

Smith Community Admin Manifesto

Tolerance, Decentralization, Adaptability, Efficiency

Personal Address

Hello everyone. This is my manifesto for the Community Administrator role. While I previously said I had lost all faith in the sim and would not run, it goes counter to my nature to quit without taking a stab at something myself.

I think most people, like me or not, admit that I have a code of ethics I stick to rigidly, and that I perform my duties to the letter of the job description without bias or self interest. If I can defend Gega as PA, or pretend to be a Conservative well enough to lead the CPC I can act as Community Admin and steward this community that I love as is best for that community and not as my personal beliefs would suggest.

I'm aware there are players who have negative perceptions of me, but I'm also aware that over the last year there have been people I've spoken to in private, or had a good debate with in the server, who will remember those experiences. I'm asking those people and everyone else to take a holistic approach to their assessment of my fitness to manage these reforms, instead of voting based on knee-jerk associations or straw men.

As Discord moderation was the reason we're having this election now, I've addressed it first. However, I'm also looking forward to doing something about a great many of the things I've complained about for several administrations now, and the overall goal for my tenure will be 'reverse decline', building on Teddy's work in stabilizing things.

In terms of tone, I want my administration to resemble most closely Golux's first term as Speaker. Before his eyesight left him less able to supervise his team he was a great Speaker who balanced the needs of the sim with the various groups of players very well, and I want a return to that kind of fair, relaxed, player-engaged community administration in contrast to the previous couple of administrators who were each highly driven to carry out their personal and specific visions.

Thank you.

Discord Moderation

Premise

The problem with the Discord isn't the factionalization. It isn't any one or several people being assholes. It isn't any one stance thought ungoodthinkful by any number of others. It's entitlement. It's purely and simply and only entitlement. That is the one (1) problem with the community right now. It's entitlement on the part

of the people who are offended by politics to exclude the people who espouse politics they dislike. This kills political communities.

It's entitlement to define as somehow more than just mere offense, mere offense. It's entitlement to promote mere distaste to harm, and entitlement to exclude from those same privileges things that other people find offensive or distasteful but which the entitled people do not. It's entitlement to define espousing certain views at all, in any way, as being an asshole. Gega wasn't being an asshole for once when he was finally banned, he just espoused a view that many people disliked and feel **entitled** to define in the same way as harassment with mental backflips.

What's the difference between the two statements when I joke about race mixing versus when a leftist on the server jokes about white people? One of those two people feels entitled to shut down the other.

Worse, when this entitlement is allowed to fester, and is rewarded, we see purity spiralling. Any time a community like this has a dichotomy that divides groups along ideological lines, whichever side has the upper hand and starts to slowly bleed dry the other lowers the bar as they drive out opposition. With Gega gone, I'm now public enemy number one. When I'm gone it'll be Cam. When Cam's gone it'll be Dom, then Ace.

This is not least an issue because new members being subjected to ideological purity tests is not conducive to retention.

What Must Be Done

We've gone through three Community Admins in my time, counting the time when a Speaker was a Community Admin, each with various formulations of Deputy Speakership or other support staff. Every time we see them removed or resign, the hottest issue at the time always boils down to this issue of certain Discord users who refuse to tolerate the beliefs of others; who're occasionally unwilling to even tolerate the presence of others. We keep replacing Speaker with Speaker with Admin and every single time this issue re-emerges. It will **always** happen because political spaces have political disagreements.

Banging our heads against a brick wall over and over again and expecting different results has not worked. It's time to try a new way. That new way is tolerance. As Community Admin I will enforce tolerance on the Discord, and refuse to accommodate the entitled demands of one side that the other should be made to bend the knee.

You will be allowed to debate whether certain things are within the bounds of good taste, and whether that's good to tolerate as a society. You will **not** be allowed to ruin the Discord with the goal of preventing discussion of the things you find distasteful. If **you** are the disruption, no matter how morally righteous you feel your casus belli is, **you** will be given a time out.

That's not to say there will be no rules or standards. They'll simply be consistent. If we tolerate politics like affirmative action in favor of women, we'll tolerate the opposite stance too, however unpopular. If we

tolerate memes like hanging capitalists by the ropes we sell we will also tolerate talk of helicopter rides. If and when a topic is verboten, it will not be one-sidedly so. Porn will not be allowed to be posted, whether gay, straight or animal.

