2014 – 2015 SGA Elections Report

Committee Chair: Keith Harrigian

Submitted: July 14, 2015
Table of Contents

Overview
Election Preparation
  Committee Members
  Committee Timeline
  Direct Elections Manual
SGA Direct Election
  Election Timeline
  Slates
  Budget and Spending
  Grievances
  Outreach and Events
Referenda
  Procedure
  $15 Now
  Gender Resource Center
  Gender Neutral Bathrooms
  Resolution on Divestment for Peace in Occupied Palestine
Results
Closing Remarks
Appendix
  • Budget
  • Referenda Legislation
Overview

The 2014-2015 Elections Report is compiled by Elections Chair Keith Harrigian and represents his interpretation of the 2014-2015 elections process. Elections Chair Harrigian speaks on behalf of the input from the SGA Elections Committee (the committee). Additional opinions have been allocated to the Addendum section of this report. After a brief introduction, each topic shall include a brief review of notable changes from preceding years. Retrospective suggestions for next year shall be included after an outline of this year’s practices for each section. The report shall conclude with a general reflection on the 2014-2015 Direct Election process.

Election Preparation

Committee Members

Keith Harrigian chaired the 2014-2015 Election Committee. Permanent members of the Committee were Student at Large Emily Williamson, Student at Large Valentina Stoma, Senator Kyle Varela, Senator Veronique Falkovich, and Senator Samuel Guggliemotto. The Committee offered valuable input throughout the year and offered a fresh perspective in attracting attention to the Direct Election. The committee was amicable with one another and aware of other initiatives of the Association as a whole. The committee served responsibly, checking the Chair in the creation of the Direct Elections manual and offering their assistance readily during the spring campaign period. The chair could not ask for a better committee. Although no member stepped up in search of a greater leadership position, the Chair would like to recognize Senator Falkovich and Senator Guggliemotto for their outstanding effort. The Chair hopes for a return of all members of the committee and wishes to develop their leadership skills in the coming year.

A five-member committee was more than enough for most of the year's work. When it comes to manual revision and promotion planning, a few heads will suffice. This said, the need for additional help was quite evident during campaign season. Although I was able to take off class during several election events, the same won’t be true moving forward. I recommend finding temporary members for the duration of the campaign period. This help may come from those senators and students-at-large within SGA that are not campaign workers for a slate, nor active leaders of any referenda campaign. I would not recommend looking for help outside of SGA due to the sensitive nature of voting.

Committee Timeline

The Committee focused first on reviewing the Direct Elections Manual and then on the beginning of logistic planning for the spring election. Several preceding years of Direct Election Manual editing allowed for an expedited revision process this year. Below is an abbreviated outline of meeting business throughout the year.

The committee’s timeline was highly effective overall. Our ability to expedite the Direct Election Manual revision process was tremendously significant in allowing us to focus on promotions and get the ball rolling on more strenuous details. I would use the extra time next year to begin filing any contracts necessary and solidly purchasing. Grander election events, on the scale of Campus Invasion, may be beneficial in securing a greater attention
from the student body; these kinds of events take much more time to put together without stress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – October 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Direct Election Manual Revision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; – November 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Promotion Logistics and Scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Full Body Senate Meeting (Approve DEM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; – March 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Promotion Logistics and Scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Full Body Senate Meeting (Nominations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – April 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Campaign Period (See Elections Timeline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Full Body Senate (Results Announcement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – April 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Recap and Affinity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Direct Elections Manual**

The Direct Election Manual (DEM) serves as the governing document of the SGA Direct Election. The DEM outlines the processes of nominations, budgeting, promotion, voting, etc. with corresponding disciplinary procedures in the case that the DEM guidelines are violated.

Election Committees of past years have largely solidified the structure and foundation of the DEM. This year’s revision called for minor adjustments and clarifications in grammar. The only noteworthy change instituted by this year’s committee was the addition of guidelines for mobile voting stations. Section 7.5 was added to the DEM to allow the Elections committee sole authority to facilitate mobile voting stations within residence halls on the Northeastern University campus. The mobile voting stations must respect the tenets of privacy and lack of bias presented in traditional voting stations. Additionally, phrasing was added to ensure that all unspent money allotted to slates would be returned to the general election fund. Senate approved the changes, grammatical and otherwise, without any issue.

In it’s current state, the DEM is adequate. However, to further the promotion of the election to the student body, I recommend certain changes be made. First, from section 7.7.4, slates should be allowed to attend campaign events of the committee. As long as all slates agree to the participation and can attend without conflict, their attendance should be allowed in order for voting student body members to learn more about what and who they are voting for.

