

June 4, 2013

**Responses to the Questions for the Vice President of Student Affairs Regarding the
Election of the Student Trustee
Submitted by the Admission and Retention Committee of the Faculty Senate**

Elections for student government and the student trustee positions are held every spring. Faculty can volunteer to assist any Student Election Committees. Also, faculty recommendations or suggestions for the enhancement of activities sponsored by the Division of Student Affairs are always welcomed.

The Vice President of Student Affairs and Associate Vice President regularly meet with faculty advisors to support their efforts in mentoring and advising students. In good faith, they both met with the Admission and Retention Committee of the Faculty Senate for the purpose of clarifying the Student Trustee Election Committee guidelines. The Vice President of Student Affairs also met with the full Faculty Senate for the same purpose.

Authority to Conduct Student Trustee Election

Have the procedures for the election of the position of Student Trustee to the Board of Trustees been formally entered into the DCMR 8? Please provide the Faculty Senate Admission and Retention Committee with a copy of the DCMR 8 version of the procedures.

The DCMR provision which contains rules applicable to the Student Trustee as approved by the Board of Trustees is 8B D.C.M.R. §122. The DCMR can be found online at www.dcregs.dc.gov

Student Trustee Election Committee

Names of students who served on the Student Trustees Elections Committee and their associations: Community College Student Government Association representative, USGA representative, GSGA representative, Student Bar Association representative and dated written correspondence from the Provost, himself, regarding the appointment of Melba Broome as chairperson to the Student Trustees Elections Committee. To which academic unit is she attached? Is she a teaching faculty?

USGA Representative - Mustafa Allahrakha- Recommended by Tereasa Holland (USGA President)

GSGA Representative - Dante Morton - Recommended by Aigerim Begadilova (GSGA President)

Community College - Shavonna Johnson - Recommended by Shane Johnson (UDC CC SGA President)

Law School- Caleb James- Recommended by Rachel Huhn (Law School Student Bar Association President)

Faculty- Ms. Melba Broom- Recommended by the Office of the Provost. Please note that LRD staff are considered Faculty and the current procedures do not require that the faculty representative hold teaching status (See Sixth Master Agreement, 2006-2008, Article XXIV, pg 63).

Election Calendar

What was the rationale behind the selection of the specific dates chosen for the Election Calendar? How is it that the VPSA/her designee developed this calendar without input from regular faculty or the Faculty Senate?

The election calendar is compiled using previous election calendars as well as the academic calendar. The DCMR requires that the University hold the election “not less than thirty (30) days, nor more than sixty (60) days, before the expiration of the term of office of the incumbent student member of the Board of Trustees.” Faculty input is always welcome anytime of the year but Faculty-Senate approval of student affairs activities is not required.

Eligibility of Candidates and Voters

Why are Law School students only required to have completed one semester of their six-semester program whereas non-law school graduate students are required to have completed two of their four-semester programs and undergraduate students, two of their eight-semester programs?

The rationale or reasons for the required number of credits or semesters of completion were established prior to the appointment of the current Vice President of Student Affairs and are codified at 8B D.C.M.R. §122. These criteria were used for previous elections. No complaints have been received during the last four years of the tenure of the current Vice President of Student Affairs. All D.C.M.R. revisions are subject to a minimum 30 day comment period during which public citizens may make comments regarding the proposed changes.

Filing of Petitions

Could petitions be available for review by faculty, students, and the public beyond the minimal three months?

Currently the guidelines specify a minimum of three months for retention, however, current practice has been to retain records in perpetuity. Review of petitions to students outside of the candidates, is available where it is deemed reasonable and appropriate and pursuant to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Voting

“The VPSA may designate University employees as election officials to oversee and assist with the balloting process.”

Question: Did any regular faculty serve in this capacity for this election? Why are electronic ballots the only option for voting? How is it assured that individuals with access to student ID numbers are not voting in the stead of students with or without the students’ knowledge and permission?

Faculty did not volunteer to serve in the capacity to oversee and assist with the balloting process. The Student Life Calendar of Events is available online. Online voting was approved in 2010. Online voting was established as a convenience for our students to vote. No concerns or allegations regarding improper use of student identification numbers were presented by candidates during this election process.

Poll Watchers

Why are we paying students to serve as poll workers? This should be a volunteer position. Payment might result in lack of independence from administrators and staff of Student Affairs.

While current and previous election procedures allow for poll watchers to be compensated, this has not been the practice during the previous three elections.

Proper Conduct of Campaigns

Given the short period to campaign, how can students be assured that there will be no delay in the approval of campaign literature by Student Affairs designee?

The process for having election literature approved is outlined in the election procedures. Candidates electing to use flyers or other such campaign literature are responsible for submitting a copy of the flyer for review and approval (marked with “ok to post” stamp) before the candidate has copies reproduced at his or her own expense.

Election Challenges

Twenty-four hours to lodge a challenge seems insufficient for such an important position. What if the Student Affairs designee is not available to accept the protest? What if the candidates do not learn of an error in the conduct of the election until after the 24 hours

Valerie L. Epps, Ph.D.
Vice President of Student Affairs

have elapsed? Did the VPSA inform the University President of the election being challenged before the results were certified by the President?

Candidates can submit written challenges as outlined in the mandatory orientation process and procedures. The form can be faxed, scanned (attached by email) or delivered to the appropriate office and staff. The procedures require that the candidate submit the written notification by form 24 hours after the alleged incident. Official written challenges were not and, to date, no formal challenges have been submitted on the form as outlined in the orientation session for candidates. No formal challenges have been submitted in writing to the appropriate offices.

Stopping or Invalidating an Election

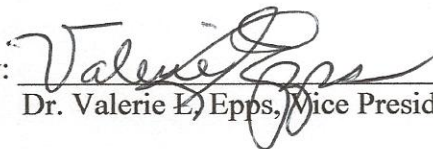
Why did the VPSA allow the election results to be certified in the face of student and faculty questions regarding flaws in the election process?

Official written challenges were not and, to date, have not been submitted on the form as requested.

Election Material Security

We request that ballots be retained beyond the minimal three months. Currently, we retain election ballots (ballots and results) longer than three months.

Submitted by:



Dr. Valerie L. Epps, Vice President of Student Affairs

cc: Dr. James Lyons, Interim President
Dr. Ken Bain, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs