RESOLUTION

To outline common-sense SGA elections reform measures to foster meritocracy in the SGA elections process along with a fair and accurate representation of the will of the entire student body.

Sponsored by: Senators Caldwell
First Reading: 09/08/2014
Referred to: Rules and Judiciary Committee
Second Reading:

Resolved,

SECTION 1. ELECTION REFORM MEASURES.

WHEREAS, the 2014 SGA elections process was mismanaged and unorganized; lost voter turnout from the previous election; did nothing campaign-related for Senate candidates; sanctioned tickets inequitably and without a clearly defined set of standards; created a faulty ballot; and was the subject of an official election appeal; and,

WHEREAS, fair, transparent, and accountable reform measures can remedy recurring and/or potential problems for future elections, candidates, and voters; and,

WHEREAS, the SGA Undergraduate Senate shall be the supreme authority over all Election Laws as specified in Article IX, Section A., Subsection 4 as outlined in the East Carolina University Student Government Association Constitution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the SGA Undergraduate Senate believes the following measures will greatly improve the SGA elections process:

(a) Final SGA elections decision-making rests with the Elections Committee, consisting of no less than ten students and no more than twenty students. The Chairperson cannot act unilaterally or without the approval of two-thirds of the Elections Committee. The SGA advisor tasked with overseeing the elections process shall act only in an advisory role;
(b) A tier-level sanctioning system shall be developed and utilized by the Elections Committee. For example, lesser campaign violations, such as early campaigning, shall be designated to a lower tier which corresponds with a point value. Higher campaign violations, such as bribery, shall be designated to the highest tier which corresponds with a point value. Once the maximal point value is exceeded, as determined by the Elections Committee, for a candidate or ticket, they will be placed under immediate campaign suspension and ultimately expelled if appeals are exhausted. The Undergraduate Senate shall vote to approve the tier-level sanctioning system once it is developed by the Elections Committee;

(c) Sanction hearings shall be conducted with at least three-fifths of Elections Committee members present. All sanctions given by the Elections Committee, in accordance with the tier-level sanctioning system, must be voted upon by all members of the Elections Committee;

(d) Organization members utilized for campaign purposes during the elections process, regardless of actual campaign coordination, as part of a requirement for the organization is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, having to go door-to-door with laptops, calling/texting everyone in their phone to instruct them to vote for a candidate and/or ticket, and being explicitly or implicitly instructed to partake on the behalf of any candidate(s) or ticket(s) involved with the SGA election process as part of a requirement for the organization(s). Upon duly documented notification to the Elections Committee or witnesses to the fact that organization members were used for campaigning purposes, the candidate(s) and/or ticket(s) that benefitted from such acts will be placed under immediate campaign suspension while the violation is reviewed and given a proper sanction and points under the highest tier-level;

(e) Election rule clarifications after the official rules have been released, deemed appropriate or necessary by a two-thirds majority of the Elections Committee, shall be dispensed to all candidates without hesitation immediately after the decision is made;

(f) Elections Committee members and university officials should investigate suitable alternative voting platforms in the place of OneStop which shall still allow all students to take part in the election;

(g) Voting stations will be set up every day of voting for at least five hours with at least two Elections Committee members facilitating the process. 200-word platform summaries, provided upon submission by each candidate/ticket, will be available on the voting table in clear view of voters;
(h) The ballot will have clear instructions for each section. Voting instructions, the respective office, names of candidates running for the respective office, ticket numbers for executive candidates (if applicable), and, if provided, a 200-word synopsis of their individual platform initiatives is all that shall be displayed for each elected office. Names of candidates on the ballot shall be decided by random order, in a process made known to each candidate. In conjunction with ballots used in elections across the country, no pictures of candidates will be displayed on the ballot;

(i) Only students designated as majors within a respective college may vote for Senators running to represent the respective college. To remedy students voting for candidates from colleges that are not their own, drop-down boxes requiring voters to select their college before they can vote, and then the corresponding ballot to follow, is a possible idea;

(j) Students can choose to not vote for every single office listed on their ballot and still have their ballot successfully submitted toward the final vote tally;

(k) Executive candidates that choose to run together as a ticket shall have their ticket number displayed by their name, regardless of other executive candidates who are not running on a ticket;

(l) Candidates and tickets shall have the right to request Elections Committee meeting minutes and official evidence used for possible sanctioning;

(m) The Final Elections Report shall contain written statements from each candidate/ticket willing to submit a written statement as part of the final election record to detail their personal experiences and future recommendations for posterity;

(n) The Final Elections Report shall be made available to all students online or via listserv as well as made available to student media; and, be it further

**RESOLVED,** upon passage of this resolution, a copy shall be given to the Elections Committee Chairperson, Elections Committee Vice-Chairperson, members of the Elections Committee, and members of the Judicial Branch.

**SECTION 2. DATE EFFECTIVE.**

This Resolution shall be effective upon passage by the Senate.