

UVSS Electoral Report

March 2012

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SUMMARY

The 2012 UVSS election was concluded successfully, with the new Electoral Policy working well and effectively serving the needs of the UVSS electorate.

1. **NOMINATIONS:** Two individuals ran for Chairperson, with only one candidate running for each of the other four Executive positions which required ratification by the electorate. 25 students filed nominations for the 11 Director-At-Large positions, although four withdrew prior to election day. Two referendum questions were asked, both of which had a proponent and no official opponent.

2. **MAJOR CHANGES:** The new Electoral Policy, adopted in November, 2011, brought substantial changes in various aspects, most notably (from an operational perspective), the use of WebVote (online voting), and the reduction in the polling period from three days to 24 hours. Candidates and election officers alike needed to be mindful of the Policy's new approach to campaigning and other activities.

3. **CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES:** Candidates participated fully and fairly in the campaign process and all involved conducted themselves in accordance with the principles of the Electoral Policy. Candidates and others took advantage of the informal processes of the Electoral Office for advice and to resolve potential disputes early, without rancour. Only two formal complaints were filed, both of which were dismissed.

4. **ELECTORAL OFFICE:** Dianne Flood returned as the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) for the second year, Shawn Slavin returned for his fifth election with the UVSS as Senior Deputy Electoral Officer (SDEO), and Angela Lorenz was welcomed to the team as the Deputy Electoral Officer (DEO). In accordance with the new Policy, the SDEO and DEO were the face of the Elections Office, dealing directly with the candidates, advising on the new Policy and resolving disputes informally, carrying out the day-to-day operations, and implementing the WebVote system, with the CEO resolving the formal complaints and advising on policy interpretations. With the WebVote system, substantially fewer pollsitters were required, and no vote counters. This structure proved to be extremely successful in the fair and cost effective management of the election.

5. **APPEALS:** Last year's Elections Adjudicator, Randy Parker, and Arbitration Panel, Karen Potts, Ron Yee, and Matt Watters, returned for a second year, and while of benefit having experienced individuals in these roles, neither of the decisions of the CEO were appealed.

6. **ONLINE VOTING:** The Election was conducted using UVic's WebVote System (administered through the UVic University Secretary's Office). This was the first time that it was used in a general election, having been previously used in the fall, 2011 UVSS referendum. The WebVote worked well, without any issues or complaints.

7. **POLLING PERIOD:** Polls opened at 9:00am PST February 29, 2012 and closed at 9:00am PST March 1, 2012. 11 pollsitters using eight Netbook computers staffed 15 polling stations at various locations on campus, open for a total of 65 hours, The polling period was reduced from three days as in previous years to 24-hours under the new Policy and the increase in voter turnout expected from online voting may have been impacted by this change. Additional work was undertaken to inform the student body of the reduced polling period through emails, posters, banners, Martlet advertisements and the Elections

Supplement. Only one student raised concerns after the close of polling, stating that he was unaware of the change in the polling period.

8. VOTER TURNOUT: 3,410 individuals cast ballots out of a possible 16,317 for a voter turnout of 20.90%.

9. ELECTIONS RESULTS: The final elections and referenda results are:

Chairperson:	Emily Rogers	
Director of Student Affairs:	Megan Quigley	
Director of Events:	Lewis Rhodes	
Director of Finance and Operations:	Ariel Tseng	
Director of External Relations Services:	Lucia Order	
Directors At-Large:	Rachel Barr	Kalyn Morrison
	Justin Fontaine	David Mutuku
	Andrew Fortune	Tribesty Nguyen
	Nicole Iaci	Gabrielle Sutherland
	Kelsey Mech	Liza Watler
	Ariel Mishkin	

Campaigns Referendum: At no cost to students, do you support reallocating \$0.50 per full-time students and \$0.25 per part-time student from the Building and Capital Fund to a new dedicated Government Relations and Outreach fund that will be used solely for quality research and lobby efforts directed at various levels of government and the University on the issues of post-secondary education, affordable housing, public transit, sexualized violence and campus sustainability? **YES**

Hempology Referendum: Do you support a directive to the UVSS Board of Directors, to ask the University of Victoria to create an exception to the smoking ban that would allow the Hempology 101 Club to hold their weekly meeting at the UVic Central quad? **YES**

INTRODUCTIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2012 UVSS Electoral Report is submitted by the Electoral Office as required by the UVSS Electoral Policy . The Electoral Office consists of:

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO): Dianne Flood

Senior Deputy Electoral Officer (SDEO): Shawn Slavin

Deputy Electoral Officer (DEO): Angela Lorenz

The Elections Office would like to thank the UVSS Board of Directors, Electoral Committee, and staff, especially Remy Hall, Samantha Scott, Allison Rhodes, Dale Robertson, Al Bishop, Ben Johnson, Carmen Barrett, and Terry Tan for their support, advice and wise counsel. Also a major thank you to the staff at Zap! Copy for dealing with the Office's printing needs, as well as all of the candidates' campaign needs.

The election could not have been run without the assistance of the 11 pollsitters who did a fantastic job advertising the elections, and upholding the democratic process on campus. The Election Office would also like to thank CFUV (Johnnie Regalado) and The Martlet (Erin Ball and Kristie Sipes), for their involvement in reporting on the elections and for their assistance with our advertising needs. The Elections Office would also like to thank Paul Donaldson for effectively and fairly moderating the All Candidates Forum. The Office also acknowledges Morag MacNeil, Kathy Scott, Bill Trott, Julia Eastman, and Sivonne McFall of the University Secretary's Office, for their assistance in matters related to the concurrent Senate and Board of Governors Elections, and especially for administering the WebVote system.

The Elections Office would also like to acknowledge the hard work of all the candidates for election to the UVSS Board of Directors, and their campaign activities that served to raise the profile of and engage students in the election process.

ELECTION PLANNING

The Chief Electoral Officer and the Senior Deputy Electoral Officer were both hired significantly earlier than in previous elections. This proved to be extremely helpful as it allowed the Electoral Office time to thoughtfully plan, assess, and address the new policy and make adjustments as necessary to effectively meet the requirements of the Election period.

1. New Forms

The forms necessary to support the Policy (Nominations, Referenda Questions, Complaints, Responses, Appeals, Appeal Responses) were redesigned to meet the requirements of the new Policy and, for ease of access by students, were made available in an electronic format on the UVSS Elections website. This made it easier for students to comply with the Policy requirements for both paper and electronic copies to be filed.

2. Dates, Timeline and Events

The dates and timelines set in the new Policy are different from the dates under the old policy that had been published in the UVSS Handbook. The Electoral Office worked with the UVSS Electoral Committee and Executive to make adjustments that accommodated the new changes, and also took into account the differing dates and timelines of the concurrent Senate and Board of Governors (BOG) elections.

The election date was set for Wednesday February 29th, 2012 with voting starting at 9:00am PST – the first day for elections to Senate and Board of Governors elections. Aligning the start of the UVSS with the Senate and the BOG elections was considered the best way to engage students – correspondence reminding students to vote would be minimized and campaign fatigue for both students and candidates would be reduced. However, this reduced the number of “campaigning days” by two, which was greeted with mixed reviews by candidates and students.

VOTERS LIST AND ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility to vote is set by the UVSS by-laws as “all currently registered undergraduate students and student enrolled in certificate and diploma programs at the University of Victoria”. Further to that, he or she must be in good standing (C&B 2.1.a; 2.1.d).

With the transition to online voting, manual parameters needed to be set that can be recognized by the “Banner” system, to adequately create the perfect voters list. Some individuals who pay UVSS fees are not recognized within the Banner System: (1st year Island Medical Program Students in their second or third semester or studies, 2nd year Island Medical Program Students, 3rd and 4th year Island Medical Program Students who have opted into the UVSS and all STEPS Forwards Program participants). Manual additions are required to permit these individuals to vote.

NOMINATIONS

31 Nomination Forms and two Referendum Forms were submitted to the Elections Office by the close of the nomination period. All were accepted as valid. Of the 31 nomination forms received, 25 were individuals running for Director-at-Large, while the other six were for the five executive positions (two individuals running for Chairperson, the other four positions ran uncontested).

Concerns were raised by some students and candidates after the call for nominations inquiring into why fewer individuals participated this year than in previous elections. The UVSS’s withdrawal of membership from the Canadian Federation of Students, which historically divided the campus, may have had a large impact on the number of nominations.

On February 27th, four DAL candidates withdrew from the election. Given the opening of polling was only two days later, the decision was made to leave their names on the electronic ballot but with the note adjacent to the candidates’ names that he or she had withdrawn.

CAMPAIGNING

Under the new Policy, candidates are not prohibited from publicly discussing their candidacy after filing nomination papers; however printed material (posters, banners, handbills, websites, buttons, Facebook Groups etc.) are not permitted to be published or posted prior to the commencement of the postering period, which began on February 20th, (nine days after the close of nominations). All candidates complied with this prohibition.

1. Candidates Handbook

The Electoral Office prepared a short document for candidates that contained important information regarding the UVSS Elections. The handbook highlighted some of the major changes to the Policy, and provided guidance on policy interpretation, campaign material information, and the process/procedure for complaints and appeals.

2. All Candidates Meeting

The Electoral Office hosted an All Candidates Meeting on February 11th at 5:00pm, after nominations closed, to meet with candidates prior to the start of campaigning. The meeting reviewed the Policy and candidates responsibilities and obligations, and was intended to set the stage for a fair election process, and to try to help candidates avoid any potential for campaign infractions. It also gave the candidates an opportunity to ask questions to clarify any matters.

3. SUB Tables – Indoor and Outdoor

The Electoral Office booked and coordinated the use of two tables inside of the Student Union Building for candidates, as in past elections. Although five days were booked for the use of tables, little use was made of them.

4. Martlet Supplement

The Martlet Supplement was an extremely useful communication tool. 3,000 copies were printed – 2,800 were distributed in conjunction with the February 23 edition, and the remaining copies were used at polling stations. The Supplement was also posted on the UVSS Elections website at the start of the postering period and was downloaded over 16,000 times.

5. Chairperson Debate

The Electoral Office promoted and organized a Chairperson Debate in Cinecenta. The debate was hosted and moderated by Phoenix Bain (CFUV) and Kailey Willetts (The Martlet). A large number of individuals came to watch the Debate – attendance was up significantly compared to the last few years.

6. All Candidates Forum

A forum for UVSS, Senate and Board of Governor candidates was held on February 27th in Cinecenta. Like the Chairperson Debate, audience turnout from non-candidates for this event was significantly greater compared to years past. Paul Donaldson very effectively moderated the forum.

7. Zap! Copy

All candidates were given a Zap!Copy credit of \$70.00 and were restricted to using it for their own campaign materials. To accommodate candidates who were on co-op workterms, candidates were permitted to authorize use of their Zap!Copy account to another individual if it was more convenient.

8. Advertising

The Electoral Office took advantage of the traditional methods of advertising (posters, banners and handbills). In addition, advertising was done through pollsitter engagement, two emails sent to every eligible voter, the Martlet Supplement, and advertisements on the SUB televisions.

9. Mass Emails

Two emails were distributed to all eligible voters informing them of the call for nominations, the 24-hour voting period, and the use of WebVote as the platform for casting ballots. In addition, a link direct to the downloadable Elections Supplement was provided.

10. Online Content

The Electoral Office did a major overhaul of the content and layout of the UVSS Elections Website, to ensure that it was easy to use, and students could find exactly what they needed without having to navigate through dozens of pages. All of the documents pertinent to the elections were digitized and put online under an "Election Forms" tab. The Elections Supplement was made available to students on our website, as was a list of candidates.

Candidates and slates have continued to use websites and Facebook as a platform for campaigning. Based on the statistics provided by the website coordinators for two of the three slates, the traffic to their websites was minimal – information regarding the traffic or reach of their Facebook Groups, Events or Advertisements is not available to the Electoral Office.

The Martlet created an election "blog", and provided all candidates the opportunity to fill out a ten question survey that was then put on their website. The Electoral Office is highly supportive of other organizations providing an additional balanced, accessible forum through which all candidates can engage with voters, and through which voters can obtain additional elections information.

THE ELECTION

1. Electoral Policy

In November 2011, the UVSS Board of Directors adopted a new Electoral Policy, which was a major benefit to the function, structure and administration of the elections, however, as with any new policy, actually applying the Policy indicated some tweaking is required and some recommendations are made in the appendix attached.

2. Online Voting

The UVSS Board of Directors signed a two year contract with the University to use the WebVote System, administered by the University Secretary's Office, as a voting platform. Currently some work is being done on the program to give more of the administrative control over WebVote to the Electoral Office for UVSS elections.

The use of the WebVote System for the Fall 2011 referendum questions was a major benefit as it provided the opportunity to do a "trial run" prior to the more complicated general election, and gave the Electoral Office incredible insight into problem solving issues. As such, no problems or complaints arose.

3. Polling Stations

The need and extent of polling stations was reduced with a total of 15 polling stations set up around campus, open for a total of 65 hours between the hours of 9:00am and 7:00pm on February 29th, 2012. 144 ballots or 4.22% of votes were cast at the polling stations. The eight Netbook computers purchased for the fall 2011 referendum were used with only a couple of minor updates needed.

4. Pollsitters

Eleven pollsitters were hired to operate the polling stations. While the majority had worked at previous UVSS Elections, two orientations sessions were held to ensure that all were updated on the new Policy and the new procedures due to the transition to online voting.

5. Voter Turnout

Despite reducing the voting period from 3 days to 24 hours, voter turnout at 20.9% of eligible voters was the largest voter turnout for UVSS elections since 2001.

8. Informal Dispute Resolution

The Policy provides for Informal Dispute Resolution. Nearly 20 individuals asked the Electoral Office to deal with issues through the informal resolution process. All of these matters were resolved quickly, and to the satisfaction of the individuals who brought forward these issues.

9. Complaints and Appeals

Two complaints were filed, both by non-candidates. The CEO dismissed the complaints and issued written reasons. Neither of the two complaints were appealed.

The CEO and the SDEO met with the Elections Adjudicator and the members of the Arbitration Panel prior to the close of nominations to discuss the new Policy, policy interpretations, the move to online voting, and the changes to the complaints and appeals process. The SDEO tried to keep all of these individuals informed along the way with updates regarding the progress of the Elections, as well as the occurrence of complaints and likeliness of appeals.

The significant reduction in complaints over previous years may, in part, be due to the change from the old Policy's Minor and Major Complaints" to the introduction of "Disqualifiable Offences" under the new Policy..

BUDGET

The costs of running an election can be significant, and many factors over which neither the UVSS Board or the Electoral Office has control can impact the budget. Those factors can include the number of referenda asked, the number of candidates running, the conduct of the candidates in terms of the time and effort needed to resolve complaints, appeals from any complaint decisions, and the ease of hiring and training poll sitters and electoral officers.

Staff hours comprise the largest part of the budget. The policy and processes require substantial staff hours in attending to details, without which the integrity of the election could be compromised. While the CEO was given sufficient autonomy in operations, at the CEO's request budget management and oversight was reserved to the UVSS General Manager. Budget details may be obtained from the UVSS General Manager.

CONCLUSION

The 2012 UVSS Elections were conducted fairly and democratically. All of the administrative and organizational responsibilities set out in the Electoral Policy were met, and carried out in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, accountability and respect for all individuals involved in the process.

The new Policy provided an effective framework for a fair election, without any complaints filed by a candidate against another candidate (although 2 complaints were filed by a non-candidate).. A slight increase in voter turnout may have been attributed to online voting, which proved to be in ideal platform for the elections with no issues surrounding security, voter eligibility, or accessibility.

Over the next few years, as the new Policy becomes better known and understood by the Electoral office, candidates and students the UVSS may expect an increased respect for the electoral process, and increased student engagement with the UVSS.

Appendix 1: General Elections Results

The final, official results of the UVSS Elections and Referenda are:

Chairperson

Ryan Petty	951
Emily Rogers	2269
SPOILED	5

Director of Student Affairs (Megan Quigley):

YES	2287
NO	726
SPOILED	3

Director of Events (Lewis Rhodes):

YES	2408
NO	674
SPOILED	5

Director of Finance and Operations (Ariel Tseng):

YES	2432
NO	713
SPOILED	2

Director of External Relations Services (Lucia Order):

YES	2313
NO	792
SPOILED	5

Directors At-Large:

Mike Anderson	1002
Mike Atkinson	961
Rachel Barr	1509
Pat Cousineau	WITHDRAWN
Justin Fontaine	1474
Andrew Fortune	1445
David Foster	1002
Joel Geddert	826
Tom Gracie	897
Jacob Gulliver	908
David Hamilton	769
James Hollinger	837
Cass Hussmann	WITHDRAWN
Nicole Iaci	1461
Peter Kazakoff	828

Sean Leslie	WITHDRAWN
Stephen Lyon	WITHDRAWN
Kelsey Mech	1539
Stephanie Mikalishen	792
Ariel Mishkin	1546
Kalyn Morrison	1419
David Mutuku	1130
Tribesty Nguyen	1576
Gabrielle Sutherland	1039
Liza Watler	1382
SPOILED	55

