

May 2010

Proposal for “Discussion Sections” at Elections

Note: Please read the entire proposal before passing any judgments.

Format

- The chapter advisor(s) and/or Section Rep will moderate discussion.
- Discussion for a position occurs after all candidates complete their speeches and Q&A sessions.
- Discussion will only occur for the office of President, Service VP, Membership VP, Fellowship VP, Finance VP, and Pledge Parent
- Candidates will be asked to leave the room.
- Total discussion time allowed per position will depend on the number of candidates for that position. Time allowances are as follows:
 - Max 5 minutes allowed if there are only one (1) or two (2) candidates
 - Max 8 minutes allowed for three (3) or more candidates
- Discussion time per person will be limited to 30 seconds max per person.
- One person can speak a maximum of 2 times per position.
 - E.g. You can only speak twice for the Membership VP discussion.
- A person can only speak once acknowledged by the moderator.

Comment [AB1]: Allows for the most impartial moderation available.

Comment [AB2]: People have been on the fence on this issue. Some suggest candidates should be allowed in, others like myself prefer the candidates be outside. My reasoning: if candidates are in the room, this is no more than a glorified Q&A session as they will just try to defend themselves and take up other people's speaking time. It's extremely unlikely people will say what they honestly feel if the candidate is in the room. While comments shouldn't be repeated outside the room, most people note they inevitably will be. Concern that the candidates might hear about people's comments later should be good incentive for people to keep comments *constructive* and directed to better the chapter.

Comment [AB3]: It was suggested that if there are more candidates, there may be more to talk about. Discussion can't drag on forever though, so a maximum limit is necessary. If no one speaks, discussion will end.

Comment [AB4]: We can't have one person talk for 4 minutes. It would be massively biased and unfair.

Comment [AB5]: We should avoid individuals monopolizing the discussion and encourage different people to speak their mind.

Comment [AB6]: I liked the concept of doing filtered comments in theory, but logistically, this will take an extremely long time and people will inevitably speak their mind regardless. Thinking of a question, writing down or texting those questions, and having the moderator evaluate each question will take a seriously long time. Speaking is best, especially given the other safeguards against bad commentary that are in this proposal.

Comment [AB7]: A common concern is that the person will have said their inappropriate comment anyway so what's the point? The answer is that these rules make a disincentive for making unsupported, irrelevant points to begin with. If they don't support the point and the moderator tells the chapter to strike the comment, people will see it as a signal that the comment has no substance behind it. Knowing this, it's pretty unlikely people will make these kinds of comments.

Comment [AB8]: I think we can trust our advisors' collective judgment as to the difference between a reasoned argument and a mere insult.

Comment [AB9]: Same as at meetings, address the "chair". This helps cut down on personal attacks and keeps discussion on track.

Discussion Content

- Any comments made by a speaker must be relevant to the candidates' qualification for the position, and must be supported with evidence/reasoning.
- If no reasoning is offered for a comment or a comment's relevance is unclear, the moderator will request clarification. If no clarification is offered, the moderator will instruct the chapter to strike that comment.
- If irrelevant inflammatory comments are made, a speaker may not be selected to speak again for the remainder of the election. Comments are designated as “inflammatory” at the moderator's discretion.
- A speaker may not advance a candidate's speech or refer to a candidate's ideas if the ideas were not mentioned in their speech.
- All comments must be addressed only to the moderator.