (+4.21) votes
Hridhika Hridhika	36.82 (+4.82) votes
Aman Sharma	29.01 (+3.01) votes
Exhausted votes	101.13 (+95.13) votes
Elected Ryan Ng due to: highest 1st preference	
Ryan Ng next preference votes redistributed at 0.46 discount	
ROUND 3	
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 (-263.67) votes
Varshit Barot	306.83 (+5.81) votes
Nina Fabian	299.08 (+46.17) votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	284.79 (+1.38) votes
Sangram Singh	271.17 (+3.97) votes
Ahmad Baker	250.52 (+14.86) votes

Lesi Nwielaghi	241.79 (+13.75) votes
Rey Tacder	214.69 (+40.80) votes
Gagan Lehra	176.11 (+2.31) votes
Devanshu Jamwal	66.80 (+2.58) votes
Eman Khan	65.96 (+13.75) votes
Hridhika Hridhika	44.57 (+7.75) votes
Aman Sharma	31.41 (+2.40) votes
Exhausted votes	209.26 (+108.13) votes
Eliminated Aman Sharma due to: lowest 1st preference	
ROUND 4	
Varshit Barot	309.83 (+3.00) votes
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Nina Fabian	302.15 (+3.06) votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	284.79 votes
Sangram Singh	274.17 (+3.00) votes
Ahmad Baker	253.98 (+3.46) votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	245.79 (+4.00) votes
Rey Tacder	216.29 (+1.60) votes
Gagan Lehra	179.11 (+3.00) votes
Eman Khan	68.03 (+2.06) votes
Devanshu Jamwal	67.54 (+0.74) votes
Hridhika Hridhika	46.45 (+1.88) votes
Exhausted votes	214.86 (+5.60) votes
Elected Varshit Barot due to: highest 1st preference	
Varshit Barot next preference votes redistributed at 0.01 discount	
ROUND 5	
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 (-1.83) votes
Nina Fabian	302.21 (+0.06) votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	284.84 (+0.05) votes
Sangram Singh	274.31 (+0.14) votes
Ahmad Baker	254.08 (+0.09) votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	245.83 (+0.04) votes
Rey Tacder	216.35 (+0.06) votes
Gagan Lehra	179.15 (+0.04) votes
Eman Khan	68.07 (+0.05) votes
Devanshu Jamwal	67.62 (+0.08) votes
Hridhika Hridhika	46.53 (+0.08) votes
Exhausted votes	216.02 (+1.15) votes
Eliminated Hridhika Hridhika due to: lowest 1st preference	
ROUND 6	

Nina Fabian	310.97 (+8.76) votes
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	285.45 (+0.61) votes
Sangram Singh	275.78 (+1.47) votes
Ahmad Baker	258.42 (+4.35) votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	250.76 (+4.93) votes
Rey Tacder	221.21 (+4.86) votes
Gagan Lehra	184.38 (+5.22) votes
Devanshu Jamwal	72.02 (+4.40) votes
Eman Khan	71.01 (+2.93) votes
Exhausted votes	225.02 (+9.00) votes
Elected Nina Fabian due to: highest 1st preference	
Nina Fabian next preference votes redistributed at 0.01 discount	
ROUND 7	
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Nina Fabian	Elected 308.00 (-2.97) votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	285.46 (+0.01) votes
Sangram Singh	275.79 (+0.01) votes
Ahmad Baker	258.52 (+0.09) votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	251.09 (+0.33) votes
Rey Tacder	222.67 (+1.46) votes
Gagan Lehra	184.45 (+0.07) votes
Devanshu Jamwal	72.05 (+0.03) votes
Eman Khan	71.17 (+0.16) votes
Exhausted votes	225.81 (+0.79) votes
Eliminated Eman Khan due to: lowest 1st preference	
ROUND 8	
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Nina Fabian	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	289.07 (+3.61) votes
Sangram Singh	277.86 (+2.07) votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	274.00 (+22.91) votes
Ahmad Baker	270.46 (+11.95) votes
Rey Tacder	229.98 (+7.32) votes
Gagan Lehra	189.96 (+5.52) votes
Devanshu Jamwal	74.67 (+2.61) votes
Exhausted votes	240.99 (+15.18) votes
Eliminated Devanshu Jamwal due to: lowest 1st preference	

ROUND 9	
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Nina Fabian	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	291.56 (+2.49) votes
Ahmad Baker	285.17 (+14.70) votes
Sangram Singh	283.26 (+5.40) votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	279.29 (+5.30) votes
Rey Tacder	237.00 (+7.02) votes
Gagan Lehra	197.97 (+8.01) votes
Exhausted votes	272.74 (+31.75) votes
Eliminated Gagan Lehra due to: lowest 1st preference	
ROUND 10	
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	351.12 (+59.56) votes
Sangram Singh	338.35 (+55.09) votes
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Nina Fabian	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes
Ahmad Baker	300.99 (+15.82) votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	287.15 (+7.86) votes
Rey Tacder	245.70 (+8.69) votes
Exhausted votes	323.70 (+50.96) votes
Elected Shehbaj Singh Chatha due to: highest 1st preference	
Shehbaj Singh Chatha next preference votes redistributed at 0.12 discount	
ROUND 11	
Sangram Singh	347.55 (+9.20) votes
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Nina Fabian	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	Elected 308.00 (-43.12) votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes
Ahmad Baker	306.66 (+5.67) votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	289.49 (+2.34) votes
Rey Tacder	247.91 (+2.21) votes
Exhausted votes	347.40 (+23.71) votes
Elected Sangram Singh due to: highest 1st preference	
Sangram Singh next preference votes redistributed at 0.11 discount	
ROUND 12	
Ahmad Baker	311.24 (+4.58) votes
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes

Nina Fabian	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Sangram Singh	Elected 308.00 (-39.55) votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	291.38 (+1.90) votes
Rey Tacder	249.70 (+1.79) votes
Exhausted votes	378.69 (+31.28) votes
Elected Ahmad Baker due to: highest 1st preference	
Ahmad Baker next preference votes redistributed at 0.01 discount	
ROUND 13	
Ahmad Baker	Elected 308.00 (-3.24) votes
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Nina Fabian	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Sangram Singh	Elected 308.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	292.18 (+0.80) votes
Rey Tacder	250.46 (+0.76) votes
Exhausted votes	380.36 (+1.67) votes
Elected Lesi Nwielaghi due to: number of options equals number of winners, highest 1st preference	
ROUND 14	
Ahmad Baker	Elected 308.00 votes
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Nina Fabian	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Sangram Singh	Elected 308.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes
Lesi Nwielaghi	Elected 292.18 votes
Rey Tacder	250.46 votes
Exhausted votes	380.36 votes
Elected Rey Tacder due to: number of options equals number of winners, highest 1st preference	
ROUND 15	
Ahmad Baker	Elected 308.00 votes
Lance Santiago	Elected 308.00 votes
Nina Fabian	Elected 308.00 votes
Ryan Ng	Elected 308.00 votes
Sangram Singh	Elected 308.00 votes
Shehbaj Singh Chatha	Elected 308.00 votes
Varshit Barot	Elected 308.00 votes

Lesi Nwielaghi	Elected 292.18 votes
Rey Tacder	Elected 250.46 votes
Exhausted votes	380.36 votes
VOTER SUMMARY Total	3118
Abstain	39 (1.3%)