



2014 Election Committee Report

Recommendation:

The Election Committee recommends the GSG Assembly certifies the results of the election.

Summary:

The 2014 GSG Officer Election was held from Thursday, February 27th to Wednesday, March 5th. Participation in the election was very high – 562 graduate students voted out of a possible 2713 (20.7%). This number is in-line with average turnout from recent elections, not counting last year's election which had record turnout to pass the referendum.

The following candidates were successful in contests for officer positions:

- President: Sean Edington
- Vice President: Mircea Davidescu
- Secretary: Julia Wittes
- Treasurer: Rachael Barry
- Communications Director: Tom Morrell
- Special Events Officer: Mike Hepler

The election ran smoothly, with no complains or concerns brought to the attention of the Election Committee.

The remainder of the report provides a more detailed account of the election process, including full vote count, and suggestions for future elections.

Pre-Election:

The election ran according to the plan approved by the GSG Assembly at the January 2014 meeting.

Nominations. The deadline for nominations was Monday, February 3rd. Twenty-two students were nominated in total, with many nominated for multiple positions. Most students were nominated by other students, although there were some self-nominations. Below is the breakdown of the nominations by position:

- President: 8
- Vice-President: 9
- Secretary: 6
- Treasurer: 7
- Communications Director: 6
- Special Events Officer: 7

Eleven candidates accepted their nominations. The positions of Vice President and Communications Director were uncontested. Three students contested the position for President, and two students contested the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, and Special Events Officer.

Statements. All candidates submitted appropriate statements to the Election Committee by the Tuesday, February 11th deadline. The Election Committee recommended that all statements be accepted without alteration. Due to timing of the February Assembly meeting, approval of the statements was sought via email – require 19 approval votes to meet quorum. The GSG Assembly accepted this recommendation by February 17th.

‘Meet the Candidates’ forum. The ‘Meet the Candidates’ forum was held Thursday, February 20th and followed the format adopted in 2012. Candidates were first invited to give a short (2 minute, 30 seconds) statement. At this point, attendees, including candidates were given the opportunity to submit anonymous questions to any or all candidates to the forum moderator. The forum moderator first consolidated similar questions and then asked questions in a random order, giving addressed candidates time to answer. Questions and summaries of answers were recorded by a member of the election committee. After the forum, the answer summaries were submitted back to the candidates to ensure their answers were summarized faithfully; only two candidates submitted minor revisions to their answers. A document containing the questions and summaries of the answers were then posted on the GSG Election page and linked directly in future global emails concerning the election.

The ‘Meet the Candidates’ forum received record low attendance this year, with fewer than 10 non-candidates attending. The Election Committee recommends future Election Committees reconsider whether an in-person forum is in the best interest of time and energy the candidates, the Committee, and the graduate student body in general.

Withdrawn candidacy. After the ‘Meet the Candidates’ forum, but before the polls opened, Jonathan Fine withdrew his candidacy for the office of president for personal reasons. This left two candidates contesting the position. The remaining candidates were notified and the election proceeded as planned with no issues.

The Election:

Election Software. The election was conducted online using the University Survey Facility (websurvey.princeton.edu, which allows for authentication of user using their Princeton netid and password). The web survey does not currently have a mobile site, but the web version nevertheless worked well on various tablets and cell phones. The Election Committee did not encounter any problems with the software. Nonetheless, given the outdated nature of the survey software, the Election Committee recommends further searching for alternatives, including working with the Princeton Survey Research Center to include NetID authentication capabilities in modern websurvey software (i.e., Qualtrics).

Reminder Emails. The Election Committee departed from the terms of the election plan in one respect: A GSG global email was combined with a GSGelect global reminder email, and send from the gsg@princeton.edu account.

Eligible Voters. All current Princeton graduate students who had paid their annual dues were eligible to participate in the election. This included all regularly enrolled students and DCE

students, whose dues are automatically collected by the Graduate School. According to the Graduate School's records, there were 2717 regularly enrolled or DCE students on the day before polls opened.

Results:

The total number of eligible voters (as reported by the Graduate School) was 2717. Quorum for officer elections was 218 votes (10% of eligible voters). Quorum was met for each officer position. An individual candidate was disqualified if the number of votes they received was fewer than the number of votes to "Disapprove" or "Disapprove All Candidates". No candidates were disqualified. Below, please find the breakdown of votes, per office. Winning candidates highlighted in bold:

President

Sean Edington- 256

Andrew Edwards- 221

Disapprove- 13

Abstain- 72

Vice President

Mircea Davidescu- 391

Disapprove- 31

Abstain- 140

Secretary

Cagin Ararat- 112

Julia Wittes- 313

Disapprove- 14

Abstain- 123

Treasurer

Vasyl Alba- 148

Rachael Barry- 250

Disapprove- 19

Abstain- 145

Communications Director

Tom Morrell- 398

Disapprove- 33

Abstain- 131

Special Events Officer

Mike Hepler- 289

Leslie Alexis- 138

Disapprove- 20

Abstain- 115