Staff Guidance on Elections

This guidance applies between the close of standing and the close of voting: 5pm Thursday 27th Feb to 3pm Thursday 20th March.

**Returning Officer system**

The Elections are governed by a different structure than the usual line-management system. The full system is set out in the Bye-Law on Elections, which was last updated and approved by the Trustee Board in February 2014.

The elections are overseen by the Returning Officer who has overall responsibility for their conduct and ensuring that they are free and fair. Our Returning Officer this year is Emma Powell from NUS. The Returning Officer has the final say on all matters relating to the elections and cannot be over-ruled by any individual inside the organisation, including by Exec Members.

The Voice Department are assisting the Returning Officer throughout the elections and if you have any queries about this or believe you need to contact the Returning Officer, please speak to Trish McGrath or Charles Barry.

**Neutrality**

All staff are expected to be neutral in the elections, except for Exec Team members and student staff, who may support and campaign for candidates **in their spare time**.

The expectation of neutrality means you should not do anything which would call into question your impartiality in the elections, and you should be even-handed in dealing with any candidates you may interact with during the elections period.

It is essential that Staff ensure that Students’ Union resources are not used to support any particular candidate in an unfair or partisan manner; for example, making use of free colour printing from office printers.

**Communications**

Particular care needs to be taken for promotion and publicity relating to announcements or campaigns which could have a bearing on matters relevant to the elections. This extends to any communications platforms operated by members of staff in an official capacity on behalf of the Students’ Union.

If any promotional material or publicity you have produced features candidates in the elections, please ensure you have checked this with Trish McGrath, as this may need to be approved by the Returning Officer.

A list of candidates can be found on the Students’ Union website (please note this includes current Exec Team members): <http://www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/elections/candidates>

**Officer involvement**

The Exec Team are the elected Officers of the Students’ Union and are expected to act as political leaders of the organisation. However as employed staff they are also expected to carry out their normal duties during the elections period in a neutral manner.

Like other students, the Exec Team are allowed to campaign for candidates and voice opinions on the merits and demerits of candidates and their policies. However this can only be done outside usual working hours or if an Exec member has taken annual leave.

For the purposes of the elections, all Officers should be treated like any other student. Information relating to the elections that has not been disclosed publicly should not be shared with the Exec Team.

The Exec Team will not be in the Voice Office on the Ground Floor for voting week (14th to 20th March).

**Candidate Liaisons**

The Voice Team have split up the various contested positions as in the table below. Each person is responsible for being the first point of contact for all candidates for these positions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Secretary | Ed Yates |
| Women’s Officer | Fran Muscatelli |
| Education Officer | Fran Muscatelli |
| Diversity Officer | Charles Barry |
| Wellbeing Officer | Rachael Magowan |
| Activities and Development Officer | Sophia Wigley |
| Community Officer | Charlotte Raynes |
| Campaigns and Citizenship Officer | Kadija Ollow |

If you have a quick question relating to any of these positions, or you want to pass something on informally, you may find it easier to contact these Staff members directly.

**Complaints**

Complaints about the elections process can only be accepted using our online form, which can be found here: <http://www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/elections/complaints>

If you are approached by any student or you receive a complaint about the elections through any means, please ask that student or other person to ensure they complete the online form, as we cannot accept complaints submitted in any other manner.

**Results**

Results will be released (pending any appeals) from 9pm on Thursday 20th March, once the Returning Officer has certified the result. There will be a results night event in Club Academy that evening.