



## ELECTIONS BOARD AGENDA

Associated Students

1/15/21, 2:00 PM

Zoom

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**CALL TO ORDER by Andrew Yan at 2:00 PM**

### **A. ROLL CALL**

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Note:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Note:</b>
Andrew Yan <i>Chair</i>	<b>Present</b>	Ruth Garcia Guevara <i>Advisor</i>	<b>Present</b>
Wessal Esber <i>Vice Chair</i>	<b>Present</b>	Diana Collins Puente <i>Advisor</i>	
Emma Xing	<b>Absent (Excused)</b>	Ahura Nezhad <i>Senate Liaison</i>	<b>Absent</b>
Shannon Hollingsworth	<b>Present</b>	Dylan Martinez <i>Senate Liaison</i>	<b>Absent</b>
Austin Foreman	<b>Present</b>		
Lauren Sullivan	<b>Present (Departed at 3pm)</b>		
Daniel Ong	<b>Present</b>		

**Icebreaker:**

### **B. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

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#### **B.1. Opening**

Andrew: Hey everyone, I wanted to quickly debrief everyone on the results show. A few of us were there. But it went smoothly, a few tech issues with initial link setup but it was all solved in time.

Andrew: The first thing I wanted to mention was the resolution in AS that allows for extra honoraria. It applies retroactively to Fall.

**Motion to reallocate \$2,300 from the advertising line item to honoraria**

*First/Second: Foreman/Esber*

Vote: 5-0 to APPROVE, no abstentions

Wessal: Because we are running down to the wire on the elections code (we need to have it done next week), our next meeting will be a (2 hour) retreat. If you have a conflict totally let Andrew know but we will be doing food again. We do need to pass \$270 from the special projects line item (\$30 each).

**Motion to allocate \$270 from the special projects line item for the elections code retreat (Slack)**

*First/Second: Esber/Foreman*

Vote: 5-0 to APPROVE, no abstentions

**B.2. Spring Election**

Andrew: So we got an email earlier this week about party formation for the Spring election.

Wessal: Let's talk about the political party idea.

Andrew: Ok, just to debrief everyone again because 1 or 2 of us weren't at the last meeting. We had a speaker last week who talked about the idea of banning political parties in AS. The main issue the speaker brought up was the issue of toxicity between the parties and the fact that the party discourse isn't always the best.

Austin: I can also speak to this from running with a party. There is a history between the two groups of little things that sometimes escalate or internally it escalates into something bigger. It does kind of breed toxicity. But when people actually come to Senate, half of the Senate is one party and half of the Senate is another party, we still get everything done basically unanimously. There really isn't much one party only goes for one idea and one party goes for another idea, basically like Ciara said, the parties that don't necessarily have a consistent platform. The platforms that students on overlap between the two parties, both parties support student issues, they represent student issues. There's so much overlap, divestment is one of the actual polarizing issue with both sides having strong opinions. They don't exist after the Election is over, they kind of do because the people know each other and are more likely to work with each other, but the existence of parties also made that someone from Party A got their second author to run for Party B. It makes it look like there's no parties at the Senate table but people still remember the parties when you see a name from both it looks more unanimous.

Austin: If we just didn't allow it from our end because we are the backend of the student election.

There is that power, if the whole board is comfortable just saying no political parties.

Ruth: I just wanted to speak on the history of the political parties. They have not existed always, For example, Aaron Jones the president of EOP. He ran and he became President when there were no parties as well. There were coalitions. Elections Board never creates the parties, we never created the parties. It's the student body who decides that's how they kind of wanted to run things. Over the years, Elections Board has put in some policies or quotes to kind of help with that situation, but for the most part is they have been hands off. I have many thoughts on this, but one of the questions I had, if you do get rid of political parties, what are some things Elections Board can do or someone can do, to help with the toxicity over this time. Because Austin, you're saying it only happens during this time and then there's no more, depending on what comes up in Senate.

