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Candidate's briefing minutes: 03/13/2012

Student Government Association, Northeastern University

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Minutes from Candidate's Briefing
3/13/2012

- Ability for grievances to be filed b/c agreement reached with Prof. Herman, the elections board, which allows you to become a provisional candidate. Technically we should not have even allowed that- giving a leeway.
- Question: The Senate may override the rules provided in the manual by a 2/3 vote: it doesn't provide any time constraints, so why was it taken that way in the Senate? **The Chair** said the way that was interpreted was that the Senate can override by the 2/3 vote before elections. If the Senate could override the manual at any point during the election that would make null and void things that have already happened. (Ex. New rules about the debates, candidates, disclosure of candidates, etc.) If in two weeks they decided to override the manual, then you guys would have all been in violation of submitting your candidate worker forms to me that are not required under this manual but would be required under the old manual. So, the provided from Prof. Herman was that can only be implemented before the elections started, which started when nominations were.
- Question: Is that precedent, or where is that coming from? **The Chair** states the manual; I don't think has ever been overturned. The 20% was overturned after elections had ended, so same kind of idea that elections weren't presently going on.
- Question re: just a section of the manual was overturned 2 years ago to extend the voting period to create a threshold after an extension. **The Chair** answers: the extension's allowed for in the manual, so it says that if you don't meet the 20% by the 7 days, that it may be overturned by some majority of the election's committee. The time being referred to was left at 19.78, they didn't continue it.

Proceed w/ agenda:

- All candidates submit a declaration form to **The Chair**. One of the last things left in the direct elections manual.
- Requirements for all candidates running for elected positions are explained. All of these requirements are found in the manual and were e-mailed to candidates.
- Announcement of the results will be April 2nd in the Senate chambers.
- **The Chair** asks for names, NUIDs for all campaign members. Can take 48 hours to get the swipe access setup. That group of people will have card access until April 2nd. In the past there was a cap, but **The Chair** stated to submit a list, and if they give her a cap, she will get back to them and let them know how many people they are allowed to provide.
- Chalk needs to be approved by Jason Foster, send an e-mail, Chiquita can e-mail you back. Stated that Quinn Snellings from the front desk can also approve.
- Two Student Body President debates: March 15th at 6pm in front of Ell sponsored by RSA and March 22nd at freshman quad sponsored by Huntington News.
- Question: in the past there have been ideas for how the layouts will be? **The Chair** states that this will be decided by the sponsors, as they are writing a lot of the questions.
- Question: Will SGA oversee this process? **The Chair** states that they will be checked for appropriateness and redundancy, but not censoring them. Personal discretion will be used.

- Candidate stated that he would be more comfortable if the committee weighed in on this process, given **The Chair's** impartiality with issues like Chick-Fil-A.
- **The Chair** stated that inappropriate includes overtly sexual, too personal or swearing. Audience questions will depend on the environment and the amount of time. If questions are asked by Twitter, the question will be designated to the individual who asked it, so there will not be anonymity.
- **The Chair** states that Monday at 8:30pm will be the only EVP debate in the Indoor Quad sponsored by Student Alumni Association.
- If a member of the elections committee does any campaign work for you, you are susceptible to a grievance.

Relay for Life

- Relay for Life happens during elections. Whether you want to campaign on it, or not, whatever is decided is a gentleman's agreement.
- Candidate proposes that personal conversations are allowed, but that tabling, disseminating campaign pamphlets, etc. are not.
 - o Vote agrees.
- You can use SGA office printer for Financial Statements, however, please do not print on that printer, but you may use it to scan your documents.
- **The Chair** answers question and states: If you want to know if someone is a campaign worker, the criteria is simply if they are doing work to obtain votes for a certain candidate at the knowledge of that candidate. In order to file a grievance, you would have to prove that it was at the knowledge of the candidate and that they were acting against the rules.
- If someone approaches a candidate and states that they are going to help out with their campaign, but the candidate knows that what they are going to do it against the rules, let **The Chair** know.
- Document the campaign work you do, and be clear what you are telling them to do and what they are doing.
- Points of communication: determine one main point of communication with **The Chair** via the campaign, so that the news is relayed efficiently.

The Chair states that she will begin going over the election manual:

- Section 1: nominations
 - o No questions.
- Section 2: slates
 - o Election committee has to approve the slate names, which will be on the ballots, and they will be looking at appropriate language and length. Slates should be approximately under 50 characters.
- Section 3: voting stations
 - o Not yet provided, but will be sent to candidates at the earliest convenience.
 - o Voting stations are off-limits for campaigning. Do not chalk at T-stations.
 - o Question asked about the penalties of chalking on city property

