

Abdul-Aziz wins presidency

Mavericks Empowering Mavericks delivers decisive victory.



LUKE LARSON
 Staff Writer

After a long campaign, Mavericks Empowering Mavericks – the first party to enter the race – delivered a decisive victory in Tuesday’s election. Students gathered outside the MSSA office in the CSU on Tuesday night as the Elections Commission posted the results. The party’s presidential candidate Abdul-Aziz and vice presidential candidate Kayla Cremers won by commanding margins. Abdul-Aziz defeated Fred de Ruiter of the Support Our Students party (SOS) by an impressive 380 votes out of 1,428 votes cast. Cremers defeated SOS candidate Jeremiah Kirch by a similar margin. All but three of Mavericks’ senatorial candidates won



Photo by Nicole Schmidt

seats on the 85th senate. SOS’ senatorial candidates had a good showing, as six were elected senators. Only one independent senatorial candidate was elected. All candidates who had declared candidacy for the four

boards – Newspaper Board, Centennial Student Union Board, Athletic Fee Advisory Board, and Student Health Advisory Board – were elected. In the CSU Board election, the Accountability Party gained its sole victory.

All three constitutional amendments were passed. More information on those amendments can be found on the front page of last Thursday’s edition of the Reporter.

While de Ruiter and Kirch

posed a serious challenge, Mavericks Empowering Mavericks’ dominance did not come as a surprise. They had significantly more Facebook likes than SOS going into Election Day and had a weeks-long head start.

This year’s election was originally scheduled for April 11, but the Elections Commission postponed it to this past Tuesday due to rule violations the commission acknowledged it had committed. The constitutionality of that decision was challenged but ultimately upheld by the Constitution Commission.

The election season seemed as if it would never end and, due to circumstances that arose on Election Day, it is still not over. At least one runoff election will be held this coming Tuesday. The results of the senatorial election for the College of Science,

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Letter to the Editor: Gries defends Constitution Commission decision

TO THE EDITOR:

It seems that the Constitution Commission is now subject to the poison pen of a couple of letter writers dissatisfied with our decision to uphold action of the Elections Commission to move the Spring General Election.

Had our ruling favored the opposite argument, I wonder if we would have earned their admiration or if they would repeat the characterization that our conduct at the hearing we held was “Very unprofessional.”

The Constitution

Commission issued a ruling and opinion following the hearing. The written statement acknowledged but did not embrace arguments of those advocating the voiding of an Elections Commission decision to hold the Spring General Election on April 25th.

When one part of the MSSA Constitution appears to be conflict with another clause, it is important to weigh the arguments of all sides, and in this case the underlying motives of the Elections Commission were called into question. The Constitution Commission

determined there was no malicious intent to favor one group of candidates over another when the election date was changed. Intent matters.

It was a surprise to read the comment that not enough time was allowed to hear the competing points of view about which clause within the MSSA Constitution should be favored. The election date change dispute was not a mystery to most what with published news stories and front page letters to the editor detailing claims of both sides. All such documentation was presented at the hearing.

I doubt much was missed in the hearing as oral arguments were also accepted from the two letter writers and from the student complainant who formally challenged the Elections Commission date change. The letter writers pitched a Fall Election solution which was viewed as creating more problems than it would solve, and left unanswered was who could “legally” be in charge of the student government for the five months between May and September.

Our ruling was a narrow one focusing on a limited circumstance where a

departure was allowed to the “2nd Tuesday in April” clause in the Constitution. The ruling rested in part on the “sole authority” clause dealing with the Elections Commission’s powers, but it does not give the Elections Commission permission to routinely deviate, or for sinister reasons, ignore the “2nd Tuesday in April” language.

Daniel “DJ” Gries, MSSA Constitution Commission Chair

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Engineering, and Technology were compromised by a technical error. Two candidates were not included on the ballot for an hour and half during the morning of Election Day. The margin between candidates in the final results of that election was small enough that the Elections Commission determined that the error could have influenced the outcome of that election. The elections for Newspaper Board, Athletic Fee Advisory Board, and CSU Board all featured ties between write-in candidates. All of these candidates had only two votes. These candidates have been contacted by the Elections Commission and have forty-eight hours to file for candidacy. If multiple candidates file in an election, a runoff election will be held. If no candidates file, there will be a vacancy. If only one candidate files, that candidate will be appointed to the position. This information was confirmed

by Elections Commission chair Connor Martin.

Abdul-Aziz commented on their win after the results were announced. He said that he believes that the success of Mavericks Empowering Mavericks' campaign will translate into success in the 85th senate.

