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Student Government Association Elections Committee Reports

Student Government Association

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2010 report on the fourth direct election of the President of the Association

Student Government Association, Northeastern University

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Northeastern University
Student Government Association

Elections Committee of the Senate

2010 REPORT

on the Fourth Direct Election of the President of the Association

compiled by
Christian A. Toczko, Chair

with
Olivia J. D'Angelo

CONTENTS

SUMMARY 3
SCHEDULE 3
NOMINATIONS 4
PROMOTION 5
FINANCIALS 7
VOTING & RESULTS 9
GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS 12
ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS 13
UNCHARTED TERRITORY 15
AFTERTHOUGHT 17
GLOSSARY 18

SUMMARY

Results
Ryan Fox won the election with 46% of the total votes.

Nominations
Amanda Sabia and Ryan Fox were nominated and confirmed for the candidacy for President during a Joint Senate on 15 MAR 2010.

Voting Period
The voting period had a very strong start with almost 1800 votes cast the first day. Voting quickly tapered off by the second day, but cumulatively outperformed the 2009 elections cycle throughout the entire voting period. It is further noted that the Committee did not utilize voting stations during this voting period.

Financials
Spending was slightly higher than the trailing two years at approximately $890. No significant issues arose with either spending or reimbursement.

Manual Performance
The Committee encountered no major issues in which the Manual crippled the performance of the election. In addition, having seen all consecutive prior elections, the Chair would like to note that this election cycle was one of the more smooth in terms of politics and grievances. No major issues arose during the election cycle.

SCHEDULE

2010	
15 March	Joint Senate (Presidential Nominations)
16 March	Candidate's Briefing
17 March	Campaign Period Begins
22 March	Campaign Expenditure Report Due (for week #1)
23 March	Public Debate: Hosted by College Republications, College Democrats, Debate Team
25 March	Public Debate: Hosted by Inter-Fraternity Council
29 March	Campaign Expenditure Report Due (for week #2)
30 March	Public Debate: Hosted by Resident Student Association
01 April	Online Voting Begins
05 April	Campaign Expenditure Report Due (for week #3)
07 April	Campaign/Voting Period Ends
08 April	Campaign Expenditure Report Due (for entire campaign)
	Campaign Expenditure Verification Meeting
	Joint Senate (Vice Presidential Nominations)
15 April	Joint Senate (Vice Presidential Elections)

Elections Timetable

Mar 2010 (Eastern Time)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
14	15 19:00 - Joint Senate (Presidental Nominations)	16 20:00 - Candidate's Briefing	17 Campaign Period	18	19	20
21 Campaign Period	22 12:00 - Campaign Expenditure Reports Due (for trailing week)	23 18:30 - Public Debate: Hosted by College Republicans, College Democrats, Debate Team	24	25 18:30 - Public Debate: Hosted by Inter-Fraternity Council	26	27
28 Campaign Period	29 12:00 - Campaign Expenditure Reports Due (for trailing week)	30 18:30 - Public Debate: Hosted by Resident Student Association	31	Apr 2010 1 Online Voting	2	3
4 Campaign Period Online Voting	5 12:00 - Campaign Expenditure Reports Due (for trailing week)	6	7	8 12:00 - Final Campaign Expenditure Reports Due (entire campaign) 17:00 - Campaign Expenditure Verification Meeting 19:00 - Joint Senate (V.P. Nominations)	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 19:00 - Joint Senate (V.P. Elections)	16	17

NOMINATIONS

Ryan Fox (incumbent executive President), and Amanda Sabia were both nominated.

Jordan Clark was also nominated, but was not confirmed by Senate. Clark was deemed ineligible to run by two sections of the DEM - Section 3.1 and 3.2 which stated “candidates must be in good academic and judicial standing, throughout the campaign period, as defined by the Undergraduate Student Handbook.” Prior to Presidential Nominations, Clark made the Senate aware that he was not in good judicial standing, which nulled his Senatorial status in the Association due to language in the USH which stated all Senators of the Association are considered “officers,” and the USH explicitly disallowed those individuals not in good academic/judicial standing to hold elected office in a student group. Clark moved to override the DEM, but did not receive the Senate’s 2/3 vote. Even if the Senate has overridden the DEM, the violation of the USH would have still held, and Administrative intervention may have ensued.

PROMOTION

Capital Investment
An initiative of the Association during the (incumbent) Fox administration has been capital investment. It has become apparent over the past few years that utilization of annual funding has been wasted on expendable materials by the Public Relations Committee and on the Association level. The Elections Committee followed this initiative for capital investment and secured the purchase of mouse pads. These mouse pads will be able to used annually during the campaign period in computer labs on campus including InfoCommons, quick print stations, and individual College computer labs (e.g. College of Engineering). This initiative for investment in capital equipment should be continued in order to build an effective stock of promotional materials for the campaign period.

Debates
The Committee coordinated a number of debates with student groups in attempt to tap the largest constituency bases in the University in addition to those student groups inherently interested/involved in student activism and politics. These groups included the College Republicans, the College Democrats, the Debate Team, the Inter-Fraternity Council, and the RSA. Three (3) separate debates were held.

Debate turnout proved to be most successful in relation to physical location. Two (2) of the debates were held in the Curry Student Center's West Addition, and turnout was not all too impressive as students had to take initiative to "attend" a debate at that location. Most successful was proved by holding debate in front of Stetson East. This is an area of high traffic, as students utilizing the Stetson East dining hall and the nearby freshman residence halls move through this space. There was a shifting crowd of about 30 onlookers throughout the debate. It was apparent that the Association can not rely on the student body to find the debates, but rather that the Association must seek to actively engage the student body. It is highly recommended that the Committee hold debates in areas of high traffic, and high visibility in order to maximize student involvement.

