

This report is intended to meet the requirements as contained in the SFSS Bylaws for a final report on any election or referendum held by the SFSS.

Elections and Referenda Report

SFSS Executive Election – 2024

Commissioners:

Maia Lomelino

Michael Wong

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Chief Commissioner:

Nadia Ahmed

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TIMELINE

<i>Electoral Period</i>	Start Date	End Date
<i>Notice of Election Period</i>	January 7, 2024	January 14, 2024
<i>Nomination Period</i>	January 15, 2024	January 28, 2024
<i>Campaign Period</i>	January 29, 2024	February 25, 2024
<i>Voting Period</i>	February 26, 2024	February 29, 2024
<i>Post-Election Period</i>	March 1, 2024	March 11, 2024

CANDIDATES

PRESIDENT

<i>Candidate Name</i>	<i>Votes in Favour</i> <i>(‘Yes’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Votes Against</i> <i>(‘No’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Elect ed</i>
Emmanuel Adegboyega	878		X
Thomas Lueth	623		
Ashley Flett	356		
Adriana Cumming-Teicher	284		

VICE-PRESIDENT INTERNAL AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

<i>Candidate Name</i>	<i>Votes in Favour</i> <i>(‘Yes’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Votes Against</i> <i>(‘No’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Elect ed</i>
Sam Killawee	978		X
Saranpreet Singh	522		
Claudia Zhou	504		

VICE-PRESIDENT FINANCE AND SERVICES

<i>Candidate Name</i>	<i>Votes in Favour</i> <i>(‘Yes’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Votes Against</i> <i>(‘No’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Elect ed</i>
Simar Sahota	795		X
Abdulkarim El hayek	763		
Boris Perdija	378		

VICE-PRESIDENT UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

<i>Candidate Name</i>	<i>Votes in Favour</i> <i>(‘Yes’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Votes Against</i> <i>(‘No’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Elect ed</i>
Rishu Bagga	1235		X
Ashkan Saffari	541		

VICE-PRESIDENT EXTERNAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

<i>Candidate Name</i>	<i>Votes in Favour</i> <i>(‘Yes’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Votes Against</i> <i>(‘No’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Elect ed</i>
Joel Gilani	678		X
Mehtab Singh	529		
Natalia Zuluaga	392		
Ayooluwa Adigun	302		

VICE-PRESIDENT EQUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

<i>Candidate Name</i>	<i>Votes in Favour</i> <i>(‘Yes’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Votes Against</i> <i>(‘No’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Elect ed</i>
Chloe Arneson	800		X
Pranay Ratan	619		
Vee Babbar(Vaibhav)	508		

VICE-PRESIDENT EVENTS AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

<i>Candidate Name</i>	<i>Votes in Favour</i> <i>(‘Yes’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Votes Against</i> <i>(‘No’ votes if uncontested)</i>	<i>Elect ed</i>
Chitransh Motwani	364		X
Lydia Lu	310		
Saransh Nagpal	299		
Rayan ALHatti	257		
Jenna Huynh	254		
Maria Jose Gomez	228		
Besmillah Sultani	170		
Hyago Santana Moreira	48		

REFERENDUM QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1: Palestinian Liberation Issues Policy Membership Adoption

<p>Question</p>	<p>Referendum Question: (as put forward by Council on January 3,2024)</p> <p>“Palestinian Liberation Issues Policy Membership Adoption Whereas an Issues Policies may be adopted by Membership at the Membership level and if passed can only then afterwards be repealed at the Membership level, as per bylaw 6(11),</p> <p>Whereas non-passage of an Issues Policies by referenda would mean the Policy will continue to be an Issues Policies at the SFSS Council level, Whereas the SFSS Council previously unanimously passed the SFSS Palestinian Liberation Issues Policy in solidarity with the Palestinian people after the previous bombardment of Gaza in 2021, and now there is a continuing genocide and siege on Gaza since October 7, 2023, resulting in the death of an estimated 20,000 Palestinians and further displacement of 2 million people,</p> <p>Whereas the people of Palestine continue to face occupation and blockade by the current State of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Issues Policy was adopted to be in solidarity with the Palestinian people and passed unanimously,</p> <p>Be it resolved that the SFSS Membership adopt the SFSS Palestinian Liberation Issues Policy at the Membership level, as permitted by SFSS Bylaw 6(11). Yes or No.</p>
<p>Votes in Favour</p>	<p>1801</p>
<p>Votes Against</p>	<p>442</p>
<p>Threshold for Passing</p>	<p>Majority of the votes cast (50%)-<i>ByLaw18:2. Any such resolution shall require a majority of the votes cast unless the resolution proposes an amendment to the Society’s By-Laws, in which case it shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast</i></p>
<p>Results <i>Pass/Fail</i></p>	<p>PASSED</p>

