

A REPORT ON THE 2009 SFSS GENERAL ELECTION

Produced by Panther Kuol, Chief Electoral Officer
11/04/2009

THE VOTE WAS HELD ON THE DAYS OF MARCH 17, 18 AND 19, IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND AND NINE.

Dear Ms President Ada Nadison and directors of the board,

I present this to you, my 2nd report as Chief Electoral Officer of the Simon Fraser Student Society. It was great honor and privilege to preside over the 2009 SFSS General Election. Following several years of deliberations, I am extremely proud to be the first Chief Electoral officer whose commission has successfully implemented online voting at SFSS.

The general election generated much controversy from nomination of the IEC Commissioners up until the end of campaign period. I will address those issues to the best my knowledge. In this brief report I summarize the referendum that has just concluded and discuss the logistics of what my electoral commission did, in the hopes that such records may be useful to future IECs and SFSS boards in the future.

I conclude with few recommendations and proposals to the board on a number of issues.

.....

Panther Kuol,

Chief Electoral Officer

November 4, 2009

Table of content

1. Introduction	3
2. IEC appointments	6
3. Nomination period	7
4. Campaigns	8
5. Online voting system	12
6. Voting days	13
7. Cost of the general election	13
8. Results: Release and analysis	14
9. Conclusion	24
10. Recommendations	24

1. Introduction

As it has been the tradition since the establishment of the Simon Fraser Student Society, every March, SFU students go to polls to elect their leaders for the SFSS Board of directors. The 2009 General Election was organized to conduct election for all the 14 positions on the Board. In addition, there were 5 referenda questions on the ballot, namely:

Question 1: Increase in CJSF Fee

Whereas CJSF Radio is a student-supported radio service providing free training to student and community volunteers in broadcasting and journalism and has not had an increase in fee levy in over 12 years, and

Whereas CJSF would like to improve its service and accessibility to students by establishing a satellite studio in conjunction with the W2 project adjacent to the new downtown SFU Contemporary Arts campus, and

Whereas CJSF requires national advocacy support for issues such as CRTC regulation and copyright via a strong student radio movement and the National Campus/Community Radio Association

Do you agree to an increase of 75 cents per full-time students (38 cents per part-time student) on the current \$3.00 (\$1.50 per part-time students) allocated to the campus radio station; with 25 cents of this increase (13 cents per part-time students) going to the National Campus and Community Radio Association?

Question 2: Society Affiliations

Whereas last March 66% of SFU students who voted chose to leave the Canadian Federation of Students; and

Whereas membership in said organisation was a toxic and problematic arrangement; and

Whereas the Canadian Federation of Students is an ineffective organisation;

Do you agree to the following, in order for the Simon Fraser Student Society to avoid entering into a binding contract with an extra-university student association/federation or society for at least the next five years, that,

- 1) No SFSS Board of Directors or meeting of Forum can vote to reinstate or acquire membership in an extra-university student association or other similar body
- 2) That the Simon Fraser Student Society will remain independent of any extra-university association or similar body for at least the next five years

By Law Change 1: Updating External Relations Officer Position Description

Whereas SFU undergraduates are no longer members of the Canadian Federation of Students and therefore, there is no need for us to have a liaison to this body:

Do you agree to amend By-Law 4. (1.) (c.) to read "Act as a liaison between the Society, and other student unions," and thus remove reference to the Canadian Federation of Students?

By Law Change 2: Prevention of Outside Interference in Elections

Whereas it's annoying enough having to deal with SFU undergraduates pushing their wares on you without non-SFU undergraduates engaging in the same annoying tactics; and

Whereas it's against current election policy to allow outside campaigners to interfere in SFSS elections; therefore,

Do you agree to the addition of By-Law 14 (15) (b.) which reads; "Only Members of the Simon Fraser Student Society may campaign for or on behalf of candidates or referenda during any election period,"?

By-Law Change 3: Democratic Reform to SFSS Forum

Whereas SFSS Forum is an advisory body to the Board of Directors and therefore it makes no sense that directors have a vote on said body; therefore

Do you agree to the following By-Law amendments in order to give forum an independent voice?

Delete By-Law 7 (2) (a.) and rearrange all following clauses of By-Law 7 accordingly, this currently reads "Forum shall consist of: a. The members of the Board."

