Issues with HSG Co-President Special Election:

Election Timing and Delay

HSG waited two months between the Co-President's resignation and the finalization of a new Co-President. The former HSG Co-President resigned October 12 and the new HSG Co-President was not finalized until December 7. Scheduling elections during finals week undoubtedly hindered student and candidate participation, with voter participation at just 29% and 25% for the first round and runoff, respectively.

Changing Bylaws to Elect One Co-President Rather than Two

According to the bylaws in place at the time of the former Co-President's resignation (the April 2023 Bylaws) state that in the event of an absence in the Office of the President: "The remaining Executive Board members will form an ad hoc election committee to administer an additional student body wide election to elect two (2) new Co-Presidents." However, HSG changed these bylaws in November 2023 to read: "The remaining Executive Board members will appoint an hoc election committee to administer an additional student body-wide election to elect a new Co-President in the case of one (1) vacancy or two (2) Co-Presidents in the case of two (2) vacancies." Thus, according to the old bylaws, there should have been a new election for two new Co-Presidents rather than just a single Co-President to join the existing Co-President. The bylaws should have been applied as written at the time of the Co-President's resignation, rather than changed a month after the fact to accommodate current Board Members' interests.

Staff Rather than Student Control over Elections

The HSG Bylaws state that "The election committee will state the election rules to the student body, certify that those who declared an intention to run meet the necessary qualifications for the election, monitor campaigns, administer the voting process, count the votes, and report the results to the Co-Presidents." However, candidates were told that "The voting software / results will be handled by Harris staff and no student will have access to the software nor results." These statements are in direct contradiction: the bylaws state that students must oversee the voting process and results, yet the voting process and results were evidently not handled by any students, but rather by unknown staff.

Lack of Clarity Around the Election Committee

Candidates nor students were ever told who comprised the Ad-Hoc Election Committee. Students could only surmise that Nick Dokoozlian was on the Committee, but no information was released on what other students were administering and overseeing student elections. Evidence suggests that Connor Thomas may also have been on the Ad-Hoc Election Committee. However, both Nick and Connor are current members of the HSG Executive Board, which represents a gross conflict of interest.

Conflict of Interest for Current HSG Board Members

Current HSG Executive Board Members were openly supporting specific candidates. Academic Committee Chair Yash Selvaraj publicly expressed her support for candidate Jenny Zhang at the

town hall. Fundraising Committee Chair Raphael Onwunali and Finance Committee Chair Abrar Hussein sent messages of support or otherwise indicated support for candidates including Kirigit Amlai, John Peloquin, and Jenny Zhang in the Harris WhatsApp group with nearly 400 Harris students. While HSG Board Members supporting certain candidates in and of itself is not an issue, it becomes an issue when, according to the HSG Bylaws: "Any action of a candidate that is found unbecoming of a student by Harris Student Government, as demonstrated by either a majority vote of the current Executive Board or a majority vote by the ad hoc committee, shall result in immediate disqualification." The Executive Board cannot have it both ways: they cannot publicly back specific candidates while simultaneously maintaining the right to disqualify any candidate for any reason. This is a gross conflict of interest.

Utilization of Photographs of Candidates without Consent

Candidates were instructed to submit, along with their candidate application, their campaign platform as well as 'a picture' to be distributed to the student body. The picture I submitted was not used. Instead, HSG used an alternative picture of me without my knowledge or consent and sent it in an email to the entire student body.

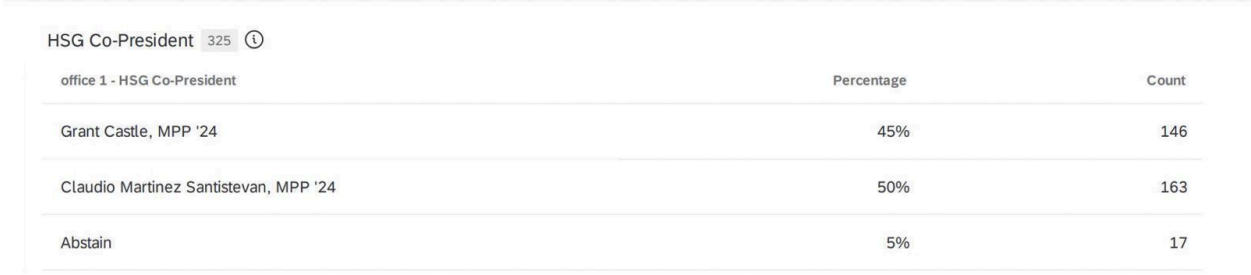
Inaccurate Vote Counts Reported

The votes reportedly received by each candidate do not add up to the total number of votes reportedly cast in the election. In the emails announcing the results of the elections, students can view the votes received by each candidate as well as the total number of votes cast. In the first round results, these numbers add up. 384 votes were reportedly cast, and the vote counts of each candidate do indeed add up to 384 (43 + 113 + 31 + 109 + 60 + 16 + 12 = 384)

HSG Co-Presidents 384

office 1 - HSG Co-Presidents - Selected Choice	Percentage	Count
Kirgit Amlai, MPP '24	11%	43
Grant Castle, MPP '24	29%	113
John Peloquin, MPP '24	8%	31
Claudio Martinez Santistevan, MPP '24	28%	109
Jenny (Yucheng) Zhang, MPP'24	16%	60
Abstain	4%	16
Write-in Candidate	3%	12

However, in the runoff election, the total number of votes reportedly cast was 325. Yet, the individual counts add up to 326 votes (146 + 163 + 17 = 326).



HSG Co-President 325

office 1 - HSG Co-President	Percentage	Count
Grant Castle, MPP '24	45%	146
Claudio Martinez Santistevan, MPP '24	50%	163
Abstain	5%	17

This discrepancy could result from either a technical error in the voting software or a manual manipulation of vote counts. Even if there is just a technical error in the voting software, this raises serious questions regarding the validity of the entire vote count, especially since no students had access to the raw voting data in qualtrics to verify or monitor the count. Numbers don't lie.

No Candidate Received Sufficient Votes to be Declared the Winner

HSG bylaws state the candidates need a majority of votes cast to win an election, yet the candidate declared the winner did not receive a majority of votes cast.

Article VI, Section 7 of the HSG bylaws state:

a. "If more than one candidate runs for an elected office, the winner shall be the candidate who receives the majority (50% + 1) of the votes cast.
b. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, Harris Student Government shall hold a runoff election to determine the winner.
c. The results shall be announced to the student body within 72 hours from the close of voting."

According to clause (a), a candidate must receive 50% + 1 of the votes cast to be declared the winner. However, Claudio Martinez Santistevan received 163/326 votes cast, which is only 50%, not 50% + 1.

Clause (b) does not stipulate that in a runoff election, clause (a) does not apply. The clear intent of clause (b) is that if 3+ candidates run for a position and no candidate receives 50%+1, the top two candidates compete in a runoff so that one single candidate can indeed secure 50%+1 of the vote. Thus, an objective reading of the bylaws posits that even in a runoff, a candidate must receive 50% + 1 to be declared the winner. Since no candidate received a clear 50% + 1 majority in the runoff, there cannot be a winner.

Use of 'Abstain' and 'Write-in' Options in Violation of the Bylaws

Article VI Section 6 states that "Write-in candidates shall be allowed for all positions." In the first-round voting, there was a write-in option. In the runoff voting, there was no write-in option, in violation of the bylaws. Furthermore, in both the first-round voting and the runoff voting, an 'abstain' option was available. However, at no point does Article VI regarding the Executive Board

Election System is an ‘abstain’ vote option authorized or mandated.

Election-Related Emails to Students

An unknown number of students reported that they never received emails related to the election. This was a major issue in the Spring 2023 election and evidently has not yet been resolved. Additionally, when voting links were sent out for the first-round election, they initially did not work and students were unable to vote.