COMPLAINTS

COMPLAINT 1 – Plagiarism of content – VP Finance and Services

Electoral Regulation	CP 3- Candidates must conduct themselves in line with SFSS values, By-Laws and policies.
Description	Complaint: "A few days ago I had posted on Instagram about my "pillars of campaign". I was using a creative method of getting my promises across, and took the time to make original graphics with pillars. I feel that right after my post, another candidate also running for my position used the same literature and very similar graphics, which feels like plagiarism of my idea. I hadn't seen anybody use pillars to market, which is why I felt I had a creative take and I now feel my idea was very prominently ripped off."
Material Evidence	screenshots of the two Instagram posts from both candidates The candidate the complaint was against <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Claimed that he had used a template for the design. - They got an idea from a friend in Beedie who used it for a campaign before. - Argued that financial pillars is a common theme in campaigning materials.
Finding	<input type="checkbox"/> Founded <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to the candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	The design and content of both campaign materials were different. The idea of financial pillars is also a common theme in campaign materials. Therefore, no action was taken for this complaint.

COMPLAINT 2 – Physical Assault

Electoral Regulation	CP-3.3 SFSS community guidelines – deliberate harm
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Description	Complaint by candidate for VP Internal against candidate for VP Equity “I noticed several days before the debates that VP Equity candidate had me blocked on Instagram. We have had no significant interactions. After the debates I was shaking hands with other candidates and declined to shake his. Later as I was walking to congratulate some of my friends and the candidate was leaving the sub social stage, we passed each other and he kicked my legs. I proceeded calmly”
Material Evidence	“Photo of a small pelt on my leg taken Thursday night” Photo of the injury given The IEC decided to keep the pictures private due to their sensitive nature.
Finding	<input type="checkbox"/> Founded <input type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to the candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	The candidate was disqualified before this complaint was resolved. Please refer to complaint number 6.

COMPLAINT 3 – Verbal Harassment/Discrimination

Electoral Regulation	<p>SFSS Elections and Referenda Policies CP-3: CAMPAIGN PERIOD REGULATIONS CP-3.3 : “Candidates must conduct themselves in line with SFSS values, By-Laws and policies.”</p> <p>BY-LAW 21 – PROHIBITION ON DISCRIMINATION 2. The Society shall not discriminate against any person on any ground enumerated in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or the British Columbia Human Rights Code.</p> <p>SFSS Space – Community Guidelines -All relationships at the SFSS should be based on mutual respect, where the rights and self determination of members are top priorities.</p>
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	Abuse of members, staff, or volunteers is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. SFSS Council Policy R-5.2I, R-5.2(d)
Description	Complaint against VP Equity Complaint about offensive language used by the candidate against them during the debates.
Material Evidence	Testimony from fellow Candidates, as well as three other students.
Finding	<input type="checkbox"/> Founded <input type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to the candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	The candidate was disqualified before this case was investigated further. Please refer to complaint number 6.

COMPLAINT 4 – Verbal Harassment/Discrimination

Electoral Regulation	CP 3.3 SFSS values/regulations relating to discrimination on basis of gender expression
Description	Complaint against VP Equity Candidate Complaint about offensive language used by the candidate against them during the debates.
Material Evidence	The complainant did not follow-up with evidence to sustain their case.

Finding	<input type="checkbox"/> Founded <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to the candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	<p>The complainant did not provide evidence. Before this case was investigated further, candidate was disqualified. Please refer to complaint number 6.</p>

COMPLAINT 5 – Physical Assault

Electoral Regulation	<p>CP3.3 – elections policy “Candidates must conduct themselves in line with SFSS values, By-Laws and policies”</p> <p>The SFSS community guidelines due to the physical assault of kick/intentional trip.</p> <p>Society Act – 53 (1) “A director of a society must, when exercising the powers and performing the functions of a director of the society,</p> <p>(a) act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the society,</p> <p>(b) exercise the care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent individual would exercise in comparable circumstances,”</p> <p>Kicking multiple in the SUB is not acting with care or in the best interest in the society. This was clearly Mujtaba acting in his own feelings rather than worrying about the society.</p>
Description	<p>Complaint against VP Equity candidate</p> <p>Claimed that the VP Equity candidate hit them on the shin.</p>
Material Evidence	<p>Photo of the injury from the day of and 5 days later.</p> <p>The IEC decided to keep the pictures private due to their sensitive nature.</p>

Finding	<input type="checkbox"/> Founded <input type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to the candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	<p>The candidate was disqualified before this case was investigated further. Please refer to complaint number 6.</p>

COMPLAINT 6 – Violation of SFU student conduct policy

Electoral Regulation	CP 3.3 Candidates must conduct themselves in line with SFSS values, By-Laws and policies.
Description	Complaint against VP Equity candidate Violating community guidelines and SFU conduct policy
Material Evidence	Confidential material: Due to the sensitive nature of this case, we will exclude certain pieces of evidence to protect the complainant's privacy.
Finding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> founded <input type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to the candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	Multiple pieces of evidence demonstrated violations of the SFU student conduct policy, which is stated in the IEC regulation manual as a particularly egregious offence warranting disqualification.

COMPLAINT 7 – Campaign Violation

Electoral Regulation	CP 4 15: “Campaigning literature i.e., printed campaign material and paraphernalia shall be removed by the start of the voting period. This only applies to printed campaign material and not to digital campaign material or in person campaigning.”
Description	Complaint against VP Equity Multiple complaints were filed for the same offence of having posters up at SFU during voting period
Material Evidence	Pictures of the posters with time stamps
Finding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> founded <input type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> censure (written statement to the candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	Posters were found around SFU Burnaby campus after the campaign period, which is clearly against the policies. A stage 1 warning was considered appropriate as a first offence.

COMPLAINT 8 – Campaign Violation Pt. 2

Electoral Regulation	CP 4 15: “Campaigning literature i.e., printed campaign material and paraphernalia shall be removed by the start of the voting period. This only applies to printed campaign material and not to digital campaign material or in person campaigning.”
Description	Complaint against VP Equity candidate Poster found at SFU campus during voting period

Material Evidence	Pictures of the posters with time stamps
Finding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> founded <input type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to the candidate in question) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	Four days into the voting period, multiple posters were still found around the SFU Burnaby campus after the written warnings were given. Hence, a fine of \$50 from the campaign expense reimbursement was considered appropriate.

COMPLAINT 9 – Campaign Violation Pt. 3

Electoral Regulation	CP 4 15: “Campaigning literature i.e., printed campaign material and paraphernalia shall be removed by the start of the voting period. This only applies to printed campaign material and not to digital campaign material or in person campaigning.”
Description	Complaint against: Multiple Candidates Complainant: “Our policies are very clear on the presence of physical campaign materials around campus. They need to be removed before the voting period starts. If you don’t remove them, it gives you unfair exposure during this period over other candidates. If a complaint is filed, you could be subject to the complaints process, and progressive disciplinary schedule. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in ensuring a fair election process.”
Material Evidence	Document with photos of the printed campaign material being up during the voting period.
Finding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> founded <input type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3

Penalty	<p>Xcensure (written statement to the candidate in question)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Disqualification</p>
Rationale	<p>Posters were found around SFU Burnaby campus after the campaign period, violating the policy CP4.15. As it was a first offence for all of these candidates, a stage 1 warning was considered appropriate and issued.</p>