Add By-Law 7 (5) to read, "Notwithstanding By-Law 7 (2) members of the Board of Directors shall be honorary members of Forum as referenced in By-Law 1."

By-Law Change 4: Accountability in External Provincial and National Student Organisations

Whereas membership in external provincial and national student organisations in the past has been subject to dubious standards of accountability; and

Whereas external provincial and national organisations have limited the constitutional charter rights of undergraduate students to freedom of association; therefore,

Do you agree to the creation of By-Law 22 and amendments to By-Law 17 as written in "Appendix A" setting standards of accountability for membership in external national and provincial student organisations?

Appendix A: Accountability in External Provincial and National Student Organisations
[Creation of] By-Law 22: Accountability in External Provincial and National Student Organisations

1. The Society may become a member of a provincial or national student organisation that requires the Society or its members to pay a membership fee to that organisation, but only if the Society and the organisation enter into a binding, written agreement, which will remain in effect as long as the Society is a member of the organisation. The agreement must guarantee the following:
 - a. The Society's membership in the organisation does not preclude the Society's membership in other organisations.
 - b. The organisation will make its by-laws, policies and minutes available online to all members of the Society within three (3) months of their approval.
 - c. The organisation will, within two (2) months of receipt of a written request from any member of the Society, provide to them a copy of any document in care or control of the organisation not lawfully required to be kept private.
 - d. The organisation recognizes that the Society reserves the right to terminate its membership in the organisation according to the Society's by-laws and policy and according to any of the following procedures:
 - i) by resolution of the Board if the Society joined the organisation by resolution of the Board;

ii) by resolution of a General Meeting if the Society joined the organisation by resolution of the Board or by resolution of a General Meeting; or

iii) by referendum in any case conducted in accordance with By-Law 17.

2. If the Society terminates its membership in an organisation as described in By-Law 22(1) by any means other than referendum, and if the Society normally collects a membership fee from its members on behalf of that organisation and remits it to that organisation, then the Society will immediately cease collecting fees.

3. If a resolution is put to referendum to terminate the Society's membership in an organisation as described in By-Law 22(1), and if the Society normally collects a membership fee from its members on behalf of that organisation and remits it to that organisation, then a resolution to cease collecting the membership fee shall be automatically put to referendum according to By-Law 17 to occur concurrently with the referendum on ceasing membership in the organisation.

2. Formation of the IEC

On January 28th, 2009 the SFSS Board of Directors appointed re-appointed the Independent Electoral Commission. Despite the fact that policy guarantees IEC one-year term, the board used its discretion to end our term after the referenda. Although this was never clear, there was a lot of uncertainty among the IEC members whether they still belonged on the IEC. Because we were re-affirmed less than two weeks prior to the start of nomination, it meant that we did not meet the deadline to put up notice of nomination and I would later be blamed for this as it was claimed by some that there was never a threat to my position. But without electoral commission being in place, I do not think the chief commission can carry out any mandate on its behalf. I was fined \$15 for the perceived infraction.

The entire team was members of the commission that oversaw the Health and Dental Plan Referenda and we are named below:

Panther Kuol	Chief Electoral Officer
Melissa Dobud	Commissioner
John Morrison III	Commissioner
Steven Anas	Commissioner
Robin Steudel	Commissioner

On January 31st, 2009, the commission received an email from Anna Belkine, then-Treasurer of the SFSS. She wrote to inform us on the arbitrary challenges she had made to the entire IEC

budget including stipend cut for the commissioners. She had claimed in the email that the decision was based on former Chief Commissioner JJ McCollough's recommendation that the introduction of online voting would significantly reduce the cost of running an election.

In my report on the referenda, I had made a recommendation that any cut to the IEC budget should be conducted after the first online general election. The reasoning was that I could not draw a realistic comparison between the conduct of Referenda and an online general election.

I have very high regard for JJ and I made several initiatives to implement several of his recommendations made in his past reports. I understand that it was his vision to see SFSS adopt online voting and I believe share his belief that online voting lowers costs and it raises efficiency. I thought by having conducted the first online voting, my recommendation would have carried some weight but it did not.

Since the board had not yet ratified this decision, I went to the next board meeting to argue our case that any such arbitrary reductions could impact negatively on the general election. After listening to some passionate speeches from Melissa Dobud, John Morrison III and myself, the board decided to restore the commissioners' previous stipend.

Despite all the extreme difficulties at the beginning, our commission was now formed and we would schedule a meeting the next Monday after the week of appointment.

Our meetings were formally scheduled to be once a week but we had schedule many emergency meetings as a result of the great volume and variety of issues we had to deal with during the campaign.

The political environment was very explosive, unlike any other. Like any other evolving democracy, my commission had its strengths and weaknesses but the fact that we were able to stay together as a team until the very end is highly commendable. Looking back now, I can proudly say it was great to be in company of John, Melissa, Robin and Stevan.

3. Nomination period

The nomination period was scheduled from February 9th, 2009 to February 23rd, 2009. Despite putting a late notice in *The Peak*, my commission adopted an aggressive advertisement strategy. We put up countless posters around all the three SFU campuses and I believe we reached out to most students.

ISSUES:

a) Blaine Diggins

Few days prior to commencement of the nomination period, Blaine came to the IEC office to inquire if he was eligible to run for position of Representative for Science faculty. He was in Kinesiology, which at the time was still part of Applied Science faculty. I personally gave him approval so long as Science students would agree to nominate him. His nomination was officially ratified in one of the IEC meetings. Our rationale at the time was that Blaine would not be officially taking the office until his department had switched. This particular decision was a contravention of the by-laws and I would later accept a fine from the Board of Directions as admission of responsibility. Blaine would later resign from his candidacy for undisclosed personal reasons in his email addressed to myself.

b) Graham Hiscocks

As far the By-Laws are concerned, Graham's eligibility was never in question and IEC has no mandate to break the society's constitution and by-laws. People only brought it up during Blaine's case to challenge the legitimacy of our ruling to allow Blaine to run for Science representative.

4. Campaign period

The campaign period started at Noon on February 23rd. 2009. Since the board had voted to reinstate slates, it was now official for like-minded candidates to declare slates.

Debates:

The debates were held on March 10th, 11th, and 13. The first two debates were held in the Atrium at SFU Burnaby campus. The final one was held at Surrey campus and it was an open forum for all candidates.

The questions were decided beforehand and approved by the IEC before each debate.

On March 10th, the debate featured all candidates for at-large positions and faculty representatives. IEC's John Morrison III and *Peak* News Editor Sam Norris moderated them. On the second day of debates saw the candidates for the executive positions square off. Sam Norris and myself were the moderators of the day.

The final debates at Surrey were planned and moderated by our Surrey Campus liaison, Stevan Anas.

The IEC's goal was to create greater awareness among student populace and get them involved with the democratic process. The reason to have one debate in Surrey was unique and first of its kind. In the past, much emphasis has been placed on Burnaby campus and my commission wanted to change this trend as the population in the other two campuses has seen rapid increases over the years, especially the Surrey campus.

The three debates were fairly well attended but it is hard to measure their impact on the eventual voter turnout. The Surrey campus was the least well attended, partly because it was unusual and maybe many students were not aware.

ISSUES

1. StudentsForU.COM

On March 9th, 2009, the IEC received a complaint from Natalie Bocking, candidate for President. In her email, she outlined that a website named www.studentsforu.com had been created to negatively target members of her slate, particularly Natalie herself, Andrew Ferguson and Alysia MacGrotty.

Natalie further claimed, "...Supporters of opposing candidates have taken to posting the site on different walls and groups on Facebook..."

Natalie did her research and found that the site had been registered to "Xao Chen", a name similar to then candidate for Member Services Officer, Andy Shen prompting the commission to summon Andy to come and defend himself, which he did.

In Natalie's view, she believed that Joe Paling, then-President of the SFSS, was the creator of the website based on the some similarities in the design and also for the fact that Joe had made explicitly negative comments about Natalie, on Ada Nadison's Facebook wall. She also pointed out how Joseph Paling "...maliciously attacked myself in order to prop up Ada Nadison's campaign for president..."

In order to remedy the situation, Natalie requested the IEC:

1. To "order" Joseph to remove his malicious website.
2. To disqualify Ada Nadison who had been publicly endorsed by Joseph

Although Natalie's claims regarding the information on the website, the IEC could not find anyone to take responsibility at the time for the website in question. Joseph testified at the IEC meeting that he was not responsible by giving us his month of February credit statement, which showed that he had not paid for any web services.

