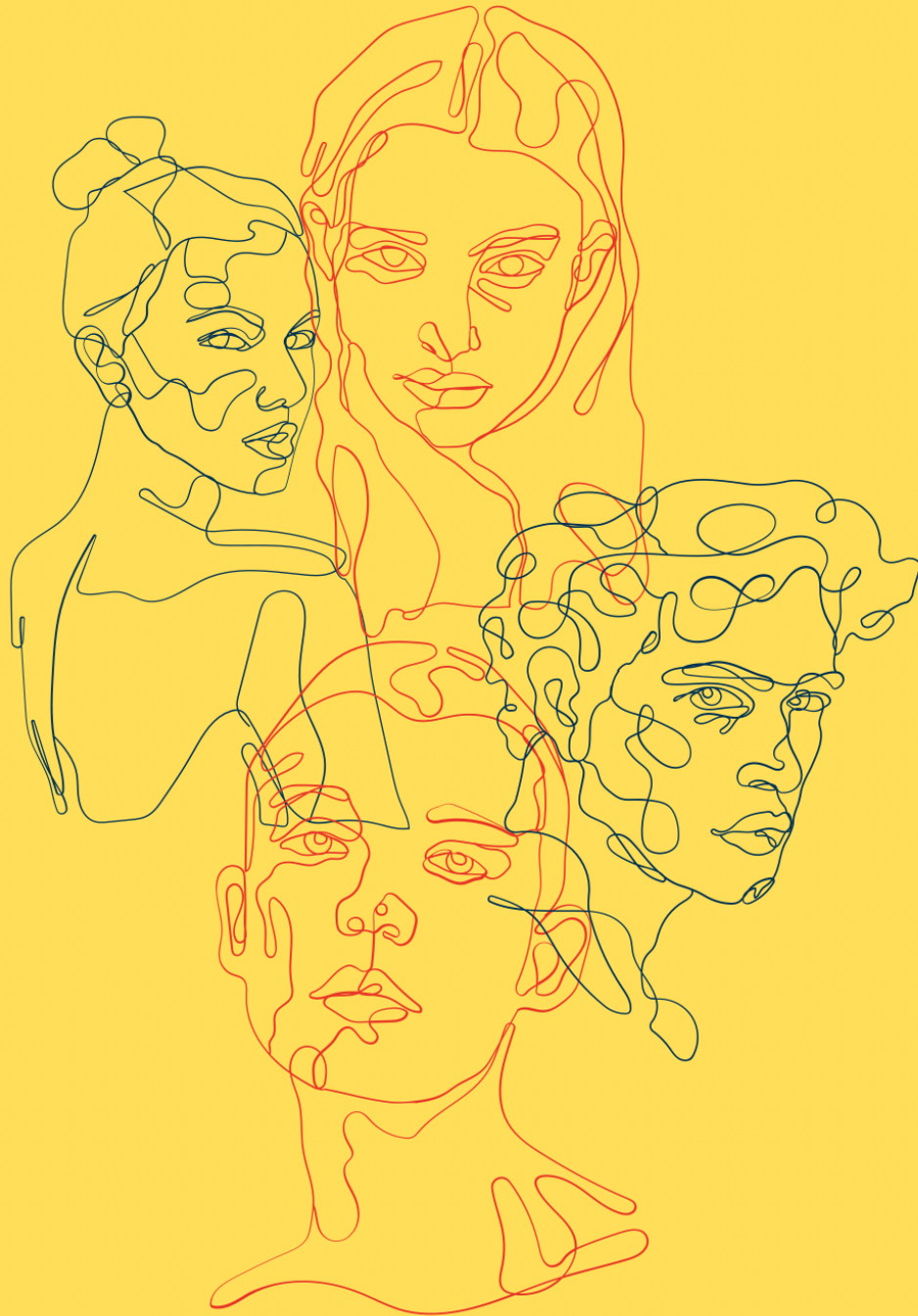


The Election Czar Handbook

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Introduction: So you want to be an Election Czar. Maybe you already are one or maybe you have done the position in the past. I can tell you from my own personal experience that this is one of the most frustrating, fun, creative, and worthwhile jobs I have had during my time at Reed. Plus if you end up being the only person that applies for the position you may get both stipends which is what happened to me. When I became Election Czar I had very little guidance and was incredibly confused about my responsibilities. A lot I learned along the way and a lot was communicated to me last minute because Senators are understandably very busy and also don't know a lot about this job. Because of this, I decided to make a quick cheatsheet for future Election Czars in order to ensure that future elections run smoothly and garner political engagement from the student body. So let's get to it!

