1. CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order – 2:36PM

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that this meeting is being conducted on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples; which, to the current knowledge of the Society include the Squamish, Musqueam, Stó:lo, and Tsleil-Waututh people.

3. ROLL CALL OF ATTENDANCE

3.1 Board Composition

VP University Relations *(Chair)* ..... Jackson Freedman
VP Finance ..... Matthew Chow
VP Student Services ..... Samer Rihani
Faculty Representative (Applied Sciences) ..... Kia Mirsalehi
Faculty Representative (Health Sciences) ..... Christina Loutsik
Ex-Officio ..... Jaskarn Randhawa

3.2 Society Staff

Chief Executive Officer ..... Martin Wyant
Campaign, Research, and Policy Coordinator ..... Pierre Cassidy
Administrative Assistant ..... Nadine Ratu

4. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4.1 MOTION BOD 2018-07-23:01

Matthew/Samer

Be it resolved to adopt the agenda as presented.

CARRIED

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 MOTION BOD 2018-07-23:02

Christina/Samer

Be it resolved to receive and file the following minutes:

- Governance Committee 2018-07-16.pdf

CARRIED

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

6.1 Electoral Reform

- Refer to attachment
- Committee continued to go over the recommendations present in the document starting from #4

- Committee was concerned with slates being used as a popularity contest which would be detrimental to the election so committee unanimously agreed to include the explanation and definition slates accurately in the orientation sessions and to not put slate names on the ballad and SFSS website
- Committee discussed establishing limitations on sponsorships and donations by advantaging privileged candidates who are equipped with lots of external connections or monetary advantages, in respect to disqualifications and reimbursements of candidate money
- Suggestions include $50 deposit when they sign up for candidacy and will be reimbursed contingent to the candidate following electoral policy, and changing the bylaw that prohibits non-society people to endorse candidates
- Concerns regarding harassment of candidate and IEC and responsibility taken were raised

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BOD 2018-07-23:03
Jaskarn/Samer
Be it resolved to adjourn the meeting at 4:00PM.
CARRIED

2018 SPRING GENERAL ELECTION REPORT
CAMPAIGN, RESEARCH, AND POLICY COORDINATOR
k
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 ADMINISTRATION OF THE ELECTIONS

The SFSS General Elections are administered according to the SFSS Elections and Referenda Policies, these contain all electoral policies, processes, and regulations. The 2018 General Elections were the first to be hosted under the new set of policies, which were revised to ensure that:

1. the policies act as the single, authoritative source for all election processes and regulations,
2. the minimum requirements for hosting an election are never at risks, giving these to staff, and having the IEC verify that these requirements are met,
3. there are basic processes and templates for election reporting, which are submitted to the CRPC and forwarded to the CEO where any aspect of the reports suggests a risk to the election,
4. there are basic processes for staff support to the IEC,
5. standard SFSS HR practices are followed in appointing the IEC,

6. all candidates attend a basic orientation process,
7. all candidates submit a set of signed forms as part of their nomination package to ensure they have committed to: acting as a director if elected, having their personal information accessed if necessary by the Society for the purposes of determining their eligibility to sit as directors, acknowledging that they having read, understood, and agreed to adhere to all electoral regulations and the SFSS Board Policies,
8. the IEC conducts some basic member engagement during each electoral period on the elections,
9. there is a clear, consistent process for administering complaints from candidates, and
10. no unnecessary restrictions are placed on campaigning so as to avoid undermining the visibility of the elections, for instance, campaigning during the voting period.

1.2 VOTER TURNOUT

The following table provides some basic data on voter turnout and voter behaviour – 'voter behaviour' means whether the ballot was cast for a candidate or spoiled.
'Spoiled ballot' means a ballot where no candidate was selected.
Comparisons with previous years are not currently available, as we did not previously have the member registry available to us directly to compare the number of actual voters to the number of eligible voters.

** DATA ON PDF

2. STRENGTHS

The strengths of the 2018 General Elections follow directly from the amendments to the SFSS Elections and Referenda Policies. At a high level, the strengths of the elections are as follows:
1. The elections resulted in the appointment of eligible candidates to all 16 positions on the Board of Directors.
2. No issues arose that risked compromising the legitimacy of the elections as a whole, or the election of any individual candidate.
3. The Society has formal records regarding voter registries, ballots, votes, and nomination packages, which include signed agreements to act as directors and consent forms for personal information and model releases.
4. The Society has weekly and final reports from the IEC on file.
5. The processes included in the policies provide a clear opportunity for improving those processes as a baseline, given feedback from the IEC, staff, Board, and candidates.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

A number of issues with the elections were identified, each representing an opportunity for Improvement.

3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE ELECTIONS

While staff should not, in any way, seek to influence the outcome of an election, it should, support the hosting a good election by planning those elections according to member approved bylaws and Board approved policies, and providing the IEC with oversight and a set of procedures for implementing the plan.

To this end:

1. Board, via the recommendation of the Governance Committee, should continue to establish and amend the standards for the administration of the election via policy. Board should not create or amend electoral policies during an election, except as requested by the IEC, or in the case of an emergency.

2. The role of staff, specifically the CRPC, should be broadened to include the planning of the election according to policy, which should include the development of procedures (i.e. step-by-step instructions). Staff will plan elections before they are scheduled to start.

3. The IEC should execute the plan developed by staff, auditing whether that plan meets all the requirements contained in the Society bylaws and policies. The IEC will not author any electoral regulations without Board approval, and only in the case of an emergency.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED BY CRPC

1. Though the policies provide a clear list of processes for the administration of the elections, they do not provide detailed procedures (i.e. step-by-step instructions).

Recommendation – As described in 3.1, procedures for each process should be developed/reviewed by the CRPC as part of elections planning.

2. Elections are not planned until after their start date. This creates a very compressed and stressful timeline.

Recommendation – As described in 3.1, the CRPC will plan the elections before they are to be held.

3. In administering the elections, the IEC creates ad-hoc regulations in response to candidate questions and complaints. During the most recent election, two examples are the prohibition of campaigning during the voting period and the prohibition against endorsements. These

are difficult to administer and enforce, and have unexpected consequences.

Recommendation – As described in 3.1, the authority of the IEC to create regulations should be narrowed to require Board approval, and to be available to the IEC only in the case of an emergency.

4. Candidates lodged complaints regarding the behaviour of other candidates, including harassment and defamation.

Recommendation – As described 3.1, the IEC should be provided with standing operating procedures on how to handle complaints. In cases of poor conduct, the IEC should refer the complaint to the SFU office of student conduct. Moreover, expectations around candidate behaviour and consequences should be further stressed during the candidate orientation session.

5. The combination of elections and referenda into a single set of policies is cumbersome and often requires referenda to be treated as elections in ways that are not appropriate, such as providing for a Nomination Period.

Recommendation – The CRPC should propose a set of separate election and referenda policies to Governance for review and recommendation to Board.

6. Candidates submit their packages at the last moment, compressing the orientation period into the campaign period, which slows the approval of candidates, and shortens the campaign period.

Recommendation – Communications staff will include calls for early submission on elections messaging.

Recommendation - Include

In the future, the bylaws should be revised provide flexibility in the timeline.

7. Though there are basic reporting requirements, those requirements do not guarantee good, actionable reports with clear data.

Recommendation – Report templates should be reviewed by the CRPC to include an increase in details. Submissions should be returned to the Chief for review if the reports do not contain sufficient detail, as determined by the CRPC. The IEC developed a template for tracking hours and activities themselves that could be used as part of a revised template.

Moreover, through the Governance Committee, staff and Board will be consulted

regarding the information they wish to see in IEC reports, in order to ensure such information is collected.

8. The design of the ballot in Websurvey results in a very complex raw data file, upon which it is very difficult to conduct any data analysis.

Recommendation – The electoral ballot template should be redesigned and tested by the CRPC to improve this.

9. SFU staff lodged a complaint directly to the IEC regarding the presence of posters around the Burnaby campus.

Recommendation – The Communications Department should consult with SFU to develop a clear set of standards for hanging posters for all types of events, including elections, at all three campuses. The standards should result in a policy and standard operating procedure, the latter of which should include a map of approved locations.

A work order should be submitted to the Communications Department to create this set of standards.

Guidelines for postering should be included in the candidate orientation and candidate handbook.

This conversation brought up an interesting debate regarding posters during our elections process. Matthew brought up the debate regarding poster-free campaigning.

10. Voter turnout seems low, but no year-over-year comparison is possible, as this is the first year we have access to a voter registry against which voter turnout may be compared.

Recommendation – The voter turnout report should be generated moving forward to permit comparisons. This will provide an opportunity to assess whether changes to the electoral processes are having positive impacts on voter turnout and engagement (i.e. not spoiling ballots).

11. Administering IEC timesheets was error prone. The Chief tracked commissioner hours in an Excel spreadsheet, which were transcribed into templated weekly reports to the CRPC, and tracked their own hours only in the weekly report. Hours then had to be transcribed into bi-monthly timesheets by the CRPC for the Finance Department.

Recommendation – Generally, the IEC should be subject to the basic SFSS employment standards contained in the SFSS Personnel Policies. Specifically, scheduling should be planned, supervised, and scheduled accordingly, to ensure all commissioners are, for instance, taking breaks as required by the labour code. This should be done and tracked by the CRPC.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED BY THE IEC

1. University breaks are disruptive to the elections. For instance, where the reading break falls during the campaign period, a week of campaigning is lost.

Recommendation – The timeline of an election is entirely regulated by the bylaws (i.e. the bylaws regulate, the order, sequence, duration, and start time of all electoral periods). The schedule for an election should select a timeline that minimizes such Disruptions.

In the future, a targeted bylaw amendment should be submitted to the membership to provide flexibility in the timeline.

2. Engagement initiatives were not planned and booked early enough, and some initiatives were only confirmed a few days before they were scheduled.

Recommendation – As described in 3.1, elections should be planned by staff in the semester before the elections, including engagement initiatives.

3. There was a significant number of emails sent to, and demands made by, candidates on the IEC. This required a significant amount of hours be worked by all IEC members at cost to the Society.

Recommendation – Timelines for responses to questions should be stressed during the candidate orientation sessions and highlighted in the candidate handbook.
In the future, data should be made available to substantiate such claims regarding work volume, in order to allow for a more focused and effective response.

Issues regarding this point were brought up. The problem is really “the IEC has to do their job”. But Pierre brought the good point that candidates are good at interpreting and pushing the IEC. We should find a way to support the IEC in managing these issues. Complaints form as a suggestion.

4. Staff workload related to the elections was too large. For instance, the Copy Centre had to work overtime to print candidate posters, and the administration of social media should be an IEC responsibility rather than a responsibility of the Communications Department.

Recommendation – Timeline for candidate material submission, including posters

for printing and candidate platforms for publication on the website, should be set in policy, included in the candidate handbook, and communicated during the Orientation.

Further discussion regarding importance of bylaw-housed timeline.

The Communications Department should continue to administer all Society social media accounts to ensure access is never at risk, standards are clearly respected, and the proliferation of multiple accounts is prevented.

5. Slates created a toxic atmosphere.

Recommendation – No evidence is provided in support of this claim. Slates are only a name given to the cooperation of candidates who share a vision for the SFSS. No prohibitions against such cooperation should be created. While policies and procedures should discourage bad behaviour, policies and procedures cannot guarantee good behaviour, and there should not be any such expectations.

Discussion is more broadly focused on the existence of slates and how the SFSS recognizes these slates.

Recommendation to communicate information regarding slates more effectively in orientation sessions - limited to definitions and impact on electoral process.

- *Limit this conversation to encouragement of working together and imparting an understanding that slates are an optional part of the process.*

Recommendation to prevent slate names from being featured on the ballot and on our websites.

6. Campaign allocation reductions (i.e. fines) are unenforceable, as allocations are used almost exclusively for print materials, and print materials are billed directly to the IEC by the Copy Centre.

Recommendation – The Copy Centre should not bill the IEC directly. Candidates should pay for their print materials directly, and request reimbursements according to policy (i.e. the submission of an expense reimbursement form at the end of the election). This will remedy the problem and incentivize the submission of expense forms.

This change should be captured in the Copy Centre SOPs by the Copy Centre Coordinator, who may request support from the CRPC.

Recommendation - candidates are asked to deposit $50 for the campaign period that will be fully returned contingent on adherence to electoral policy.

Unanswered: Should we try to cap expenses at the $50 dollar deposit?

- Issues around enforcement - how do we prevent candidates from getting sponsorships?
- Should we allow candidates to spend on top of the 50? Online/Social Media? Is it possible to prevent?

7. The issue of endorsements were difficult to manage. The IEC created a regulation against them, but was unable to enforce that regulation.

Recommendation – As described in 3.1, the authority of the IEC to enact electoral regulation should be narrowed to require Board approval, and only be available in the case of an emergency.

Recommendation - abolition of bylaw that prohibits non-members from campaigning.

Unanswered Question: Why? ^

Clarification: Board members are members of the society, and have the absolute right to endorse and support candidates.

8. Many conflicts were reported between candidates, with claims ranging from anti-social behaviour to harassment. This behaviour was also observed as directed towards the IEC and Staff.

Recommendation – As described 3.1, the IEC will be provided with standard operating procedures on how to handle this kind of complaint, which will refer the complaint to the SFU office of student conduct. Moreover, expectations around candidate behaviour will be stressed during the candidate orientation session.

Recommendation - Integrate policy that suggests candidates conduct themselves in line with the values of the SFSS.

3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

1. The bylaw requirement that notices for the notice of elections period and campaign period be posted in ‘prominent locations’ is ambiguous. Clear standards should be put in place outlining precisely where posters are to be placed.

Recommendation – The Communications Department should consult with SFU to

develop a clear set of standards for hanging posters for all types of events, including elections, at all three campuses. The standards should result in a policy and standard operating procedure, the latter of which should include a map of approved locations. A work order to the Communications Department will be submitted upon the approval of this recommendation.

Moreover, the Communications Department has support staff it may use to meet these requirements. It should make use of that support if needed.

2. Communications material for the election misspelled many candidates' names.

Recommendation – The nomination package should be converted to a fillable PDF form, on which candidates will be required to type all information. All communications materials using this information will be copy pasted from this form.

3. The debates were poorly structured:
a. Candidates or their friends were able to direct easy or tough questions to targeted candidates.
b. The number of questions fielded by each candidate should be greater.
c. There should only be one debate, not two.
d. Debate regulations should be better enforced.
e. Order of responding candidates should be alternating.

Recommendation – The debates should be formalized, and planned as a single large-scale event by the CRPC with support from the Events Coordinator. Some changes should include:

- *the development of scripted questions in advance of the debates;*
  - *Questions should be released to candidates ahead of the debates for them to prepare answers, given a mechanism to ask live questions exists as well.*
- *Candidates should be given the opportunity to ask each other questions during the debates;*
- *the duration of the event should be formally set;*
- *the duration of each debate for each position should be set;*
  - *Suggestion: Break up debates into Execs and Non-Execs*
- *strict time limits on responding to questions tracked and enforced by someone other than the moderator;*
- *questions from the public, including the Peak should be submitted before the debate.*

There needs to be the inclusion of a platform to discuss with one another, rather than just students bringing forward concerns.

This should be established in policy and procedures, and the IEC should be coached in the moderation of the event, and supported on-stage by staff.

3.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED BY THE CANDIDATES

1. No formal feedback was received by the candidates, and no such feedback mechanism Exists.

Recommendation – The CRPC should develop a feedback survey for candidates following each election as a feedback mechanism, the content of which could be included as part of this report.

This report should be included as a requirement for each election.

3.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. No formal feedback was received by the Board, and no such feedback mechanism exists.

Recommendation – The CRPC should develop a feedback survey for directors following each election as a feedback mechanism, the content of which could be included as part of this report.

This report should be included as a requirement for each election.

UNDER THIS SECTION WILL READ THE ISSUES WE'VE BROUGHT TO THE FORE IN GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE.

1. Problem: Students are unqualified for the monitoring and oversight of elections, and staff may have a conflict of interest.

Recommendation:

- Finding a way to incorporate AMS or other student society staff in monitoring of elections

2. Problem: Not enough students participate in our elections, as either candidates or voters.

Recommendation:

- Find new ways to improve the visibility of the elections
- Ties in with item 3.3.2
- A booth
- Classroom presentations

- Various directors submit editorials to the peak - what we've learned on the campaign
    - A callout for campaigns - making elections a more regular part of the communications

Problem - The IEC is paid on a system that differs from the pay system for both staff and the BOD.

Recommendation:

- Move away from hourly method and pay IEC flat stipend
- Should either be under the BOD or staff system, not a separate system

Problem: Candidates are misinformed about the function and capacity of the SFSS during the electoral process.

Recommendation: *Integrate a must-complete canvas course prior to eligibility as a candidate.*

Recommendation: Change the timeline to ensure orientation occurs prior to the completion of platform deadlines.

Recommendation: Include frequently asked questions in the orientation session.

Problem: Candidates pursuing re-election on the board of directors have access to society resources which can provide an unfair advantage over non-board candidates.

Recommendation: Include a policy that directly stipulates that board members may not use society resources to forward their position in their election.

Problem: The excessive printing of posters has an undue impact on the environment.

Recommendation: ??

KIA

- Autonomy that the IEC is given in great; but they are unable to plan effectively
- Nomination period ended and campaign period started immediately - poor management of transition
    - Suggestion: new period in between
- Like the suggestion that staff oversees policy; IEC more of an adjudicator
    - Some of the basic powers of the IEC should be lined up in policy
    - Imparts too much power on the board of directors

- At what stages do we need the IEC involved? How do we well define the role between these two bodies?

Samer

- Campaigning is too broad a term - poorly defined
- Undue pressure placed on staff, copy centre specifically
    - Disrupts flow of service for student groups
        - Suggestion: clearer delineation of timelines and periods of the election
- Allowing the IEC to create regulation on the spot generates great concern and inconsistency - this is the source problem
- “Neutrality, competency and expectations of IEC”
    - Unclear infractions and inconsistent application
    - Suggestion: pull plug on the IEC being able to interpret policy as they wish

Jas

- Orientation

Martin

- The IEC largely fails to be able to judge information effectively; an uneducated third body
- Consequences for staff partiality should be considerable and strong
- What are the things that need to happen to see a successful election occur? STAY AWAY FROM PROCESS

Matthew

Endorsement restrictions unmanaged
Environmental issues - use of paper
How campaigns budget
Violations not taken seriously