Other existential threats to the sim and/or its Discord will not be allowed either. This includes calls to violence, which quite aside from any ideological divide is illegal in all English speaking Western countries and poses an existential threat to the sim's Discord server and subreddits if not contained.

An 'overflow' general chat will be created. When a discussion is ongoing and others want to have a meta-discussion about the first discussion, it will go to #general-2. Conversely, if #general-2 is where a controversial discussion originates, people who want to have a meta-discussion will move to #general-1. This will also be useful when the return to 'open debate' on meta issues (see 'decentralizing reforms' below) fills #general-1 with debate about whether FPTP is better than PR; people who just want to shitpost can move to #general-2. In this way we should see an end to contentious topics monopolizing the Discord and chilling people who just want to casually chat.

Implementation

If elected as Community Admin I will ask Soup to stay on as a Discord mod, because at my level of tolerance I do need a counter-balance to avoid my own purity spiral. I do not expect Soup will agree to stay on under me, but I have always found him to be reasonable in private and in mod channels and would welcome his continuing as Discord mod.

I will likewise ask Aedelfrid to stay on an interim basis until he decides whether the new way is for him. While we disagree on many things, I find him refreshingly willing to hesitate and think before using mod tools, and willing to recognize it when his immediate gut reaction may not be right to impose on others. I respect this.

Dom will be asked to stay on as a Discord mod too, as someone who has been speaking against this issue of intolerance on the Discord since his first tenure on the Speakership.

Due to the introduction of #general-2, I'll be increasing the number of mods so that when issues arise that see both general chats become busy division of labour is easier to manage. Therefore:

Howling will be offered a role on the Discord team too, for similar reasons, and act as my deputy for community issues.

The kind of meta-arguments about what speech should or should not be tolerated, or what rules the Discord should have, that we've had to death lately are endless, eternally recurring, and useless. They're spam, in other words, and as such they'll be directed to a space for this: a specific channel, or a mega-thread on CMHoCmeta.

At a Glance

There will be tolerance, consistency, and where there are lines they will be universalized, but there will be lines where the sim's existence is at stake.

Decentralizing Reforms

Premise

A few of the issues we face in addressing player needs are:

- Lack of a New Player Experience
- Lack of recruitment - partly due to the above
- Lack of variation
- Lack of opportunity for creativity
- Creativity or variety providers being disincented or disallowed
- Over-conservativity killing emergent gameplay
- Maladaptivity to change
- Implementation of the Council chat having channeled important discussions away from the public eye

P R A X I S

Too much during Teddy's tenure all hinged upon his vision and timeline, and too much work relied upon other work being completed before it could proceed. I want to be able to point at issues that need solving and have players compete or bid to be the ones to implement their solutions. Even if I don't love a solution, if someone has one, and it's daring and creative, I'll either give that player the go-ahead to try it, or conduct a quick straw poll.

Likewise, the Balkanization of departments into autonomous self-contained channels, and the sweeping under the rug of Council debates has had a negative effect on the players' sense of engagement with and ownership of problems.

Many infrequent posters who are nonetheless valuable members of the community lack access to Council, and while Council certainly did its job of controlling opposition to Teddy's vision I think we all forget that even though they may have run hot at times, the public debates about what to do about game problems meant that people cared. Moving it to closed council has reduced engagement. This will end.

Council will be replaced; it will be a publicly readable channel and the role awarded on an opt-in, on-request basis, with the potential for it to be revoked for low effort contributions, though never for unpopular contribution. This will see the return of the admittedly sometimes 'hot' debates that used to rage, but I

prefer this to a game running out of solutions to problems because no one feels strongly about many issues anymore.

In this way; with ideas no longer restricted by when the Community Admin wishes to hear them or has staff free to implement them, we will replace the linear timeline for one person's singular vision being completed step by step with a flurry of activity as issues are raised and people found to work on them. We don't need everyone to be a mod, we just need to be able to temporarily deputize players who have solutions to offer and the willingness to see them implemented.

Those who were seen as gadflies under Teddy will be seen as assets and utilized during my tenure. If for example Redwolf has an idea I don't currently have the time to implement but like, he will be afforded the ability to design a complete proposal and put it before CMHoCmeta for refinement and if necessary vote.