Referendum Questions:

i. *At no cost to students, do you support reallocating \$0.50 per full-time students and \$0.25 per part-time student from the Building and Capital Fund to a new dedicated Government Relations and Outreach fund that will be used solely for quality research and lobby efforts directed at various levels of government and the University on the issues of post-secondary education, affordable housing, public transit, sexualized violence and campus sustainability?*

YES	2405
NO	874
SPOILED	8

ii. *Do you support a directive to the UVSS Board of Directors, to ask the University of Victoria to create an exception to the smoking ban that would allow the Hempology 101 Club to hold their weekly meeting at the UVic Central quad?*

YES	1731
NO	1602
SPOILED	2

Appendix 2: Voter Turnout – 1976 to 2012

General Elections:

YEAR	NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS*	NUMBER OF VOTES CAST	VOTER TURNOUT
1976	6,875	1,492	21.70%
1977	6,894	1,280	18.57%
1982	9,925	1,059	10.67%
1983	10,230	1,171	11.45%
1984	9,798	1,471	15.01%
1985	9,709	2,122	21.86%
1986	9,832	1,376	14.00%
1987	10,839	2,132	19.67%
1988	11,182	1,405	12.56%
1989	11,918	1,059	8.89%
1990	12,628	1,900	15.05%
1992	13,514	1,397	10.34%
1993	13,284	1,788	13.46%
1994	13,246	1,666	12.58%
1995	14,715	1,643	11.17%
1996	15,077	2,022	13.41%
1997	15,327	1,897	12.38%
1998	15,098	1,166	7.72%
1999	14,984	4,757	31.75%
2001	15,504	3,900	25.15%
2002	16,052	1,760	10.96%
2003	15,731	1,989	12.64%
2004	16,056	2,211	13.77%
2005	15,920	2,575	16.17%
2006	15,826	2,978	18.82%
2007	15,641	1,670	10.68%
2008	15,519	2,612	16.83%
2009	15,955	2,964	18.58%
2010	16,465	3,402	20.66%
2011	16,420	2,922	17.80%
2012	16,317	3,410	20.90%

*Undergraduate population provided by UVic's Department of Institutional Planning and Development

By-Elections:

YEAR	NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS*	NUMBER OF VOTES CAST	VOTER TURNOUT
1977	7,151	422	5.90%
1985	9,832	1,547	15.73%
1986	10,839	1,209	11.15%
1987	11,182	1,390	12.43%
1988	11,918	1,160	9.73%
1996	15,327	1,636	10.67%

*Undergraduate population provided by UVic's Department of Institutional Planning and Development

Referenda:

YEAR	NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS*	NUMBER OF VOTES CAST	VOTER TURNOUT
1978 (Fall)	7,672	1,626	21.19%
2010 (Fall)	16,863	1,162	6.89%
2011(CFS)	16,420	4,665	28.41%
2011 (Fall)	17,448	3,425	19.63%

*Undergraduate population provided by UVic's Department of Institutional Planning and Development

Appendix 3: Electoral Structure and Responsibilities

The conduct of the UVSS Elections is governed by the UVSS Constitution and Bylaws with the Electoral Policy setting out the specific rules that govern the election process.

1. Electoral Committee (EC)

The role of the EC is to hire the elections staff and is a source of guidance and support when needed, or when issues arise beyond the authority of the Elections Office. The EC is comprised of three Board members – in 2012 they were Remy Hall, Samantha Scott and Allison Rhodes. The SUB General Manager (Dale Robertson) and the Officer of Research and Communications (Ben Johnson) are non-voting members of the committee.

2. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

The role of the CEO is to ensure that the UVSS Elections are conducted in accordance with the Electoral Policy, fairly and transparently. Dianne Flood returned as the independent CEO for the second year.

Under the new Policy, the CEO acted principally in a supervisory capacity, providing strategic planning and general direction on policy interpretation, plus deciding all complaints.

3. Senior Deputy Electoral Officer (SDEO) and Deputy Electoral Officer (DEO)

Shawn Slavin was hired as the SDEO, and brought the experience from having organized four elections and referendum periods with the UVSS; this assisted in minimizing the learning curve. Angela Lorenz was hired as the DEO, and brought knowledge of UVSS matters through her prior Board committee membership and other employment experience.

The SDEO and the DEO acted as the face of the Elections Office, and as the point of contact between candidates and the CEO. The role of the SDEO is new under the Policy with the SDEO providing for the day-to-day operations and administrative and organizational responsibilities, and working one on one with candidates about campaigning issues. The SDEO and DEO were also responsible for conducting the informal dispute resolution process. In instances where policy interpretation was concerned, the CEO was consulted. This proved to be an extremely successful model.

4. Elections Adjudicator (EA)

When a decision of the CEO is appealed, EA hears the appeal. Randy Parker returned for his second year as the EA. No decisions of the CEO were appealed, which meant that the EA did not have to rule on any complaints or appeals.

5. Arbitration Panel (AP)

The AP is the third and final body that deals with formal complaints and appeals within the jurisdiction of the UVSS Elections. Ron Yee, Matt Watters and Karen Potts also returned for their second year as members of the AP. Since no decisions of the CEO were made, subsequently no decisions of the EA could be appealed which meant that they did not need to rule on any elections matters.

6. Senate and Board of Governor (BOG) Elections – University Secretary's Office

The Electoral Office met with the University Secretary's Office at the beginning of January to discuss the respective roles in the conduct, coordination and operation of the UVSS, Senate and BOG Elections. Although the University Secretary's Office is in charge of all matters pertaining to Senate and BOG, the Elections Office assists in the promotions and preparation by including their candidates in the Elections Supplement, the All Candidates Meeting, and the All Candidates Forum, and by acting as a point of contact for questions, policy, and campaign rules. The Elections Office also stamps all Senate and BOG campaign material for posting.

The rules governing election to the Senate and BOG are different from the UVSS which causes confusion for candidates, especially those running in both elections. Beyond that, there is likely some confusion for the general student population, in that they do not fully understand that there are three independent elections taking place concurrently, nor do they know what role each of these governing bodies do. In the production of the Elections Supplement, an effort was made to try and differentiate the three elections, and what they all do.