Helpful Apps/Platforms To Use

Canva- Canva is a poster-making app where many easy Election Czars have made posters advertising elections, voting, the candidates etc. It is fairly easy to use and lets you curate a specific theme for your posters. In order to get access to better designs I enrolled in Canva's free trial which allows cancellation after two weeks.

Google Forms- Google Forms is where most Election Czars have designed voting forms and other forms to collect candidate platforms, images etc. I am including a couple of Google Form templates that I found helpful during my time as Election Czar.

Google Sheets- Google Sheets is where most Election Czars have tallied electoral votes. If you plug the voting Google Form into a Google Sheet it can organize the votes for you and makes using the Singular-Transferable Voting Method a lot easier. I am including a template Google Sheet that I found helpful during my time as Election Czar.

Zoom- If you don't know what Zoom is after the pandemic I am very confused about where you were from 2020 onwards. Since I was an Election Czar during the pandemic I used Zoom to host an Elections Assembly and meet with the Senate liaisons to discuss fun Czar stuff. Hopefully if the pandemic subsides you will be able to host events and meetings in-person.

Helpful Questions To Ask:

What groups am I hosting an election for? (Senate Members, President, Vice President, The Quest Editorial Board etc)

How many seats are available for each group seeking new members?

Who are my Senate liaisons and how do I get in contact with them?

Who is currently Senate Secretary and who is currently in charge of SB Info? How can I get in contact with those individuals?

Who are past Election Czars that will be willing to assist me and how do I get in contact with them?

Who should I contact about finding the number of currently enrolled students at Reed this semester?

Senate Liaisons: When hired as an Election Czar you will be assigned two or more Senate liaisons to answer any questions you may have and to assist in the vote-counting process. Most Senators are unfamiliar with Election Czar duties or the vote-counting process but are eager to help and can connect you to some important people/resources. The point of being an Election Czar is to remove the responsibility of elections from Senate so there is no additional stress or potential election interference. Despite this, it is important to lean on your Senate liaisons. They are a resource that should be utilized. If you are an Election Czar and aren't regularly communicating with your Senate liaisons they are going to have no idea if you are doing your job. Make sure to cc your liaisons on every email you send and regularly keep them up to date on what you have been doing during your time as Election Czar.

Senate Secretary: The current Senate secretary is your new best friend. Whenever you want to get a poster, a video, or anything advertising the elections onto Senate's social media platforms email them what you want posted. Make sure to include a caption for them to detail whatever medium you want posted.

Endorsing Candidates While on Senate: All members of Senate and The Quest allowed to endorse candidates on their private social media pages or when they are not on Senate or Quest duties only. Since those on Senate and The Quest are not working 24/7, they are allowed to endorse candidates as themselves but not as Senate members. If this becomes a point of contention with either the student body or Senate/The Quest members contact the student body President.

SB Info: Utilize SB Info! This is another tool for you to get your work out there for people to see. Make sure to regularly submit to SB Infos with Election Czar updates, posters, events, and links to important forms and information. I am adding the link to submit to future SB Infos for your consideration.

Vanity Positions: Another fun thing about being an Election Czar is that if you want, you can include vanity positions into the election. A vanity position is a fake position created by a member of the student body that can be voted on in the election. For example, if I made a petition, got the required number of signatures, wrote a speech, and made posters etc, I could technically run to be the Dictator of Manatees. It's just a fun and creative way to get students involved in the election and can be a cool thing for graduating seniors if they wish to participate. If you want to include vanity positions in your election, you can suggest the number of signatures needed for vanity petitions and add those candidates to the ballot. All vanity position candidates must participate in all activities "real" candidates have to, which means you should include vanity candidates in every email, assembly, ballot, poster, event etc.

Creativity: This job is stressful. While being an Election Czar is also fun, it can be overwhelming and a lot to handle. In order to make this job a little less scary, I encourage all Election Czars to embrace creativity. I know that sounds stupid, but as an Election Czar, you can do whatever you want. If you want to host a stand-up comedy Elections Assembly where all candidates have to deliver their platforms in joke form, do it. If you want to have all voters send their ballots to you via carrier pigeon, do it. If you want to host a fake Olympic opening ceremony to announce the elected winners, do it. How the elections are run and received is entirely up to you. While being creative may take up extra time, I cannot encourage it enough, as everyone needs a little fun and elections traditionally garner little student involvement. You can change that by being creative, so have at it!