While increasing student turnout to debates may be a more pressing issue for future elections, editing debate structure to extract and elucidate statements from presidential candidates is also a concern. As most students from other student groups that help to host debates are not familiar with SGA history, procedure, and current areas of contest, these students are able to propose and moderate only simple questions to the candidates. While proposing simple and more general questions to the candidates is advantageous in the sense that it allows even the most removed onlooker to understand the debate, asking simple questions allows candidates to gloss over points and make vast generalities. When only very general, surface conversation is had during a debate it results in poorly defined political stances, the ability to avoid touchy subjects that may be applicable to the student body, a lack of differentiation between candidates, and an overall boring debate. This generality dilemma was somewhat resolved during the debate in which the Debate Team asked more specific follow-up questions after the more general ones were expressed. It is recommended that a student group with the ability to ask more specific, probing questions be involved in hosting future debates.

NUTV provided streaming feeds online for all debates. NUTV streaming feeds and recordings of the debates were not widely viewed by the student body. Although this media did not seem to directly serve a purpose in the election period, it is recommended that NUTV be involved in future presidential debates for purposes of accurately recording speeches for candidate accountability, increasing student involvement in the elections of the Association in the form of NUTV associates, and improve Association exposure via social media.

Electronic Communication

During the spring semester the University administration revamped their solution to departmentalized and University-wide digital communications, rending the NU Announcements system unavailable. The Committee contacted the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Marina Macomber with intention of utilizing University-wide communications for the purpose of promoting elections. Initially, Ms. Macomber agreed to three (3) emails to be sent at various times throughout the campaign/voting period. But due to delays in the office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and administrative rejection of the three (3) similar emails for the same purpose, only a single email was allowed for the purpose of promotion.

Voting Stations

Voting stations were not utilized during this election period. While the Committee does have the jurisdiction to administer voting stations, they were not included as an action item for the campaign period. This was in lieu two (2) circumstances, the first being that initial outreach efforts proved extremely effective and the total vote count in the first few days carried strong momentum throughout the period. The second circumstance was that any attempts to coordinate voting stations with the Public Relations Committee (in terms of man-power) were unsuccessful, as the Public Relations Committee cited it was the Committee's responsibility to administer the voting stations. While the Committee does have expressed jurisdiction over the voting stations, it is the responsibility (and initial intention of the authors of the Direct Elections Manual) of the Public Relations Committee to physically maintain the voting stations, whereas the Committee should provide simple administration in the form of a check.

It is recommended that the Committee review related responsibilities of both herself and the Public Relations Committee for purposes of explicit delegation of tasks, come time when voting stations are needed.

