**April 17th, 2019**

**Tran Thanh Tam, Pham**

**Chief Returning Officer (CRO), DAGS**

**1263 Queen street,**

**Halifax, N.S**

**President**

**Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS)**

**Mona Campbell Building**

**1453 LerMarchant street,**

**Halifax, N.S**

Dear President,

Based on Article VI of the DAGS constitution, an annual election must be held to vote in office a new leadership. To that effect, DAGS conducted its election on the 8th and 10th of April, 2019. This year's election recognized eight candidates with their interest to take part in the election. There was a lower amount of election candidates compared to the positions available but as based on previous year's observation, this has been an ongoing problem for DAGS election. This year’s nominees included the following; **President:** Martine Panzica; **Vice-President, Finance and Operations:** Kayla Preston; V**ice-President of Academic:** Anas Tahir, Nima Mayanmandi; **Vice-President of External:** Hailie Tattrie; **Vice-President of Student Life:** Fallen Matthews; **Director (Health and Medical Sciences):** Alexandra Fox and **Director (Engineering, Architecture, Planning):** Rohit Shivarkar. Two positions were vacant including **Director (Arts and Social Sciences, Management, Journalism, and Law)** and **Director (Sciences and Computer Science)**.

The election voting poll was set up on the afternoon April 6th, 2019 and opened at 8 am, April 8th,, 2019. The following candidates were successfully elected:

* Martine Panzica: **President** 81.87% voted for Yes
* Kayla Preston: **VP Finance and Operations** 85.29% voted for Yes
* Nima Mayanmandi: **VP Academics** 68.21% voted for Yes
* Hailie Tattrie: **VP External** 78.36% voted for Yes
* Fallen Matthews: **VP Student Life** 80.59% voted for Yes
* Alexandra Fox: **Director (Health and Medical Sciences)** 81.50% voted for Yes
* Rohit Shivarkar: **Director (Engineering, Architecture and Planning)** 81.29% voted for Yes

For this election, since it took place at the beginning of examination period, reaching the quorum of approximately 200 voters could serve some challenges. As I noticed that a number of graduate students do not participate in the voting process as they were unaware of the values from their opinions in this election. I proposed to give an update in vote counts by the end of election date as that could allow the graduate students to make a conscious decision of how much participation they wish to input to this election. With the following points, I would like to make certain recommendations based on my experience with this year's elections.

Firstly, there remained a low number of nominees with more variation in their interest positions and a decent number of voters that barely reached the quorum. This could be attributed to the low amount of individual campaigns as the election took place in the beginning of exam period when most students were busy studying for their exams. I suggest the nomination/application period should be held in early March to account for timing delays. Subsequently, the election should be held with the second last or last week of March before the examination period takes place.

Secondly, as much as we would like many graduate students to participate in the election voting process, having an election during April presents several restrictions in terms of graduate students enthusiasm towards it and knowledge of candidates as they were in a rush to study for their exams. A potential time-efficient way in the voting poll is to incorporate the link of each candidate profile page next to their names. I realized that some graduate students were unaware that they could read more information on each candidate which resulted in their hesitation towards voting.

Lastly, we received a constructive criticism with the mass emails before the voting poll closure. For future elections, it is important to schedule mass emails to all graduate students in the early morning of the first and last election dates as a reminder.

I wish you a wonderful year in office.

Best,

Tran Thanh Tam, Pham.

CRO, DAGS 2019.