At a Glance

Transparency and a return to a FREE MARKETPLACE of ideas but also, crucially, ad hoc allocation of responsibility for implementation. Good ideas implemented by those whose babies the ideas are.

The Docket and Schedule

Premise

The sim currently does not have the activity to support the current pace of its routine, or at least, not sustainably so. The routine needs to change to support player engagement, not methods found to try to artificially force player engagement to meet an arbitrary routine.

During Vibe's tenure, the pace of bills was increased because modifiers incited this. To accommodate that, Vibe correctly increased the bill cycle to get through the backlog, but when activity went down that schedule became an expectation rather than an accommodation.

Wat Do

As such, Parliament and the docket need reforming to account for our new and reduced circumstances, and when those change it may need reforming again at that time too. The schedule should be considered subject to change at short, but not no notice. It has always been treated like such a big deal to change it by previous admins, but it's not.

After my accession I will run a brief straw poll, and with consensus temporarily reduce the pace of bills and voting and institute a one bill per party docket, plus an extra slot for Government and OO bills. Debates will go up on Monday at 0000 and close on Thursday 0000, with voting and QP going up at that time and lasting until Sunday 0000. Sunday will be a 'day off', or any ongoing events encouraged to do big things on that day

while everyone is free. All times will be in EST, which is not an issue for me as I sleep during the UK daytime, if at all.

This will massively simplify the whole process, which confuses Leaders, House Leaders, bill writers and Parliamentary Team alike, as well as reflecting the pace at which parties realistically want to be putting out bills at this moment.

This is not intended to be permanent. A consultation on the form Parliament routine should take will go up immediately after my accession, even before the temporary measures outlined above take place. This is what I mean by it not being a big deal to change the schedule on a nearly ad-hoc basis to fit the needs of the week. When we have more players, or the parties are experiencing a burst of inspiration, this will be accommodated. When we have fewer players or the parties' most prolific writers are taking a rest, we won't be punishing them for not filling slots.

During the writing of this manifesto I sought input on this topic as it's one I know there are a lot of stances on, but the take-away for my campaign is that the sim will match player engagement, changing to accommodate new circumstances as they develop, whether that be periods of fewer players or more players.

At a Glance

People need the game to reflect what they choose to put into it, not for it to make egregious demands of their time and energy when they're already burning out.

Elections *spits*

Premise

Nobody is clear on what form the upcoming election is going to take. Even as PA, I was not privy to the details of what was going on with regards to election reform, if anything. I don't know what I'm going to inherit from Teddy's administration, if anything.

Previous elections have been draining, demoralizing, degrading, even dangerous to the health of the sim and its players. Elections on similar systems in other sims have led to trouble time and time again, as depending on how well or poorly a Party's term time mods or campaign mods save or screw them they love or hate the weighting term and campaign mods are given.

This system leaves everyone unhappy after an election, to the point that Vibe (previous admin) had to impose a cooling-off period before the results, during which time Teddy (who ran the last one) invested days of effort ensuring everyone would have realistic expectations.

It also creates poor outcomes during the term - for as long as there's even a minor benefit to bill spam, bill spam is de facto required to get ahead. There's no point talking about what people would ideally do; the fact is that at least one party will exploit to the max any benefit that can be gained, 'cheesing' the system, however marginal. In my favorite online game we called it dickstabbing because there are players who would stab themselves in the dick if it gave them a tiny number of points at no other cost, and CMHoC has its share of dickstabbers.

Solutions

As this is contentious, with good ideas on all sides, it's another issue I'd like to host a consultation on. As it's time sensitive, this will also happen immediately following my accession. The initial question will be whether we should proceed with whatever system Teddy has set up for the upcoming election, or whether we should use the following:

- Five days of election events.
- A different event theme per day, with each candidate per riding ranked from first to last in quality.
 - Platforms
 - Lawn signs
 - Speeches
 - All candidates debate their riding competition on a topic chosen pseudorandomly
 - Go Out And Vote graphics
- Leaders will have their own riding to compete in as well as Leaders' events to win points they can distribute among their party at will by the end.
 - Party Platforms (day ONE)
 - National poster
 - National rally
 - National TV ad (video or **very** well-written description)
 - Leaders' debate, with points available commensurately with ranked performance per round.
- Seats cannot be resigned to other users or a Party. If vacated by the incumbent for any reason they go to a by-election, to make up for how ignoring term-time will make it easier for people who only contribute during elections to win seats.
- Keep in mind that while term time *modifiers* won't be used, it will be easier for someone with an active term to produce persuasive events by citing experience and recent contributions. In other words, having an active term is as good a bonus during the campaign as your roleplay skill makes of it.