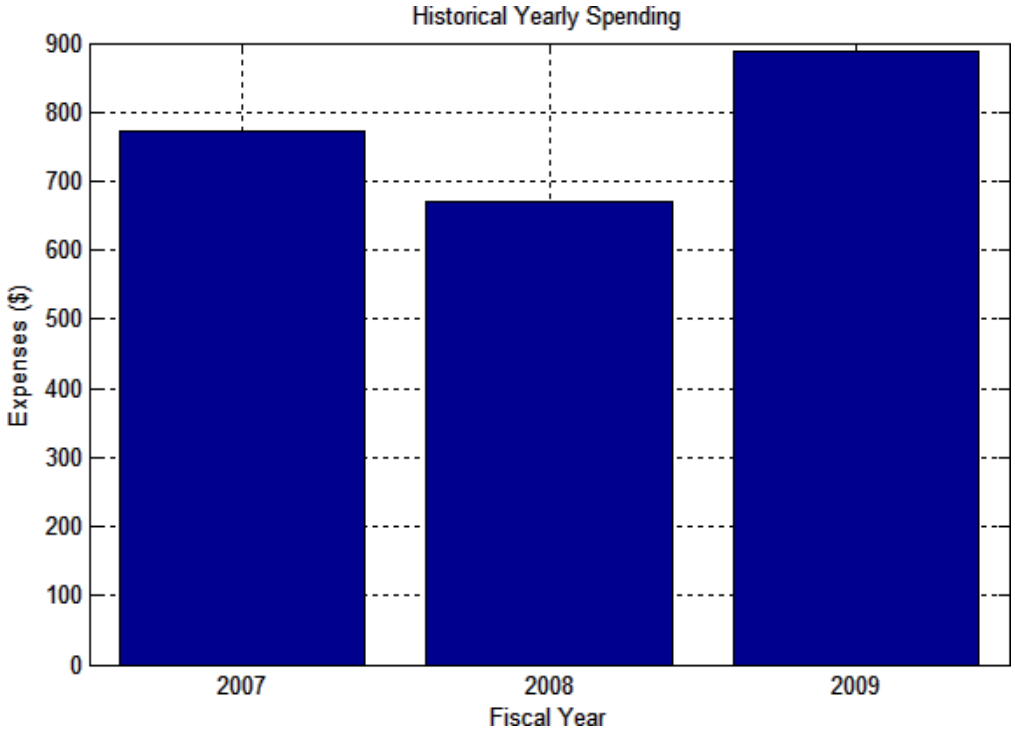
FINANCIALS

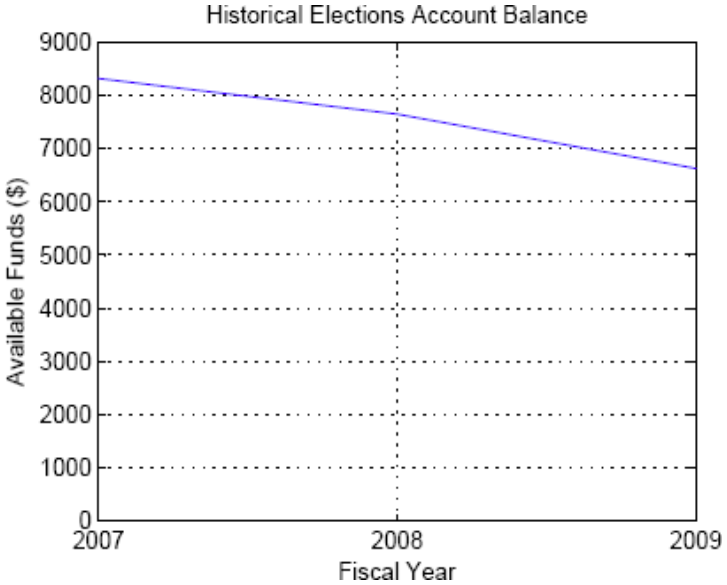
Tax Exemption

In continuation of past year concerns, an issue arose again regarding reimbursement of tax on receipts. It is a stated policy of the SABO that tax shall not be reimbursed on any purchase where tax-exemption was not claimed. It is recommended that the Committee examine methods to ensure proper reimbursement for purchases online and other situations in which tax-exemption cannot physically be claimed.

Spending

Fox spent $450.57, and Sabia spent $448.81. Total spending between all candidates was $889.38.





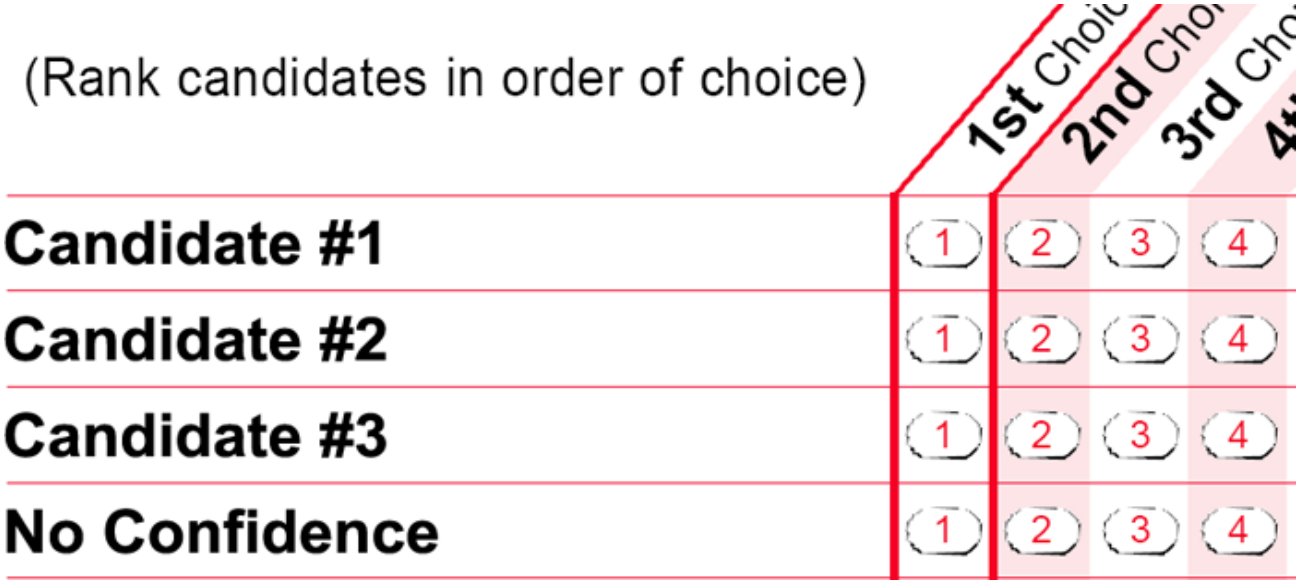
VOTING & RESULTS

Contacts
The contacts at University Information Services were David Navisky, Jim Lemmon (primary), and Suzanne Katz.

Online Ballot Structure

The Committee only made small grammatical edits to the ballot from the year prior.

The Committee also discussed (on multiple occasions) issues with the structure of the online ballot voting system. Multiple concerns arose regarding the way No Confidence vote is handled in the system. Currently, selecting No Confidence nulls any voting by preference. For example, if a student very much supports one candidate and holds no confidence in the other, the student should be allowed the ability to vote first choice candidate, No Confidence as his second choice, and finally the other candidate as his last choice. This would properly portrait the voter's voting preference. The current system does not allow for this.
It is a recommendation that the Committee change the online ballot structure to treat No Confidence as a candidate as shown below:



Results

With 1801 votes (46% of total), Ryan Fox (incumbent President) won with a plurality. Please note that this victory was by plurality and not majority. There is inherent flaw with the modified IRV system employed by the Association in which No Confidence is not treated as a candidate. IRV requires a candidate to take have the majority vote for victory.