The timeline for Senate and BOG elections do not coincide with the UVSS – the call for nominations for Senate and BOG is two weeks prior to that of the UVSS, the postering period for begins 9 hours before the postering period of the UVSS Elections, and ends 16.5 hours after the end of UVSS postering period, and the close of polling extends an extra day and a half after the UVSS polls close. Additionally, financial rules and reporting are different. It would benefit both candidates and students alike, if the UVSS worked with the University Secretary's Office and the UVic Senate to try and resolve these discrepancies in policy and administration of campus elections.

Appendix 4: Issues and Recommendations for the Board from the Electoral Office

A number of issues came to light through the election period and some policy recommendations are set out below that the Board may wish to consider.

1. Timeline – Aligning the Start and End of Polling with Senate and BOG Elections

Issue: Concerns were raised regarding the different polling periods for UVSS and UVic (Senate and BOG) elections.

Recommendation: The UVSS Board of Directors meet with the University Secretary's Office to discuss the possibility of reaching a consensus on a standardized voting period. If a consensus cannot be reached, EP 3.2.a.2. be amended to read "Where possible, the election date will be set for the same date as the first date for elections to Senate and Board of Governors."

Rationale: Aligning the voting periods would eliminate some of the confusion of and concerns raised by candidates and students. If a consensus cannot be reached between the UVSS and the University Secretary's Office, by setting the UVSS election date as the first date of Senate and BOG election, the UVSS can take advantage of the fact that the majority of ballots cast in UVSS, Senate and BOG elections occur on the first day of polling.

2. Voter Eligibility - the Opt In Deadline and the Constitution and Bylaws

Issue: In order to electronically permit an individual to vote, the voters list has to be set in advance and there is a point at which the voters list cannot be adjusted. Currently students can opt-in to membership in the UVSS on the day of the UVSS Elections, and are therefore technically eligible to vote in the UVSS Elections (Bylaw 2.1.a).

Recommendation: The Constitution and By-laws be amended to set a deadline for students to opt-in to the UVSS to be eligible to vote.

Rationale: As students are eligible to opt-in to the UVSS at any time, there needs to be a deadline set for eligible voters without the need to keep adding names to, or adjusting the electronic voters list.

3. Voter Eligibility – Members in Good Standing

Issue: When setting the eligible voters list, the system only permits the Electoral Office to use the parameter "students who have been assessed UVSS fees", however the Constitution and Bylaws provide that criterion is whether or not an individual is eligible to cast a ballot in standing within the UVSS (see C & B (2.1.a) "Students who fail to pay their current Society fees are not members in good standing of the Society".)

Recommendation: The UVSS Board of Directors examine voter eligibility under the Constitution and Bylaws, and how to set eligibility within parameters which be set by the system that permits electronic voting.

Rationale: The C&B eligibility needs to align with the parameters that can be set by the electronic voting system..

4. Candidate Withdrawals and the Electronic Ballots

Issue: Four candidates withdrew their candidacy for election as Director-At-Large prior to the opening of polling. The Electoral Office had to decide whether the candidate's names should remain on the ballot, or be removed.

Recommendation: EP 4.d. be added (and the subsequent policies renumbered) to read "If after the close of nominations a candidate withdraws their nomination, his or her name will remain on the ballot, but with the status 'WITHDRAWN' adjacent to their name. The results of the ballots cast for a withdrawn candidate are not made public."

Rationale: Candidates names should be kept on the ballot with the status "WITHDRAWN" to avoid confusion for voters who were not made aware by other means that a candidate has withdrawn their candidacy. This also aligns with the practices of provincial and federal elections.

5. Referendum Timeline

Issue: The timeline in which referendum questions can be called does not align well with the timeline for general elections. Currently referendum questions can be called up until the close of the nomination period. The Constitution and Bylaws states that "the Board of Directors. . .shall give no less than fourteen [14] calendar days notice of a referenda" – sufficient notice shall be deemed to have been given by not less than one half page advertisement in the student newspaper. If a referendum question is submitted at the close of nominations, it could not be held in conjunction with a general election.

In addition, following the close of the nominations, individuals have seven days to apply to be the official opponent. which in effect gives the proponent a seven day advantage in terms of campaigning, and also is too late for the opponent to have a platform published in the election supplement.

In order to align the referendum period with the campaign period of a general election, the deadline for submission of a referendum question should be no later than the day before the Call for Nominations.

Recommendation: Strike EP 6.1.c.4. "be submitted before the close of nominations", and EP 6.1.c be added (and the subsequent policies be renumber) to read "A referendum form must be submitted to the Elections Office no less than 24 hours before the call for nominations is made in order for it to be held concurrently with a general election, or with other referendum questions." The related policies respecting applying as proponents and opponents should be aligned with this deadline.

Rationale: The addition of this policy would comply with the timeline set out within Constitution and Bylaws, and would align the referendum and general election timelines. Putting a deadline on the submission of referendum questions, this would ensure that adequate notice and a fair opportunity is given to all students who want to run as a proponent or an opponent to a referendum question.

6. Polling Stations and Advertising

Issue: 144 ballots were cast at polling stations during the 65 hours that stations were set up on campus – this equates to an average of less than 2 ballots per hour, not a very effective use of resources, which could be used in other ways to promote the election.

Recommendation: Polling stations should be required only in the Library, Clearihue and the Student Union Building, for students that do not have access to a computer, and for students with a disability. Remove the requirement for polling stations in other locations by striking EP 7.1.d.2 “each of Elliott, Engineering Lab Wing, Cornett, MacLaurin, University Centre, Social Sciences and Mathematics, David Strong Building, Fraser, Fine Arts, Human and Social Development, Commons Block, Engineering and Computer Science, and McKinnon.”