Given the limited mandate of the IEC, we advised that the matter was serious enough that it should be brought up with the board of directors of SFSS or with the University or any other avenue, which the complainant might deem appropriate.

The IEC did not find Ada Nadison personally responsible for the website and therefore did not disqualify her as per Natalie's request. The commission, however, ordered her to remove any negative comments towards other candidates that may have been posted on her wall as they had direct control of her Facebook account.

There was no way we could have gone to the bottom of the issue without the involvement of police who would have had to obtain a warrant to carry out a search or seek disclosure of the website owner's accurate information from the service provider.

In my opinion, it will be in the best interest of the society to empower the IEC to take measures against any member of the society who is maliciously attempting to interfere with the smooth running of the elections.

2. StudentsForU slate

StudentsForU slate was the only officially registered slate with the IEC. The members of StudentsForU slate were as follows:

Natalie Bocking – Candidate for President
Andrew Ferguson – Candidate for Internal Relations Officer
Alysia MacGrotty – Candidate for External Relations Officer
Shara Lee – Candidate for University Relations Officer
Lorretta Laurin – Candidate At-Large Representative
Graham Hiscocks – Candidate for Applied Science Representative
Yannick Cuddenec – Candidate for Arts Representative
Jyoti Rai – Candidate for Business Representative

The major complaint made against the above slate was that they were sharing a template for their posters. At issue was whether this amounted to sharing of resources and/or sharing of poster colour by one slate, which was against the policy at the time.

The IEC ruled that no posters of StudentsForU slates would be approved with the same template as soon as the commission discovered evidence that they were in fact sharing. We relied upon the Facebook message sent to Joseph Paling by Blaine Diggins, stating that his posters had been made for him by the StudentsForU slate and that it was a matter of convenience for him to decide what slate he belonged to. Also, Natalie admitted to sharing the template but claimed that it was not breaking any rule and that "resource" as used in the elections Handbook contravenes the policy on slate, which prohibits sharing of "material". The IEC did not agree with her

argument but rather warned the entire slate that their material would no longer be approved if they were made from the shared template.

The group then did a bit of editing and started to design the posters somewhat differently, but the posters and banners were still similar. At this point, the IEC did not find any particular reason from the policy perspective to not approve their new materials, although it was still clear to some on the commission that the design was still very similar.

Another complaint was in regard to the slate's Facebook group. After the other two slates had withdrawn their applications to be recognized, a complaint was launched against the StudentsForU website that they were sharing resources by having all of their pictures on one facebook group.

To give a brief background, when I received all the three requests for slate names, I initiated an online discussion with the IEC to find out their views regarding slates' Facebook groups. In anticipation for all the three slates to form a Facebook group, the commission reached a consensus that we would allow slates' Facebook groups and slates' websites to carry pictures of the entire slate on one page. It is important to mention there was one dissenting voice on the commission who maintained that this would amount to sharing of resources. Because there was a consensus by majority of the IEC commissioners, we decided that we would allow Facebook groups and websites for the slates.

When Ada Nadison, Winnie Cheung and Mona Law, launched this complaint, the other two anticipated slates had withdrawn their registration. These withdrawals came at the time when IEC had already approved a Facebook group for the StudentsForU slate.

The complaint was filed long after the group had been approved on the IEC and about 300 members, as claimed by StudentsForU slate members at the time, had joined the online group. Then rationale behind the decision to not order the slate to take down the group, despite the complaint, was that we had already agreed within the IEC that all the slates' groups would be approved.

The rationale was not to promote the StudentsForU slate at the expense of the other candidates, but to sub-guard the interest of the said 300 members who had joined the Facebook group to be part of an electoral process at SFU. Also, we had acted in anticipation that all groups who had applied would follow suit and form similar groups.

The reasons behind the withdrawal of slate registrations still remain a mystery to the IEC and only the applicants can offer an explanation.

It is clear from this issue that there was no consensus on the interpretation of the policy due to the vague nature of the clause regarding the slates. The board is moving in the right direction by adopting more clarified policy.

3. Posters

Ada, Winnie and Mona Episode

This complaint was filed by Natalie against the above three candidates. It was in regard to handmade posters that included embedded pictures that were not water marked from the copy centre.

