

Running an Election: Some Suggestions

Introduction

The elections for student members of the faculty boards have traditionally been characterised by low interest and even lower turnout. Having fewer candidates than places is often common and a situation occurred last year where neither of the two candidates for the graduate seat on their faculty board received a single vote. However, CUSU believes that this should not be the case, as a seat on a faculty board is both a position of prestige and importance. It is also in the faculty boards' interest to have competent, active and interested members and this can be achieved most easily with a competitive election. The following guidelines are therefore suggested, with the aim of increasing participation and interest.

Publicity to Attract Candidates

In order for these elections to be effectively publicized, it is important that a variety of approaches are adopted. CUSU will provide posters which will hopefully be displayed prominently in the faculty building(s). Additionally, it would be helpful if at least two emails could be sent out asking for candidates, one before nominations open and one shortly before they close. If you have had active student faculty board members for the previous year, you might also consider asking them to send an email, explaining the types of activities in which they have taken part. If senior members of the faculty boards can tolerate it, perhaps they could also be encouraged to mention the election at the start or end of their lectures?

Displaying Manifestos

All candidates should be encouraged to submit a single-page manifesto which can then be displayed prominently in the faculty or in departmental buildings, if your faculty is spread over various sites. Encouraging all candidates to submit a short, 250-word statement, which can then be emailed out on the day of the election has also proved fruitful in generating interest.

Running the Election

Unfortunately, few students seem to want to go far out of their way to vote in these elections. Therefore, it would be helpful if the ballot box could be placed in a very obvious place, close to a main thoroughfare. The election should be conducted by Single Transferable Vote, as described on pages 116-120 of the *Statutes and Ordinances*. The computer program OpenSTV might be helpful if you have a large number of votes to count. It can be downloaded from <http://stv.sourceforge.net/> and runs on most systems.

After the Elections

Please fill in the *Election Results Form* and UMS it to CUSU. Encourage the candidates to contact CUSU if we can be of any immediate assistance to them. Otherwise, we will arrange training for them at the start of Lent.