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Subject: Proposal for Increasing Participation in the Science Undergraduate Society at UBC

Introduction

The Science Undergraduate Society (SUS) at UBC is a student organization that aims to promote academic, physical, and social wellbeing to science students at UBC. There are currently over 8,206 science students at UBC who SUS serves. SUS is made up of many positions of individuals who organize events, liaise between students and faculty, change school policy and much more. Many of the roles on SUS are elected by science students, thus participation from science students is vital. Unfortunately, participation within the organization has been steadily decreasing in the past 5 years.

Statement of Problem

Voter turnout in the science undergraduate society is at an all-time low, and it is only decreasing. Low participation in the organization in general has led to low turnout for events, elected positions not getting filled, and voter turnouts as low as 1 person. Without prominent action, the society may fail to meet the threshold needed to continue running.

Proposed solution

The solution that I propose for increasing voter turnout is to establish a stronger community among science students through increased science student exclusive events, and increasing events geared towards first year students. Students that care about the organization and the work that it does are more likely to vote and be involved. Another solution is to make leaders in the organization and the organization itself more approachable through expanding events outside of the science student building. Some students do not feel that they belong in the science student building, so having more science events in different science department's buildings may make more students feel more welcome to attend. Lastly, another solution is to spend more money on fewer but better events, rather than many low-budget events.

Scope

To focus my research, I will look into the following questions:

- How does the voter turnout for SUS compare to other student governments at UBC and what do they do differently?
- How does the voter turnout for SUS compare to previous years, and what factors contribute to this?
- What is SUS currently doing to increase student participation?

- What factors are related to voter turnout?
- Is there a difference in participation between volunteer positions and elected positions?

Methods

My primary data sources will include election results from the AMS election website. This data includes all election from UBC official undergraduate societies all the way back until 2013. The election result data include the number of voters, how many votes were cast to each candidate, and the results. I will also conduct interviews with current members of the organization to obtain information about current strategies to increase voter turnout. Lastly, my primary data will include an online survey for science students to give feedback on why they do or do not participate in the organization.

My Qualifications

As a fourth-year science student, I have been a part of the organization for four years. In my second year I ran for the Combined Major representative position, so I have first-hand experience in the election process and the responsibilities for each candidate. I have also attended many events held by the organization, and even planned a few events while I held my position.

Conclusion

The Science Undergraduate Society is an important organization at UBC, but with participation rates going down, will be unable to help students in the way that they deserve. By addressing the 5 areas of inquiry mentioned earlier, I will be able to determine a viable solution to help raise participation in the organization. With your approval, I will begin research at once.