Voting Methods: Counting the votes is one of the most confusing responsibilities of an Election Czar. If you aren't naturally gifted at math or have poor organizational skills good luck. Even if you have all of those skills, still, good luck. If you applied for the position you probably already know what the Singular-Transferable Voting Method is, but nonetheless I am going to explain it in very basic human terms. STV is where every voter gets to pick three candidates as their first choice, second choice, and third choice. For the sake of clarity I am going to name our three example candidates Beep, Randall, and Yomp. Let's say Beep gets ten votes, Randall gets six, and Yomp gets three. In this example if you meet or exceed eight votes you are automatically appointed the position you are running for. Since Beep has exceeded the needed votes you will take the extra two votes away and put them towards another candidate. The tricky part is those two votes you are taking away need to go to those particular voters second choice candidates. Let's say these two voters put their second choice candidates as Randall and Yomp. As Election Czar you will take those two extra votes from Beep and put one towards Randall and one towards Yomp. This now makes the voting tallies eight for the already elected Beep, seven for Randall, and four for Yomp. With more candidates and more votes this method can get very confusing. The fun part about being an Election Czar is that if this is too complicated you can change the voting method! You can even make voters tell you in-person who they want to vote for or can have them vote via a physical ballot. Since I acted as Election Czar during the pandemic I conducted the voting process through Google Forms and because STV was too confusing I changed the vote-counting method to Instant Run-Off. Instant Run-Off is almost the same as STV except instead of applying Beep's extra two votes to those voters specified second choice candidates, those two extra votes go towards the most voted for second choice candidate. That means if Beep has two extra votes, those votes would be given to Randall, making Randall automatically elected for the position they ran for. I am including a helpful instruction sheet about STV method below if you choose to go that route.

Quorum: I didn't know what quorum was until it was too late so I am adding an additional section to discuss what quorum means and how to go about it when counting votes. Quorum is the amount of votes needed to officially elect a candidate and is critical to enforcing the STV method or the Instant Run-Off method. For this example we are going to bring Beep, Randall, and Yomp back into the picture. To remind you, Beep has ten votes, Randall has six, and Yomp has three. When explaining the various voting methods I discussed how two of Beep's ten votes are allocated to other candidates. In order to reach quorum, 25% of the currently enrolled student body must have voted in the election. Calculate what number constitutes 25% of the currently enrolled student body and that number determines the number of votes that automatically elects a candidate. In this example our quorum number is eight. Since Beep got ten votes and only needs eight to be elected, those two extra votes need to be allocated to other candidates.

Election Czar To Do's and Timeline:

This section is going to be a rough outline of your duties as Election Czar, when to have them completed by, and how to go about them. It is helpful to create a timeline for your election so you have due dates to work off of.

Before Polls Open-

- Create a poster advertising the election with a corresponding email. Email the poster to the Senate Secretary and they will post it on the Senate Instagram. Send the email and the copy of the poster to whoever is responsible for sending out SB Info and make sure they send those out in a separate email to the student body. In the corresponding email make sure to include the Google Form template for collecting candidate signatures as well as give a brief outline of your timeline and candidate responsibilities, and how candidates can send you their signed petitions. Note that Senate candidates need twenty five signatures while Quest Editorial Board candidates need fifty.
- As candidates email you their petitions with the required number of signatures, create a Google Form where candidates can send you their platforms and a photo of themselves. Write an email to The Quest when you get enough candidate platforms and share the Google Form with them. These platforms and photos will be published in The Quest. Then make a PDF of every candidate platform and photo. This PDF needs to be sent out to the student body so make sure to send the PDF to whoever is in charge of SB Info with a corresponding email so they can send it to the student body.
- Create a Zoom link (or if you want email the right people and secure a classroom/other space) and set a time and date to hold an Elections Assembly. An Elections Assembly is a time where candidates can deliver speeches advertising their platforms and can answer questions from their peers. Write an email to be sent out to the student body advertising the Elections Assembly and create a poster to be out on Senate's Instagram as well. In your email to the student body be sure to include the Zoom link (if applicable) and an Election Czar-created Google Form where people can submit questions. Send a separate email to the candidates telling them to arrive to the Elections Assembly 5 mins early in order to compose themselves and ask questions. Include the Zoom link if applicable. I am assuming that you guys will also include the date and time of the Elections Assembly in all emails.
- Before the Elections Assembly create a voting Google Form (if you choose to conduct voting virtually) and set a timeline for when polls open and close. I am included a template Google Form for your consideration. Draft an email to the student body and create a poster with advertising the polls opening. Make sure to include the Google Form (if applicable), the PDF you created with all the candidate platforms, and the poll timeline. This will be sent out after the Elections Assembly. Share the voting form (if applicable) to your Senate liaisons and both the President and Vice President. Remove anyone from the form who is running in the election.

