

Summary Report to Pacifica & KPFK on the 2004 Elections

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Two excellent reports about the KPFK LSB election were submitted by Casey Peters, the KPFK election coordinator, and Art Stasney, a volunteer who provided technical support during the election. They are attached for easy reference. These reports are valuable because of their comprehensiveness and specificity and also because they propose practical solutions.

There is one other point brought up by a number of KPFK listeners and LSB members that should be addressed in future elections. This is the question of diversity. This has come up more than any other concern, to my knowledge. This falls into 2 categories. First, should there affirmative action standards or quotas be mandated as part of KPFK elections? If so, how might this be done? Also, can it be done legally? Second, the question arises about giving free memberships to low income, minority and underrepresented groups. This is seen as a way to help solve problems in creating a diverse board. How would this be done? Although KPFK has the policy of granting volunteer memberships to anyone volunteering for 3 hours or more, it is acknowledged that geographical and other problems can make this an inadequate way to ameliorate lack of diversity issues.

To briefly summarize the election problems delineated by Eva Georgia, KPFK General Manager, Casey Peters, Election Coordinator and Art Stasney, Election Volunteer, they are:

1. The general lack of adequate time between different elements of the election process. This has led to problems that include: members not receiving ballots in time, candidates not submitting statements in a timely manner, etc.
2. Technical breakdowns, mostly caused by computer hardware and software failures.
3. Inadequate staffing for the election.
4. A lack of a clearly delineated job description for the election coordinator.
5. A lack of clearly defined roles and policy for the interface between the election coordinator and KPFK staff.
6. A lack of clearly delineated guidelines for candidates and for the election itself. This is not to say that there was no policy, and no guidelines, but they

were not sufficiently thought out causing extra work, confusion and stress for both the election coordinator and KPFK staff and volunteers.

Suggested Solutions:

1. For the next election, budget enough money to hire 2 election coordinators as our experience has shown us that the job is too much for one person to coordinate.
2. Clearly delineate the job description of the election coordinator, including specific tasks he needs to perform, how s/he will coordinate those tasks with the station staff, etc.
3. The time frame for the events leading up to and including the election and election follow-up should be longer. Candidate recruitment and preparation could be done in 1 month and the mailing of ballots and the election could be given 2 months. One month for the election itself was too short.
4. A very clearly delineated time line which gives ample time to recruit candidates, create candidate statements, questionnaires, 60 second spots, etc., mail out ballots, handle any problem with the balloting or mailing, gives ample time for subscribers to vote and for the election to be tallied. Candidates should have to provide candidate statements, answers to questionnaires, 60 minute spots, etc., in a timely fashion or be disqualified. The criteria for being accepted as a candidate should be made very clear at the beginning of the process.
5. Make sure that the computers used to tally the votes are in good working order. Make sure that the software is adequate for the job and is reliable. Line up volunteers and a venue for tallying the votes well enough in advance.
6. KPFK has about 2,000 people in its database that have given money, but less than \$25 per year. We suggest that people who fall in that category who have donated any sum at least twice and at least in two separate calendar years be mailed a fee waiver form and instructions on how to fill it out and how obtaining a membership this way will give them voting privileges. This would help to create more diversity in our membership and on our board.
7. No election should overlap the LSB election the way the Interim Program Council did at KPFK.
8. Policy should be created to allow the questioning of blocks of votes (either by faction, group, geography, etc.) that indicate a malevolent attempt at a take-over of the board. Let's say 10% of the final vote tally. This is only a vague suggestion as this is very problematical. But there should be some method to

prevent or invalidate a take-over of the station board. And some policy should be put in place before a take-over is attempted. The ballots that are mailed out may have to have a double envelope system so that the ballot is placed in a sealed envelope and then that envelope is placed into another envelope that identifies the sender. This way voters can be traced by a neutral third party if a group or faction of votes is in question.

9. Sufficient mailings need to be done to maintain the integrity of the mailing lists and the database needs to be kept up-to-date.
10. Candidate statement, ballots, etc., should be translated into Spanish.
11. Part of the job description of the Election Coordinator(s) should to write an election report after the election for the LSB.