- **The Chair** answers: If you chalk on city property, it will go through NUPD. If NUPD suspends you, it will come back down to SGA. It is not up to the committee to interpret Northeastern policy: that is OSCCR and Student Affairs' responsibility.
- Section 4: elections timetable
 - Available to public on the website.
- Section 5: campaign finance
 - Campus activities will not reimburse tax, so you can find the tax-exempt forms on the campus activities website.
- Section 6:
 - Directly facilitating voting is providing the means and opportunity to vote.
 - Candidates cannot campaign in a situation where they are watching someone cast a vote. This is true to prevent voter intimidation.
 - Question was posed if candidates were to walk around InfoCommons, but were not facilitating or watching people vote and **The Chair** stated that would be fine.
- Section 7: elections promotions
 - Pictures will not be on the ballots but will be on the website if candidates submit them, as well as the first 10-words of the candidate statement. You can modify them if necessary.
 - Candidates may make a title for a campaign and use that as their statement on the page rather than the first 10-words if they would rather.
 - Elections promotions survey is optional, but would be helpful if candidates fill them out.
 - General rule of thumb for 4 and .4, stay ~100 yards. Depends on each situation, but use personal discretion.
 - Question was asked if they could have this written in formal writing, and **The Chair** concurred that would be done once it is decided.
- Section 8: voting procedure
 - Question: do staff accounts have access to the vote? **The Chair** answers no
 - Question: are global pathway students able to vote? **The Chair** answers no, because they considered CPS.
 - If someone has a problem casting their vote, myNEU is down, etc., have them e-mail **The Chair** all of their information, and it will go through Information Services.
 - There will be no vote counter on the SGA website, but candidates will be updated on a daily basis of how many votes have been casted.
- Section 9: elections results
 - No questions.
- Section 10: grievances
 - Question: in the past, certain individuals said that anything that might be a grievance should be filed as so. **The Chair** states that if you can argue that it's a violation of something in the manual, then you can file it as a grievance. If it's a general issue with something in a campaign, inform **The Chair** and then a decision can be made.
 - **The Chair** suggests that if someone makes a mistake, does something that can be easily rectified, and you would rather just see it fixed than go through the entire process, then that is an option. If it affects the campaign or integrity of elections or needs to be heard in a formal setting, file it as a grievance.
 - Question is asked about the definition of a worker: **The Chair** answers that if you are a campaign worker, you are working towards the slate, and the slate is responsible for the

actions, but demerits are decided on an individual basis. If both candidates are participating in an activity that requires a demerit, then that will happen, however if it is filed because of something a campaign worker did and only one candidate was responsible for this action, they will be evaluated on an individual basis.

- **The Chair** explains that things that are financially involved and requires reimbursement, this is the only case that a sanction would affect both members of a slate, regardless of who committed the violation.
 - Question is asked about members of the election committee filing grievances: **The Chair** answers that the committee can file grievances because any student body member can file a grievance, however **The Chair** requires that during the grievance hearing, the member would then have to recuse them. This would automatically be extended to anyone that they call, i.e. witnesses.
 - Question is asked about asking every election committee member to be called as witnesses: **The Chair** answers that if there are less than 5 members of the committee able to hear the grievance, no grievance hearing can be held. **The Chair** states that you cannot call a witness without their consent.
 - Comment is stated that all candidates are planning on adhering to rules, and do not intend to have to go through the grievance hearing process.
- Section 11: appeals
- Question is asked who the current members of the Operational Appeals Board? Amy Holmes, Chrissy Judah, Ian Oo, Mark Mellisen, Jason Fried, Kieran Foran. This is available online.
 - **The Chair** states that if you are concerned about the appeals process then the SGA website has all of the members listed.
 - Question is asked about the limit of the number of grievances and **The Chair** answers that there is no limit on the number of grievances that can be filed by one individual.
 - **The Chair** asks that if they are filed that they are filled out properly and in-full and that evidence is provided to support the violation. She states that she is not judging the validity, but rather that the evidence is there.
 - Question is asked about if there is no contact information filled out on a grievance form. **The Chair** answers that grievances can be filed anonymously. If there is a grievance that is anonymous without contact information, then they run a higher risk of not seeing a hearing, as they then cannot check back with the individual filing with questions about the evidence.
 - Question is asked about multiple grievances being filed against a campaign for the same violation and **The Chair** answers that no, the first grievance is the one that stands.
 - **The Chair** explains that grievances that are found without merit will still be available to see, and see why they were found without merit. **The Chair** said that she will make it a transparent process and will talk to the committee and let the candidates know.
 - Question about the Operational Appeals Board and their relationship with elections committee: **The Chair** answers by stating that the minutes from the elections committee meeting are provided to the Appeals Board so that they can see the process and evidence. The deliberation is in the executive session, so that is not in the minutes, but the Board is provided all of the information about the decision.
 - Question is asked: in past the chair of the Board has interviewed the chair of the elections committee: **The Chair** answers that it has not been planned, but if she is called to represent, then that will happen.
 - Question is asked about a process for students to lose the right to file a grievance: **The Chair** answers no unless they are no longer a student. **The Chair** states that they have in the past discussed community members filing grievances, but those issues must be filed through student affairs.

- Section 12: post-election report
 - o **The Chair** states that it will be released end-April. That will be passed on to her successor.

- Section 13: grievance hearing procedure
 - o Appendix A: Section 1, #3, question is posed about lack of official campaign workers, does that not apply to anyone helping any candidates? **The Chair** states that the definition is implied, so just the two people who are representing (i.e. the slate.) Both members of the slate cannot be witnesses. The campaign is referring to the two representatives. If they are not, one of those two people can be called as a witness, but a witness can refuse to testify.
 - o **The Chair** states that the grievance hearing is something that they try to follow, but modifications are at the discretion of the committee and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
 - o Appendix B: Glossary: Question is posed about the definition of campaign period, and **The Chair** answered that it is defined to begin at the end of the candidates briefing.
 - o Question is posed about the definition of campaigning, as they believe that it contradicts the earlier definition of campaigning, including the creation of posters. **The Chair** answers that barring any objections; she would change the definition to distributing, not creating.
 - No objections.
 - o **The Chair** states that this is the first time that there is a glossary, and it will hopefully serve to clear up issues and questions about definitions.

- Section 14: Campus Activities Chalking Policy
 - o **The Chair** states that candidates have to follow the guideline of using the chalk provided in the student activity office.
 - o Question is asked about the 15-word maximum. **The Chair** clarifies that it is a 15-word maximum in each section according to Campus Activities, example 15 words in Snell Engineering, 15 words in Centennial Common. Question is asked to define “a word,” and **The Chair** said it is up to the Campus Activities Office to interpret the policy.
 - o Question is asked based on precedent; a website/Twitter handle/Facebook link would be one word? **The Chair** answers that she does not have documentation of the precedent, if the students have worked on campus before and that was what they experienced, and then they should go by that. Question on the policy can be directed to **Chiquita Baylor, President Michael Sabo** or Campus Activities.
 - o Question is asked about the map, as there was a scanning error, and **The Chair** answered that the actual chalking policy map is stapled above the Work Study desk, and advised candidates to take a look there. Another student added that Student Activities also has maps available.
 - o The bikeway path by International Village is not Northeastern property, and students are advised to stay on only Northeastern property.
 - o **The Chair** stated that she will e-mail Student Activities and ask them to send over an updated chalking map.
 - o **The Chair** states that the grievance report form template is available on the SGA website under elections and they can be submitted in-person or via e-mail.
 - o Question is posed about filing an anonymous grievance report, and **The Chair** states that they may make-up a fake e-mail address or they can drop it at the SGA office.
 - o Candidates are advised that if the SGA office is closed, they may go to the operations desk and ask to be let in to drop off the form. **The Chair** asks that if it is dropped off when no one is at the office, to e-mail her to make sure that she receives the form.

Questions:

- Are these meetings confidential?
 - o **The Chair** states that this meeting is not confidential. All meetings are open unless they're being held in executive session. The only things that require this are deliberations for grievance hearings and approving finance statements.
- Are off-campus events allowed in campaigns?
 - o **The Chair** answers yes. Anything you spend has to be declared.
- Student Activity Fee
 - o **The Chair** states that any events sponsored by the Student Activity Fee cannot be used for campaigns. Anything that could come close to using the SAF and you being elected should not occur. No endorsements at SAF funded speakers, events. Candidates can campaign after an event, but it has to be far enough away from the event that it does not interfere.
 - o Question is asked if a candidate is coordinating SAF-funded events, is that OK? **The Chair** answers yes, as long as there is no campaigning present.
 - o Question is asked how this applies to referenda. **The Chair** answered that the referenda part of the election is not governed by the Direct Elections Manual; it is governed by the bylaws of the SGA and **President Sabo** and the e-board. Sponsors of referenda can campaign that in any situation that they want.
 - o **The Chair** stated that elections committee members can sponsor referenda or work closely with referenda, but if a candidate decides to endorse referenda, the election committee member(s) must distance themselves from the candidate's campaign.
 - o **The Chair** states that members of student groups can endorse candidates how they like, election committee members do not have to resign from these groups but must abstain from any decision within a group as to who to endorse.
- Questions
 - o Question is posed as to the language in elections promotions, where it is stated in Section 3 that candidates are "allowed and encouraged" to participate in debate. **The Chair** states that candidates are not required. Grievances cannot be filed, but if the candidates cannot go, to let **The Chair** know if they cannot go, as the debate will be cancelled.
 - o Question is posed by member that had to step out by visiting student groups to promote their campaign. **The Chair** said that should be all set now, and because of previous campaigns, the time allowed to debate was limited (as it was not allowed to happen once elections had begun.) Student groups can invite candidates to debates in however they want. Any debates that happen outside of SGA does not have SGA jurisdiction.
 - o Question is posed if candidates will get a format for the debate, in terms of opening speeches, etc. **The Chair** said she will send notes on this to the candidates by Thursday morning. NUTV has the past years' debates on their website.
 - o Question is posed about endorsement of student groups in regards to campaign members that are part of a student group and want their group to endorse their candidate. **The Chair** answers that student groups can do it in any way they want, including talking about it at meetings or writing the Huntington News. **The Chair** encourages candidates to talk to groups and let them know that is an option for them.
- Meeting is adjourned.