COMPLAINT 10– Campaign Violation, Defamatory Material

Electoral Regulation	<p>CP 3 5; CP 3 15:</p> <p>“Campaign Materials must not be defamatory or discriminatory.</p> <p>2. ‘Defamatory’ is defined as any false statement or remark damaging the reputation of someone else that are any candidate or member of the society with a purpose to discredit them in the process of campaigning.</p> <p>b. Candidates shall not engage in any defamatory comment, remark or material posted to defame another candidate.</p> <p>c. Defamatory or discriminatory statements or remarks against a candidate must not be engaged with by that candidate that believes defamatory or discriminatory statements or campaign material were made against them without prior notification of the IEC.”</p> <p>“15. Any candidate who is endorsed by a person who is defaming or being discriminatory to another candidate, must not publicize that endorsement of such person, and must reject said endorsement.”</p>
Description	<p>Complaint against VP Equity candidate</p> <p>Complainant alleges that candidate was involved in spreading defaming messages after the 2024 Elections Debate, which is in violation of CP 3 5: “Campaign Materials must not be defamatory or discriminatory.</p> <p>2. ‘Defamatory’ is defined as any false statement or remark damaging the reputation of someone else that are any candidate or member of the society with a purpose to discredit them in the process of campaigning.</p> <p>b. Candidates shall not engage in any defamatory comment, remark or material posted to defame another candidate.</p>

	<p>c. Defamatory or discriminatory statements or remarks against a candidate must not be engaged with by that candidate that believes defamatory or discriminatory statements or campaign material were made against them without prior notification of the IEC.”</p> <p>“A friend of mine saw this HURTFUL and DEFAMING meme of me posted from the candidates friend’s account and it was also sent to a group chat of his.”</p>
Material Evidence	<p>screenshot of the meme from the third party’s Instagram story The picture is not added here due to being sensitive.</p>
Finding	<p><input type="checkbox"/>Founded <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>Not founded</p>
Infraction Stage	<p><input type="checkbox"/>Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/>Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/>Stage 3</p>
Penalty	<p><input type="checkbox"/>Censure (written statement to candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/>Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/>Disqualification</p>
Rationale	<p>In accordance with CP 3 15: “Any candidate who is endorsed by a person who is defaming or being discriminatory to another candidate, must not publicize that endorsement of such person, and must reject said endorsement.” The IEC team met in a meeting with the candidates, and the candidate provided evidence that he took the relevant steps to inform the third party to remove the post. Furthermore, the candidate did not repost this story on his official campaign Instagram or his personal social media accounts, therefore not officially linking him to the post.</p>

COMPLAINT 11 – Campaign Violation – Posting Campaign Materials in SFU Residence

Electoral Regulation	<p>SFU Campaign Material Regulations Burnaby Campus and the SUB 1. At the Burnaby Campus Do not place campaign materials in or on: 12. Student Residences”</p> <p>VP3 5: “Stage 2: For a second offence, the candidate will be fined, or have their campaigning or one or more methods of campaigning suspended for time, not exceeding 48 hours as determined by the IEC”</p>
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Description	Complaint against VP Equity candidate Complainant “This candidate had their campaign poster on residence buildings
Material Evidence	1. The picture of the candidates poster on residence 2. A screenshot verifying the time and date the photo was taken.
Finding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> founded <input type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to candidate in question) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	This was in violation of the campaign material regulations provided in the candidate manual. A stage 2 infraction fine of \$25 was deemed appropriate due to a prior stage 1 warning given to the same candidate regarding campaign material still up.

COMPLAINT 12 – Verbal Harassment

Electoral Regulation	CP3.3 Candidates must conduct themselves in line with SFSS values, By-Laws and policies.
Description	Complaint against VP Event candidate The complainant was with another candidate when the VP Event candidate allegedly said some words in an inappropriate tone and called the complainant short tempered.
Material Evidence	Witness statement provided by the other candidate via email.
Finding	<input type="checkbox"/> Founded <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3

Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	The witness statement provided stated they did not hear the conversation hence insufficient evidence to take any action.