Stevan Anas had approved the posters in question after he had contacted me over the phone. When Natalie showed me the posters, they had no water markings and I invited her to bring her complaint to the IEC meeting that day. At the same time, I called Stevan to contact Ada, Mona and Winnie that a complaint had been labeled against their posters and they needed to present their arguments to us.

At the meeting, the IEC heard arguments mainly from Natalie and Andrew with but none of the three showed up. So the IEC relied upon the minimal information Ada had relayed to Stevan on the phone.

The IEC initial decision was to order Ada, Mona and Winnie to take down their posters but they challenged this decision stating that they had not been given a due hearing.

Given that the first ruling did not relax the view from both sides, the IEC had no choice but to allow the appeal.

Upon appeal, we decided, based on the evidence provided, that they candidates be fined \$5 each on their campaign budgets. Some parties saw this as soft but \$5 is actually 10% of their campaign budget, which is quite significant.

Other complaints

The IEC received several other complaints, which were dealt with formally in our minutes and can be referred to through the IEC website, 'minutes' section.

5. Online voting System

Following a successful implementation of first online voting during Health & Dental Plan Referenda, it made sense that the IEC would adopt online voting to conduct the 2009 general elections.

The idea behind the introduction of online voting first came during the 2009 referenda when the IEC took advantage of the clause in By-Law 14(16), which reads, "The form of the ballot shall be decided by the Independent Electoral Commission, except that the candidates for each office shall be listed alphabetically by surname."

The IEC used the same basis to allow voting to be conducted online. Online voting was conducted using authenticated SFU websurvey, which has been used over years, to run the Senate elections, GSS elections and most recently to conduct the Health & Dental plan referenda as well as the 2009 SFSS General Election.

6. Voting days

Voting started at 12:00Am on March 17, 2009 and ended at 11:59Pm on March 19, 2009. The decision to keep the system running was based on the assumption that the IEC has the capacity to extend voting period, i.e. the voting days as it deems fit although this contradicts by-law 14. Section 18 (b). In the IEC's perspective, one of the advantages of having online voting is that it conveniently makes it easier for students to vote anytime, anywhere.

The three days of voting went smoothly and the IEC maintained reasonable presence around Burnaby and Surrey campus.

There was no glitch or formal complaint during those days.

7. Cost of the 2009 General Election

Below is the summary of the total cost of the referenda as was provided at my request from SFSS Finance department:

Description	Amount
Stipend	\$5,250.00
Worker at SFSS copy centre - Overtime	\$1,771.43
CPP/EI/WCB	\$246.23
Campaign expenditure	\$1739.86
Total	\$9,007.25

The statement shows that the above figure is higher than the fall referenda, as the general election involved about 40 candidates and at least two campaign sides. Due to the large number of candidates, we had to allow the SFSS worker at the copy centre to work overtime on at least two occasions, in order to print the candidates' materials. We did this in the best interest of all candidates and also on the account that the more posters get put up, the greater the opportunity to reach out to as many students as possible.

I was also paid an extra \$750 for work done in October, after the fall referenda. I had to write a report, compile all the candidates' receipts, process them and submit them for refunds. The

decision to pay me a full monthly stipend was based on the precedent, which had been set earlier when JJ McCollough was paid for writing the 2008 general elections report.

The importance of the report has been somewhat underestimated; given the response I got in my request to be compensated for the time I have put in to get this report ready. Even though Anna had paid me for the referenda, she declined my request to be compensated for this 2009 general election. Her argument was that JJ was paid because his 2008 general election was used as an affidavit during the CFS lawsuit.

First of all she backed out of her precedent and second, I believe all election reports should be held to the same standard as they are all potential affidavit for any legal challenge to any election or referenda results.

The current treasurer was cc'd on the emails and he told me that he could not pay me for my time, partly because the report had not been submitted to the board yet.

As chief Commissioner, I understand it is my obligation to submit the report in a timely manner. However, the environment had not been made conducive as I was denied access to the IEC office for reasons that I have yet to understand. The Board should allow a transition period for which the current chief should be able to write the report with access to the IEC documents, as some documents cannot be kept at home. In the event that a new chief is selected, it is important to recognize the role of the current chief to allow for a peaceful and stable transfer.

