

UVSS Elections Office

Electoral Report

March 2013

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Summary

The spring 2013 UVSS election was conducted successfully, with no major issues to report. The Electoral Policy Manual (EPM) acted effectively as a guiding framework from which to adjudicate policy and reach decisions.

1. Nominations

One individual ran for Chairperson, and only one candidate ran for the position of External Relations. The other Executive positions had two candidates, with the exception of Student Affairs, which had three. 12 candidates ran for the 11 Director at Large positions. Three referendum questions were asked, for which there was one proponent for each of the three questions, and no opponents.

2. Major Changes

The EPM was amended to stipulate polling stations and promotions work on campus. Section 7.1.e was amended to reduce the number of polling stations from thirteen [13] to six [6] buildings on campus, including Engineering Lab Wing, MacLaurin, Fraser, Fine Arts, Commons Block, Engineering and Computer Science, and requires them to be open for at least two hours. Promotional work must be done in the buildings of Social Science and Mathematics, Human and Social Development, and Cornett to substitute the absence of polling stations.

In addition, the EPM was amended to allow for additional time between the close of nominations and the start of the postering period. EPM 5.4.a was amended from nine [9] to sixteen [16] days, thus allowing for an additional week between these two important dates for candidates and Electoral Officers.

3. Elections Office

Shawn Slavin returned to the Elections Office as Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Alannah James fulfilled the position of Senior Deputy Electoral Officer (SDEO), and Sylvia Alves and Samantha Scott occupied the positions of Deputy Electoral Officers. The SDEO and DEOs were responsible for resolving disputes informally, carrying out the day-to-day operations, and preparing the vote. The CEO's main responsibilities were resolving formal complaints, and providing advice on policy interpretations. As a result of the reduction in the number of polling stations, fewer pollsitters were needed.

4. Complaints

The Elections Office did not receive any formal complaints, thanks – in part – to the informal processes of dispute resolution mediated by Electoral Officers. Candidates and community members voiced their concerns via email on a number of issues, and all were resolved without the need to file formal complaints.

5. Appeals

Last year's Elections Adjudicator, Randy Parker, and Arbitration Panel, comprised of Karen Potts, Ron Yee, and Matt Watters, returned for a third year. This experience was invaluable when a decision made by the CEO regarding the validity of referendum questions was appealed.

6. Online Voting

Voting was conducted using UVic's WebVote System, and administered through the University Secretary's Office. This was the second year it was employed in a general election, having also been used in the previous two fall referenda. The only setback was a delay in the uploading of students' information, resulting in issues with voting online for the first 20 minutes. This issue will be explored in-depth later in Appendix 4.

7. The Polling Period

Polls opened at 9:00am PST March 6, 2013 and closed at 9:20am PST March 7, 2013. This additional 20 minutes was added to accommodate issues with the voters' list that occurred when polling opened. 12 pollsitters used eight [8] Netbook laptops to staff polling stations around campus. In addition, significant time and energy was dedicated to hand-billing and other promotions work in order to increase student awareness of the election. This was also intended to supplement the reduction in polling station locations.

8. Voter Turnout

3050 students voted out of a possible 16,796 eligible voters, for a turnout rate of 18.83%.

9. Elections Results:

Chairperson	Kelsey Mech
Director of Student Affairs	Nadia Hamdon
Director of Events	Ariel Mishkin
Director of Finance and Operations	Matthew Hammer
Director of External Relations	Rachel Barr
Directors at Large	Eric Cameron
	Rajan Dhaliwal
	Kayleigh Erickson
	Lisa-Jane Hayfron
	Marina Holding
	Miriam Moore
	Scott Robertson
	Negin Saadati
	Simarjit Singh
	Nick Tang
	Kieran Wilson

Food Bank (Referendum Question):

"Do you support an increase to the Food Bank student fee in the amount of 50¢ per semester for full-time students and 25¢ per semester for part-time students?"

PASSED

Constituency Group Fund Amendment (Referendum Question):

“Do you support amending the Constituency Group Fund to include the Native Students Union and to have the fund allocated between the four constituency groups and the Native Students Union as decided by Advocacy Council? (The Constituency Group Fund is the student fee that currently supports the Women’s Centre, UVSS Pride, Society for Students’ With A Disability, and Students Of Colour Collective.)”

PASSED

Constituency Group Fund Increase (Referendum Question):

“Do you support an increase to the Constituency Group Fund in the amount of \$2.50 per semester for full-time students and \$1.25 per semester for part-time students?”