Add EP 7.1.e to read “The Electoral Office will hire UVSS students to promote the elections by handbilling, classroom speaking and other means to be determined by the Electoral Office.

Rationale: With the move to online voting, accessibility has increased significantly, and there is no need for polling stations in every building. UVSS Election employees could be used much more effectively by classroom speaking, handbilling or other means.

7. Define the term “Business Day”

Issue: In relation to the complaints and appeals process, the EP uses the term “business day” to define deadlines.

Recommendation: Add the term “Business day” to EP Part 2 with the definition “Business day means a day other than Saturday, Sunday or a holiday between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm.”

Rationale: This would eliminate any confusion for individuals wishing to respond or appeal a complaint or decision of the CEO or EA.

8. Campaign Expenses and Disqualification

Issue: There is a lack of clarity between EP 5.5.c and EP 5.8.a.8 in regards to reporting campaign expenses. EP 5.5.c states that “a candidate who exceeds the campaign spending limit or fails to submit copies of their receipts or to certify in writing that the limit has not been exceeded must be disqualified by the Chief Electoral Officer.” The understanding was that by creating a stiff consequence for individuals who chose to exceed the spending limit, this would hopefully eliminate any uncertified spending.

However, EP 5.8 Disqualifiable Offences reads that “candidates...will be subject to disqualification if...[they] exceed the campaign spending limit, fail to file all of their receipts for campaign spending and the required certification about campaign spending.” The current use of the word “and” suggests that a candidate is required to do all three in order for the candidate to be disqualified, which is not believed to be the intent of the policy.

Recommendation: EP 5.8.a.8. be amended to read “exceed the campaign spending limit, fail to file all of their receipts for campaign spending, or fail to file the required certification about campaign spending.”

Rationale: This change would reflect the intent of the policy.

9. Tie Breaking Procedures

Issue: As was evidenced during this election period, there is a potential for a tie in the number of votes cast for candidates

Recommendation: The UVSS Board of Directors create tie breaking procedures to be included in the EP. If the tie is for 11th DAL, consideration might be given to that a 12th DAL be appointed, to avoid the costs and fatigue of a by-election.

Rationale: Two DAL candidates received an equal number of votes, and came in twelfth spot. Had it been at the position of the 11th DAL or had one of the elected Directors-at-Large been disqualified or withdrawn, or had the tie occurred in an Executive position, no procedures govern how to break the tie.

10. Executive Position Vacancies

Issue: Concerns were raised this Election Period as four of the Executive Positions ran uncontested; there was a chance that a candidate running for an Executive position was not going to be ratified. In addition, during the Nomination Period there was some concern that one or more of the Executive positions were going to remain vacant.

Recommendation: EP 5.5.b be added to read “If after an election or by-election a vacancy for an Executive position exists, a Director-At-Large can (temporarily) fill that position by a vote by the Board of Directors.”

Rationale: It is important that there are procedures in place to govern those scenarios to ensure that the Board can still function without a fully elected Executive.

11. Candidate Endorsements

Issue: Candidates running for election as an independent tend to support other independent candidates. Frequently, other slates support the election of some independent candidates as well. EP 5.6.c currently reads “In their campaign materials candidates may refer to their slate and to other persons on the same slate, but may not refer to any candidates not on that slate” – this would suggest that independent candidates cannot be endorsed by other independent candidates, or by other slates.

Recommendation: EP 5.6.c be amended to read “In their campaign materials candidates are permitted to endorse other candidates and/or slates, including candidates not on the same slate, provided they have the consent of the other candidate.”

Rationale: Support for candidates running as independents or on other slates is already taking place, and this needs to be reflected in the policy manual.

12. Paper copy of complaints/responses/appeals

Issue: When a complaint, response or appeal is filed, a hard copy must be submitted to the Electoral Office and an email copy to the Elections Adjudicator or the Arbitration Panel. It is extremely difficult for candidates and students who are not on campus to file these forms with the Elections Office.

Recommendation: EP 5.11.d be amended to read “Complaints must be made in writing, by sending a Complaint form (appendix C) to the Elections Office email address. A complaint may be made at any time up to forty-eight hours after the close of polls.”

EP 5.11.f be amended to read “The candidate complained about may respond in writing by sending a Response form (appendix D) to the Elections Office email address within one business day of the complaint being sent to the candidate.”

EP 5.13.a be amended to read “Within one business day after the Chief Electoral Officer makes a decision, an appeal may be made to the Election Adjudicator by a complainant or the candidate by sending an Appeal form (appendix E) to the Election Adjudicator at his/her email address, and to the Elections Office email address.”

EP 5.14.a be amended to read “Within one business day after the Election Adjudicator makes a decision, a candidate may appeal that decision to the Arbitration Panel, by sending an Appeal form (appendix E) to the Arbitration Panel at its email address and to the Elections Office email address.”

Rationale: The purpose of the physical hard copy is to ensure that the complaint submitted is genuine by the presence of a signature. Although this is something that should be considered, there are countless ways that individuals can prove their identity without the use of a hardcopy signature (scanned signature, Student ID Number, telephone call etc.). It is important to consider the needs of all students and candidates involved in the elections, especially those who are not on campus. There is no need to require a hard copy of a complaint, as all of the investigation and correspondence regarding a complaint, response or appeal is done through email.

13. Define how to apply the definitions listed under disqualifiable offences

Issue: The two complaints that were filed during this elections period focused on their perceived harassment in candidates’ platforms. The EP defines “malicious campaigning”, “substantially prejudicial”, “harassment”, “defamation”, “libel”, and “slander”, listed below 5.8 Disqualifiable Offences; however the EP does not make reference to how these definitions will be applied.