The next large addition that needs to be made is in regard to referenda. As it stands, the word referenda or any synonym is not even used in the DEM. Without any such inclusion, referenda sponsors are technically not governed by any formal document. I recommend adding a section that recognizes referenda as equals as slates, in that they must abide by the same rules slates do. There were issues last year in which a referenda sponsor attempted to facilitate voting on their own, which demonstrates the need for the addition. The next debatable addition with regard to referenda is the purpose of referenda for the Association, what constitutes a referenda, and how the Association treats the referenda after the election. Personally, I do not believe that the DEM is the appropriate place for this. The DEM is meant to govern the campaign period, not define the purpose of referenda for the Association. I believe the DEM can give a nod to the bylaws or another document of the association, but should not directly be responsible for such a significant outcome of the election.
SGA Direct Election

Elections Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 16th, 2015</td>
<td>Referenda Submission Forms Become Available on OrgSync</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18th, 2015</td>
<td>Referenda Submission Forms Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 19th, 2015</td>
<td>Executive Board addresses referenda question and notifies sponsor¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20th, 2015</td>
<td>Signature Collection Begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16th, 2015</td>
<td>Nominations / Referenda Signatures Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 17th, 2015</td>
<td>Candidates Briefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18th, 2015</td>
<td>Campaign Period Begins at 12:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25th, 2015</td>
<td>Public Debate/Town Hall Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26th, 2015</td>
<td>Voting Begins at 12:00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2nd, 2015</td>
<td>Voting Ends at 11:59pm on April 1“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6th, 2015</td>
<td>Results Announcement in Senate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The timeline was near perfect. Suggestions regarding the public debate are to follow below. The quick turn around time between candidate’s briefing and start of the voting period kept the student body’s attention better. Drawing the campaign period out any longer than it needs to be would only create tension and apathy in the eyes of the student body.

Slates

There were two slates in the 2014-2015 Election, Engage NU and IgniteNU. Engage NU was comprised of Presidential Candidate John Finn and Executive Vice Presidential Candidate Neel Desai. IgniteNU was comprised of Presidential Candidate Eric Tyler and Executive Vice Presidential Candidate Morgan Helfman. Both slates met criteria to run in the election without issue. The Chair found both slates to be extremely easy to work with, maintaining transparency throughout the process and checking for clarification when necessary. Further, both slates offered their full dedication to the promotion of the election and were instrumental in surpassing the vote count threshold.

I could not ask for two better slates. Like we did this year, I recommend maintaining transparency with both slates early on in the process and asking for advice regarding committee decisions from all parties to ensure the election is a collaborative effort.

Budget and Spending

Per Direct Election Manual guidelines, each slate received an allowance of $1000 to spend on approved campaign-related expenditures. A total of $2000 was set aside from the SGA cash account to fund the election expenditures. The funding was a result of internal SGA fundraising in collaboration with Student Affairs and MicroFridge.

Engage NU spent $872.82 of their allotted sum. Expenditures included domain hosting, printed promotional material, and food for various tabling events. IgniteNU spent $794.86

¹ Ruled unconstitutional by Parliamentarian Eide
of their allotted sum. Expenditures included domain hosting, Facebook advertising, printed promotional materials, and food. Expenditures of both slates were submitted by Monday at 12:00pm each week of the campaign period and approved at the following meeting of the Elections Committee. There were no issues recognized by the committee in approving the expenditures.

The SGA Budget, approved by Executive Cabinet, allotted the Elections Committee $5,000. The committee spent $4,555.73 over the course of the campaign period for promotional material and event-related expenses. Direct transfer paid for a majority of committee expenditures. The Chair was reimbursed for $1,433.93 of the total expenditures. Choice of payment option ultimately came down to timeliness and convenience.

The $5000 budget from Election’s Committee spending was sufficient and necessary. Next year, it will be important to advice the committee and slates to look for a tax-exempt form from Northeastern. Because SABO cannot reimburse taxed-purchases, any reimbursement will be made without addition of the tax. Purchasing from campus vendors when possible is a great alternative to alleviate some of the tax issues.

Grievances

There were no formal grievances filed through the provided procedures of the Direct Election Manual. Slates always asked for clarity when the situation called for it. Further, slates were amicable with one another throughout the campaign period and thereafter. There are no suggestions of the committee currently. However, it will be important to create an action plan in the case that a grievance is filed. Formation of precedence will be an important concept to be aware of, in addition to recording all meeting minutes thoroughly to allow the chair of elections and parliamentarian to reflect upon decisions afterward.

Events and Outreach

Election Committee sponsored events were a success in increasing voter turnout and creating increased awareness on campus. The combination of giveaways and student engagement made each event a unique experience. In such, students could feel that election week was an ongoing process and not just a continuous push of the same message. The theme of “Vote Your Top Dog” was continued from previous years. I would recommend continuing using this theme to establish recognition for members of the student body. Logo design may be changed, but I would not stray far from the current iteration. Branding has certainly shown itself as an important facet of elections, with voters remembering images first and foremost before issues and stances.

Giveaways

We purchased 500 T-shirts from Boston Screen Printing with the “Vote Your Top Dog” logo, slightly altered from the previous year to remove dates. All 500 T-Shirts were passed out during the first two hours of the first day during the Election kick-off event. The committee began to hand out extra “Vote Your Top Dog” T-shirts from the previous year and eventually distributed all of those as well. T-shirts remain a critical component of giveaways. Purchasing more smalls and mediums next year will be beneficial. The Northeastern University community is surprisingly healthy. The committee also distributed 200 plush huskies from Plush in a Rush. Proof of voting was required to receive a stuffed
husky due to their limited amount. If done again, I recommend increasing the order size or
looking into the stuff your own husky program used by the Resident Student Association.
They are a tremendous hit and offer just enough nuance to keep people interested. Options
to customize the husky were available; depending on budget, adding some kind of SGA
branding may be beneficial to the organization.

Candidates Briefing (March 17th, 2015)
The candidates’ briefing was short and succinct. Elections Chair Harrigian pushed for a
question and answer format, as much detail of the campaign period was already laid out in
the Direct Election Manual. Engage NU and IgniteNU made only one formal agreement, in
which the two slates agreed not to campaign at Relay for Life. Presidential candidate John
Finn of Engage NU was teleconferenced in due to co-op travel.

I recommend the election committee to attend the briefing next year. Although I was quite
capable of answering questions and reminding slates of important information, I forgot to
mention a couple of points in the address itself that could have been included with a
reminder of the committee. This year, the campaign managers of both slates asked key
questions that jogged my memory, but such a luxury will not always be a certainty.

Debate/Public Forum (March 25th, 2015)
The Elections committee held an open debate in the West Addition Mezzanine of Curry
Student Center. The program began at 6:30pm and lasted until 8:00pm. The first half hour
was dedicated to referenda sponsors and an introduction of their respective causes. A brief
performance by the NU Downbeats and break for refreshments served to transition the
debate toward slate discussion. During question and answer for the SGA slates, Elections
Chair Harrigian asked each slate a question in an ABBA format. Each slate had an allotted
5 minutes to speak to the question before yielding to the next slate. After five prepared
questions, the microphone was turned over to members of the audience. Questions were
not screened before asked to the slates. Each slate had the opportunity to answer audience
questions. Presidential candidate John Finn of Engage NU was teleconferenced in due to co-

op travel.

The debate/public forum remains one of the most troublesome points for the election
season. On one hand, the ability for slates to present their platform and interact with
members of the student body is a necessary component. On the other hand, attendance is
almost entirely made up of Association members, already well versed on the platforms o the
slates and the issues presented by the referenda. Attempts to make the debate more
interactive, via question and answer, twitter questions, live streaming, etc., have been largely
unsuccessful. It is my belief that timing of the event is the greatest barrier. Members of the
student body are more likely to prioritize other meetings given the knowledge that they can
meet the slates and referenda sponsors around campus if they truly wanted to. Instead of
bringing an audience to the debate, the debate must be brought to the audience. I have
mentioned before, and I will mention again, that slates should be allowed to participate in
election committee coordinated events. First, the DEM should be revised to allow the
public debate to occur during the voting period. Then, the chair should coordinate with
slates to hold the public forum in an informal manner during the middle of the day when
many students have a free period. Otherwise, I’d recommend eliminating the public debate
altogether as it only costs additional money and wastes precious time that slates and
referenda sponsors could use for self-promotion.
Kick-off Event (March 26th, 2015)
To mark the beginning of the voting period, the elections committee collaborated with Green Line Records and Coffeemate NU in an afternoon on the Library Quad. The Elections committee facilitated an official voting station in which undergraduate students could vote on myNEU. Elections Chair Harrigian oversaw the voting to ensure there was no voter intimidation. Appearances from Paws and King Husky made the event memorable. All 500 of this year’s “Vote Your Top Dog” T-shirts were given out during the event, in addition to two boxes of leftover T-shirts from the previous campaign season. Tabling was moved to under the Library entryway due to inclement weather. Green Line Records featured performances from campus musicians for the entire four-hour block of the event.

This event was a tremendous success. This would be a great atmosphere for slates to interact with voting members of the student body. Increased staffing may be beneficial for sake of stress.

Brunch Tabling in East Village (March 28th, 2015)
A small tabling event in East Village from 11:00am to 1:30pm on Saturday, March 28th offered an opportunity for NU.in students, new to campus, to engage in the democratic process and learn more about SGA. The location made the event exclusive to residents of East Village, a facet not accounted for in initially planning the event. Refreshments from Rebecca’s Café and Dunkin Donuts were a tremendous attractor for the students around breakfast time. We offered two laptops with confidential locations for students to vote without intimidation. We received about 50 votes during the event, with several students offering that they would vote once they returned to their room due to computer-use backup.

This event was a success in its own right, but is probably not as necessary in the grand scheme of the election. Morning events seem to be less successful in general. More attention may have been given to the voting station had it been framed in the evening while students were mingling in the lobby of the building and coming back from classes. Additionally, the event should be framed in a location that is accessible by all undergraduate students as not to create any exclusivity.

Coffee and Munchkins in Centennial (March 30th, 2015)
The Elections Committee collaborated with Coffeemate NU again to bring coffee to students during the morning rush for class from 8:30am to 10:30am. The Elections committee also purchased several boxes of 50ct Munchkins from the Dunkin Donuts in Shillman Hall. Inclement weather (read: extreme cold) made tabling difficult. Technology would not work due to water and condensation from snow. The planned voting station was thus scrapped quickly and replaced by an advocacy push. Further, few students wanted to wait outside for more than a second due to the unexpected chill factor. That said, it is the observation of the committee that early morning events such as these have a tough time engaging regardless because of timing of classes and breaks.

Next year, I’d recommend moving this event to the afternoon and catching the lunch rush. More students are around campus and have time to vote rather than running to class.

Closing Barbeque (April 1st, 2015)
The Elections Committee held a BBQ and facilitated a voting station in the Library Quad. Giveaways included stuffed huskies, which required proof of voting to receive. Extraneous T-shirts from the previous year were given out in addition and as an alternative for students that were not able to vote or unable to show proof of voting. The Elections Committee collaborated with Green Line Records again to provide music throughout the four-hour block of time. Food options included hot dogs, hamburgers, and veggie burgers. The BBQ ran out of food quicker than expected. Further, there was a demand for cheese that had been forgotten in the initial order. No voter intimidation occurred during the event.

Like the kick-off event, this event was a tremendous success. This would be a great atmosphere for slates to interact with voting members of the student body. Increased staffing may be beneficial for sake of stress. Definitely utilize Green Line Records again. The amount of food was perfect because it allowed us to wrap up early after a long week. This said, it will be important to remember to order cheese, offer drinks, and more bread.

**Announcement (April 6th, 2015)**
Slates were notified independently of the results 30 minutes prior of a Full Body Senate meeting. Elections Chair Harrigian and SGA President Noah Carville were the only people privy to the information until the communication with each respective slate. Results, including executive office positions and referenda, were formally announced at approximately 7:15pm in the Senate Chambers of 333 Curry Student Center. Results were made publically available on the SGA website immediately after adjournment of the meeting.

The announcement went off without a hitch. Disclosing the results to the slates 30 minutes early should be a continuing practice out of respect to the hard work that all parties deliver. No one deserves to be blindsided by the election outcome in a public setting and in the least this disclosure offers both slates the opportunity to calm their nerves and maintain a professional composure in Senate.

**Referenda**

**Procedure**

A referendum is a direct vote in which the undergraduate student body is asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal. Referenda will be classified according to the same distinctions as Senate legislation. Referenda are not binding legislation and therefore do not result in immediate policy changes or enactment, but instead signify to both the Student Government Association and the University that the referenda speaks to an issue of importance to the student body that should promptly be addressed in accordance with the specifications of the referenda.

The sponsor of the referenda must complete the Referenda Submission Form, which includes the sponsor of the legislation, sponsor contact information, question to be posed and text of the legislation. After approval by the Executive Board, sponsors must submit 750 signatures of undergraduate students affirming the relevance of posing the question. The Senate will then examine and approve the question for feasibility, adherence to University policies, and fairness in wording. All appeals of the decision after being heard by the Executive Board and the Senate are referred to Operational Appeals Board.
The Association’s Parliamentarian ruled executive board approval unconstitutional as the Association’s Bylaws outline such a power to the executive board, but the constitution allocates sole approval power to the senate. The constitution supersedes the authority of the bylaws and thus all decisions made by the executive board concerning referenda approval were voided.

Referenda procedures should be outlined in the Direct Election Manual next year to create a formality of governance. Referenda must abide by the same rules the slates do and putting such in writing is a necessary addition next year. Outside of operating procedures, Association policy on referenda should remain separate from the jurisdiction of election’s committee. The Association must decide how to interpret referenda and treat their outcome in the election. The elections committee should be included in all discussions regarding the matter, given that the committee must enter a discourse with the referenda sponsors during the campaign period.

$15 Now

Recognized student organization $15 Now NU submitted the following referenda question: Given the rising cost of living in Boston, do you believe that Northeastern University should ensure all campus workers are paid a minimum of $15/hr? The question was submitted with 1564 signatures to allow it to move forward to the Senate floor. In a vote of 34 yays, 7 nays, and 9 abstentions, Senate approved the question and legislation on March 16th, 2015 for feasibility, adherence to university policy, and fairness of wording.

Gender Resource Center

Recognized student organization Sexual Health Advocacy and Resource Education submitted the following referenda question: Do you want a resource center on campus focused on addressing gender issues, including discrimination, sexual assault, and domestic violence, that would provide a safe, physical space for collaboration, survivor resources, student organization meetings, workshops, and campus outreach and education? The question was submitted with 1019 signatures to allow it to move forward to the Senate floor. In a vote of 54 yays, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions, Senate approved the question and legislation on March 16th, 2015 for feasibility, adherence to university policy, and fairness of wording.

Gender Neutral Bathrooms

Student-at-large Sonia Banasczyzk and Student-at-large Susanna Edens submitted the following referenda question: Should NU convert all single-stall bathrooms on campus, including in residence halls, to be accessible to persons of any gender? The question was submitted with 816 signatures to allow it to move forward to the Senate floor. In a vote of 46 yays, 0 nays, and 2 abstentions, Senate approved the question and legislation on March 16th, 2015 for feasibility, adherence to university policy, and fairness of wording.

Resolution on Divestment for Peace in Occupied Palestine

Recognized student organizations Students for Justice in Palestine, Progressive Student Alliance, and Queer Student Union submitted the following referenda question: In accordance with international humanitarian law, human rights protocols, and the values of
the Northeastern community. We ask the Northeastern trustees to divest from companies engaged in human rights violations in Palestine. We ask that Northeastern withdraws all investments that it may hold in Caterpillar, Raytheon, Motorola and Hewlett-Packard. The question was submitted with 919 signatures to allow it to move forward to the Senate floor. In a vote of 9 yays, 25 nays, and 13 abstentions, Senate did not approve the question and legislation for the ballot, citing lack of feasibility, failure to adhere to university policy, and lack of fairness of wording. Overwhelming concerns with regard to student safety and creation of a respectful discourse were main motivators for the Senate decision.

**Results**

A threshold of 3,625 votes (20% of the undergraduate student body) was necessary to validate the direct election. A total of 4,564 votes were cast over the weeklong voting period, representing 25.18% of the student body. IgniteNU won the election by a margin of 50 votes. Full breakdown of executive position results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slate Results</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Percent of Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slate 1 - IgniteNU</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>10.41%</td>
<td>41.36722174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slate 2 - Engage NU</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>10.14%</td>
<td>40.2716915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Confidence</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>4.62%</td>
<td>18.36108677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Votes</td>
<td>4564</td>
<td>25.18%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, all referenda questions passed with a super majority. The breakdown is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referenda</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Abstain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referenda 1 - $15 Now</td>
<td>3415</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referenda 2 - Gender Resource Center</td>
<td>3784</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referenda 3 - Gender Neutral Bathrooms</td>
<td>3153</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were two cases in which students experienced difficulty with the voting application and contacted Election Chair Harrigian through the given email address on the application to rectify the issue. Individual-specific votes could not be isolated due to ITS constraints. In such, these votes were manually added to the post-hoc total. They did not affect the result.

To alleviate some of the issues with the voting process next year, I recommend entering into discourse with Jim Lemmon and the rest of ITS early in the year. The voting application was successful for the majority of students. However, it was noted that a substantial minority were timed out of the window due to myNEU issues and unable to fill out the entire ballot. Perhaps including a save and return option would be beneficial. Additionally, some students had an issue with the anonymity of the ballot. Next year, all students should not be required to enter their email address to finish the voting process and instead taken to a separate application if they choose to participate in any survey.

**Closing Remarks**
As it stands, the SGA Direct Election process is a well-oiled machine ready to serve the association for years to come. Were we to continue our methods of this year into the future, I strongly believe that each election would continuously hit the voting threshold and engage the student body in an interactive democratic experience for the duration of the campaign period. Although these basic guidelines have finally been met, there is much more that may be done through the election process to further promote SGA’s significance within the mind of the student body.

Our Association is different than those of other elite universities—we don’t have political parties and more debate occurs outside of the senate chambers than within. Slates tend to offer similar platforms, with most discrepancies attributed to individual background within the organization. This unity in thought is great for the Association’s internal purposes, as we can lead effectively as a single group with one mission. From an elections standpoint, it becomes a difficult task to inspire conversation amongst the student body regarding any potential future leadership. We see that the student body is likely to vote based on marketing and personal interaction with candidates. I’d like to note that this commentary is based solely off my two years within the Association, as practices may have been different before 2013.

Referenda continue to create the most controversy on campus and within the Association. This year highlighted the need for referenda reform. In particular, the Association needs to explicitly define the purpose and qualifications of referenda. As it stands, referenda are no more than a convoluted survey question used by individual students and student groups to stir the pot of conversation. Several sponsors this year readily admitted the questions proposed within were of little importance. The main use of referenda, according to the sponsors, was to show administration they had support in their respective causes. At the end of the day, such an attitude offers nothing for the Association. It is not the job of the Association to be involved in political debates that ostracize any single person, group, or belief on campus. It is the responsibility of this organization to ensure the “Northeastern Experience” is all that it can possibly be for each and every student that commits to this university.

I suggest the formation of a committee next year to thoroughly evaluate the referenda process and consider implications moving forward. The current tenets of “feasibility, fairness of wording, and adherence to university policy” are decent qualifications of referenda but offer significantly too much ambiguity. In discussing the state of referenda with my committee and various members of the Association, there are a few running themes to outline referenda.

First, a referendum must be actionable by the Association. Essentially, a referendum must be able to be addressed by a direct policy change or institution of the Association. Suggestions for further action should not qualify as referenda. Such are the purpose of our several committees and their respective Vice Presidents.

Second, a referendum should be aimed at some aspect of the student experience. It is not the job of this Association to make political statements or decide how the university presents itself on a global scale. These kinds of decisions are well out of the pay grade of any Student Government Association member.
Lastly, referenda should remain respectful of all individuals and belief systems. There are several conversations that need to happen on college campuses. That said, a “yes or no” ballot question is far from the appropriate location for such a conversation to take place. If any student or group is interested in pursuing such a conversation, they should seek one of the several resources on campus that are in places specifically to address complex issues.

By no means are these issues out of reach for elections committee or the Association. In the least, the last two years have shown how significant the direct election can be for the Association. For many students, the direct election is the first time they pay attention to something that comes out of our organization. Whether it’s elected leadership or referenda, students actually care about the future of their Northeastern Experience. It remains a challenge to invoke this emotion in them, but such challenge is the reason we all keep working. As long as we continue to address election promotion and the existence of a forum to connect students with the change they would like to see enacted on our campus, there is hope to obliterate the 20% voting threshold and create a campus-wide conversation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Vendor</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Amount Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/23/15</td>
<td>Ignite NU</td>
<td>Facebook Ad (4/1)</td>
<td>74320</td>
<td>$0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/31/15</td>
<td>Dunkin' Donuts</td>
<td>Facebook Ad (3/23)</td>
<td>73410</td>
<td>$9.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/31/15</td>
<td>Dunkin' Donuts</td>
<td>Facebook Ad (3/25)</td>
<td>73410</td>
<td>$0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/31/15</td>
<td>Dunkin' Donuts</td>
<td>Facebook Ad (3/27)</td>
<td>73410</td>
<td>$0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/31/15</td>
<td>Dunkin' Donuts</td>
<td>Facebook Ad (3/28)</td>
<td>73410</td>
<td>$0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/18/15</td>
<td>Amazon</td>
<td>Facebook Ad (3/19)</td>
<td>7041368596975190000000</td>
<td>$2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/28/15</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Snickers</td>
<td>74320</td>
<td>$13.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/15/15</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Tape</td>
<td>7819</td>
<td>$7.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/13/15</td>
<td>4imprint</td>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>73301</td>
<td>$264.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/13/15</td>
<td>Dunkin' Donuts</td>
<td>Tape</td>
<td>73301</td>
<td>$198.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/28/15</td>
<td>Amazon</td>
<td>Tape</td>
<td>11410144101799400</td>
<td>$82.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/24/15</td>
<td>Northeastern</td>
<td>Tape</td>
<td>250871898008406000</td>
<td>$34.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/15/15</td>
<td>Amazon</td>
<td>Tape</td>
<td>11410144101799400</td>
<td>$210.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/1/15</td>
<td>EngageNU</td>
<td>Printed Materials</td>
<td>74320</td>
<td>$31.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/1/15</td>
<td>EngageNU</td>
<td>Assorted Food for Brunch</td>
<td>28975</td>
<td>$46.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$15 Now

WHEREAS: Northeastern University places emphasis on its commitment to community and has stated that “our community is our strength;” and,

WHEREAS: The current hourly wage of Northeastern protective service employees is $13.25; and,

WHEREAS: According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator, the “typical hourly wage” for protective service employees in the city of Boston is $21.61; and,

WHEREAS: The average rent per person in Boston in 2013 was $1,314 per month; and,

WHEREAS: Working 40 hours per week for one month at $13.25 adds up to approximately $2,120, before taxes, and with monthly rent at $1,314 that leaves only $806 to cover food, healthcare, child care, transportation, education, leisure, etc.; and,

WHEREAS: According to data collected by the Council for Community and Economic Research, groceries in Boston run 25.8% above the national average, healthcare costs run 26.3% above the national average, and utilities run 44% above the national average; and,

WHEREAS: The Northeastern mission is “To create and translate knowledge to meet global and societal needs;” and,

WHEREAS: According to the University’s mission statement, “Northeastern pursues each of its activities and interactions with integrity, maintaining the highest ethical standards;” and,

WHEREAS: Northeastern has experienced a 66% growth rate in donations between fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2013 and through this Northeastern has demonstrated its immense financial capabilities; and,

WHEREAS: Northeastern has the potential to set a precedent for colleges and universities nationwide by becoming the first university in the United States to bring the “Fight for 15” to its campus and, as such, ensure that all campus workers are paid $15 an hour; and,

WHEREAS: Northeastern has the opportunity to be a leader in the social and economic justice movement both in the city of Boston and nationally,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: All persons who work on the campus of Northeastern University should be paid a minimum of, or the salary equivalent to, $15 an hour.
“A Sense of the Student Body Supporting the Creation of a Gender Resource Center on Northeastern's Campus”

WHEREAS: A 2007 campus sexual assault study by the U.S. Department of Justice found that around 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men are targets of attempted or completed sexual assault during their undergraduate careers; AND,

WHEREAS: The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network reports that college-aged women are 4 times more likely than any other age group to face sexual assault; AND,

WHEREAS: According to a Hollaback! survey about harassment, 67% of students experience sexual harassment on campus, disrupting daily activities and interfering with their ability to benefit from education; AND,

WHEREAS: Over half of college men admitted to sexually harassing other students in a 2005 report from the AAUW; according to the same report, women and LGBTQ persons most commonly experience harassment, causing a strong negative impact on their quality of life and emotional wellbeing; AND,

WHEREAS: There is a lack of safe, survivor-friendly spaces on campus for students who have experienced sexual assault and/or domestic violence; AND,

WHEREAS: Highly publicized cases of Northeastern failing to provide adequate resources and responses to survivors of sexual assault, as detailed by the Boston Globe, Buzzfeed, and other news sources, have prompted the ongoing federal investigation of Northeastern for violating Title IX and raised concerns about the school’s ability to address sexual assault and other issues of gender equity; AND,

WHEREAS: ViSiON, the network to address sexual violence on campus, lacks a physical space, and resources for sexual assault, domestic violence, and gender discrimination are scattered around campus; AND,

WHEREAS: Ineffectiveness of existing services inhibits safe reporting, alienates victims from support services, and negates the possibility of a safe community; AND,

WHEREAS: The leading Boston-area colleges and universities including Harvard, Boston University, MIT, Tufts, and Boston College all have some sort of women’s/gender resource centers on campus with internal and accessible services for survivors of sexual assault; AND,

WHEREAS: There is no current space on Northeastern’s campus to address the unique needs of historically marginalized identities and groups including women, trans and non-binary individuals; AND,

WHEREAS: The SJRC and LGBTQA Center provide some of these resources but are focused on other issues and cannot provide all the services needed, especially regarding sexual assault and domestic violence; AND,
WHEREAS: Northeastern University is “committed to providing equal opportunity to its students and employees, and to eliminating discrimination when it occurs”, as outlined by its Policy on Rights and Responsibilities Under Title IX;

Therefore, be it resolved that:

It is the sense of the student body that Northeastern University, in keeping with both its institutional commitment to eradicating discrimination and ensuring the safety/wellbeing of its students and with federal regulations such as Title XI, should create a gender resource center on campus which would function as inclusive, safe space for persons of any and all gender identity and sexual orientation, and the purpose of which would include but not be limited to:

• offering centralized resources for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence as well as a physical location where ViSiON may be housed;
• providing a meeting space for gender-focused student groups;
• hosting programming related to gender equity and ending sexual assault, gender discrimination, and other forms of gender-based violence on campus and in the broader community;
• and advancing the intellectual growth of the student body on issues related to gender and oppression.
Increase Access to Gender Neutral Bathrooms

WHEREAS Northeastern University campus currently offers a select number of gender neutral bathrooms to faculty, staff, and the student body many buildings are not equipped with these facilities. While positive progress has been made, it is insufficient.

