

# **FINAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER**

University of Toronto Students' Union Fall 2012 Elections

Submitted by: Brian Yoshida, Chief Returning Officer

Monday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This report accounts the events of the UTSU Fall 2012 By-Elections period. It also provides recommendations for consideration by the Board of Directors and the Elections and Referenda Committee for improving processes and policies in order to facilitate future elections.

The Fall 2012 By-Elections took place on the St. George campus and held by-elections for Board of Director candidates for the following seats: Transitional Year Program (TYP), Faculty of Law, Toronto School of Theology, and OISE. No referenda were held during this period.

## **ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO VOTING PERIOD**

In preparation for the nomination and campaign period, and in accordance with the UTSU Elections Procedures Code, a number of tasks were completed prior to the beginning of the nomination and campaign periods:

1. Review of all relevant UTSU governing documents.
2. Preparation of nomination and election-related publicity materials for campus publications and the UTSU website.
3. Preparation of the nomination packages for Board of Director candidates.
4. Hiring of one Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) for the St. George campus.
5. Site inspections, selection and booking of potential polling locations.
6. Obtaining an up-to-date voters list from the Office of Student Affairs.
7. Arranging the renewal of the online voter eligibility verification system.
8. Scheduling and logistics for the All-Candidates' Meeting.
9. Arranging for the secure storage of ballot boxes between voting days.
10. Ordering ballot boxes, voting screens, and seals from Elections Canada.
11. Organizing poll clerk hiring, scheduling and logistics for poll-clerk training sessions.
12. Preparation of polling station kits.
13. Ensuring that the UTSU website was updated with relevant elections materials.
14. Designing ballots and determining ballot quantities and distribution.
15. Preparing laptops for use at the voting stations.

## **NOMINATIONS**

Nominations for the Fall 2012 UTSU By-Elections opened Monday October 1, 2012 at 9:00am and closed Friday, October 12 at 18:00. Three Director nomination packages were signed out, and three were returned before the end of the nomination period. Director nomination packages were submitted for three of the four constituencies available (TYP, Toronto School of Theology, and Faculty of Law). All submitted nomination packages were approved, as elections staff verified nomination signatures. Due to the fact that each position had one or fewer eligible candidates, it was determined by the elections staff that there was no need to hold a full by-election. As a result, each of the three candidates has been acclaimed to their respective seats, pending ratification.

## **ALL-CANDIDATES MEETING**

The all-candidates meeting was held on Saturday March 12, 2012 at 14:00 in the UTSU office. Present at the meeting were the CRO, DRO, and all three candidates. The meeting lasted approximately 30 minutes, as the CRO informed the candidates that they had been acclaimed to their respective seats on the Board of Directors. The CRO briefly reviewed the Elections Procedure Code and the role of the elections staff with the candidates. Following that, there was a brief question and answer period for candidates.

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## **HIRING OF POLL CLERKS**

Ten poll clerks were originally selected to serve as poll station operators during the by-election period. However, since each candidate was acclaimed, there was no need to hold an election and it was determined that no poll clerks were required.

## **CAMPAIGNING**

The campaign period was slated to open on Monday, October 15, 2012 at 09:00 and to close on the last day of voting, Thursday, October 25, at 18:00. However, the campaign period was not necessary, as all seats had been acclaimed, and was thus cancelled.

## **POLLING LOCATIONS & VOTER ELIGIBILITY**

As a large campus spread out across downtown Toronto, the University of Toronto St. George campus presents some challenges in ensuring representative distribution of polling stations. The Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) is required to consider a number of factors in allocating poll stations, including but not limited to: cost, wireless internet access, proximity to other poll stations, accessibility for residence and commuter students, and student traffic. Based on recommendations from previous CRO reports, the ERC determined that polling stations at the following locations would provide members of the relevant constituencies a convenient and accessible place to vote.

- Sidney Smith Hall
- Flavelle House, Faculty of Law
- Social Work Building
- Alumni Hall

When it was determined that there was no need for an election, all bookings for polling station locations were cancelled.

## **STORAGE & TRANSPORTATION OF BALLOT BOXES**

Prior to the beginning of the nomination period, the CRO made arrangements with the Office of the Ombudsperson to store and secure the ballot boxes in their offices between voting days. However, due to all seats being acclaimed, no storage space was necessary. All unused ballot boxes, voting screens and seals remain in storage at the UTSU office for future use.

## **VOTING**

Voting was slated to take place on Wednesday, October 24, 2012 from 09:00 to 18:00, and Thursday, October 25, 2012 from 09:00 to 18:00. However, due to the acclamation of all seats, no voting days were required and voting did not take place.

## **REPORTED DISCREPANCIES**

There were no reported discrepancies during the Fall 2012 By-Election period.

## **BALLOT COUNTING**

No ballots were cast and therefore no ballot count was occurred.

## **APPEALS**

There have been no appeals filed as of the date of this report.

## **RESULTS**

*Acclamations:*

Faculty of Law: Ella Henry

Toronto School of Theology: Michael Buttrey

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Transitional Year Program (TYP): Eric Jadidzadeh

OISE: Vacant

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Increase targeted advertising and outreach efforts to better inform the student body of upcoming by-elections to generate more interest in running for positions on the Board.

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## **Acknowledgements**

The CRO would like to thank the DRO, the Elections and Referenda Committee and all UTSU staff who provided logistical support for the Fall 2012 By-Elections.