Ruth: On the presentation, one of the points that was brought up was the laptopping at UCR. I think Ciara was saying that after laptopping, they dropped parties. The interesting thing is we went through that exact same issue on our end. It was interesting because they (UCR) were reading about what we were doing at our school. It was also interesting Andrew that you brought up the numbers, and is it attributable to banning of the parties that the turnout numbers dropped. One thing to think about going back to the turnout, we have highest turnout in the UCs.

Andrew: To provide context on that because some people weren't here last week, we talked about UCR turnout and how their turnout fell from the 30's in the few years before 2017 to 14% last year since they banned political parties and lapping.

Andrew: Never mind, it was actually 11% not 14%.

Wessal: I think it's important to have the voices of the student body heard. For me turnout is a really important thing because it raises awareness, it gives people an opportunity to speak and cast their vote. I honestly think that when looking at that year, comparing us to UCR, we both stopped lapping the same exact year but they took out their political parties as well. Their turnout is now 11% and our turnout wasn't affected by the change.

Wessal: Also, I think COVID and making everything remote is making it less toxic in people having to think before they post. I do think we're going to see a change in how political parties are being run because people are getting used to that it's remote. I think that's how society works in general post-COVID.

Andrew: Another thing we keep talking about is the fact that UCSB has the highest rate of student participation in the UC when it comes to elections. I'm wondering how much of that participation is due to the parties.

Wessal: I definitely don't think we should ban political parties because it does provide competition. You could look at it both ways, we get 2 slates of candidates, maybe 3 because there might be a 3<sup>rd</sup> political party. I don't think we should ban them because I think the overall benefit is better than the cost.

Daniel: I'm also a bit conflicted on this. On one hand, the party divide seems pretty meaningless on behalf of policy. But each party has campaign managers and those managers do promote their candidates a lot, through door knocking and tabling and stuff. So by getting rid of political parties we are going to reduce some sort of turnout. I would be ok with banning them but I would be worried with how much turnout will be reduced because of that.

Shannon: I just wanted to say that I really liked Ciara's presentation. It really swayed me to remove political parties. I think Wessal brought up a really good point. I personally am really against political parties in the US as a whole, but because there is a lot of overlap on their stances, I think if we should consider overlap it honestly might be ok for them to exist at UCSB. There's no large division between them except social reasons, but issue wise they're fairly similar.

Austin: But one thing about being in political parties, sometimes they pick candidates, they are a group of people who are in AS or people who are in AS or who are in AS. They're all members who have participated in AS to some degree. Some of them may not be elected officials but the leadership of the political parties have been members of Associated Students. One thing they really do is they recruit a ton of first and second years. I got recruited when I was a first year from Campus United. They just found me, literally, it was completely by accident, but they found me and they do a lot of recruitment from people and they have their own application process where they decide a slate. Sometimes they pick candidates who have good social circles that are going to win. I saw some people who got elected and did the bare minimum, or not even the bare minimum of their responsibilities and duties. But they got elected because they ran decently well. Running to win is not the best approach, but the parties are normally that way.

Austin: Also, I do agree with Wessal in the pros outweigh the cons. The parties do some groundwork that if they weren't there the Elections Board has to take on. There is a single point of contact between Elections Board and the parties and they disseminate that to all of the parties, they do a lot of promotional work, networking, and people they know. If we do decide to get rid of them I think Elections Board is going to have to plan out more on how to get a decent chunk to candidates.

Andrew: One thing no one has mentioned yet today, there's been discussion about how political parties breed toxicity, but another issue that was brought up earlier was inequity and greater student access in the AS political system. I think what was said is that some parties appear to be dominated by Greek life. I've been thinking about it and here's my belief: I believe that getting rid of political parties will increase inequity rather than solve the problem. Austin, did you say that you were recruited for office as a first year?

Austin: Yes.

Andrew: Did you know anyone in AS before you ran?

Austin: No.

Andrew: There we go. There's been all this talk about Greek life, but the truth is even if we ban political parties, people that already have groups of AS friends will still run together. That includes Greek life, and we will still see those "coalitions" that Ruth mentioned. Except the difference is that most students, like Austin, will now be left out of those groups and the support system that comes with it. I think getting rid of parties is something that is good in theory but bad in practice.

Shannon: My issue isn't the parties but maybe the two party system. But maybe the party that is being created would change things.

Austin: Shannon you brought it home. The problem is two parties because they're just butting heads. The parties are two, when there's two they focus on each other, but when it's three it's different. It's a triangle. They're not going to go for both, that's just a waste of their time. I think 3 party system really makes the parties focus more on themselves. I'm not sure how we can make there always be three parties because there has to be someone making the parties.

Andrew: I'm glad you brought that up. On the issue of focusing on themselves, I think this year we can tell the parties to write a mission statement which we would then post on our website, sort of like how we post the candidate statements. This actually isn't something new, it's already in Legal Code so we wouldn't even have to make a code change for this. We just haven't emphasized the mission statement in the past.

Ruth: It's on the backend so the liaisons put in their mission statements but it's not public.

Andrew: Exactly, I didn't even know that the mission statements existed.

Wessal: I do think it is a great idea, Andrew, especially if they already put things about the party's mission statement.

Shannon: I just think it's a good idea, to I don't think demand, but to expect more from these parties. Part of that could be having a mission statement. Maybe more than two parties could also encourage this.

Andrew: Also, the mission statement would help solve one of the problems but this wouldn't do much for the toxicity issue. One thing that I just thought of: does this school have some kind of training that we could utilize?

Ruth: I think that is a great idea Andrew. That was why the candidate meetings were being extended in past years. It doesn't have to be necessarily at the Declaration of Candidacy meeting. We could make it a requirement that they must attend a workshop. This was an idea that kind of has been floating around with staff as well, but kind of mandate several things to the candidates. But once elected, they have to do XYZ. But before, here are some things you have to do beforehand.

Austin: I know that for senators, after we were elected, the execs went to this too, we did do a thing with the National Conflict Resolution Center. Marisela knows someone there. I thought it was really good, especially if they would be willing to tailor it to running in an election and running against

other people. I don't know, because an election in my mind, you're running to represent your values and support your constituency, instead of running against someone.

Lauren: I think that's a really good idea.

Andrew: It's an amazing idea. I didn't know that AS already has something like this. We could require this before the election.

Austin: Something like a recorded, course kind of thing would be cool. I also like live, interacting, but that's when it's in-person. The AS event was shortly after being elected and we were working with people from the other party on this topic. So it would be cool to do it before the meeting with all the parties and other topics, if all the people are interacting and working together. The individuals at this center know all of this and they have it down.

Ruth: What organization is it again?

Austin: National Conflict Resolution Center.

Ruth: I really like this idea. I am asking Holly about it. I'll get info and pass it along.

Andrew: We can work out the logistics later. I think we're all on board with this.

Austin: Yes, and I think it's wrong to say, the parties are what's causing the toxicity, so let's get rid of the parties. Ultimately it might not even be the institution of the party, it could just be a few people in the party.

Ruth: Also Austin, you are all adults. Everyone running in the election are adults. In the real world politicians aren't always the greatest examples but we are emulating the real world with AS.

Austin: The parties do a lot of good things. A lot of the pros outweigh the cons, the pros include meeting people, networking with people, getting people involved, younger people, for instance first and second years. People who run and don't win still keep their connections and will get to work in BCUs, and exec offices. I think there's so much good that the parties do that trying to get rid of the main con is a better strategy before completely eliminating parties.

### **Motion to allow party registration on January 19<sup>th</sup> for the 2021 Spring Election**

*First/Second: Foreman/Hollingsworth*

Vote: 4-0 to APPROVE, no abstentions

Shannon: Do you guys think we should reach out to Ciara to update her. I can write an email later.

Austin: Yes, we are going to focus on eliminating the toxicity.

Shannon: We can update again when we have plans with the National Conflict Resolution Center. We plan to do this to help combat the issues that she brought up.

**MEETING ADJOURNED by Andrew Yan at 3:12 PM**