



UWSA

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG
STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

By-law Amendment Proposal

August 11, 2021

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ELECTION REFORM AMENDMENTS

In February 2021, the UWSA piloted significant electoral reform. The intent of the reform was to prevent harms previously experienced by election participants, to integrate professional feedback provided by Catalyst Research & Communications, and to create an electoral system that is in line with the values of the union. In July, the By-law and Policy Committee engaged open consultations with 2021 General Election participants to gather feedback on the reform.

Participants in the consultations reported a generally negative experience in the 2021 General Election. Participants felt over-surveilled and policed. Their training was unsatisfactory and collaborative campaign building was not engaged. Supplemental rules and campaign by-laws unfairly restricted campaigning and negatively impacted voter engagement. The Election Accountability Board (EAB) was unable to meet and could not provide meaningful support to the election management team. Failures in communication from the election management team constituted a significant portion of the participant complaints.

Participants reported that the sense of community built among candidates was a positive part of the 2021 General Election. They also reported that it was a good learning experience.

This package contains a modest set of by-law amendments to address core problems with relatively simple solutions in time for the 2021 By-Election. The committee is planning a longer student engagement process to guide further reforms for the 2022 General Election. Outside of the scope of policy and by-law, the committee recommends renewed focus on year-round student engagement, democratic culture building, and better training for the election management team.

AMENDMENT SUMMARY

Campaign Opportunities

This section of the by-laws was found to be needlessly restrictive and prevented candidates from engaging meaningfully with voters. In these amendments, campaign opportunities are still planned collectively during Week 3, however, candidates can arrange for additional campaign opportunities without needing ECF approval – they need only to give notice to the ECFs and any candidates running for the same position. The amendments also allow the ECFs to assist candidates who may be less experienced with campaigning to arrange additional campaign opportunities.

Election Accountability Board (EAB)

The EAB was unable to meet during the 2021 General Election because the membership, and therefore quorum, was so large. In these amendments, the membership of the EAB does not change, however, quorum is reduced from 50% + 1 to five (5) voting members. Keeping the

membership large but the quorum low has a high chance of ensuring that the EAB can meet quickly to deal with conflicts as they arise.

Chairing Housekeeping

When the UWSA instituted the UWSA Rules of Order, it removed the ability of the Chair to utilize a tie-breaker vote; however, two instances of this former rule were missed when these changes were made. These final amendments remove the contradictory clauses to ensure the UWSA Rules of Order are respected. Removing these clauses ensures that there is no confusion – the Chair of the Board is a non-voting member of the EAB and does not count toward quorum.

MOTION RECOMMENDATIONS

BE IT RESOLVED THAT By-law 5.25.iii Election Campaign Facilitators Powers and Duties is amended to remove the words in red below to read:

“The ECFs shall organize ~~all~~ campaign opportunities for candidates and volunteers including debates, forums, classroom presentations, meetings with student groups, and any other campaign opportunity targeting ten (10) or more voting members.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT By-law 5.35 Campaign Opportunities is amended to remove the words in red and add the words in purple below to read:

i. Campaign opportunities shall be any promotional engagement for candidates targeted at classrooms, student groups, or any group of ten (10) or more students, table bookings or campaign displays (not including posters or banners), debates, forums, and any other publicly promoted engagements.

~~**ii.** All campaign opportunities shall be approved or arranged by the ECFs.~~

ii. ~~Planning for~~ Campaign opportunities shall be ~~done~~ collaboratively **planned by all candidates** during the All-Candidates' Campaign Preparation Week (**Week 3**).

iii. During Campaigning (Weeks 4 and 5), candidates may independently arrange campaign opportunities additional to those developed collaboratively during Week 3. In these instances, candidates shall notify the ECFs and any other candidate contesting for the same position of the additionally planned campaign opportunities no less than 24 hours in advance of said opportunity.

iv. During Campaigning (Weeks 4 and 5), the ECFs shall provide support by request to candidates who require additional guidance arranging campaign opportunities.

~~**iv.** All candidates contesting for the same position shall have equal access to the same campaign opportunities.~~



~~v. Candidates found to have arranged for private campaign opportunities shall be in violation of these by-laws and subject to consequences in accordance with the Election Complaints Policy.~~

v. Classroom presentations may only be made with instructor permission and must follow any restrictions imposed by the instructor within their classroom, subject to compliance with these by-laws.

vi. The ECFs, in coordination with the UWSA Communications Department, shall arrange for the purchase of ad space in the Uniter to feature UWSA Election Campaign promotions and/or candidate bios.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT By-law 5.48.iv Election Accountability Board (EAB) is amended to remove the words in red and add the words in purple below to read:

“Quorum for a meeting of the Election Accountability Board shall be ~~50% + 1 of the membership of the EAB minus any members in a conflict of interest or three (3) voting members, whichever is more.~~ **five (5) voting members of the EAB.** At least three (3) UWSA Directors must be present at a meeting of the EAB in order for it to meet quorum.”

BE IT RESOLVED THAT By-law 7.14.iii (Voting and Decisions at Standing and Ad-Hoc Committees) is removed in its entirety:

~~“The Chair of a Committee does not vote on any motion except to break a vote that is tied.”~~

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT By-law 6.7.viii (Duties of the Chair of the Board of Directors) is removed in its entirety:

~~“The Chair or acting Chair may vote on any motion upon which there is an equality of votes.”~~