

## **Election protocol and ballot instructions for the 2005 Graduate Student Council Officer Elections**

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) will be holding its 2005 Officer elections at the General Council Meeting (GCM) to be held on April 6, 2005 in Room 6-120. GSC Representatives are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the voting procedure and the election ballot information the GCM. If there are any questions, please contact the GSC Vice President at gsc-vice-president[at]mit[dot]edu.

### **Voting Procedure for the GCM**

The GCM will begin at 5:30 pm or when quorum is met. The Vice President is charged with presiding over the elections of the GSC Officers. The election procedure is delineated in the GSC Constitution Bylaws in Article IV.E. The Vice President will appoint a member of the Graduate Student Council to act as Election Officer when the Vice President exits the room for the ballot counting. The Election Officer is charged with maintaining decorum and quorum at the GCM.

The elections will proceed starting with the office of President, followed by Vice President, Secretary, and then Treasurer. If one nominee is not elected to the office that they were nominated for, they have the option to run for the next position when that position comes up for election.

The Vice President will read the list of candidates for each position and at that time ask the candidates if they accept their nominations. It has been a traditional courtesy that if there is only one candidate nominated for a position, the nominee declines the nomination and thus opens the floor for new candidates to be added to the election roster for that position. At this time, the nominee is re-nominated and seconded by the GSC Representatives. If the nominations are refused and the floor is opened for new candidates, any new candidate nominated must be present at the GCM at the time the nomination is introduced. If a nominated candidate declines the nomination, there will be no more nominations for said candidate.

The candidates will each give a speech which shall last no more than 5 minutes. A speech shall first be given by Candidate 1, then Candidate 2, and so on until Candidate N, where the candidates are ordered alphabetically by last name and there are N candidates. If a candidate exceeds the allowed time, they will be asked to stop at 5 minutes and given no more than 15 seconds to finish their speech.

After the speeches, the candidates will answer questions from the GSC Representatives and other members of the audience. The GSC Vice President will preside over the question and answer period. The GSC Representatives are expected to conduct themselves with in a manner befitting of their position. All questions will be addressed to all candidates and will be answered in the following order: the first question will be answered first by Candidate 1, second by Candidate 2, etc.; the second question will be answered first by Candidate 2, second by Candidate 3, etc., and Candidate 1 will answer this question last. Candidates will be allowed two minutes to answer each question.

The candidates will be asked to leave the room and closed-ballot voting will take place. Voters will be asked to list the candidates in order of preference and the votes will be counted using the full preferential method. If not one candidate receives a majority of first choice votes, the candidate with the fewest first place votes will be eliminated and his/hers votes will go to the candidate that was listed as a second choice. This process will continue until a candidate receives a majority of the votes.

## **Ballot Information**

Full preferential voting information and sample ballots are included in the supplemental material section. Please read and follow instructions as any deviation from this procedure will discount your vote. Information on full preferential voting and ballots was taken from:

[http://www.eca.gov.au/systems/single/by\\_category/preferential.htm](http://www.eca.gov.au/systems/single/by_category/preferential.htm)

[http://www.seo.sa.gov.au/apps/uploadedFiles/news/88/Returning\\_Officers\\_Instruction\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.seo.sa.gov.au/apps/uploadedFiles/news/88/Returning_Officers_Instruction_Manual.pdf)

## **Voting Eligibility**

The GSC Council members constitute the eligible voting body for the GSC Officer Elections.

## **Preparation of Ballots**

Ballots shall be prepared by the GSC Vice President. The order of candidates will be alphabetical. The ballots shall include a total of 5 boxes and names / lines to write in names for the case where late candidate entries occur.

## **Method of Voting**

The method of voting is the full preferential method with 'bottoms up preferential' counting. That is, candidates with the least number of votes are excluded from the count until the number of candidates remaining in the count is 50% + 1.

## **Voting Procedures**

Candidates, who are eligible to vote, will be given one ballot on which to cast their votes. They will write in any new names added to the candidate roster. Eligible candidates will vote and turn in their ballot to the election officer. After candidates have left the room, ballots will be handed out to the voting body. At this time any new candidates who have been nominated will have her / his name on the blank lines in the ballot.

