

DASB Senate approves new presidential election

Kunal Mehta
STAFF REPORTER

The DASB Senate Election Committee started a presidential reelection March 13 after a flawed voting system failed to register votes for two candidates. The reelection was unanimously approved by the Election Committee, and then the full Senate on March 8.

Students were notified by email to submit votes starting Monday at 12:01 a.m. The revote is supposed to last until Friday, March 17 at 4 p.m.

Senate Elections Committee chair Faris Waitesa said College Life Office Coordinator Dennis Shannakian will be regularly checking to ensure the integrity of the new election.

On March 3, students discovered that votes for two presidential candidates, Rhozhen Panahi and Cialysiah, “Cici,” Washington, were not counted because DASB’s online voting system was not prepared for candidates running without vice presidential candidates on their tickets.

Before the decision to hold a new election, the voting period was extended until Wednesday, March 8, accompanied by a mass email instructing students to re-vote if they voted for either Washington or Panahi.

During the revote period, the server displayed the candidate’s vote counts while voting was still open, potentially influencing voters actions. Another concern was the unlikelihood that most students would re-vote.

In Tuesday’s elections committee hearing which was open to the public, Panahi and Washington advocated for a brand new election.

“To me and Cici, this is totally unfair,” Panahi said. “Keeping what we have right now wouldn’t be just. We have to restart a new election.”

Washington said, “I want the students’ voices to be heard and the best way to do that is have a re-election.”

Candidate Dylan Kim, who finished with the most votes in the now invalidated election, originally wanted to keep the results after the extended voting period finished.

“Initially, I thought having a re-election in which voters, who actually voted during the original election, would be thrown away is a ridiculous solution, but after considering that prospect from the point of view of Cici and Rhozhen’s candidacies, I realized that is the most fair and equitable solution,” Kim said.

Candidate Carlos Duran proposed leaving the presidential post empty and leaving it up to the next Senate to vote in



PHOTO BY KUNAL MEHTA

The DASB senate deliberates on the fairest way to handle the uncounted votes during the March 8 meeting.

a new president, also known as an internal election. Others believed that would be unfair to candidates who did not run in a coalition or for those who do not already have close relations with current senators.

“If you did that, it puts candidates who ran with very big coalitions at an advantage over candidates who maybe ran with smaller coalitions,” Senator Dara Streit said.

“The only fair thing I see is redoing it,” De Anza Political Revolution Club president Eddie Cisneros, 23, public health major, said. “Then you get one person, one vote. And everybody knows that what happened was credible.”

All four presidential candidates were given \$100 to re-campaign until next Friday, March 17.