

SACUA Information Technology Committee (ITC)

December 17, 2018

Investigation of various options to **increase faculty participation in Faculty Senate** (<https://facultysenate.umich.edu>), **Senate Assembly** (<https://facultysenate.umich.edu/senate-assembly>), and **faculty governance**.

Background: On 11/19/18, the **Senate Assembly (SA)** voted to explore the option of virtualizing the SA meetings. To allow remote access voting, we need a secure platform accessible only by UM faculty. Discuss with SA Rules Committee. Various options include:

- **BlueJeans** (<https://www.bluejeans.com/resources/product-video/video-introducing-polling>)
- **AdobeConnect** (<https://wiki.med.umich.edu/display/UMHSHELPDESK/Adobe+Connect+Pro>)
- **Qualtrics** (<https://www.safecomputing.umich.edu/dataguide/?q=node/211>)
- To design polls, we may need to work with ISR/SRC (<http://www.src.isr.umich.edu/>)

Voting Process: Teaming up with Information Technology Services (<https://ITS.umich.edu>), the ITC explored existent and alternative options to enable synchronous and asynchronous debates of issues related to faculty governance and electronic ballot voting. The cost, reliability, usability, security and other factors were considered during the review process. One potential solution that provides a cost-effective mechanism to facilitate bringing issues to faculty senate/assembly, debates of the issues and ultimately resolution by faculty voting is described below:

- Prior to each Faculty Senate/Assembly meeting, a new **Canvas Course** (<https://umich.instructure.com>) is created with all eligible faculty being included as equal instructors (the Chair of the Senate may be the instructor of record/owner of this course. This allows all faculty to productively and securely debate issues, post and respond to discussion topics, upload and review evidence provided by others, form virtual groups and coordinate threaded discussion topics. All of this can be done synchronously or asynchronously.
- Synchronous Faculty meetings can be run off of these Canvas Course-pages providing virtual access via **BlueJeans** (<https://umich.bluejeans.com>).
- Electronic (absentee) and real-time voting can be conducted using **SimplyVoting** (<http://facultyvote.umich.edu>, to be created).
- At the close of the election, all results will be automatically tallied and reported individually (without identifying faculty voters) and in aggregate, see examples below.

Reference Materials:

- Attachment 1 includes the summary of the reviews of several alternative voting mechanisms.
- Attachment 2 contains a UMich-specific SimplyVoting quote (about \$2000/yr).
- Mockup of a UMich SimplyVoting login screen: <https://demosite.simplyvoting.com/index.php>
- An example of the University of Minnesota use of SimplyVoting:
 - Ballot: <https://vote.umn.edu/index.php>
 - Results: <https://vote.umn.edu/index.php?mode=results&election=52007>

Attachment 1: Summary of the reviews of several alternative voting mechanisms

Voting Application Assessment for UM SACUA

At the request of SACUA-IT, ITS has assessed a number of software solutions and their suitability for managing elections for SACUA and its sub-groups.

We assessed the solutions based on the following criteria;

- It must support 1-4 elections annually. All faculty could be eligible to vote in any given election; up to 8,000 voters.
- It must meet UM security and privacy standards.
- It must be easy to use, for both voters and administrators
- It must support formal voting procedures including but not limited to;
 - One vote per voter
 - Votes not traceable to voter
 - Auditable results
 - A historical record of past elections
- The system provider must be a stable company.
- Low-cost, if possible

Our recommendation is that SACUA use the dedicated voting application, SimplyVoting.com. We do not believe any of the other reviewed solutions meet the needs set forth above. Below are assessments of each of the solutions we reviewed.

SimplyVoting.com (recommended)

[SimplyVoting](https://SimplyVoting.com) is the best reviewed voting application available on the market. In business since 2003, they have over 2,000 clients world-wide, including dozens of universities. Their largest elections have hundreds of thousands of eligible voters.

SimplyVoting was the only application we reviewed that met all of the requirements. Elections are secure and auditable. It can use UM logins, including dual-factor (Duo) for authentication. Here is a [link to their proposal](#).