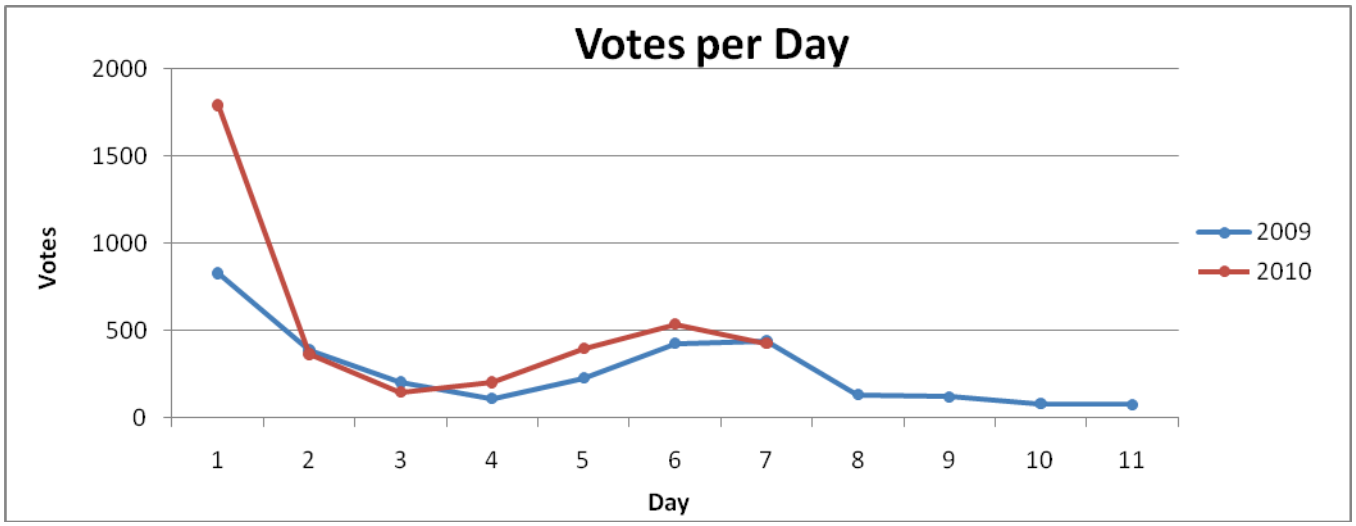
Twenty-four (24) percent of the student body voted. The minimum vote necessary was twenty (20) percent.