"It's the communication that we stressed so much," he said. "We had a very strong message that MSSA is a voice for students and for students voices to be heard, they have to be listened to and actions must be taken. The way we campaigned – going to different organizations, getting their feedback, and then tailoring our platform to what the students want to see on campus – is their voice being listened to."

He added that the connections he made with people and organizations on campus will prove valuable to the 85th senate.

"We're just really really excited," said Cremers.

She expressed her

confidence in Abdul-Aziz, saying "Wouldn't want it to be anyone else!"

When asked what vision of the 85th senate they will pursue, Abdul-Aziz responded simply: "change."

"We'll just continue to improve," said Cremers.

Both Abdul-Aziz and Cremers served as senators in the 84th senate. They and the 85th senate were inaugurated in the Hearth Lounge of the CSU yesterday afternoon after the MSSA meeting. Abdul-Aziz and Cremers delivered brief speeches.

"Wemadepromisesthatwe intend to keep," said Abdul-Aziz. "We will be transparent and communicate. We will work on expanding student services and we will work on diversifying the campus atmosphere. To all students of MSU: we will work to support you, fight for you, and, most importantly, empower you for success."

"With this opportunity, I know that I will strive to

do my very best and I am excited to work with as many people across campus and lead with my Maverick spirit," said Cremers.

In a statement, de Ruiter thanked his party for their support.

"I'm absolutely proud of my party and the effort we went through these past weeks," he said, noting the obstacles faced. "We had a fifth of the campaign time as the other party yet the vote count was nowhere close to a fifth of our competition. I am honored to have such a dedicated party to run with."

He also expressed his confidence in the newly-elected president.

"As I said before, I had no problems with Abdul-Aziz as president and think he will do a great job. It is an honor and a privilege to serve in that role, and he should always be grateful for the student body who put him there."

De Ruiter's work with MSSA is not over. He says that he will serve on the

Parking Advisory Committee, working to preserve the Free Lot, an issue that both parties campaigned on.

This year's voter turnout was 11.5 percent (1,620 out of 14,047 students), which is typical of student senate elections. Last year's turnout was 13.6 percent, 2015 was 8.2 percent, 2014 was 8.9 percent, 2013 was 12 percent, and 2012 was 11.2 percent.

Faical Rayani, president of the 84th senate, offered his thoughts shortly after the results were announced, saying "I'm really excited that the constitutional amendments finally passed after four years of hard work, that we have every single senate seat filled, and that we have over 10 percent voter turnout."

"I'm very proud and honored to have served with these people for the past year," he added.

For a full list of results, visit www.mnsu.edu/mssa/

Yale grad students pledge hunger strike to press union bid

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — As a union push stalls at Yale University, organizers are stepping up pressure to bring the administration to the negotiating table, including a vow by some graduate students to go on a hunger strike until talks begin.

Graduate assistants in eight departments at the Ivy League school voted in February to unionize, and they appeared to be on track to become among the first to do so since the National Labor Relations Board ruled last year that those assisting in teaching and research at

private universities have a right to union representation.

But Yale is challenging the union strategy of voting by individual departments, as opposed to the graduate school as a whole, and has said the requests by Local 33-UNITE HERE for collective bargaining are premature.

Hundreds of graduate students and their supporters participated in a march Tuesday evening to the home of Yale's president, Peter Salovey, and demonstrators announced that eight graduate students would begin a fast.

"I've been waiting for

Yale to negotiate for four years. That doesn't seem to matter to them," said Aaron Greenberg, a union chairman who is among the hunger strikers.

Graduate assistants at public universities have been able to organize for years, but until a reversal last August by the NLRB, graduate students at private schools could not be considered employees. Union organizers at Yale said they suspect university officials are dragging the process out because they believe the NLRB will become more sympathetic to their view under President Donald

Trump.

School officials said the fast is unwarranted, and Salovey said in a written statement that the students should reconsider and avoid actions that harm their health.

The Yale organizers say they believe a union would help address concerns surrounding pay and benefits.

Yale says it provides "unsurpassed" support for doctoral students. In a statement Monday, it said it has challenges pending regarding an NLRB regional director's finding that teaching fellows are employees and regarding the

union's strategy of focusing on individual, hand-picked departments.

"That strategy is unprecedented in higher education," the university said. "Unions that have organized at other private universities, including Columbia, Harvard, Duke and Cornell, have all sought school-wide bargaining units — not the separate departmental units advocated by Local 33 at Yale."



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