

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER 55 OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

February 12, 2009

To the University Affairs Board,
University of Toronto.

Your Committee reports that it met on Thursday, February 12, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. in the Board Room, Office of the Vice-President, Research, Simcoe Hall, Room 109, with the following members present:

Mr. Stephen Smith (In the Chair)
Mr. P.C. Choo
Professor Ronald H. Kluger

Regrets:
Mr. Gary P. Mooney
Mr. Olivier Sorin

Secretariat:
Ms Mae-Yu Tan

In Attendance:
Ms Nancy Smart, Chief Returning Officer
Ms Alison Webb, Deputy Returning Officer

In this report, item 3 is recommended to the University Affairs Board for approval; all other items are reported for information.

1. Approval of the Reports of the Previous Meetings

The following reports were approved.

- a) Report Number 52 (October 14, 2008)
- b) Report Number 53 (January 27, 2009)
- c) Report Number 54 (February 5, 2009)

2. Business Arising from the Reports of the Previous Meetings

**(a) Report Number 53 of the Elections Committee (January 27, 2009) – Decision -
Recommendations for the 2010 Elections Process**

The Chair noted that some recommendations for the 2010 elections process had been developed by the Committee at its meeting of January 27, 2009. A member had suggested that the Committee review the definition of a “serious violation” to take into account situations in which candidates might unintentionally commit campaign violations. The terms of “serious” and

2. Business Arising from the Previous Meeting (cont'd)

“severe” violations should perhaps also be re-examined. The Chair recalled that the current categories of violations had been implemented in 2006 in an effort to simplify the previous demerit point system.

Members discussed additional steps that might be taken to increase the likelihood that candidates (especially students) would read the *Election Guidelines*. While it was the responsibility of candidates to ensure that they read and understood the complete document, a cover sheet containing a checklist of steps to be followed could perhaps be attached to the *Guidelines*, or prospective candidates could be asked to sign a declaration when submitting the nomination form indicating that they had read the *Guidelines*. Members agreed that these matters would be considered further at the Committee’s meeting in the Fall, 2009, when amendments to the *Election Guidelines* for 2010 would be discussed.

3a) Online Voting for Teaching Staff and Administrative Staff Constituencies

The Chair said that documentation outlining a proposal for the implementation of an online voting process for teaching and administrative staff constituencies of the Governing Council had been placed on the table. The Elections Committee was responsible for developing guidelines for procedures to be used in the election of teaching staff, administrative staff, and students to the Governing Council, and teaching staff and librarian staff to the Academic Board; amendments to the procedures were recommended for approval by the Committee to the University Affairs Board.

Invited by the Chair to summarize the proposed changes, Ms Nancy Smart, the Chief Returning Officer (C.R.O.), commented that the Committee had, on previous occasions, discussed the desirability of holding online elections for all constituencies. Currently, student elections were held online, through the Repository of Student Information (ROSI). The C.R.O. had held a number of discussions with staff at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) about the possibility of adapting the OISE online election application, *Survey Wizard*, for use for the Governing Council and Academic Board elections. The OISE developer had confirmed that the OISE group would be able to set up and host the election application for this purpose. Ms Smart outlined the details of the process as follows.

- The C.R.O. would enter the list of eligible staff and faculty voters into the *Survey Wizard*. The list of eligible voters would be obtained from the Human Resources Information System (H.R.I.S.) and from the federated universities.
- An electronic message would be sent to eligible staff and faculty members who had University-issued email addresses listed in H.R.I.S.. The email would outline the election process and would provide the URL for the website where staff would be able to vote. Ballots would be mailed to the departmental address of those staff eligible to vote who had no email address listed in H.R.I.S..
- Once an elector entered the required verification information (personnel number) on the secure elections website, the *Survey Wizard* software would automatically check the number against the preprogrammed list and admit the elector if:
 - a) the personnel number was on the list, and
 - b) the record indicated that the elector had not already voted.
- Electors would be directed to the appropriate elections page for their constituency (i.e. administrative staff or teaching staff) as identified by their personnel number.

3a) Online Voting for Teaching Staff and Administrative Staff Constituencies (cont'd)

- Once admitted, the elector would mark the electronic ballot, click on “submit”, view a message on the screen which indicated that their vote had been registered, and then exit the website.
- The record of votes would be stored in a separate database from that which housed the list of personnel numbers.
- While the C.R.O. would be able to determine whether or not a ballot had been completed for a particular personnel number, the C.R.O. would not know the identity of the individual or the candidate for whom they had voted.

Members of the Committee expressed their support for the proposal and thanked the C.R.O. for having initiated the process. It was suggested that staff voting online should be required to enter a second form of verification in addition to their personnel number. The C.R.O. stated that she would speak with the developer to see if it would be possible to use additional information such as the name or date of birth of voters for identification purposes in the 2009 elections. Members discussed at length the importance of maintaining privacy and security in an online voting environment. It was suggested that perhaps in future years the application could be developed to send an automatic email receipt to voters confirming that their online vote had been recorded. As well, for added security, passwords which would enable voters to enter their online ballots could also be generated and sent to voters by email.

In response to a question, the C.R.O. explained that the definition of administrative staff¹ used in the *Guidelines* was drawn from the *University of Toronto Act, 1971*.

On motion duly moved, seconded, and carried

YOUR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS

THAT the elections for teaching staff and administrative staff representatives on the Governing Council be conducted by online voting, effective immediately.

3b) Election Guidelines 2009

The Elections Committee reviewed the proposed amendments to the *Election Guidelines 2009* and made some suggestions for minor revisions.

On motion duly moved, seconded, and carried

YOUR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS

THAT the amended *Election Guidelines 2009* be approved.

¹ “Administrative Staff” means the employees of the University, University College, the constituent colleges and the federated universities who are not members of the teaching staff (*University of Toronto Act, 1971*, section 1(1)(aa), p.3).

4. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair reminded members that no further meetings of the Committee were scheduled for the 2008-2009 year. However, the Committee might be called to meet as the Election Overseers again during the remainder of the 2009 election period.

5. Other Business

There were no items of Other Business.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Secretary
February 18, 2009

Chair