COMPLAINT 13– Use of Society Resources for Campaigning

Electoral Regulation	CP3. 12 “Society resources shall not be used for campaigning.”
Description	Complaint against VP Finance candidate The candidate used the SFSS Executive Lounge computers to create, edit, and print his campaign materials.
Material Evidence	The campaign posts made by the candidate were created using the SFSS computers, as he had confirmed during the review of evidence. Meetings with the IEC and the candidate were conducted following the founding of this information to identify the scope of the use of the SFSS resources.
Finding	Xfounded <input type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	Xstage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	Xcensure (written statement to candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	The Executive Lounge is not easily accessible to the general SFSS member; therefore, it is more probable than not that an Executive member would allow the use of the computers for this candidate, who already works, in some capacity, with the SFSS, than a regular student who is not in his position. Additionally, as someone who obtains a fob to access certain areas in the SUB, it creates an unfair advantage of using SFSS resources to those candidates who don’t have the same privileges.

	As this was a first offence and regulations on society resources for campaigning were unclear, a stage 1 warning was considered appropriate, and the candidate was reminded not to use society resources for campaigning.
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COMPLAINT 14 – SFSS Council or Executive Committee Endorsing Candidate

Electoral Regulation	CP3. 4, CP.3 17 “4. No Society staff or department may in any way seek to influence the outcome of an election.” “17. The SFSS Council as a body, or the Executive Committee as a body, may not endorse any candidate or any group of candidates for any election within the Society. Endorsements can be made by a Councillor in their private capacity of a student and member, as long as society resources are not used.”
Description	Complaint against VP University candidate On February 15 th , 2024, on the debate day for the SFSS candidates, the complainant observed that a video with the VP university candidate in it was posted on the official SFSS Instagram story. The posting of their video occurred on the same day as the debate, which raised concerns about the fairness and neutrality of the election process for the complainant.
Material Evidence	Screenshot of the instagram post
Finding	<input type="checkbox"/> Founded <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not founded
Infraction Stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3
Penalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Censure (written statement to candidate in question) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine (reduction of campaign expense reimbursement allocation by half) <input type="checkbox"/> Disqualification
Rationale	The IEC does not consider the picture of the current Associate Vice President of University and Academic Affairs (AVP UAA) exercising the position posted by a staff person on SFSS Instagram to be violating policies 4 and 17. The IEC clarifies that posts on SFSS Instagram are made by the Communications staff person, not by SFSS Executive Members. We also clarify that the post mentioned in this complaint was not a re-post but an original outreach Instagram post about SFSS’s current events. While it does show a VP UAA candidate working in the event, it does not mention their name, position or any other language that would

	endorse the candidate. It is simply an outreach post on a current event to inform the students of what was happening.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1 – FIC students voting

Issue	FIC students could not vote during the elections despite being SFSS members. Many FIC students reached out, expressing their wish to vote and asking if there was a way to do so.
Recommendation	Arrangements be made to include FIC students in the mailing list for the voting survey so they can exercise their voting rights.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – Use of a third-party independent voting online platform

Issue	The SFU platform we use right now is not adequately catered to the SFSS elections.
Recommendation	Hiring an independent specialized platform could be easier, more customizable, and more transparent for candidates and students.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – Clarifying Campaign Rules with Other SFU Departments/Teams

Issue	<p>A. A candidate posted numerous campaign materials in student residences, which has been outlined as one of the off-limit locations for posting campaign paraphernalia in the Candidate Orientation Manual (under <u>SFU Campaign Materials Regulation; Burnaby campus and the SUB</u>)</p> <p>B. SFU security removed candidates’ posters from the cement walls around the Burnaby campus even though they were allowed to put up these posters based on the candidate manual campaign material rules. This made candidates lose on campaigning time and loss of resources such as their campaign materials.</p>
Recommendation	A. It should be made clear to the candidates that even if they had made prior arrangements with team supervisors (e.g., Community Advisors), the regulations outlined in the Candidate Manual, the SFSS By-laws, and the SFSS Elections

	<p>and Referenda Policies should overrule their arrangements to ensure a fair and just elections process. The candidates must adhere to the official rules and cooperate if they violate them.</p> <p>B. Communicate with SFU to clarify the policies of where posters can be put up on the Burnaby Campus. SFU be informed and permission sought in advance that Electoral candidates will put posters on cement walls.</p>
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RECOMMENDATION 4 – Deadline for Platform Submission