This is an extremely simplified electoral campaign system that anyone can understand, it's easy to deploy for snap by-elections, and crucially it eliminates the toxic influence modifiers have on term time. I do not have my heart set on it, and I will take consultation on minor tweaks to the general gist of it and then put it to the vote against using whatever Teddy has left us.

FPTP and PR will also be voted on.

At a Glance

We'll look at what Teddy has left us, as a community, and implement it or my alternative, which will be easily done before the next election occurs.

Activity

Premise

CMHoC has, partly as an emergent consequence of aspects of all of the above issues, an activity problem. Like any long-running game, we lose and regain members, but unlike most we aren't recruiting many first-timers or retaining any of those we do.

Further, a lot of people who burn out recently are doing so for systemic reasons - as opposed to just needing a break before being ready to get 'back into things', it is the way things are that in and of themselves has become stale, and won't ever not be stale again unless things change.

Solutions

The sim is in dire need of shaking up. Things Teddy put on hold because his management style requires it will be started immediately after my accession. Jac will be handed the events team and begged to implement some of the ideas he has so far been met with nothing but discouragement in exchange for. VMK will be given press, if he's willing, and that team immediately unfrozen. When someone like Feline takes the initiative and starts work on his own, far from being offended at perceived slights to my authority, I'll review the work and the community's response to the work for inclusion into the sim.

It doesn't matter what those teams are doing, or even if there is a modifiers system in place; people want press and events because they want change; they want something that isn't the nose to the grindstone workaday routine of half-hearted bills, half-hearted debates and votes nobody cares about enough to go to much effort to influence.

Emergent gameplay will be facilitated, wherever at all possible. While unfortunately the sim has no mechanism through which to simulate a war with France, one would not be shut down simply because it is too far out of the ordinary way of things - it just wouldn't be possible to do. If the sim can facilitate a new and novel activity, this should be indulged or even rewarded. A Party will not be prevented from forming on the basis of its ideology being controversial or less serious.

Ad hoc and novel new ideas will be tried, such as arranging formal moderated debates between Ministers and Critics on certain topics, or panel style debates between various personalities, or inviting guests from Canadian political or legal subreddits to simulate townhalls, purely for the sake of giving people something new to talk about.

People who aren't and have never been on any team who have an idea may be allowed to bring it to fruition without needing to necessarily commit to being on any team, or the relevant team may simply be asked to arrange it for us, or I will do it.

I will personally pay for ads shortly after my tenure begins - depending on when my next pay day afterward is. Thus far I have held off, as have others who have volunteered to contribute, because Teddy's conservatism convinced us this was the right thing to do. I say that if people are willing to gamble, let's gamble. Let's try for a burst of new activity - all it can cost us is money we're willing to play with for the chance at an injection of new blood. If it doesn't pay off at the start of my tenure, I for one will try again once a few more of the systems Teddy was holding out for are up and running, in whatever form they've taken during my time.

I will rely on Chapo's data as to which places advertising has previously been effective, as he had already looked into that issue last time it was mooted.

At a Glance

There are players who are dying to do the new and novel things that will bring new life to the sim, and we should let them.

My Team

Due to the number of departments involved, even though many 'departments' consist largely of one person, I would like to have three adjutants, who will have standing orders to run specific things, or take overall charge of something within their domain in my absence.

The reason for this isn't to increase bureaucracy, as I will still be directly involved with all levels of all departments; it is to have a backup deputy community administrator for all possible issues and to make it easier to hear out and implement more than one thing at a time.

Roughly, specific sub-departments will be grouped under one of Community, Canon and Procedure. Where a team has its own head, that head will report to myself and the relevant adjutant, and the adjutant for that department will be my consultant for issues affecting it. So far, my ideal prospective team looks as follows:

