

A Joke of an Election



■ **OUR OPINION:** *Countless errors by the Election Board made this year's election a display of incompetence*

The Primary Election this year was a farce. It was a joke. In the words of executive candidate Ryan Ositis, it was a "cataclysmic failure." Candidates broke and ignored rules. Students and candidates filed complaints that were never forwarded to the Constitution Court. The only upside remains that the Elections Board members who were around for the elections worked their asses off in an attempt to have an election. In short, almost everything that could have gone wrong with the election, did.

Rule Violations

Election rule complaints were filed against Bill Miner and Ben Unger, claiming that their posters were all over town in both illegal places and quantities.

Instead of forwarding those complaints to the Constitution Court, which is the course of action the ASUO Constitution spells out, the Elections Board decided to take action on its own.

That was not their decision to make. It is the responsibility of the Constitution Court to decide if the candidates should be fined or even disqualified. As we understand it, the Elections Board does not have the authority to make those decisions. The Elections Board disagrees. Maggie Veatch, Voter Education Coordinator, said there are two conflicting rules about what to do with complaints, and the Elections Board erred on the side of taking action themselves.

Ironically, the Elections Board claimed a lack of authority and resources as the reasons why they couldn't disqualify the Miner/Unger ticket. In the end, Miner and Unger were fined five dollars. At \$2.50 per person, that doesn't amount to much of a penalty.

Low Voter Turnout

Before the elections, the Elections Board set a goal for 20 percent of the students to vote in the election. The final turnout came embarrassingly short at a pathetic eight percent. While there are multiple reasons turnout was low, the fact that there were only five places on campus to vote didn't help.

Three of the voting booths were indoors in low-traffic areas such as the law school. In addition, the computer verification plan didn't materialize until the end of the election. The two outside booths on campus were often backed up with potential voters, discouraging other students from voting.

Computer Problems
Earlier this year, ASUO Elections Coordinator Stacey Harding and the ASUO's computer support person, Ryan Ositis, went before the Student Senate to ask for money to implement a computer verification system. The system would allow students to run their student ID through a scanner before voting to ensure everyone only votes once and to ensure that voters are enrolled University students.

Harding maintained it could be done. Ositis said it would take "an act of God" to implement.

The system was up and running by midway through the second day of elections. The first day, Dave Whipple, Elections Board publicity coordinator, said there simply weren't enough people to get the system up. However, Harding said before she left, she had set up a schedule and trained everyone to use and set up the computer system.

Stacey Harding

Harding is responsible for the ASUO elections, but she said she had a severe reaction to medication Wednesday morning. By Saturday, she said she was in the hospital. However, Harding did show up to campus Wednesday to take a test for a class.

There was no communication between her and the Elections Board. She said she tried to call the members of the board; they said they never heard from her. They said they called her repeatedly, but she said she was unconscious.

Harding said the Elections Board jumped to conclusions and took actions that were not warranted. Harding said everyone was trained on how to set up the computers, adding, "a monkey could have run the computers."

During Campus Talk on KWVA, Whipple said he was acting as though he and Maggie Veatch are the Elections Board co-coordinators. A rumor has circulated that Harding has been fired. However, Harding said she will show up to work on Tuesday to continue at her job. "I have never done anything to warrant being fired," Harding said. "I can't be fired because I have a documented medical condition. Would they fire someone if they were in a car crash?"

She said she feels quite flabbergasted by comments made by Elections Board members, and she insisted she is a dependable person.

The Bottom Line

The elections have been both amusing and frustrating from the start. It will be interesting to see the fallout from all the in-fighting and miscommunication. If nothing else, the Elections Board has a lot of mistakes to learn from for the next election.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

Correction

In the April 18th *ODE*, it was incorrectly reported that the computer system used in voting did not work due to computer errors. There are actually two computer systems, one for verifying enrollment and another for counting ballots. The counting system did not work on the computer it was supposed to, but instead worked on an older computer. The verification system did work but was not utilized until the second day because there weren't enough people to set it up.

The Emerald regrets the error.

LETTERS

SETA lies

Allow me to challenge the students at the University of Oregon to vote down a student fee increase for a change.

During this spring's election season, Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals will request approximately \$5,000 from us so that they might educate us about animal research.

Careful examination of SETA's disseminated information and one conversation with a pamphleteer have left me no choice but to conclude that there is a disturbing amount of ignorance behind their actions and "educational" campaigns. One member informed me

that HIV cannot infect any species other than *Homo sapiens*. However, HIV did not even originate in the human species.

Animal research is conducted as much as possible on animals which either aren't capable of suffering in any human sense (such as zebrafish) or are made to suffer as little as possible. The primate research featured on much of SETA's literature and posters is rare.

The research performed is indeed not directly leading to any cure, but that may be a deceptive statement. One cannot attempt to design a drug or gene therapy to cure a disease that is not fully understood.

In the case of Alzheimer's disease, for example, the symptoms are painfully obvious, but that does not mean that we therefore know how it is caused or how to treat it effectively.

SETA does not deserve our money, nor the title of "educator," when it cannot educate its own membership. Rather than being educators, SETA members do no more than dispense outright misinformation and flashlight-under-the-chin ghost stories. Let them say what they want, but not with our money backing their shenanigans up.

Trevor Miller
Biology

Letters policy

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be typed, double spaced and include the author's name, signature, and phone number. The identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

Letters must be limited to 250 words or less. The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar or style.