Recommendation: EP 5.8.a be added before the definitions are listed to read “To satisfy the belief that a disqualifiable offence has occurred, an objective test must be applied. The test is whether a reasonable person, having knowledge of all the facts, would find the activity subject to disqualification using the following definitions:”

Rationale: It is not enough simply for a person to claim that they feel an activity listed as a disqualifiable offence has occurred, nor is it a sufficient response for a candidate to say the activity was not intended to be perceived in that matter. The inclusion of this policy would ensure that complainants and respondents understand how these definitions will be applied when investigating disqualifiable offences.

14. Non-Candidate Involvement

Issue: Issues arose regarding the actions of non-candidates and their involvement in the elections, making serious allegations and potentially libellous comments about candidates.

Recommendation: The Board should consider creating policy that sets consequences of non-candidates who engage in those behaviours listed in EP 5.8 under disqualifiable offences. Loss of UVSS membership may be one such consequence.

Rationale: Untruthful comments about candidates could significantly impact the way a voter casts his or her ballot and affect the integrity of the elections process. The Electoral Office has no control over the actions of a non-candidate, but takes these matters very seriously. EP 1.b (Purpose and Application) states that the purpose of the Policy is to ensure that there is “respect for the democratic process and persons involved in that process” and that “voters and candidates [can] participate in a fair and just election”.

Appendix 5: Issues and Recommendations for the Board from Candidates

A number of issues came to light through the election period and some policy recommendations are set out below that the Board may wish to consider.

These recommendations and issues come from candidates who participated in the 2012 UVSS Elections.

The Electoral Office surveyed candidates requesting their input as to what worked and what did not work during the election period in an attempt to gauge how candidates felt the elections were conducted with the new Policy and in particular, online voting, and one day of voting.

1. Timeline – Close of Nominations and Opening of Postering Period

Issue: Some candidates expressed concern about the shortened (nine day) period between the close of nominations and the opening of the postering period. The concerns by candidates were that since the postering/campaign period usually results in a large increase in their absences from regular classes, they would prefer to have some additional time to try and get ahead in their academic pursuits, since Reading Break was now dedicated solely to preparing for campaigning.

Recommendation: EP 5.4.a be amended to read “Campaign material must not be posted or published prior to 9:00 a.m. on the sixteenth [16th] day after the close of the nomination period.”

Rationale: The extension of the timeline would give candidates the opportunity to prepare their campaign materials in advance of Reading Break and use that time to get ahead in their academics. This would also allow The Martlet to run an additional week’s worth of elections related stories. As the Electoral Office is already staffed and in the process of organizing polling at that time,, the change could be accommodated without additional staff resources.

2. Release of Results

Issue: A candidate who was running for election in the UVSS and the UVic Senate/BOG came forward with a concern that the release of the results for the UVSS Election in advance of the close of polling for the Senate and BOG election would skew Senate and BOG election results as historically the results have mirrored one another.

Recommendation: (See Issues and Recommendations 2: Timeline – Start of Polling). A conversation should be had with the University Secretary’s Office in an attempt to a) close polling at the same time, or b) withhold the UVSS election results until BOG/ Senate polls are closed. Following that meeting, policy should be amended or created to address this matter.

Rationale: To promote fairness in the outcomes of all University elections.

3. Campaign Spending

Issue: A concern expressed by candidates was that the policy did not support the use of new or more creative means to campaign. Additionally candidates suggested the UVSS should consider implementing policy that would adjust the financial limits annually, based on the number of students on campus to \$50.00 for the first 10,000 students (which will be provided by the Elections Office in the form of a credit at Zap!Copy) and an additional \$5.00 for every 500 students (rounded up to the nearest 500 students) beyond that first 10,000.

Recommendation: EP 5.5.a be replaced with “No candidate shall spend more than \$50.00, plus \$5.00 for every five-hundred [500] UVSS Members beyond ten-thousand [10,000] in campaign expenses. The Elections Office will cover the first \$50.00 in the form of a credit at Zap!Copy.”

EP 5.5.b be added (and the subsequent policies renumbered) to read “The Senior Deputy Electoral Officer will calculate the annual spending limit, and publish this value before the Close of Nominations. Where the number of UVSS Members beyond ten-thousand (10,000) is not a multiple of five-hundred (500), the financial limit will be rounded up to the nearest 500 students.”

Strike “In addition to the ZAP! credit, candidates may spend a maximum of \$30.00 on their campaign (“the campaign spending limit”)” from EP 5.5.b.

Rationale: Some candidates expressed that the small out of pocket spending limits the candidate’s creativity since the majority of campaign expenses have to be spent at Zap!Copy (which does not provide a wide range of campaign options). Changes to campaigning strategies that have taken place over the last few years (i.e.: stickers, buttons, websites, Facebook advertising etc.) as Zap! Copy cannot provide many of the things that candidates would rather spend their money on.

The majority of candidates did not use their entire Zap!Copy budget this year, yet most candidates used almost all of their out of pocket expenses.

Tying the spending limit to student population would align UVSS Elections more closely with many other universities, and follow suit with Provincial and Federal rules.

Appendix 6: Recommendations and Suggestions for the Electoral Office

The following suggestions are intended to help improve upon the administration and organization of the UVSS Elections. These issues were raised largely by candidates during the elections period, by candidates in the surveys that they filled out, and from external groups. They are set out here so that in 2013, the Election Committee and/or the Electoral Office may consider implementing them.

1. Chairperson Debate and All Candidates Forum Impartiality

Issue: Concerns were raised by multiple individuals following the Chairperson debate regarding the bias of one of the moderators.

Recommendation: The Electoral Office meet with CFUV and The Martlet to discuss the role of the moderator(s) for the Chairperson Debate, and the importance that they remain impartial during their moderating.

2. Accessibility at the All Candidates Forum and Chairperson Debate

Issue: Following the Chairperson Debate issues were raised regarding accessibility for students with a disability. The Elections Office met with the Society for Students with a Disability to discuss how the elections can be organized to better support some of the diverse array of disabilities on campus.