FAILED

Introductions and Acknowledgements

The spring 2013 Electoral Report is submitted by the Elections Office as mandated by UVSS Electoral Policy. The Elections office is comprised of:

Shawn Slavin (Chief Electoral Officer)

Alannah James (Senior Deputy Electoral Officer)

Sylvia Alves (Deputy Electoral Officer)

Samantha Scott (Deputy Electoral Officer)

The Elections Office would like to thank the UVSS Board of Directors, the Electoral Committee, and all UVSS staff, especially Dale Robertson, Ben Johnson, Carmen Barrett, and Terri Tan for their support. Thank you as well to CFUV and the Martlet for supporting the needs of students by publicizing elections information and events. Many thanks go to Dr. Andrew Wender for moderating the all-candidates forum in Cinecenta with fairness and gravitas. The Office also acknowledges Morag MacNeil, Kathy MacDonald, Julia Eastman, and Sivonne McFall of the University Secretary's Office, for their assistance with the concurrent Senate and Board of Governors elections, and for the administration of 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 managers, for promoting and embodying fair and transparent student politics.

Election Planning

The Elections Office again worked with the Electoral Committee to ensure that updates to policy were correctly reflected in the planning of elections events and voting. Having all elections – to the UVSS, the Senate, and the BOG – begin at the same time is an excellent way to engage students while preventing superfluous correspondence with students. These measures help alleviate elections-fatigue that students may suffer due to the sheer volume of information released during campaigning.

NECESSARY FORMS

The presence of all necessary elections forms online, including the Candidates' Handbook, nomination forms, and other essential documentation streamlined the activities of candidates in conjunction with the Elections Office. The website, uvselections.com, greatly assists in the management of administrative tasks, especially involving candidates and community members.

THE 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 with the students' society (C&B 2.1.a; 2.1.d).

In addition to this policy point, due to online voting, manual parameters needed to be set that can be recognized by the University database system, to adequately create an accurate voters list. Some individuals who pay UVSS fees are not recognized within the Banner System: first-year Island Medical Program (IMP) students in their second or third semester or studies, second-year IMP students, third- and fourth-year IMP students who have opted into the UVSS, and all STEPS Forwards Program participants. This required substantial collaboration with the University Secretary's Office, the STEPS Forward program, and IMP.

Nominations

The Elections Office received 21 nomination forms by the close of the nomination period, all of which were accepted as valid.

REFERENDUM

At the close of nominations, no referendum forms were received by the Elections Office.

The Elections Office was aware of three referendum questions that had been called by the UVSS BOD. The EPM states that in order for a question to be asked, a referendum form must be submitted to the Elections Office before the close of nominations. The CEO completed a written ruling shortly following the close of nominations informing members that the three referendum questions that were called by the BOD would not be asked in conjunction with the general election.

The decision of the CEO was appealed to the EA, who upheld the decision of the CEO.

The decision of the EA was appealed to the AP, who overturned the decisions of the EA and the CEO.

These three referendum forms were thus accepted late, all of which were accepted as valid.

Following the election, the Elections Office met with the EA and AP to discuss the issues surrounding the referendum, and the intent behind the referendum policies. Please see Appendix 4 for a comprehensive look at policy recommendations from all three levels of the complaints and appeals process.

Campaigning

Due to extensive interaction with candidates, and the experience of both campaign managers, candidates campaigned according to the limits set forth in policy without issue.

1. Candidate Handbook

This document, available on the Elections Office's website to all candidates, contains a brief summary of pertinent information pertaining to UVSS elections. The handbook highlights important policy parameters, provides guidance on policy interpretation, campaign material information, and the process/procedure for complaints and appeals.

2. All-Candidates Workshop

The Elections Office hosted an all-candidates workshop on the 12th of February at 4:30pm, after the close of nominations, to meet with candidates prior to the start of campaigning. The purpose of this event is to review policy, outline candidates' responsibilities and obligations, ensure a fair election process, and help candidates avoid any potential for campaign infractions. It also gave the candidates an opportunity to ask questions of the Elections Office.

4. Martlet Supplement

The Elections supplement, which the Elections Office compiles for publication in *The Martlet*, continues to be an extremely useful communication tool. 3,000 copies were printed – 2,500 were distributed to students in conjunction with all on-campus copies of the February 28 edition, and the remaining copies were used at polling stations as a resource for students in preparation for voting. The supplement was also posted on the Elections website at the start of the postering period.

5. All-Candidates Forum

The All-Candidates Forum was held on March 4th in Cinecenta. Audience turnout was disappointing. The absence of student attendance and involvement should be noted with concern for future Elections Officers, Board of Directors, and Electoral Committee members, who may wish to accommodate for these issues. Dr. Andrew Wender, Professor in the History and Political Science departments, was an excellent moderator who ensured the schedule of the event was followed by candidates and students.

In years past, the Elections Office has worked with CFUV and The Martlet to organize a Chairperson debate for all Chairperson candidates. Since only one candidate ran for the position of Chairperson this semester, after significant discussion with CFUV and The Martlet, the Elections Office decided to eliminate the Chairperson debate. To accommodate this modification, an additional 10-minutes was allotted to the Executive Directors question-and-answer period during the All-Candidates Forum.

Traditionally, attendance is very low for the All-Candidates Forum – it would be worthwhile to explore additional Elections Office-sponsored events (i.e.: a candidate "meet-and-greet") as opposed to the traditional formal speech-style event.

THE ELECTION

1. Electoral Policy

On February 4th, 2013, the UVSS Board of Directors amended the EPM, which, as mentioned previously, greatly benefited the function and administration of polling stations, and permitted additional preparation time for all parties.

2. Online Voting

The WebVote System, administered by the University Secretary's Office, was used for the second year as a highly effective

voting platform. Currently, some work is being done on the program to give more of the administrative control over WebVote to the Elections Office for UVSS elections. This is even more necessary given the disjointed nature of having the Elections Office organize and facilitate voting, while lacking access to the actual administrative system.

This year, voting was interrupted when students tried to log on between 9:00 am PST and 9:20 am PST and were informed they were “ineligible” to vote in UVSS elections. Senate and BOG voting procedures were not affected. Electoral Officers worked with the University Secretary’s Office in order to troubleshoot the problem. Issues with the uploading of student information by the University Secretary’s Office prohibited the system from accepting students’ attempted log-ins. By placing control of the system with the Elections Office, errors like this may be avoided in the future. In order to accommodate this delay, students were notified via email that the voting period had been extended by 20-minutes. No complaints arose from this delay.

3. Polling Stations

Polling stations were reduced to nine [9] locations on March 7, 2013, open for a total of 65 hours between the hours of 9:00am and 9:00pm. The eight Netbook computers purchased for the fall 2011 referendum were used with only a couple of minor updates needed.

Additional steps were taken to ensure accessibility for students with a disability, and with the support of the Society for Students with a Disability (SSD), accessible technologies were provided for students. On request of the SSD, CFUV ads were placed for students whom are visually impaired.

4. Pollsitters

A team of twelve [12] 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 new policy implementations.

5. Voter Turnout

Voter turnout was around the expected amount, with 18.83% of eligible students casting their vote.

6. Informal Dispute Resolution

The EPM provides for Informal Dispute Resolution. Five 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.

7. Complaints and Appeals

No formal complaints were filed, however the CEO ruled on the validity of three referendum questions that were received after the close of nominations. The decision was appealed to the Elections Adjudicator (EA). The decision of the EA was appealed to the Arbitration Panel (AP).

The CEO, SDEO, and DEOS met with the EA and the AP around the close of nominations to discuss the minor changes to the EPM, policy interpretations, and the roles and responsibilities during the complaints and appeals process.

As has been the case for the last couple of years, the significant reduction in complaints over previous years may, in part, be due to the change from the previous Electoral Policy’s “Minor and Major Complaints” section to the introduction of “Disqualifiable Offences” under the new version of the EPM.

BUDGET

The costs of running an election can be significant, and many factors external to the Elections Office can impact the budget. These factors 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 pollsitters and electoral officers.

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

Conclusion

The 2013 UVSS Elections were conducted fairly and democratically. All of the administrative and organizational responsibilities set out in the EPM were met, and carried out in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency, accountability and respect for all individuals involved in the process.

The changes made to the EPM further assist in the facilitation of a fair election, and the major policy overhaul that occurred last year appears to play a major role. Online voting continues to be an ideal platform for the elections, with no issues surrounding security, voter eligibility, or accessibility.