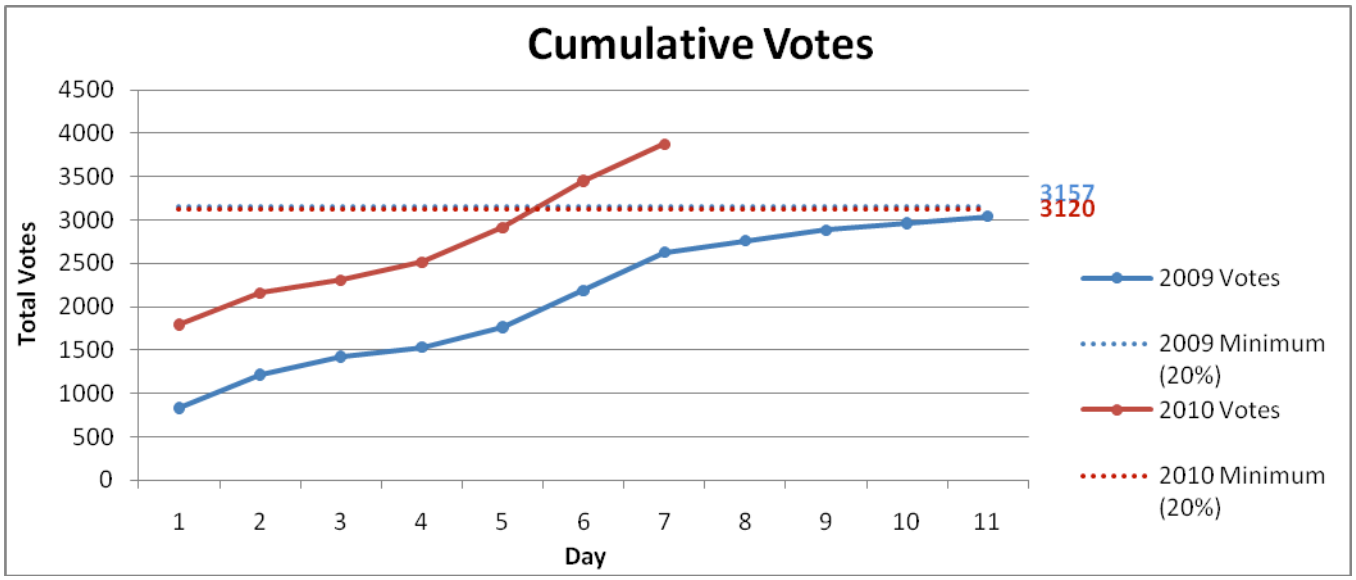
Daily Statistics

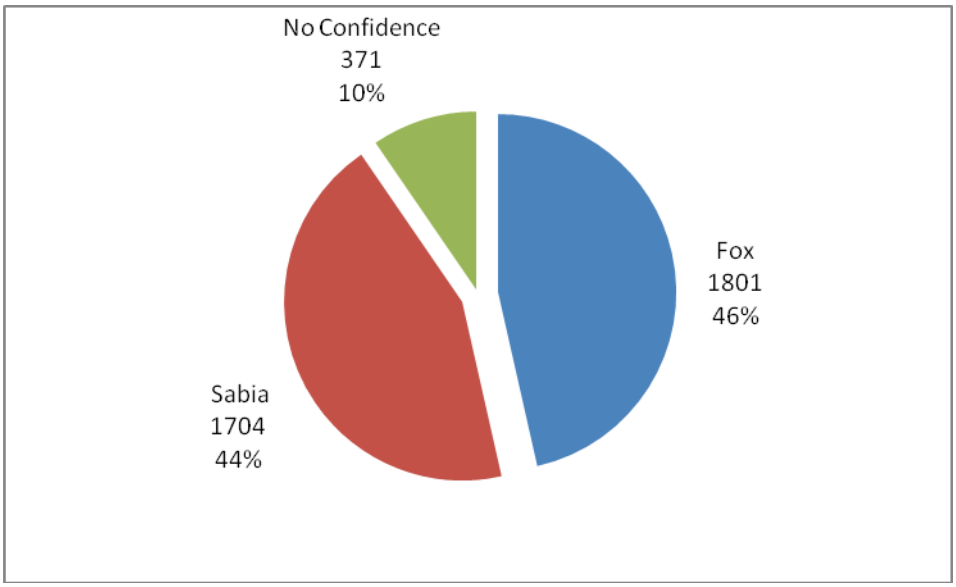
	2009		2010	
Day #	Votes	Total Votes	Votes	Total Votes
1	830	830	1794	1794
2	388	1218	367	2161
3	205	1423	148	2309
4	111	1534	205	2514
5	228	1762	398	2912
6	428	2190	538	3450
7	439	2629	426	3876
8	133	2762		
9	121	2883		
10	81	2964		
11	77	3041		

Vote Distribution

2009		2010	
Votes	Candidate	Votes	Candidate
2007	Fox, Ryan	1801	Fox, Ryan
535	Soleyn, Matt	1704	Sabia, Amanda
499	No Confidence	371	No Confidence




Cumulative Votes
Total Votes
4500
4000
3500
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
Day
3157
3120
2009 Votes
2009 Minimum (20%)
2010 Votes
2010 Minimum (20%)


No Confidence
371
10%
Fox
1801
46%
Sabia
1704
44%

GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

Student Intimidation (file date 2010-03-24)

Filed by Senator Matthew Soleyn, the grievance accused the Fox campaign of threatening the filer with a spray tank/nozzle that was being used to mark the ground in front of a West Village residence hall at approximately 23:55.

Merit was found in the grievance and was heard by the Committee. With further investigation, the filer mentioned he was under the influence of alcohol that night and that the Fox campaign may have seemingly intimidated the filer at the time of occurrence. The Committee recognized the fact that the alleged violation was specific to the Code of Student Conduct and any Committee sanctions would be out of SGA jurisdiction. The Committee issued no sanction, and recommended to the filer that a complaint be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

The grievance also questioned the substance being used to mark the ground, but was found to be authorized for use by the University.

Impedence of Elections Promotion (file date 2010-03-25)

The filer (Vice President for Administration and Public Relations Timothy Siclari) claimed that the candidate (incumbent President) was impeding his ability to carry out elections promotions.

The Chair of the Committee did not find merit in the claim and noted that the ability of the candidate to affect such promotions was derived from powers of the Executive President's office, and therefore was acting in the name of that office during such actions. The candidate would have been unable to affect promotions if the Presidential office was not held, and was therefore exercising jurisdiction independent from that of candidate.

Disclosure of Campaign Workers (file date 2010-03-28)

Senators Matthew Soleyn and Jessica Dervin-Ackerman filed a grievance against the Sabia campaign for alleged violation of Section 8.2 (disclosure of all campaign workers) of the DEM.

The Chair of the Committee found merit in the grievance, and it was heard by the Committee. Evidence presented by the Complainant suggested that Mr. Siclari (via email to a distribution list) appeared to be "campaigning" on behalf of the Accused. The email contained a signature stating that Mr. Siclari was indeed acting as an Association member at time of mailing, but the Complainants did not provide sufficient evidence to support a relationship between Mr. Siclari and the Accused. As such, Mr. Siclari was treated as having acted independent from that of the Accused. The Committee did not sustain the grievance.

Voter Intimidation (file date 2010-03-30)

Senator Matthew Soleyn filed a grievance against the Sabia campaign claiming voting intimidation.

The Chair of the Committee did not find merit in the grievance because the voting period had not begun at the time of receipt of the email communication. Voter intimidation was not possible if the voting period had not yet begun. The Committee did not hear the grievance.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Blocking
The section on blocking should be removed from the DEM, and should be listed as a Senate power in the Association's Bylaws. The procedure for blocking, however, should be outlined in the DEM. It is recommended that the Committee procure the necessary Bylaws amendments to appropriate this change, ensuring that the conditions for blocking are outlined.

Migration of Grievance Appeals to the Operational Appeals Board
Section 12.6 titled "Appeals" should be modified to grant the Operational Appeals Board explicit jurisdiction to hear grievance appeals.

Removal of "Referral to OSCCR" Sanction
The sanction of "referral to OSCCR" needs to be removed from the DEM, as current OSCCR policy does not allow filing on behalf of other parties. The Committee can only simply recommend that the party file with OSCCR.

Remove References to the Code of Student Conduct
The Committee does not have the jurisdiction to sanctions campaigns for violations of the Code of Student Conduct (whereas OSCCR does). Section 8.1 titled "University Conduct Regulations" should be modified to remove this reference as a grievance could result in alleged "violation" of this section. It is implied that all student at the University must adhere to these requirements, and does not need to be explicitly stated here.