8. Results: release and analysis

The results were announced shortly after 12Am, just few minutes after voting closed. All the IEC members were present in the IEC office to view the results and together we went to room 2290 in Maggie Benston where several candidates had gathered to wait for the results.

The reason why we believe the results should be made public immediately is for transparency. The introduction of online voting has made it easier since the results are automatically tabulated by the system.

It is important to maintain this practice as long as we continue to conduct online voting.

OFFICIAL RESULTS OF THE 2009 GENERAL

PRESIDENT

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Natalie Bocking	1028	37.31%	40.65%
Ada Nadison	1501	54.48%	59.35%
Blank	226	8.20%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

TREASURER

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Susie Hill	790	28.68%	32.54%
Harjit Sandhu	658	23.88%	27.10%
Joe Zelezny	980	35.57%	40.36%
Blank	327	11.87%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

INTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICER

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Andrew Fergusson	1219	44.25%	50.83%
Robert Lutener	1179	42.79%	49.17%
Blank	357	12.96%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

MEMBER SERVICES OFFICER

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Mona Law	1233	44.75%	50.82%
Andy Shen	590	21.42%	24.32%
Nigel Tunnacliffe	603	21.89%	24.86%
Blank	329	11.94%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICER

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Jordan Kohn	842	30.56%	35.85%
Alysia MacGrotty	954	34.63%	40.61%
Michelle Liu	553	20.07%	23.54%
Blank	406	14.74%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS OFFICER

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Ryan Daw	943	34.23%	40.20%
Shara Lee	1048	38.04%	44.67%
Richard Vickery	355	12.89%	15.13%
Blank	409	14.85%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

MEMBER AT – LARGE

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Jonathan Brockman	1043	18.93%	25.05%
Winnie Chung	1364	24.75%	32.76%
Sunny Kahlon	460	8.35%	11.05%
Loretta Laurin	906	16.44%	21.76%
Nathan Nastili	391	7.10%	9.39%
Blank	1346	24.43%	
Total	5510*	100.00%	100.00%

Please note that each of the 2755 who voted had an opportunity to choose two names for Member At-Large, that is why the number is doubled.

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Anton Bezglasnyy	484	39.64%	42.64%
Yannick Cudennce	326	26.70%	28.72%
Ryan Currie (withdrew)	325	26.62%	28.63%
Blank	86	7.04%	
Total	1221	100.00%	100.00%

FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Graham Hiscocks	217	39.45%	41.65%
Moe Kopahi	207	37.64%	39.73%
Joshua Weissbock	97	17.64%	18.62%
Blank	29	5.27%	
Total	550	100.00%	100.00%

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Chantelle Chand	360	61.54%	63.94%
Juan Tolentino	203	34.70%	36.06%
Blank	22	3.76%	
Total	585	100.00%	100.00%

FACULTY OF BUSINESS

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Wisam Abdulla	121	19.84%	20.44%
Karan Cheema	139	22.79%	23.48%
Yuanzhi (Victor) He	20	3.28%	3.38%
Jyoti Rai	129	21.15%	21.79%
William Shen	62	10.16%	10.47%
Kevin Zhang	121	19.84%	20.44%
Blank	18	2.95%	
Total	610	100.00%	100.00%

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Neelu Cheema	25	39.68%	39.68%
Sara Olson	38	60.32%	60.32%
Blank	0	0.00%	
Total	63	100.00%	100.00%

REFERENDUM QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1: Increase in CJSF fee

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Yes	1354	49.15%	50.48%
No	1328	48.20%	49.52%
Blank	73	2.65%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

QUESTION 2: Society Affiliations

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Yes	1774	64.39%	69.30%
No	786	28.53%	30.70%
Blank	195	7.08%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

By-Law change 1: Updating ERO position description

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Yes	1956	71.00%	77.25%
No	576	20.91%	22.75%
Blank	223	8.09%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

By-Law change 2: Prevention of Outside Interference in Elections

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Yes	1924	69.84%	75.04%
No	640	23.23%	24.96%
Blank	191	6.93%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

By-Law change 3: Democratic Reform to SFSS Forum

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Yes	1774	64.39%	76.17%
No	555	20.15%	23.83%
Total	426	15.46%	
Blank	2755	100.00%	100.00%

By-Law change 4: Accountability in External Provincial & National Student Organizations

	Votes	% with blanks	% without blank
Yes	1934	70.20%	83.15%
No	392	14.23%	16.85%
Blank	429	15.57%	
Total	2755	100.00%	100.00%

NOTES.

