



2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OAKLAND, JANUARY 11 - 13

AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATION

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**THE NEXT ERA OF AUXILIARIES  
SHAPING TOMORROW**

# DIY Democracy:

## How We Brought Student Government Elections In-House



PRESENTED BY  
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Cal State Student Association



# Presenter Introductions



**Odalys Zamora, M.S.**

She/Her/Ella

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**Joe Nino, M.S.**

He/Him/His

Executive Director, CSSA



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# 3 Question Poll

DIY Democracy



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# 3 Question Poll

Quick Glance of Responses

# Elections at CSULB

## State of the Elections Process

### **Ballot**

- Third-Party vendor
- Two ballots per student (at-large positions, college specific)
- Candidate photos

### **Elections Handbook/Code**

- Adopted and approved by Judiciary
- Violation hearing - handled by Judiciary

### **Voting**

- Positions voted on individually
- Run-off Elections the week following general Elections

# Elections at CSULB

## Challenges Faced

### Third-Party Vendor

- Service cost & training (\$7000+)
- Potential FERPA issues
- Ballot spam mail issues
- Delayed access to results

### Voting

- Lower voter turnout
- Two separate ballots (major-based positions and all-student based positions)
- Run-off elections needed
  - Lower voter turnout

# Elections at CSULB

## Solution Exploration

### Assessing the need for change

- Looking for something
  - Cost effective
  - Adaptable
  - User friendly (back-end)
  - Voter friendly (Front-end)
- In-house vs external
- Challenges faced

# Qualtrics

## Establishing a New Ballot Platform

### Creating The Team

- Campus IT
- ASI Communications/Marketing Team
- Enrollment Services
- Qualtrics Campus Support
- CSU San Marcos – ballot foundation donation



qualtrics<sup>XM</sup>

# Qualtrics

## Establishing a New Ballot Platform

### Building the Ballot Major Considerations

- Duplicate Testing
- Fraud
- Receiving corresponding ballot
- Access the ballot
  - Individualized link vs universal link
  - Distribution List
- Distribution List (Matriculated Students)
- SSO Authentication

### Testing the Ballot

- Small sample size (internal ASI staff)
- Attempting to "break the ballot"



# New Wave Elections

## Other Elections Changes

- **Slates**
  - Defining slates in handbook
  - Slate registration form
- **Ballot**
  - Rank choice voting
  - Instant run-off
  - Removed ballot photos
- **Events**
  - Elections Kickoff Event

# New Wave Elections

## Other Elections Changes

- **Government Elections Officer**

- Scholarship-based leadership position to paid student assistant

- **Conduct Process**

- Reformed conduct process in Elections Handbook
- Included Dean of Students/Director of Conduct in process
  - Violation conference

- **Creative Marketing**

- Social media competitions
- Creation of voter guide

# New Wave Elections

## Strengths

- **Overall Strengths**

- Increased voter turnout
- Increased access to ballot
- Decrease in ballot bias (photos)
- Instant run-offs
- Cost Savings --> repurposed into programs and voter incentives
  - Ex.) Canopy for student org social media competition

# Elections Reflection

## How to Apply to Your Campus

- **Reflect**

- What operational challenges do you face with your current elections system?
- Which campus partners could you collaborate with to make an internal election system successful?
- If you could find elections cost savings of 50%, how would you reinvest those funds into your elections process?

# What's Next?

## Other considerations

### **Areas for community brainstorming**

- Engagement
  - Increase candidate pool
  - Increase voter turnout
- Approved/Prohibited Campaign Activities
- Violation handling process
- Sanctions
- Campaign Finance/Endorsements

# Questions? THANK YOU!



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