Issue	Candidates were late sending their platforms, so the IEC had to send multiple reminders to submit them.
Recommendation	There should be a deadline for submitting candidate platforms. Failure to do so in a timely manner should be considered an infraction.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – Submitting Poster Information

Issue	Many candidates seemingly forgot the areas on campus where they had posted their posters, leading to complaints from other competitors. Candidates also complained that they had removed their posters during the voting period but that they were reposted for malicious purposes. This made it difficult to issue infraction penalties for leaving up campaign materials during the voting period.
Recommendation	Candidates send the IEC an estimate of the number of posters they have put on in every building location to make it easier to track them.

RECOMMENDATION 6 – Mid-Stage Infractions

Issue	There were instances during complaints where some IEC members wanted to give mid-stage infractions (e.g. Stage 1.5 instead of Stage 1 or Stage 2) depending on the severity of the complaint.
Recommendation	The IEC should be able to issue mid-stage infractions (e.g., stages 1.5 and 2.5). Depending on the case and the IEC’s justification, the commission should be able to impose more severe punishments without going through all the stages above.

RECOMMENDATION 7 – Consequences for Spamming IEC with Complaints

Issue	Some candidates kept spamming the IEC with the same complaints, unnecessarily increasing the team’s workload.
Recommendation	There should be an infraction penalty for candidates who spam the IEC with similar complaints.

RECOMMENDATION 8 – Meeting with IEC

Issue	There have been instances where candidates tried to reach out to IEC members through their personal social media outside office hours to ask for quick approval of posters instead of through proper channels such as email or visiting office hours.
Recommendation	Candidates who unnecessarily contact the IEC without scheduling an in-person meeting or contacting them through personal accounts, trying to bypass the procedures, and emailing the IEC personally instead of using the proper channels for complaints should be penalized.

RECOMMENDATION 9 – Time for former IEC workers to run in the elections.

Issue	Someone who was working for the IEC resigned to run in the elections.
Recommendation	The policies should include a requirement that anyone who previously worked for the IEC wait at least six months before running in the SFSS elections.

RECOMMENDATION 10 – Complaint Procedures.

The Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The lack of clear procedures for complaints made some things more time-consuming. B. There are challenges with complaints where evidence is word of mouth or witness statements by friends, as it cannot be conclusively decided who is correct and what action to take. C. Scheduling an in-person review of evidence by the next office hour after a complaint has been received was unrealistic at times, as the parties and witnesses involved could sometimes not make it due to scheduling conflicts. Also, having an in-person review of evidence for each complaint made the complaints process much longer and was sometimes unfeasible for the complainant.
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. A policy with guidelines on dealing with complaints should be created and updated/reviewed every two years. B. A guideline for which kind of evidence is acceptable and making it clear to the candidates and the students. C. Having more flexibility in being able to resolve complaints where an in-person review of evidence is not necessary

RECOMMENDATION 11 – Policy on complaints that involve sensible matters.

Issue	Some complaints were very serious and would require more than just conversations with the people involved to be dealt with.
Recommendation	Hire a third party trained and prepared to deal with more serious situations and/or give the IEC autonomy to look into security recordings. The onus put on the students is too high and could be a liability, especially when causing possible psychological distress.

RECOMMENDATION 12 – Policy on IEC members safety

Issue	Some complaints are very serious, and as all the candidates know the IEC team, the IEC team must have their safety guaranteed.
Recommendation	Policies and procedures must be reviewed and established to keep IEC members safe in their work.

RECOMMENDATION 13 – The policy on campaign material needs to be reviewed

Issue	Candidates asking for approval for every one of their posters and campaign materials takes too much time from IEC members as they are also students and do not work full-time as IEC members.
Recommendation	A policy with clear instructions on posters and campaign materials must be reviewed, and only printed materials must be approved. IEC would rely on complaints to address misconduct in other forms of campaign.

RECOMMENDATION 14 – Policy on harassment and coercion.

