Running a good Election Campaign

Election time is an exciting and important time within the Students’ Association as it is for all other students’ unions. The elections develop student awareness of voting and democratic experiences as well as promote the work that the Students’ Association do.

As the Elections spark higher engagement rates with the student body it gives us a great opportunity to hear from students who we don’t usually hear from. The debates and conversations that arise help us represent the views of the students.

Perhaps the best thing that comes out of the elections is that it inspires students such as yourself to take a lead in how the Association is run.

Digby Jacks was National Union of Students President in 1969 until 1971. He had the following to say about representation:

“Representation must never be seen, except in strategic and practical terms, as an end in itself…Too many union officers see it as a question of communication and merely sitting on the appropriate committee…The purpose of representation is to secure social, educational and institutional change—large or small, grand or gracious, collectively or individually…The best officers see this and work on all levels to change things for the better”

Why should you campaign?

Why not? You want students to vote for you in the up-coming elections, and campaigning is a way that you can engage your audience. It is also a great time to inspire students with your manifesto, and gives a voters the chance to get to know you.

What should you focus on?

- Have a look at the Consultation forums and Student Voice Website to see what current hot topics are and what students are saying about them.
- Get beyond the clichés and try to understand the student body, appeal to them personally.
- Have a clear identity and try to keep your messages consistent.
- Take a look at the OU Students’ Association’s strategy and find the points relevant to the role you are standing for, how do you plan to fulfil these?
- You could also read the past Central Executive Committee Papers to get an understanding of what we’re currently working on.
- Get students to vote, regardless of who for!
- Concentrate on your own campaign, not your opponents.

Campaigning Conduct

- Candidates should take all reasonable steps to ensure that your supporters actions comply with the campaign rules
• Candidates can seek endorsements and support from anyone, but Candidates cannot endorse or support another Candidate
• Candidates must allow voters to cast their votes freely without interference
• Candidates are not permitted to aid voters when voting under any circumstances, if the voter requires assistance they should be signposted to ERS or the Returning Officer

Don't forget to… Tell the voters who you are!

• Explain why you are the right person to elect.
• What do you know about the Association?
• What do you know about the OU?
• How will you work as a team?
• How will you fulfil the obligations of the role?

And be prepared to be challenged! You are likely to receive some tough questions and even criticism during your Campaign. The easiest way to avoid this is to do your homework and know your facts, but if you feel you are subjected to bullying or harassment please contact oustudents-elections@open.ac.uk