Sanctions Point System
The ineffectiveness of the incumbent sanctions system has become increasingly apparent with each new direct elections season. Many candidates have realized that unless a sanction renders disqualification, it acts no more than a simple slap on the wrist. There is a need for greater campaign responsibility, and through a more effective sanctions system, overall traceability can be improved.
It is recommended that the Committee consider the replacement of the current sanctions system with that of a "point system", where campaigns are issued demerit points based upon the severity of an infraction, and are disqualified if they exceed the maximum points allowance. This system ensures that even minor infractions hold a campaign accountable.

Removal of Recounts
Section 11.5 titled "Recounts" is now obsolete with a [non-paper process] computerized ballot system.

Removal of Candidate's Briefing Signatures
Candidates and their campaigns are held to the standards set by the DEM. This is regardless of whether or not a candidate signs an acknowledgement document. The Committee only creates additional work and another chance for error by requiring this. For example, this year signatures were not collected from the campaigns after the Candidate's Briefing. This did not exempt the campaigns from adherence to the DEM. Removal of this language simply streamlines the DE process and makes the DEM more concise.

Candidate's Briefing

To make language more concise and clear, it is recommended the Committee add "Candidates are required to attend briefing with a worker." to Section 5.2 titled "Briefing Meeting", and remove Section 5.3 titled "Attendance at Candidate's Briefing".

Emergency Nominations

The Committee should review language in Section 4.4 titled "Emergency Nominations" due to the possibility of an impossible timeline if a block is moved against an emergency nomination. A Full Body meeting would have to convene to hear the block, but the timeline of the campaign and voting period is not conducive to this as it is relatively short.

UNCHARTED TERRITORY

Direct Election of the Executive Vice President
During the spring semester, both the Senate and the Committee discussed the possibility of directly electing the Executive Vice President (EVP) in future Spring elections. After deliberation in Senate, a Directive was created from the President to the Committee to consider the practices and implications of instituting direct election of the EVP, to be reported back to Senate by August 1st. The intention of this Directive was to have the Committee to consider the advantages and disadvantages of directly electing the EVP, and to bring the best possible plan of action to directly elect the EVP to senate to be voted upon.

Due to the complicated nature of the Spring election season, no formalized plan was brought to Senate for deliberation. The Association President then issued an Executive Order charging the Committee to further research the change and to bring forth the language required to modify the governing documents.

Questions arose including:

1) What platform would the EVP run on? Does the position of EVP have issues to speak about that the student body can relate to?
2) Should the EVP run on the same ticket as the Student body president?
3) Is it in the best interest of the Association for the chair of the Senate to be chosen by students that are not Senators? Is blocking a sufficient means of preventing candidates that are deemed unqualified by the Senate from running in DE?
4) Although it makes sense that the second most powerful position of the Association be considered for direct election, would it be better if another position were to be directly elected?

The summer timeframe did not allow the Committee to formalize any such language prior to 01 JUL 2010, and therefore the Executive Order was handed off to Olivia D'Angelo, Committee chair for the 2010-2011 year.

However, the Chair feels compelled weight the dis/advantages of this expansion of Direct Elections:
There exist many reasons as to why the Executive Vice President is not a well-suited position for Direct Election. First off, the Chair would like to make it known that the initial reason this position is even being considered for DE was noted in the 2008 DE Report:

> *"During a meeting in October 2007 to plan and discuss the second direct election, the University's Vice President for Student Affairs, Ed Klotzbier, requested that the Rules Committee consider expanding the scope of the election to include the Executive Vice Presidency beginning in the Spring 2008 election cycle."*

It is noted that the intention of the EVP was to serve an internal role (the Chair also authored much of the Association's recent structural changes).

- Structural Changes -
This request having been *prior* to the structural changes the Association recently saw, the EVP now serves a significantly different role as Chair of the Senate.
Prior, the DE of the EVP was simply a move down the order of precedence [of the Executive Board] to expand DE. With the new structural changes in place, the Executive branch was shifted laterally to that of the Legislative branch. The EVP now serves as a liaison (as Chair of the Senate) between the Legislative and Executive branches.

- Political Agenda -
Directly electing the EVP would impose an agenda on the position. Otherwise, the EVP has no reason to push a personal agenda on the Senate, as the Chair is purely a logistical role by facilitating meetings.

- Direct Election of Other Positions -
There exist other positions within the Association that appear to be better suited for DE than that of the EVP.