Vote percentages are divided into two categories. “% without blank” is the net percent without blank ballots. “% with Blanks” is the number votes for each response divided by the total number of votes cast.

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTERS IN THE March 17, 18 & 19 2009 GENERAL ELECTION.....**2,755 out of 22,009** (over 12.5% of SFU undergraduate students)

9. Conclusion

The 2009 General Election was largely a successful event despite the problems that were faced. The impartiality and the credibility of the results was not challenged as evidenced by a unanimous ratification given by the then-Board of directors.

In the past two general elections, the Independent Electoral Commission has received over 40 nomination forms for various positions. This trend clearly indicates that is likelihood for many students to get involved in the electoral process at SFU.

Efforts should be made to preserve the achievements, which have already been made as we look for new ways to get more people involved in this special democratic process. Online voting is one of those achievements made by IEC worthy of safeguarding.

10. Recommendations

My first recommendation is regarding the designated times in which students may vote. By-law 14. 18 (b), "Polling for all positions shall occur between the hours of 9:30am to 7:30."

In my opinion, this by-law is outdated and unreasonable in the light of the introduction of online voting. It was clearly crafted to govern an election that uses paper balloting and I think we should be amended as we have chosen to use an online voting system.

My second recommendation is to find a permanent space for the IEC office. I believe we seem to downplay the sensitivity of the information the IEC carries but I believe that IEC's documents could be potentially used for legal purposes should the need arise. That is why I think it is important that the IEC's document and computer are kept in a permanent and safe location.

We are not unreceptive to the fact that the Society has priorities but I do not quite clearly understand why the IEC's space always seems to come as the least of priorities. I know we have been allocated a temporary room right now but as far as I know, the future IEC will have a room, "When possible..." according to the language of the new policy.

Also, the budget for running the election was unreasonably cut without any consultations or any basis. I understand the society is struggling financially but we must use reports such as this or consult with IEC members to decide on the budget. The reason why I say so is that any arbitrary decisions such as ones made by Anna Belkine in her recommendation to FASC to cut the IEC 's budget by more than half do not clearly reflect anything. Any extreme cuts will either force the IEC to go over the budget or cut down its programs that are aimed at encouraging voter turnout.

Recently, the IEC has made several initiatives to attract involvement of students in satellite campuses. Any extreme cuts will hamper such efforts.

It is quite clear that the IEC has already reduced the costs of running an election by introducing online voting. For example, the cost of hiring poll clerk has been eliminated. Furthermore, we no longer buy bulk of paper scantron and we do not go to UBC to pay for their scantron services. So it should be self-evident that has done enough on its own to help the Society cope with financial constraints.

Any further cuts will be unreasonable given that nothing has changed in terms of the administrative tasks allocated to the IEC. Every year comes with new challenges and the 2009 General Elections are a great reminder. IEC had to commence several emergency meetings, for which, in my view, their time was not properly compensated.

As it stands, on an hourly basis, the IEC is greatly underpaid. While commissioners understand that they are to receive a stipend, and not a salary, it is wise to point out that the same could be said about the directors of the SFSS board. While the board receives compensation of about \$14.37 per hour, the commissioners received significantly less in the 2009 General election, let alone the 2009 byelection that is not to be discussed herein. Any changes to IEC stipends should be made in consultation with the IEC and not by simple guesswork by people who have little to no experience running elections. There is more work done than appears evident to non-commissioners and the IEC believes that because of this, consultation is essential.

I am in support of the reform efforts, which are being undertaken by several members to improve the work of the Independent Electoral Commission. However such efforts must be done in close consultation with members of the IEC due to their experience with the issues regarding an election, and not by board members with a desire to change policy without asking those with experience in the matter.

Finally, I think it will be a good idea to maintain an IEC all year round even though they are not to be paid outside of an election. That way, members of the IEC can be involved in the amendments procedures. It is can be a challenge to expect members of the IEC to know the policy and the by-laws within the little time when they are appointed. When they are appointed, they ought to have known the policies and by-laws beforehand so that they can accurately interpret them.