Recommendation: The following are requests made by the advocacy group that they feel would address their concerns:

- Ensure that the Elections Supplement is available online in a format that could be read using Text-to-Speech software (a pdf will work provided it is not flattened)
- Centralize the websites, Facebook Groups and candidate platforms on the UVSS Elections Website (provide links to the external sites)
- Provide alternative methods of asking questions at the All Candidates Forum and Chairperson Debate – allow students with a disability the option of writing a question down, or asking the question verbally
- At the 'Easy Access Polling Stations for Students with a Disability' install text-to-speech software that could read out the information to students who are voting that have a visual or learning disability (can be provided by the advocacy group)

3. Zap!Copy Campaigning

Issue: After campaigning was completed, the Electoral Office met with Crystal Lee and Roxy Price from Zap!Copy to see if there were any issues, or if there were things that the Elections Office could have done differently to better support them.

Recommendation: The following are requests made by Zap!Copy that they feel would address their concerns:

- The Electoral Office set a deadline for candidates to change accessibility to their Zap! Copy account. (Assuming that others will be permitted access to accounts to permit off campus candidates to use ZAP!) Zap! Found it difficult to

constantly be updating their records as to who could sign for an account, and would prefer that once the accounts are set up, no changes are made.

- Depending on the status of the 'One Card System' at UVic next year, there are issues with the Self-Serve machines in Zap! To minimize any loss of product or candidates being overcharged for printing, a discussion may have to occur between the Electoral Office and Zap! Copy at the start of the Election period to work out discounted full-serve printing prices, and not allow Zap! Copy account money to be put on self-serve cards
- If a candidate chooses to put their Zap!Copy money on a self-serve card, he or she should be paying for the card deposit out of his or her own pocket

4. SUB Tables – Indoor and Outdoor

Issue: Candidates inquired about the use of tables outside of the Student Union Building for campaign purposes. Candidates do not have table booking privileges.

Recommendation: Candidates be permitted to book one [1] table on one [1] day during the postering period, at one of the approved outdoor vendor locations.

The Electoral Office books tables inside of the SUB for candidates to use in an attempt to provide extra election publicity. The SUB has 5 indoor vendor locations and 13 outdoor vendor locations that are all used for revenue generating purposes. Since there are a large number of outdoor bookable locations, providing candidates the opportunity to book tables outdoors on one day is something that should not interfere with the regular revenue generating bookings.

5. Campaign Material Approval and Liability

Issue: Several candidates expressed their concern, as there is no oversight to limit publishing or posting false information in election platforms published in the Elections Supplement. Questions of UVSS liability may arise if a libelous or defamatory comment is made.

Recommendation: The Electoral Office make it clear in the Elections Supplement that "the opinions expressed in the Elections Supplement are those of the candidate, and may not necessary reflect the opinion of the Elections Office."

The role of the Electoral Office is to act as judicial moderators when it comes to the policies as laid out in the EP – it is not the role of the Electoral Office to monitor campaign content.

6. Liability in the Elections Supplement

Issue: If a libelous, or defamatory comment is made in the Elections Supplement, questions of liability of the UVSS may arise..

Recommendation: Candidates sign an indemnification agreement releasing the Elections Office and the UVSS of any responsibility over their campaign content.

Although this may not release all liability of the UVSS and what is published in the Elections Supplement, major newspapers undergo the same process for advertisements and op-ed articles from external sources.

7. Online rules

Issue: While the new EP does not place limits on online campaigning, or the use of list serves, mass emails for campaigning, current directors should not be using mailing lists accessible to them as a result of their position on the UVSS Board.

Recommendation: The Electoral Office include a statement reminding current directors that they should not be using these list serves and mass emails, in the Candidate Handbook.

8. Clearer Understanding of the Nomination Period

Issue: Some candidates felt that the elections process and timeline was unclear.

Recommendation: The Electoral Office create and make available a detailed timeline/calendar that candidates can download.

9. Student Engagement and Voter Apathy

Issue: There continued to be a very poor voter turn out and participation when it comes to engaging in UVSS Elections. There was a belief by most individuals that moving to online voting would see a major increase in voter turnout – this was not the case. There were however a greater number of non-candidates present at the Chairperson Debate and the All Candidates Forum.

Recommendation: The UVSS and Elections Office should consider taking steps to inform students about the importance of engaging in politics. Perhaps a “Get Out the Vote” campaign from the UVSS could be attempted.

10. Publicizing the Nomination Period

Issue: There was a significant reduction in the number of nomination forms received for election to the Board this year – though this isn’t necessarily a bad thing, there is a chance that it is due to outdated policy and practice of advertising the Call for Nominations.

Recommendation: A new strategy should be considered to increase student participation in the UVSS Elections.

11. Awareness of the Shortened Voting Period

Issue: Though the Elections Office put in a significant amount of work trying to inform students that the duration of the voting period had been reduced (compared to years past), the message was not received by everyone.

Recommendation: If the Board is going to consider changing the voting period again, more of an effort should be made to inform the student body of this fact.

12. Give Professors Advance Notice of Election Campaigning:

Issue: Candidates suggested that an attempt be made to contact professors to let them know that candidates will be coming around to do classroom talks.

Recommendation: During the All-Candidates Meeting, inform candidates that they should be contacting professors at least one week in advance of their proposed classroom talk, and ask if they can briefly speak.

13. Informing Students of Spoiled/Blank Ballots:

Issue: Students were not aware that they could leave a ballot blank, or spoil a ballot when voting.

Recommendation: Students should be aware that they are capable of spoiling their ballot (by clicking on too many options or leaving a ballot blank), and that they do not have to vote for all of the items. Although all of the questions appear on one single webpage, each one is treated as a separate ballot and students can vote for any or all of them. The Electoral Office did not make this information known to students this year, but that this is something that students should be aware of.

14 Facebook Ads for Advertising:

Recommendation: This is something that the Elections Office should consider looking into as an additional method of connecting with students and advertising voting, forums, debates and nominations.