WHEREAS According to this map (https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=zoOYV406uVmg.koA2NpEFsmUU&msa=0), many of the gender neutral restrooms on campus are inaccessible to students without swipe access to the building, and some of the more public restrooms are not always left open.

WHEREAS The total absence of gender neutral bathrooms in many major buildings on Northeastern's main campus, and only partial access in many others, is a major issue for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals who may be uncomfortable with using cisgender/gender-binary restrooms. Because of insufficient access, for many Huskies, day to day campus life can be distressful or potentially health-compromising.

WHEREAS Northeastern is dedicated to providing an equal opportunity environment for each student, this is an issue that deserves attention and action from decision-makers in our community, as well as more visibility and support from the entire student body.

Therefore, be it resolved...

On behalf of concerned students, faculty, and staff, we the undersigned students urge the Northeastern administration to convert all, (or most, within possibility), single-stall bathrooms already available on campus that are designated as female- or male-only to be gender-neutral. This would be a low-cost, high-yield solution to show administrative dedication to the health and safety of the student body, and to improve the accessibility of indispensable facilities.
Resolution on Divestment for Peace in Occupied Palestine

WHEREAS the Northeastern University Mission Statement declares that “Our vision is to be a university that expands the meaning and impact of our engagement in the world using our knowledge and resources as positive forces for change in both our local communities and our global society.” (1)

WHEREAS “As a university where teaching and research are grounded in global engagement, Northeastern’s impact is being felt in all corners of the world.” (2)

WHEREAS Northeastern University has a history of divesting from and boycotting corporations such as Adidas (3) and countries such as Apartheid South Africa (4)

WHEREAS international humanitarian law recognizes the right of all people, including Israelis and Palestinians, to life, security(5) and self-determination (6)

WHEREAS Israel has been recognized by international law since 1967 as an occupying power in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza (7), hereafter referred to as the Occupied Palestinian Territories,

WHEREAS this resolution calls for targeted divestment from multinational corporations causing substantial social injury by violating international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, regardless of which countries contract said corporations

WHEREAS multinational corporations disproportionately conduct business in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as compared to other conflict areas (e.g. Syria or North Korea), where binding law often prevents engagement with human rights violators

WHEREAS Caterpillar provides engineering tools and bulldozers routinely used in the demolition of Palestinian homes in the West Bank and Gaza, and Caterpillar's products facilitate and profit from the expansion and construction of illegal, segregated and Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank.(8)

WHEREAS Hewlett-Packard provides biometric identification systems used at Israeli military checkpoints that can distinguish Palestinian faces from Israeli faces therefore reinforcing segregation and apartheid by designing specific technology to racially profile Palestinians. (9)

WHEREAS Raytheon is a main supplier of weaponry to the United States and Israel. Many of the missiles the were used in the massacre of over 2,000 Gazans (mostly civilian) this summer were made by Raytheon. (10)

WHEREAS Motorola Solutions profits from Israel’s control of the Palestinian population by providing surveillance systems around Israeli settlements, checkpoints, and military camps in the West Bank, as well as by providing communication systems to the Israeli Army. (11)

Therefore, be it resolved...
In accordance with international humanitarian law, human rights protocols, and the values of the Northeastern community, We ask the Northeastern trustees to divest from companies engaged in human rights violations in Palestine. We ask that Northeastern withdraws all investments that it may hold in Caterpillar, Raytheon, Motorola and Hewlett-Packard.

(1) http://www.northeastern.edu/planning/mission/
(2) http://www.northeastern.edu/
(3) http://www.boston.com/yourcampus/news/northeastern/2013/04/northeastern_ends_relationship_with_adidas_following_student_protests.html
(4) http://library.northeastern.edu/archives-special-collections/find-collections/northeastern-history/timeline/1980s
http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136
(9) https://wedivest.org/c/57/hp#.VOP9BbDF9uo
(10) http://www.mediamonitors.net/joshruenber3.html
(11) https://wedivest.org/companies