Appendix I: General Elections Results

UVSS Elections Results (March 2013)

	Number of Eligible Voters		# Who Voted	% Voted
	16796		3050	18.83%

CHAIRPERSON - Kelsey Mech

Total Ballots	Spoiled Ballots	Valid Ballots	In Favor	Opposed	Percent in Favor	Result
2834	5	2829	2124	705	75.08%	PASS

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Name	Number of Votes Received	Result
Matthew Hammer	1757	ELECTED
Yang You	1066	

DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS - Rachel Barr

Total Ballots	Spoiled Ballots	Valid Ballots	In Favor	Opposed	Percent in Favor	Result
2817	5	2812	2161	651	76.85%	PASS

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Name	Number of Votes Received	Result
Nadia Hamdon	1321	ELECTED
Deryck Harry	576	
Bowen Macy	960	

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Name	Number of Votes Received	Result
Sam Hagen	1281	
Ariel Mishkin	1573	ELECTED

DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Name	Number of Votes Received	Result
Eric Cameron	1708	ELECTED
Rajan Dhaliwal	1733	ELECTED
Kayleigh Erickson	1450	ELECTED
Lisa-Jane Hayfron	1740	ELECTED
Marina Holding	1713	ELECTED
Miriam Moore	1764	ELECTED
Scott Robertson	1698	ELECTED
Negin Saadati	1574	ELECTED
Simarjit Singh	1278	ELECTED
Nick Tang	1703	ELECTED
Taylor Verrall	1277	
Kieran Wilson	1279	ELECTED

REFERENDUM - Food Bank

Total Ballots	Spoiled Ballots	Valid Ballots	In Favor	Opposed	Percent in Favor	Result
2985	4	2981	2067	914	69.34%	PASS

REFERENDUM - Constituency Group Fund Amendment

Total Ballots	Spoiled Ballots	Valid Ballots	In Favor	Opposed	Percent in Favor	Result
2928	9	2919	1827	1092	62.59%	PASS

REFERENDUM - Constituency Group Fund Increase

Total Ballots	Spoiled Ballots	Valid Ballots	In Favor	Opposed	Percent in Favor	Result
2954	6	2948	1078	1870	36.57%	FAIL

Appendix 2: Voter Turnout – 1976 to 2013

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%
2013	16,796	3,050	18.83%

*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

REFERENDUM:

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%
2012 (Fall)	16,681	3,522	21.11%

*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 Manual (EPM) setting out specific rules to administer 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 was comprised of: Lewis Rhodes, UVSS Executive Director of Events; Gabrielle Sutherland, Director at Large; Nicole Iaci, Director at Large; Dale Robertson, SUB General Manager; and Ben Johnson, Officer of Research and Communications.

2. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

The role of the CEO is to ensure that the UVSS Elections are conducted fairly and transparently in accordance with the EPM. Shawn Slavin returned as CEO, for his sixth year with the UVSS Elections Office.

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

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

Alannah James was hired as the SDEO, bringing significant on-campus organizational experience. Sylvia Alves and Samantha Scott were hired as the DEOs, bringing knowledge of the UVSS as an organization through prior Board and committee membership, along with other employment experience.

The SDEO and DEOs 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 EPM with the SDEO providing for the day-to-day operations, administrative, and organizational responsibilities of the office. The SDEO and DEOs were also responsible for conducting the informal dispute resolution process, with consultation from the CEO when policy interpretation was ambiguous or of concern. This proved to be an extremely successful model.

4. Elections Adjudicator (EA)

When a decision of the CEO is appealed, the EA hears the appeal. Randy Parker returned for his third year as the EA.

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 third year as members of the AP.

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

The Elections Office met with the University Secretary’s Office at the beginning of January to discuss each office’s 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 their promotion and preparation. This primarily involves including their candidates in the Elections supplement, the All-Candidates Workshop, 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 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 the roles of each

governing body. One of the purposes of the Elections Supplement is to differentiate among the three elections with explanations as to their roles and procedures for students.

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 poster period begins 9-hours before the poster period of the UVSS Elections and ends 16.5 hours after the end of UVSS poster 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 be mutually beneficial for both candidates and students if the UVSS, and the University Secretary's Office, 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. The Electoral Officers encourage the Board of Directors to consider the Electoral Policy Manual (EPM) recommendations set out below.

1. Referendum Issues (Timeline/Proponents)

a. 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.

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 Elections 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 open of nominations.

Recommendation: See below

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 would ensure that adequate notice and a fair opportunity is given to all students who want to run as a proponent for or an opponent to a referendum question.

b. Referendum Form

Issue: As it currently stands within the EPM, a referendum question may only be asked if a referendum form is submitted to the Elections Office before the close of nominations. If a referendum form is not submitted, the question will not be asked.

Recommendation: See below

Rationale: This policy change would mean that a referendum question can be asked if a referendum form is not submitted by the close of nominations. This was the major issue that the Elections Office had to deal with this year. After discussions with the Elections Office staff, the Elections Adjudicator, and the Arbitration Panel, the amendments to this policy would satisfy the issues raised by all parties, including: cost, transparency, fairness, and the breadth of the decision.

c. Referendum Proponent

Issue: In order for a referendum question to be asked, it currently requires an individual to act as the proponent.

Recommendation: See below

Rationale: If the UVSS Board of Directors calls a referendum question, but wishes to remain neutral (EPM 6.1.i), a proponent need not exist.

Referendum Recommendation (1a, 1b, and 1c – as above): Strike EPM 6.1.c through 6.1.f, and add 6.1.c through 6.1.g (and the subsequent policies be renumbered) to read:

6.1.

c. Referendum questions must set out the exact words of the question which are to appear on the ballot, and which must be phrased in a way that the question can be answered “yes” or “no”.

d. In order for a referendum question to be held concurrently with a general election, or with other referendum questions, the question must be called no less than 24 hours before the open of nominations. The question must subsequently be submitted in writing to the Elections Office.

e. If the Chief Electoral Officer is of the opinion that a question does not comply with the requirements of the preceding paragraphs, the Chief Electoral Officer may refuse to accept the question as valid. To appeal that decision, the process for appealing a rejected nomination must be followed.

f. Before the open of nominations, the Senior Deputy Electoral Officer must post a list of all referendum questions asked, and their respective proponents, at the Electoral Office and ask the Electoral Committee to post that information on the UVSS website.

g. If two or more individuals apply to be the official proponent or opponent, the Chief Electoral Officer must:

- 1. give each person applying one business day to submit in writing why he or she should be the proponent or opponent*
- 2. within one day of that, decide which person shall be the proponent or opponent*
- 3. give reasons for the decision, in writing, to each person who applied to be the proponent or opponent.*

2. 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, provided they have written consent of the other candidate and/or slate.”

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

3. Paper copies 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: EPM 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.”

EPM 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.”

EPM 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.”

EPM 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 hard copy is to ensure that the complaint submitted is genuine, the evidence being 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 physical signature (scanned signature, Student ID number, telephone call, etc.). It is important to consider the needs of all students and candidates involved in 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.

4. Title of the Office

Issue: As stipulated by employees of the UVSS, “Electoral Office” is a term that is not widely recognized on campus and the office was asked to publicly display “Elections Office.”

Recommendation: All policy be changed to recognize and amend “the Electoral Office” to “the Elections Office.”

Rational: To eliminate confusion, and align policy with practice.

Appendix 5: Recommendations and Suggestions for the Electoral Office

The following suggestions are intended to help improve upon the administration and organization of the UVSS Elections. They are set out here so that in 2014, the Electoral Committee and/or the Elections Office teams may consider their implementation.

1. Internet campaign activity

Issue: Social media involvement and reach is increasing exponentially. As such, the presence of candidates online will inevitably increase. Informal complaints were made involving the endorsement of certain candidates by off-campus, online groups, and pages on Facebook.

Recommendation: The Elections Office include information to candidates in advance of the campaign period as to how the EPM applies to online and social media activities.

2. Student engagement and voter apathy

Issue: There continued to be a very poor voter turnout and participation rate in UVSS Elections. Voter turnout hovers at around the same percentage each year, but 2013 saw lower voter turnout than 2012, which featured a turnout rate of 20.90%.

Recommendation: The Electoral Committee, in partnership with the Elections Office, should consider taking steps to inform students about the importance of engaging in student politics. A “Get Out the Vote” campaign by the UVSS would be invaluable in addition to the significant educational and promotions work done by the Elections Office already.

3. Spoiled or blank ballot information

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. The Elections Office debated including this information in the supplement and on the website, but ultimately the Elections Office acted to avoid the possibility of bias, and did not publicize this information.

4. Advertising via Facebook ads

Issue: Students increasingly look online for information regarding candidates and elections. The Elections Office should meet this increased demand for information provision with an accompanying online presence.

Recommendation: Building off of recommendation #1, the Elections Office should consider looking into Facebook advertising as an additional method of connecting with students and advertising voting, forums, debates, and nominations.