The elector will designate a top choice for a given officer position with a number '1'. Then the elector shall proceed to the next available candidate until all the candidates or all the candidates minus 1 have had a preferential number assigned to them. There will be 5 minutes allowed to fill

in the ballot. At this time the Election Officer and the Vice President will collect the ballots and the afore mentioned individuals shall leave the room for the counting of the ballots.

An elector is permitted one and only one vote.

### **Formality of Ballot**

The person filling out the ballot must show a preference for **all** candidates. There can only be one and only one blank left when filling out the ballot. If more than one blank is left, the ballot is disqualified. If an elector spoils a ballot, the elector shall contact the Vice President for a new ballot. The elector shall turn in the spoiled ballot before receiving a new ballot.

A ballot is informal if:

- It is not an official ballot from the GSC Vice President
- It is blank (has no vote indicated on it)
- Marked with an tick ( ✓ ) or a cross ( × )
- It is signed by the elector
- Does not indicate the order of the voter's preference for **all** candidates

### **Counting of the Ballots**

The Vice President shall oversee the counting of the votes. After the votes are finished the following shall remove themselves from the room to count the votes: the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and GSC Office Administrators. The Secretary shall count the votes and the GSC Administrators staff shall assist in the counting and the verification of the votes. The Treasurer will tally the votes. The final outcome will be presented to the GSC Representatives by the Vice President before the election for the next office proceeds.

Winner of the elections shall constitute a 50% + 1 vote.

### **Results of the election**

Results of the election will be presented after the election of each office. The results will also be posted on the GSC web page the evening of the elections. The GSC Representatives shall be notified of the results by e-mail.

### **Celebration of election results**

All individuals attending the Officer Election GCM are invited to attend the Muddy Charles Pub for a celebratory evening after the GCM. Old and new officers are expected to attend the celebration at the Muddy Charles Pub.

## **Supplemental Material:**

### **Full Preferential Voting Example**

[http://www.eca.gov.au/systems/single/by\\_category/preferential.htm](http://www.eca.gov.au/systems/single/by_category/preferential.htm)

## **Preferential Voting Systems**

In Australia, preferential voting systems are majority systems where candidates must receive an **absolute majority**, 50% plus 1 of the total formal votes cast to be elected.

The term "**preferential voting**" means voters can indicate an order of preferences for candidates on the ballot paper, i.e. who they want as their 1st choice, 2nd choice and so on.

### **Full preferential voting**

The elector must show a preference for **all** candidates listed on the ballot paper. In some electoral systems which use full preferential voting, the voter can leave one box empty if the voter's intention with regard to the other preferences is clear. The empty box is treated as the voter's last preference, eg: voting for the Victorian Legislative Council and Assembly.

### **Optional preferential voting**

The number "1" preference must be shown and other preferences may be indicated, eg: voting for the NSW Legislative Assembly.

### **Partial Preferential**

The elector must show a minimum number of preferences as set out on the ballot paper. eg: voting for the Tasmanian Legislative Council.

## **The Full Preferential Count**

### **On the election night.....**

Polling officials sort and count formal and informal votes. Informal votes are set aside and do not take further part in the count. The formal votes are counted according to the first preferences given by voters. This is the primary count and the results are displayed on the tally board. These are about 85% of total votes cast in an election and do not include absent, postal, or pre-poll votes (which are received and counted after election night). If no candidate receives an absolute majority, 50% plus 1 of the total first preference votes, then subsequent preferences have to be distributed. This takes place after election night once all votes have been included in the primary count.

### **Distributing preferences**

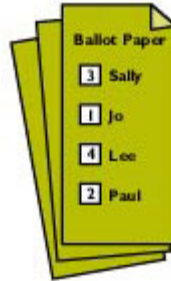
#### **First (Primary) Count**

Formal votes received by each candidate are counted according to where the voter placed number "1" for each candidate.

**In this example there are 100,000 formal votes. The absolute majority is 50% plus 1, ie 50,001 votes.**



Sally 33,000



Jo 21,000



Lee 16,000

Lee with the lowest number of first preference votes is excluded.