The notable drawbacks of SimplyVoting are its cost and the fact that it's not currently in use at UM. SimplyVoting has a \$2,000-\$3,000 annual license and \$500-\$1,000 initial setup costs. We believe the price can be negotiated towards the low end of the range listed. SimplyVoting may also be a suitable replacement for other voting solutions currently in use on campus, allowing the price to be negotiated further.

We recommend that SACUA use SimplyVoting to manage their elections.

Qualtrics (second choice)

[Qualtrics](#) is an application for conducting surveys. It can be adapted to elections, although this is not its primary design. Qualtrics meets most of the requirements but falls short in a couple of areas, notably voter anonymity and guaranteed one-vote-per-voter.

Qualtrics is widely in use across campus and technical support is available from ITS. It's use for SACUA elections would be free under the UM site license agreement. It is already integrated with UM logins and Duo.

If SimplyVoting is not chosen as a solution, and SACUA is willing to tolerate the shortcomings of Qualtrics, it may be a good alternative.

BigPulse.com (not recommended)

[BigPulse](#) is a dedicated voting application with functionality, and cost, similar to SimplyVoting. BigPulse is used to managed elections within Michigan Medicine. BigPulse is a one-person company with a limited number of clients. MM's license agreement is targeted; SACUA would need to negotiate their own license agreement with BigPulse.

Based on the size of the company, and that it doesn't offer any real advantages over SimplyVoting, we do not recommend BigPulse as a solution.

Virtual Meeting applications (not recommended)

We reviewed BlueJeans, Skype, Zoom, Adobe Connect, and Google Hangouts. All of these offer ad hoc polling, but do not offer any kind of formal voting support. We do not believe any of these meet the needs of SACUA.

UM Student Government Voting Application (not recommended)

The student government maintains their own custom-made voting application - vote.umich.edu. This application has very limited support and is tailored specifically to the needs of the Central Student Government's needs. It is possible this application meets the needs of SACUA but, due to its limited support, we do not recommend it.

UM Administration Evaluation Voting Application (not recommended)

The Administration Evaluation Committee (AEC) maintains their own custom-made voting application - aec.umich.edu. This application has very limited support and is tailored specifically to the needs of the AEC. The faculty member who maintains this system recommended against using this for SACUA elections.

BoardEffect.com (not recommended)

[BoardEffect](http://BoardEffect.com) is an application for managing the needs of Board groups - Boards of Directors; Boards of Regents. UM uses Board Effect to manage its Regent affairs, including votes. This application does not appear to easily scale to the size of elections that SACUA holds.

Attachment 2: UMich-specific SimplyVoting quote

Updated Pricing For
University of Michigan

Attention: Chris Eagle

December 12, 2018

Adrienne Hardy
Senior Project Manager

Simply Voting Inc.
ahardy@simplyvoting.com
1 (800) 585-9694 ext. 804



Premium Services & Features

Simply Voting also offers a range of Premium Services such as fully-managed elections, managed mailings, customizations to the voting technology, and Premium Features like voter segmentation or weighted voting.

❖ Fully Managed Election

If you desire to be fully hands-off from the election process, Simply Voting offers a fully managed election premium service. With a fully managed election, Simply Voting staff will manage the election and elector set up, sending email blasts, reporting on mid-election turnout, and reporting on post-election results.

You remain the first point of contact for your voters and your staff retains access to the back-end Election Manager at all times (unless no-access is specifically requested to be completely hands-off). Simply Voting staff will coordinate with your election organizers to provide previews and samples to ensure that everything is up to specification. Simply Voting staff will also actively monitor the election as it proceeds to ensure that everything is working as intended.

❖ Voter Segmentation

With voter segmentation, you can categorize voters into groups, restricting access to certain ballot items and delivering a unique ballot to each group of voters, so they only see and access what is relevant to *their group* (e.g. their classification) in addition to what is relevant to *all voters*. Voter segmentation also allows for targeted email blasts to specific groups, as well as additional turnout tracking.

This Premium Feature carries with it a onetime activation fee. See the *Pricing* section for more details.

❖ Elector Data Pull

Simply Voting offers an automated Elector Data Pull feature which can pull the member data directly from your API and synchronize it with the eligible voter list within the Simply Voting election. This feature provides a more secure and efficient transfer of elector data and can eliminate the potential of any inadvertent data errors due to manual manipulation. This feature may be employed either exclusively prior to the start of voting, or periodically throughout the voting term to re-synchronize your database and the elector list, depending on your desired configuration. This feature requires adhering to our technical specs provided as an addendum to this document.

❖ Multiple Administrators

With the multiple administrators feature, you can setup unique administrator login identities that can have unique permissions on what actions each administrator identity can do to or with an election.

Thus, scrutineers or auditors could be configured to have read-only access to say the Electors list, Turnout Reports, the Activity Log, and final Results once voting is over, but could be restricted from other interactions with an election.

This Premium Feature carries with it a onetime activation fee. See the *Pricing* section for more details.

❖ Vanity URL

Simply Voting may deploy a vanity URL for your Voting Website, to improve branding for your voters. You create the domain or subdomain, you create the CNAME record pointing to the appropriate Simply Voting URL, and you setup an SSL certificate for the domain. Simply Voting Technical Staff will assist with questions as necessary, and ensure corresponding setup is done on our system to ensure the successfully deployment of the vanity URL.

Vanity URL samples (which also deployed custom style sheet branding) are: <https://vote.umn.edu> and <https://vote.reco.on.ca>

There is a onetime setup fee for this customization. Up to one month may be required for implementation. See the *Pricing* section for more details.

❖ Custom Voting Website Branding

Default

All our customers receive a voting website they can brand with their colors and logo when an account is setup on Simply Voting. A sample of this default level in action can be found at: <https://stusu.simplyvoting.com/>

Custom Voting Website Branding (Level 1)

Simply Voting can develop a custom CSS style sheet to overlay our default voting website look and feel. The look and feel of your voting website will be similar your organization's branding. Essentially, the look and feel will resemble your website, but your organization's website's content is not part of the style sheet.

A sample of this level in action can be found at: <https://ams.simplyvoting.com>



Custom Voting Website Branding (Level 2)

Simply Voting can develop a custom CSS style sheet, in addition to custom HTML headers and footers for your voting website. The look and feel of your voting website will be similar to your organization's website. Essentially, your voting website will have your navigation links, search bar, etc. in the header, and your quick links in the footer, with similar visual styles. The links will be clickable and will navigate voters just as if they were on your website.

A sample of this level in action can be found at: <https://vote.umn.edu>
(Note: your voting website would still be a *.simplyvoting.com* URL address unless you are also interested in premium white labeling customizations).

The customization fee for either level is based on a programming per hour fee or a minimum setup fee, whichever is greater. Two weeks to one month may be required for implementation. See the *Pricing* section for more details.

Pricing

Simply Voting's election fees are based on the number of eligible voters. This quote is an example based on the assumption that you would run an election or elections with 8000 or less electors. If there are more electors, the cost will fluctuate accordingly.

Item	Cost	More / Less Electors
System fees:		
1-Year Plan (10 elections, up to 8000 electors ea.)	\$2738.80	~\$0.18 / elector

Additional Items	Cost
Optional:	
Fully Managed Election	\$650.00 / election
Voter Segmentation Activation	\$300.00 One-time
Multiple Administrators Activation	\$500.00 One-time
Elector Data Pull Activation	\$750.00 One-time
Integrated Authentication Setup	<i>FREE</i>
Vanity URL	\$1500.00
Custom Voting Website Branding	
- Level 1	\$800.00 Minimum, \$200/hr out of scope
- Level 2	\$2000.00 Minimum, \$200/hr out of scope

Notes

- ❖ All prices are in USD.
- ❖ Additional items are charged on top of system fees.
- ❖ Items marked as "one-time" carry a one-time activation fee. Once activated, you retain access to the feature on your account indefinitely.
- ❖ No out of scope work will be performed by Simply Voting without prior approval by you.

Getting in Touch

Adrienne Hardy
Senior Project Manager

Simply Voting Inc.
ahardy@simplyvoting.com
1 (800) 585-9694 ext. 804