- Additionally before the Elections Assembly write a script. You don't need too much information on the script as the assembly can be as formal or informal as you want it to be. I am including an assembly script example for your consideration. Make sure to send an email to the current President and Vice President asking them to be ready to give a little speech before the candidates deliver their speeches. Make sure to include the Elections Assembly questions submitted by the student body in your script. If you don't have enough questions you can make up your own.
- Host the Elections Assembly! I personally held mine over Zoom, wore a fun hat, and played music to welcome all candidates, Senate members, and observers. Feel free to have fun with the Assembly. Make sure to welcome everyone, give the current President and Vice President time to speak, introduce all candidates before they deliver their speeches, and ask the crowd if they have questions before you dive into the previously submitted questions. The conclusion can be as fun as you want. After the assembly send a thank you email to all of the candidates and Senate members who attended. No need to include everyone outside of Senate or the candidates. Make sure to include the voting form (if applicable), the candidate platform PDF, as well as the voting timeline in your email. Check to see if you shared the voting form (if applicable) to your Senate liaisons and both the President and Vice President. Remove anyone from the form who is running in the election.

When Polls Open-

- Send the email you drafted and the poster you created advertising voting/polls to whoever is in charge of SB Info as well as the Senate secretary. They will send this information out to the student body via email and post the poster on the Senate Instagram. Make sure to include the PDF with the candidates platforms, the voting Google Form (if applicable), the voting timeline, and any other information you want the student body to know.
- Have fun! This is your time to create posters, host Netflix parties, set up an in-person coffee/tea extravaganza, and do whatever you want to advertise voting and the candidates. Make sure to remember your poll/voting timeline during this process and regularly check in with your Senate liaisons.
- Send an email to Admissions asking for the number of currently enrolled students at Reed this semester. Use that number to calculate 25% of the population in order to determine quorum. Feel free to have your Senate liaisons check your calculations in order to ensure accuracy.
- Host a meeting (Zoom or in-person) with your Senate liaisons and both the current President and Vice President to discuss a game plan on how you are going to count the votes. Feel free to invite any past Elections Czars to assist if needed. Make sure everyone is on the same page and has a strong understanding of how to count the votes.

After Polls Close-

- This is the hard part. Make sure you have a clear timeline of when the votes need to be counted and that you have reached quorum. Host a Zoom or in-person meeting with your Senate liaisons and both the President and Vice President to count the votes. Stick with the method you selected when counting the votes and make sure to work together to double check for mistakes, fill in the Google Sheet (if applicable), and keep spirits up despite the stress. Don't be afraid to ask for the help of a past Election Czar but make sure to ensure confidentiality. This is especially important. You don't want to be accused of fraudulently counting the votes.
- Once you have counted all the votes and determined the elected candidates, write an email to the student body announcing the winners and detailing the vote-counting process. Make sure to congratulate all candidates who ran and to clearly state how the vote counting process went to reassure all that the election was fair. Additionally include a PDF of the election results. I have included a template for your consideration. Send this email to whoever is running SB Info so they can send it to the student body.
- Create posters advertising the elected candidates. This will allow those who are bad at checking their email to find out who their elected candidates are via social media. Email these posters to the Senate secretary so they can post them on the Senate Instagram.

Templates and Examples:

Petition Google Form Template-

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hZxr4TpWD22SvAyoVdVeZN5n8xCMnUKxTsu5YYCITwE/edit>

Candidate Platform/Photo Google Form Template-

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdUhJ0XciSiR_FXNt6TEUaaGx7D3ueE7KFcnb_YT_I54j6cQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Assembly Script Example-

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RNxzIEY_idsImzSrFiEQvlUMxdu6bBSw5L5Fed0ZlsI/edit?usp=sharing

Voting Google Form Template-

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1KcFSu-84pp1A-XFoaDV2X-bPvBfV_K7jmIsvlFFwtg/edit

Counting Votes Google Sheets Template-

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13YCFf3q_7SimITRvYMjOPVWT66i5Zp8ltpacBbpfvNg/edit?usp=sharing

Election Results Google Doc Template-

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1h9wkR8d54QeEm-j75iux0uuWq4exnA0uhCFxokQ8xIQ/edit>

STV Voting Method Instruction Sheet-

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-WUHvc2K-KTCNNyAzzxVIYbQUZmibceEB/view?usp=sharing>

Submit to SB Info-

<https://forms.gle/ug3mWPoPDVX7HJfi7>

Conclusion: I think that's about it. I hope that this handbook was informational and that you continue to reference during your time as Election Czar. If you have any questions or want to add or edit the handbook, feel free to email me at ediepaczkowski@reed.edu. Thank you for reading this far and good luck. I know you are going to kick ass as an Election Czar.