



elections@ufvsus.ca

University of the Fraser Valley Student Union Society

By-Election 2020

Final Report

Results & Recommendations

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Chief Electoral Officer, 2020

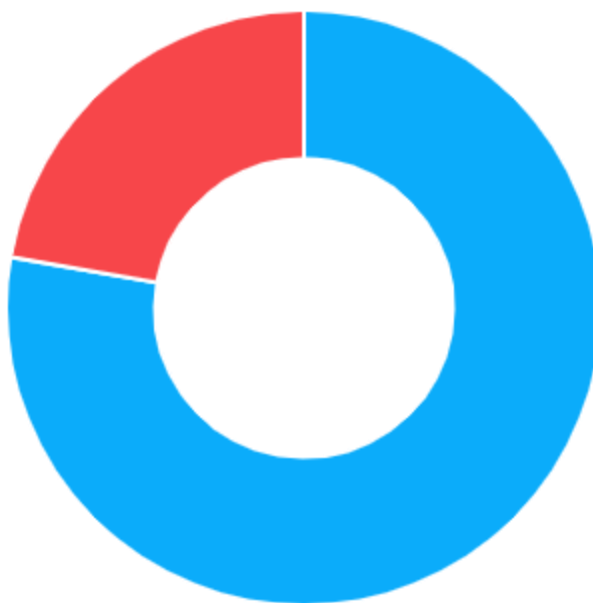
Election Results :

Those candidates with the greatest number of votes cast in their favour are the successful candidates. Spoiled ballots render a vote null and void

Total Voters : 584

Executive Positions : Vice President External

Option	Votes	
■ Rajdeep Dhaliwal	78%	454
■ Spoil Ballot	22%	130



Incidents and Items to Report

- 10/09/2020 – Contact was made with UFV Cascade. No response was given. Contact made briefly again later during campaign period
- 14/09/2020 - Due to scheduling conflicts, press release announcing nomination period was delayed until the Thursday (18/09/2020) that week. No complaints made, three students nominated themselves
- 29/09/2020 – Candidate withdrew nomination due to time conflicts. Withdrawal came before end of review period.
- 1/10/2020 – Candidate withdrew nomination due to personal conflicts. After review period, their candidate statement remained on Elections Website with note indicating their withdrawal.
- 1/10/2020 – Following above withdrawals, only one candidate remained. Decision made to implement ‘Spoil Ballot’ option on ballot to encourage electoral integrity but ensure the position would be filled appropriately. Final Debate event modified to a ‘campaign Speech’ event for candidates.
- 19/10/2020 – Student expressed confusion over single choice of candidates + spoil ballot option. Decision was explained and student had no further questions
- 20/10/2020 – Issue occurred where Election Runner forwarded duplicate reminder-to-vote emails to students over the course of 10 minutes. One complaint made, described below
- 21/10/2020 – Student made complaint regarding number of emails being received and asked to stop receiving them. Student insisted they had already voted in election and was still receiving the reminder emails even after the election had ended. Further investigation showed the student could not differentiate one election from another and had actually only voted in the UFV BoG election and thought all of their email reminders were from SUS Elections, totalling to seven emails. Situation explained to student, no further complaints made (as of 23/10/2020)

Recommendations

- Confirm the future use of Election Runner as SUS's primary voting service. Service proved easy to use, reliable, and functional for what SUS requires from the service. UFV IT were able to easily whitelist all incoming emails from the service.
 - SUS should further look into removing the law which prohibits the use services which store data outside of Canada.
- Move away totally from in-person nomination package submissions. The online format of the packages worked very well this year and saved much time, money, and energy. There should be no reason a student at UFV with access to Library services cannot submit an online form.
- Relevant Elections policy should be reworked to allow campaigning during the nomination and voting periods. (eg; Elections oversight policy 4.6.3 & Elections policy 5.11)
- Elections Policy 2.2 should be altered to allow **SUS** promotional materials to be distributed as soon as all relevant election dates are set.
- Candidate Statements should remain mandatory however candidates should be provided the review period to the review period to create their statements.
- Candidate statements should be allowed to be altered during the election, but with a note at the beginning of the statement in bold text stating that the original document has been altered or removed.
- The EAC should have a much more relevant role in Elections at SUS. As it stands the EAC serves to add legitimacy to the electoral process without actually having a role to play. Oversight policy needs to be altered to allow students to contact the EAC directly rather than going through the CEO, the EAC should hold their own separate email (such as EAC@ufvsus.ca) to avoid the use of their student emails, and they should be required to attend meetings such as the mandatory information meeting for candidates. Given SUS Elections history of being accused as unfair, the EAC should take a greater, more active role in checks and balances of the election.
 - Suggest three roles within the EAC to help organize these efforts :
 - Secretary – heads email operations

- Policy Analytic – stays up to date with the elections policy and follows the actions of the election to make sure policy is being followed and will raise concerns when necessary
 - Event Representative – Officially attends all events to promote the EAC's visibility in the election
- These roles would lend real legitimacy to the elections rather than perceived
- This would require greater benefits for the EAC members (unpaid, but real such as the opportunity to receive letter of confirmation for their volunteer hours put into the election)
- The EAC should further be advertised during the Nomination and Planning period more fully by SUS rather than discretely
- Policy should be created to clearly indicate how Elections should proceed when there is only a single candidate running. Suggest having a two-part requirement to proceed :
 - Minimum requirement of votes – University Göteborg uses this method for their Board of Representatives
 - Include a 'Spoil Ballot' option as was implemented in this election
 - Intention is to ensure 1) a candidate is not elected when it is clear the electorate do not care for them, and 2) allows students to express a 'protest vote' similar to Federal and Provincial elections where ballots can be intentionally spoiled. This information is then made public and the new government can enter with that knowledge that their voters accept, but are not happy with their success

Conclusion

Despite initial scheduling conflicts which resulted in a delayed start to the election, there were no major complaints made against the election process nor any of the candidates. The election proceeded entirely online and adapted appropriately to the development of candidate numbers. Election Runner successfully delivered all 10 000+ voting invitations without issue, however duplicate reminder emails were sent out. Despite the apparent stress all students are under due to their online coursework, the voter turnout was acceptable with a turnout of 6% (2018 By-Election had a turnout of 4%). No sanctions were given against any candidates.

Election Ruling

These elections have been free and fair, with all candidates having an equal opportunity. As a result, I recommend to the current Student Union Board that these results be ratified.