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EGC PRESS RELEASE

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Yesterday at 8:52 am the CRO was made aware of issues with the Science Ballot for Faculty President and Councillors, and worked quickly to rectify the situation with the voting platform (Simply Voting) and the technological back-end. To better understand the issue at hand we requested information from students including emails and names in order to determine the source of this error. Determining how this error occurred, is crucial to ensuring an accurate ballot.

By 10:30 am we had identified an error with the science ballot that 3rd and 4th year Medical Science students were unable to vote for Science Faculty President and Faculty Councillor. By 11:30 am the issue had been resolved and any student who had not already voted after that time, had (and continues to have) access to all appropriate ballot options. While the situation was being resolved, we identified that a maximum of 607 students could have been affected by this technological error however 78 students voted using the incorrect ballot.

The distinction between who is, and who is not, eligible to vote under the Faculty of Science has been consistent in our elections for many years and is guided by the Registrar's office. We worked with the Registrar's office this afternoon to confirm which programs within the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry are eligible to vote, as per graduation requirements, which is in-line with By-Law 2, Section 8.2.4 -- which indicates voter eligibility. This is not a new system change, nor is it an attempt to discourage students to vote. It is in our best interest, as the EGC to ensure that voter engagement and turn out is high; any statement that indicates otherwise is inaccurate assessment of our bylaws and democratic procedures.

The election software we use is rigid in its ability to change a ballot for a reason. The system ensures that individual people who are in charge of running an election cannot influence its outcome by producing favourable results for one particular party. Given these circumstances, it would not be in the best interest of democracy to open up the entire ballot to permit students to change each of their votes for each race within the Faculty of Science. We understand why students are putting pressure in support of a re-vote. However, the solution that will ensure a fair election is to permit the 607 potentially affected students to vote for the positions they were originally unable to.

For this reason, the CRO has made the decision to create a special ballot for those students so they can vote and ensure their votes are counted when electing the new leadership in the Science Faculty. The affected 607 students should have received an email earlier today. Students were given the opportunity to respond to

the email by tomorrow February 6th at 12:30 p.m. in order to be eligible to vote in the special ballot. The special ballot will then be occurring on Thursday February 7th from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. The special ballot will only include the Science Faculty President and Faculty Councillor questions.

If there are any remaining, unidentified issues with the Science Ballot students must email cro.intern@westernusc.ca and gpimlatt@westernusc.ca including their Western University Email and their name as registered with the University. This will allow the EGC, and our technological support to truly understand and solve an issue relating to balloting.

Sincerely,

Michelle Wang
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