

SA Election Reform: Incumbency and Student Engagement

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Introduction.

Last year, there were 10 uncontested elections with a lot of incumbents.¹ This has been a source of criticism from both within and outside the Student Assembly (SA). In lieu of calls to restructure the SA to improve engagement (see #restructuringhellyeah chat) and more accountability on the SA, this proposal looks to be a part of the solution.

Proposal.

Amend Article III Section A of the Election Rules to the effect that:

- Two Candidate Registration dates (early and late registration)
 - Early registration date is 1 week (7 days) before the late petition date
- Anyone can participate in early candidate registration but...
- SA incumbents must submit their candidate registration petition at the early date
 - **Who's included:** Incumbents are *anyone* who is an elected member of the Student Assembly
- Upon the day of Early registration, Office of Assemblies publicly releases the candidate names in the races so far

Discussion.

Allows public to see which elections are still uncontested after early registration, so encourages people to run → attacks uncontested elections

¹ <https://cornellsun.com/2018/04/11/s-a-election-results-announced-after-delay-of-almost-two-weeks/>

- With “late” petition, people can see which roles look uncompetitive so can foster more competition
- The uncertainty of not knowing who else is running might be the reason why some do not run in the first place
- Example: Someone sees A&S Rep. seat open only 2/3 running, so this inspires a kid to run for that other open seat

Principle of rewarding good representation

- Allows general public to see which SA members want to do SA again
- If a poor representative, people will more likely challenge, or incentives challenges
- Gives credence to the constituent threat: “If you vote for XYZ, I will run against you”