Paul 30,000

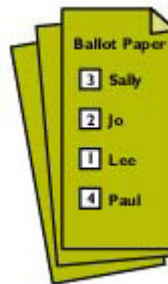
### Second Count

No candidate received an absolute majority, in the first count. So the candidate with the lowest number of first preference votes is excluded. In this case Lee has the lowest number of votes, 16,000. Those votes are distributed to the remaining candidates according to the next available preference. In this case, this is where voters placed their number "2" preference.



Sally

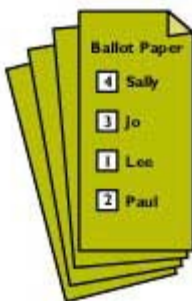
33,000  
+7,000 from Lee  
40,000



Jo

21,000  
+4,000 from Lee  
25,000

Jo with the lowest number of votes is excluded.



Paul

30,000  
+5,000 from Lee  
35,000

### Third count

Still no candidate has an absolute majority so the counting procedure continues.

Again the candidate with the lowest number of votes is excluded.

In this case Jo has the lowest number of votes, 25,000. Those votes are distributed to the remaining candidates according to where voters placed the next available preference for the candidates remaining in the count.



#### Sally

40,000  
+6,000 from Jo  
46,000

( these will include ballot papers from voters who originally voted "1" for Lee. NB ballot paper shown on top of pile).



#### Paul

35,000  
+19,000 from Jo  
54,000

( these will include ballot papers from voters who originally voted "1" for Jo. NB ballot paper shown on top of pile).

### Result

Paul is declared elected as he has a majority of votes, 54,000.

### Issued by

**Electoral Council of Australia**  
**Level 22, 2 Lonsdale Street Melbourne VIC 3000**  
**Phone: (03) 9285 7108 Facsimile: (03) 9285 7153**

The Electoral Council of Australia (ECA) is a consultative council of Electoral Commissioners and Chief Electoral Officers from the electoral authorities of the Commonwealth, States and Territories of Australia. The ECA considers issues about the development and maintenance of the electoral rolls for Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Government elections and matters of electoral administration, which have implications for Australian electoral authorities.

## Samples of formal and informal ballots

[http://www.seo.sa.gov.au/apps/uploadedFiles/news/88/Returning\\_Officers\\_Instruction\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.seo.sa.gov.au/apps/uploadedFiles/news/88/Returning_Officers_Instruction_Manual.pdf)

### EXAMPLES OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL BALLOT-PAPERS

Ballot-papers are Formal and admitted to the Count as long as the voter's intention is clear

BALLOT PAPER  
PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE  
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.....

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	GREY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	YELLOW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	BLUE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	WHITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	GREEN

**FORMAL**

BALLOT PAPER  
PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE  
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.....

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	GREY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	YELLOW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	BLUE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	WHITE
<input type="checkbox"/>		GREEN

**FORMAL**

BALLOT PAPER  
PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE  
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.....

<input type="checkbox"/>	1	GREY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	YELLOW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	BLUE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	WHITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	GREEN

**FORMAL**

BALLOT PAPER  
PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE  
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.....

<input type="checkbox"/>		GREY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		YELLOW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		BLUE
<input type="checkbox"/>		WHITE
<input type="checkbox"/>		GREEN

**INFORMAL**

BALLOT PAPER  
PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE  
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.....

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		GREY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		YELLOW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	BLUE
<input type="checkbox"/>		WHITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	GREEN

**INFORMAL**

BALLOT PAPER  
PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE  
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.....

<input type="checkbox"/>		GREY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	YELLOW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	BLUE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	WHITE
<input type="checkbox"/>		GREEN

**INFORMAL**

BALLOT PAPER  
PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE  
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.....

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	GREY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	YELLOW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	BLUE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	WHITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	GREEN

**INFORMAL**

BALLOT PAPER  
PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE  
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.....

<input type="checkbox"/>		GREY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	YELLOW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	BLUE
<input type="checkbox"/>		WHITE
<input type="checkbox"/>		GREEN

**INFORMAL**

BALLOT PAPER  
PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE  
PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.....

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		GREY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	YELLOW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	BLUE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	WHITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	GREEN

**INFORMAL**