Issue	Candidates who have a link to the election ballot and go around Campus showing it to students could coerce students into voting.
4Recommendation	Candidates should not be allowed to distribute QR codes or any other links that directly or indirectly link to the ballots during the election period.

RECOMMENDATION 15 – Real-time report and log of complaints and rulings publicly.

Issue	Students do not currently have access to complaints filed and rulings from the IEC when those directly impact the elections.
Recommendation	A policy highlighting students' right to know that complaints are being filed and IEC rulings must be created. There must be a place for the IEC to make them public in "real-time." Candidates must understand and agree that those issues will be made public. The same goes for those filing complaints; the option of doing so anonymously must be available.

RECOMMENDATION 16 – Review/Edit Use of SFSS Resources for Campaigning

Issue	Candidates are unsure what constitutes an SFSS resource that they can or cannot use in campaigning, such as whether they can use executive lounge computers.
Recommendation	A review of the policy about SFSS resources that candidates can use during the elections must occur. All other SFSS resources used will be considered an infraction.

RECOMMENDATION 17 – Chief Returning Officer

Issue	Possible harmful situations, including but not limited to mental health, stress, harassment, etc., Quality of investigations and the effectiveness of the election process.
Recommendation	Suggest that SFSS consider hiring an external Chief Returning Officer who will have the final say on both complaints and appeals. This person would also be responsible for conducting the investigations during the election period, assisted by an electoral commission of students in the moulds we have today. Such measures would bring much-needed transparency and effectiveness to the election process as the Chief Returning Officer could work full-time on resolving issues and would be more suited to deal with serious problems pertaining to harassment, sexual violence and others. Moreover, having an external, trained person could improve investigations, such as when the need to access security camera footage arises. The successful use of an externally hired Chief Returning Officer is a common practice in many Student Unions in the Province, including KSA (Kwantlen Student Association) and CSU (Capilano Students' Union).

RECOMMENDATION 18 – Enhanced Training of IEC team

<p>Issue</p>	<p>While the IEC team was given a brief orientation upon hiring, we were still unclear on how to deal with some of the issues that arose during the election period. We were also not able to understand some of the policies including those that had been changed over the last year. These were particularly in relation to the complaints process and the infraction schedule.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>We suggest that the IEC team be given multiple orientations with days in between for them to read and understand the policies related to elections. The team is made aware of the common problems that arise including complaints from previous years and how to resolve them. Detailed guidelines on how to deal with various issues are provided. The expectations from the team are made clear including deadlines. All the resources that the team will need to conduct smooth elections be provided for them in one folder rather than being dispersed through multiple emails or only given when asked.</p>

FINAL THOUGHTS

Throughout this election cycle, our team put in a lot of effort in planning and promoting the elections through many interactive tabling sessions, class visits, club visits, posters, canvassing, and engaging social media promotions. This led to a higher candidate application turnout and a higher voter turnout compared to last year. Nevertheless, we observed amongst some members a lack of interest in SFSS and the electoral process, and despite informing them about its importance, a portion of the community remained disengaged. It highlights the need for further initiatives to bolster the interest and involvement of the membership in SFSS affairs and to ultimately have an even higher voter turnout. Moreover, there were complaints regarding the voting platform being user-unfriendly and others having trouble with being able to vote. The high number of candidates running led to a competitive environment and a very high number of complaints being filed by the candidates against each other. There were challenges faced by the team, especially with complaints that had no actionable evidence and those that were of sensitive nature. The current infraction schedule also provides little support to the team in determining minor vs major infractions. Overall our overarching priority was to make decisions that ensure the election process is fair based on the established policies. However, parts of the policies and bylaws are vague, with grey areas and open to interpretation which makes it harder to understand and implement them. It is also important for candidates to understand that the IEC team is limited to the policies in making their decisions. The policies need to be made clearer, with detailed guidelines and enhanced training should be provided for the IEC team to help navigate the complexities and challenges that arise. In conclusion, while this election period was successful in many respects, there are areas for improvement and the election process could be made smoother and more transparent with the recommendations provided.

Nadia Ahmed

IEC Chief Commissioner