Student Council Byelaw 5 – Elections

The elections this year created mixed results in terms of candidates standing for various positions and in terms of the number of votes cast .

Student Council decided at the last meeting to have the by- elections in October 2015 rather than immediately (march 2015) and I proposed that I would bring forward a number of options for student councillors to discuss and come to some sort of decision on.

1. Proposal 1

**Fulltime and part-time officer elections should take place together at a period before the end of semester 2 when as many students as possible are in attendance at the university.**

This is more or less the status quo except that the Elections Committee Chair (president for 2015/16) should work with the university departments to not only try to have the voting when education and nursing students are “less likely” to be on placement. In addition to official placements there are also “Reading weeks” in some institutes or departments that are simply not on the calendar and we tend not to find out about them until during the voting. We also need to leave enough time before to encourage students to stand and enough time at the end to ensure adequate voting periods. There seems a very slim chance that there is a period between Christmas and Easter when all the students are actually in university for a week but we should not be afraid to alter the dates (perhaps after Easter, except this is close to hand-in for third year students, or in January which may not give students enough time to decide what they want to do with their lives once they have finished their course). In this scenario the advertising of elections would commence during freshers week as we explain to students why their SU is important and why they should stand or vote.

1. Proposal 2

**The Full time officer and part time officer elections take place as above with bye elections taking place immediately after the main elections**

1. Proposal 3

**The full time elections take place in semester 2 but the part time elections do not take place until early October.**

The recent council meeting discussion suggested that this might be a possibility and be used not only as way to increase first year participation but also highlight the democracy of the SU as a tool to interest potential candidates for the full time positions in semester 2.

1. Proposal 4

**The full time elections and part time elections are split with the part time elections taking place immediately after the full time elections.**

There is anecdotal data which suggests that students get more fired up during the campaigns and voting and often don’t realise that they could have stood for part time positions. If we formally split the full time and part time will we get more uptake for the part time positions? What happens if we need a by election for a full time position?

With any thoughts of when the part time officers are elected there always a number of pros and cons. I have tried here to ask questions which council may wish to consider

1. If we elect the part time officers in March, can they not start immediately?
2. How effective are the part time officers during the summer when they do not take up their posts until June, when basically everyone has gone home and don’t come back until September?
3. Is there an advantage to starting the PT officers in March so they can start their plans before the summer break?
4. How does this work considering we have just (and will in October) elect our PT officers? *The answer to this is interesting. Either the newly elected officers agree to stand down in march2016 or this will not take place until March 2017 after council have declared that next years elected PT officers are only from June (2016)until March(2017)*
5. If we elect in October and the students take up office immediately where will that leave us in June when some of those student officers will potentially have left? Do we not let 3rd years stand?

The questions are probably endless but councillors are being asked to find the best of a difficult world rather than the ideal solution which most likely does not exist.

What if we also attempted to elect councillors in early October?

Would the next step be the mass election of course reps? Do we have the resources for this?