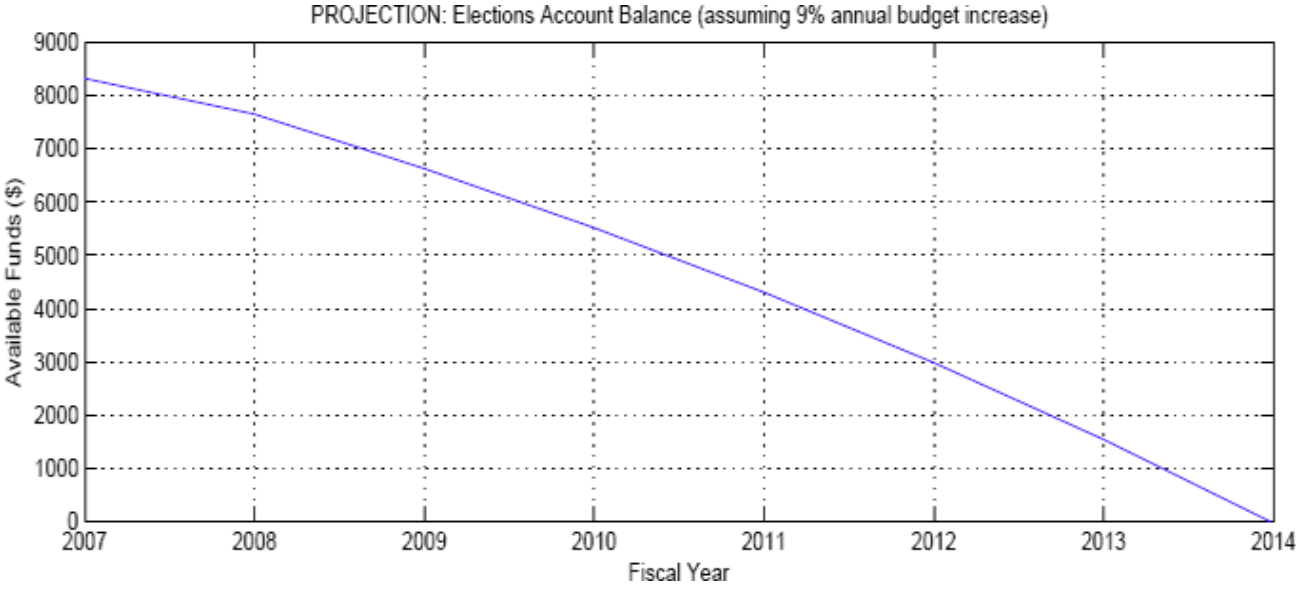
For example, the Comptroller oversees the distribution of millions of dollars worth of the Student Activity Fee to student groups. This position directly affects the student body significantly more than that of the EVP.

For example, the Vice President of Student Affairs deals with high-interest, high-impact student issues such as the Code of Student Conduct which directly affects the student body more so than that of the EVP.

In result, the Chair strongly urges the Association to consider a position other than the EVP for the expansion of Direct Elections, as there exists other positions more directly affecting the student body.

Elections Fund

The fund was originally established by University President Curry with intention of use for the Direct Elections process. The fund continues to diminish with each passing election cycle, with no foreseeable solution for replenishment of the fund. The Committee has had prior minor discussions on the issue, but has resulted in no resolutions. It is recommended that the Committee look into the issue further.



AFTERTHOUGHT

I commend the Committee for her dedication this past year. She has always had a reputation of attracting heat and unpopular opinion in the eyes of those not involved in our deliberations. I want to remind the Committee of the utmost importance of standing strong in the face of adversity, whether it be an election or not. Since the first election I have seen candidates drop, Committee members quit, and Chairs resign. I have come to the realization that no matter the circumstance it is vitally important that you, in whatever power you sit, do what is morally correct and not be consumed by the virus of politics. Please do not forget that this is Northeastern University. Take a step back to reflect and ensure that the people you take advise from are unbiased, and the decisions you make are also rightfully so. Never disregard the consideration of an alternate view, as it may shed light on a perspective you have never seen, and may ultimately change your belief.

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."
- ***Aristotle***

I wish the Committee smooth sailing on future Direct Elections;
It has been a pleasure serving the Association.

Best Regards,
Christian A. Toczko, Chair

GLOSSARY

Association: Student Government Association
Chair: Chair of the Elections Committee
Committee: Elections Committee
DEM: Direct Elections Manual
DE: Direct Elections
EVP: Executive Vice President
IRV: Instant Runoff Voting
NU: Northeastern University
NUTV: Northeastern University Television
OSCCR: Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution
RSA: Resident Student Association
SABO: Student Activities Business Office
USH: Undergraduate Student Handbook

ADDENDUM to the Report on the Fourth Direct Election of the President of the Association

Opening Words

A few weeks ago, I was sitting in my office in Verona, Wisconsin working on a training project at work when an e-mail appeared in my Inbox from Christian Toczko, the Chair of the 2009-2010 Elections Committee, with a copy of the *Report on the Fourth Direct Election of the President of the Association*. Being "separated" from Student Government for more than five months following graduation and moving away from the Boston metro area, the report made me think back in an interesting reminder of the work I had put in on behalf of fellow students over the five years I spent at Northeastern University. Over the years, I put attended many meetings and put hundreds of hours towards direct elections, always believing that students deserved to make the choices about their leadership on-campus. Perhaps, part of this stems back to the fact that my first leadership taken on at Northeastern was the result of being directly elected by the students living in my building as their Hall Council Vice President back in 2005. However, like Mark McGwire, I don't want "to talk about the past." The past cannot be changed. From 1000 miles away from Northeastern, the best benefit I can provide as an alumnus is to document my suggestions and ideas for the future. It is the current and future members of the Association who will have the responsibility to reach out to the student body, deliberate, and make decisions about the future of direct elections.

Suggestions for The Future

- **The Direct Elections Must Be Expanded, But Not to the Executive Vice President:** In 2008, I put forth in an addendum to the election report from that year that the Direct Elections should be extended with an objective of moving to a system where the entire Executive Board of the Association would be elected by the student body with positions being added over a period of roughly five years. The reason for expanding direct elections is to give the average Northeastern student a greater level of involvement and say in their student leadership. In the past, the Executive Vice President title did little more than indicate who would be the Vice-Chair of Senate and next in the order of succession. Back then, the Vice President for Student Affairs and Executive Vice President were the same person, similar to how another large Northeastern student group, the Resident Student Association, has one person serve as the Executive Vice President and Vice President for Housing Services. With the structural changes, the Executive Vice President is now primarily an *internally-facing* position, responsible for internal projects and working with other members of the Association. It is illogical, therefore, to have this person elected by the student body, especially as the next addition to direct elections when there are positions that are focused more on working with general students (as opposed to other student group leaders or administrators). It is these positions that are the most important

to make directly elected. Below, in order of importance, I identify three good candidates for direct elections to be expanded to:

- #1: The Vice President for Student Services, who is responsible for overseeing areas that affect almost all students, including housing, public safety, dining, and technology services. This position, often deals directly with individual students or small groups of students having issues, but must also balance the interests of some students with that of the student body as a whole, meaning that direct student input to the election of the position could be very beneficial.
- #2: The Vice President for Academic Affairs, who is responsible for overseeing an area that affects every Northeastern student, and is the primary reason why they came to the institution,. Like the Vice President for Student Services, the Vice President for Academic Affairs often works directly with individual students or small groups of students having issues, and must play a delicate balancing game, making the position's direct election beneficial.
- #3: The Comptroller, who is responsible for overseeing the Finance Board that allocates money paid in every student, totaling over $1.7 million a year. This position is literally responsible for the student body's money, and students deserve an input into who will be overseeing the money they've paid in.

- **Privatize the Financing of Campaigns:** As direct elections continue, and more positions are hopefully added, the cost for campaigns will rise. However, the election fund shrinks each year and eventually the money will run out. The solution to this problem is to move to a system where candidates are responsible for fundraising on their own for the election. Instead of restricting candidates to a certain amount of money, and having forms and processes for financial approvals and reimbursements, the Elections Committee should not involve itself with campaign finances and should leave the raising of funds and spending for elections to the candidates themselves. Moving to private financing relives the Association of the responsibility to replenish a dwindling election fund, allowing more effort to be focused on the core mission of student advocacy.

- **Students Must Know WHY They Should Vote:** In many cases, students know that voting is open and that they can vote, but they do not. Going forward, The Association must make an effort to reach these students by showing them the true power and importance of their votes. This not simply an election-season task, but must take place throughout the entire year. Students need to know what the Association does and need to see results from the Association. Students must definitively know that their voices are heard, and that the Association is fighting for what they want. The ideas that the Association only advocates for a certain elite or that Association members are "in bed with" or focused on appeasing administrations must be eliminated so students will have confidence in the Association and have a stronger desire to participate in direct elections. It is not enough to ask for student input through surveys on myNEU and during Campus Invasion, and then to work on projects quietly behind the scenes. In many cases, a change happens at Northeastern or something is improved, and students don't know about the work that their representatives put in to doing it. By enhancing the lines of communication between the Association and the student body, students will have more incentive to vote during elections knowing the direct impact and importance the Association has. In addition to continuing to enhance social media efforts through Facebook and Twitter, the Association should look to brand

new enhancements at Northeastern as being brought forth by the Association. A great example of an effort that did this was the 2008 giveaway of laundry detergent that came with an attached note indicating to students that the Association was responsible for the implementation of the popular Laundry Bucks program.

- **Eliminate Blocking:** While I agree with the Chair of the Elections Committee that the section on blocking should "be removed from the Direct Elections Manual," I propose going further and removing the entire concept of blocking a candidate from the Association. Given that the student body has the option of voting "no confidence" (a vote that is effectively a vote against all candidates), the Senate needs to defer the decision on who is or is not competent to serve to the student body.

- **Eliminate the Concept of "Campaign Workers":** The concept of "campaign workers" and who exactly is a campaign worker is a difficult to document, difficult to understand concept. I suggest that the entire concept be removed from the Direct Elections Manual. It should be an expectation of Senators that if they are working on a campaign, they recluse themselves from the Elections Committee and any other efforts requiring impartiality. However, having sanctions and hearings for the actions of campaign workers or alleged campaign workers brings negativity to the elections process and takes up valuable time that could be used encouraging students to vote. By eliminating the concept from the Direct Elections Manual, acts of gross misconduct during the campaign will still be prohibited, however it will be left to entities outside the Association (such as the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, Department of Residential Life, or Northeastern University Public Safety) to handle such issues and issue consequences.

Final Words

It would not be right for me to write this addendum without also nothing that I believe the success of the direct election of the Association President in 2010 was due to the hard work, dedication, and commitment put forth by many. Without the help that I received from other Senators, the promotional efforts I was responsible for wouldn't have been as strong. I too commend the members of the committee for their dedication. I also commend the candidates and their campaign workers for their hard work.

During my five years at Northeastern, I learned a lot about representing others. A few key points to pass on that would help future members of the Association with future direct elections:

1) Always listen: Often, people just want someone to listen to them and hear what they have to say. By being that person, you're helping them. By listening to the people you represent, you can understand their issues and truly be their advocate. Even if you don't agree, you should listen.
2) Always learn: Naturally, I expected to learn when I came to an institution of higher learning. However, so much of what I learned came from outside the classroom. The saying that "knowledge is power" is true. You can be a better advocate by gaining more insight and more knowledge.

3) Never forget your mission: No matter what, don't forget what the purpose of the Association is. Read Article II of the Constitution – take it literally, and remember that you are there to "advocate in the interest of all undergraduate students."

I am always willing to provide my insight and help to the Association and its officers and members. It has been a pleasure serving the Association, and an even greater pleasure serving the student body at Northeastern.

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