

## GUIDELINES ON ELECTRONIC VOTING

4/11/16

The Faculty Code does not currently specify a policy clearly nor have written procedures. However, our guidelines follow Robert's Rules of Order procedures addressed therein under "abstentee voting/mail votes, etc.". Here are some of the suggestions I can provide, as well as the procedures our office uses:

\*The bylaws should include a statement allowing electronic voting & when electronic voting may occur (v. in-meeting voting)

\*Openness: raising hands, etc. in a meeting is "open", paper ballots or mailed ballots or Catalyst votes are not "open" in the same way but should be subject to verification or audit

\*A vote should not be a mix of "in-person" and "electronic" voting. That is, everyone votes with same format, the same question, the same timeline.

\*The ballot should clearly state the motion, the deadline for receipt of ballots, the instructions for voting. It should also contain a summary of information to aid voters (eg. pros/cons, rationale, etc.) that may summarize the discussion or issues that have taken place.

\*all voters must have access to the voting process (eg. computer, software program being used)

\*the process should be simple to carry out, especially for an unsophisticated computer user

\*the tellers should be trustworthy and not have a personal stake/conflict of interest with the outcome (eg. faculty vote should not be counted by a dept chair or dean ..it would be delivered to them by the tellers

\* Essential characteristics for electronic voting:

1) Ability to assure that only eligible voters are allowed/able to vote

- use of specific password & login security)

-current roster of eligible voters

-reasonable and announced period (eg. 2 weeks) for voting that is fairly consistent across all voting if not specified in procedures; send reminder before voting period closes

2) Anonymity v. confidentiality – if #1 is met, the vote can't be anonymous. However, it can be kept confidential by limiting the access to the identity of voters to a trusted source(s). For example, for Senate elections we use Catalyst and only the Secretary of the Faculty & her assistant have access to the identities of voters and have confidentiality as part of their job description..you could ask the 'tellers' to sign a confidentiality agreement if this is a concern.

3) Actual voting setup issues (Catalyst allows this): a voter can change his own vote before it is cast/"sent"; once "sent", neither the voter nor anyone else can change the vote; a person can't vote more than once.

4) Documentation, Verification & Auditable – method to assure that a cast vote is really counted, and can be recounted, if necessary; who voted, and who didn't, as a public record; the voter can discover if his vote has been changed (or miscounted) and fix it without destroying the secrecy of the ballot.

5) Final vote is verified and certified by 2 people (eg. our votes are certified by the Secretary of the Faculty & the Senate Chair) & reported in writing to the voters/official in charge

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