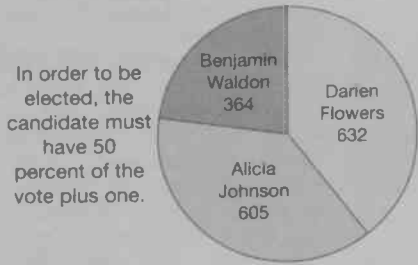


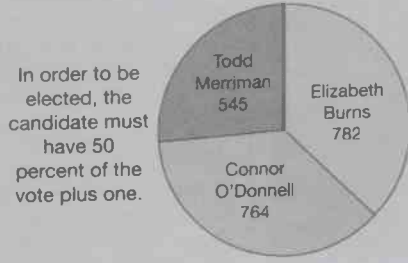
SGA Elections

Original voting breakdown

Executive President

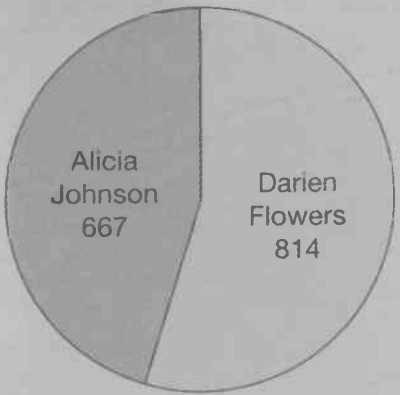


Executive Vice-President

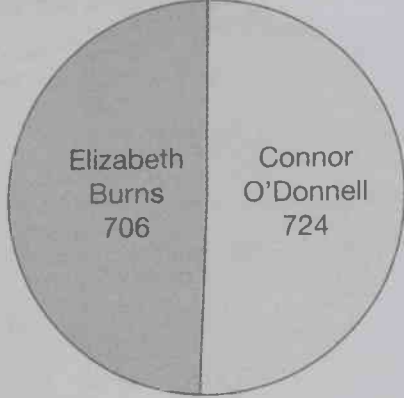


Runoff voting breakdown

Executive President



Executive Vice-President



KRISTEN CASE | Design Chief

New officials credit advertising of elections for voter turnout

Katherine Blunt
Senior Reporter

Palpable tension filled the room in Moseley Center as the results of the run-off elections for executive president and vice president were on the brink of release. The candidates sat very still, clutching the hands of their friends and supporters.

And then, the moment of truth arrived. Cheers erupted for junior Darien Flowers and sophomore Connor O'Donnell, the new executive president and vice president, respectively.

The run-off executive election took place Feb. 23. This year, the increase in Student Government Association executive candidates resulted in not one, but two run-off elections. The two candidates that won the most votes during the general election participated in the run-off election. Candidates need 50 percent of the votes plus one more vote to win.

The heightened interest in the executive presidency and vice presidency speaks to the strength of the current executive board, O'Donnell said.

"The people who were running for executive positions that were already in SGA saw all the things that the (current) executives were doing and wanted to mirror that," he said.

Prior to the election cycle, the current executive board advocated their positions to existing members of the SGA, as well as students outside the realm of government.

"The current executives really challenged all the senators to advertise the election to their own constituents and groups of friends," Flowers said. "I think that word-of-mouth (advertising) really

increased candidates for all positions."

Such advertising increased voter turnout as well. A total of 2,091 votes were cast in the 2012 general election, a 14 percent increase from last year, according to Jana Lynn Patterson, assistant vice president for student life and SGA adviser.

Social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter allowed students to exchange campaign and election information quickly and easily, which bolstered support for candidates and rallied enthusiasm.

"I think Twitter is the fastest-growing social media platform that students are using," Flowers said. "The instantaneous information that Twitter provides was able to attract students to vote."

Student media covered the election campaigns and encouraged students to consider the platforms of each candidate. The SGA website was staffed throughout the entire election cycle, and students were prompted by SGA representatives to vote online.

"I have only heard good things about how high-tech and professional the campaigns and speeches were," O'Donnell said. "It seemed like an actual debate and really mirrored the professionalism of the candidates and the student media."

After a largely successful campaign cycle, Flowers and O'Donnell look forward to working with the student body and the student media to foster change in the Elon community.

"It was definitely a great experience to operate in an environment where we had access to people with the ability to send information to extremely large amounts of people," Flowers said. "It really helped combat that sense of voter apathy that has been prevalent in elections past."

Interactions with candidates prompted students to vote

Hannah DeLaCourt
Senior Reporter

Whether students voted in the recent Student Government Association election was largely determined by whether they heard directly from the candidates and how much significance they felt their vote would have.

SGA election gave students a chance to exercise their right to vote and allowed them to have a decision about which of their peers will represent the student body. But even though voting only takes several minutes, not all students participate in the voting process.

According to senior Grant De Roo, SGA elections co-chair, while there was an increase from the number of students who voted last year, only about half the student body voted this year.

"This year, there were 2,091 students that voted compared to 1,827 from last year," De Roo said. "If we increase the voting base by 50 students every year, we are increasing the voting base by 1 percent."

Although only half the student body voted, De Roo said he is pleased with the outcome this year, including the participation in the runoff election in which 1,481 students voted.

The increase in the voter base benefits SGA because, with every increase, more students are represented, De Roo said. He attributes this year's increase to three factors: Media coverage, the number of candidates and the work of the candidates.

Phoenix 14 News covered SGA's debate live allowing candidates to respond to questions and talk about their platforms. De Roo said the media coverage this year, particularly from The Pendulum and Phoenix 14 News, helped increase the interest of students in the candidates themselves and what SGA can do for them.

De Roo said he also believes the number of candidates running for positions affects how students portray the significance of their vote. As opposed to last year's two candidates, this year there were four candidates running for executive president.

"I think it just depends on how contested of an election it is," he said. "With four candidates (running for executive president), people's votes counted more as opposed to last year when there were only two candidates."

Also with four candidates, they have different groups that they are close to or tied to so that would increase the voter base as well."

De Roo also said he felt the candidates did a good job this year of going out and talking to students and student groups in person. He said they tried to reach out to more diverse groups this year so there would be less of an overlap in the number of students in the same groups they talked to.

Some students said this personal connection was what encouraged them to vote, including junior Cecil Worsley, who said he would not even have considered voting if candidates had not come to talk at his fraternity's chapter meeting.

"The candidates for the different positions came to our chapter and presented some of the issues that they were going to work to improve or correct," Worsley said. "I had no idea that they had that much influence over the campus. Before, I didn't think (SGA) was that important at all."

Other students who did not personally hear from the candidates said if they had had this opportunity, they might have understood more of the importance of SGA and took the time to vote.

"I would have voted if I knew more about (SGA) and I knew more about what it can actually do to help," said freshman Alex Komrovsky. "I basically know nothing about it."

But De Roo said each year is a learning process for SGA and for the candidates running.

"Each year, people learn from the innovative things that past candidates have done," he said. "And students should realize that after their time at Elon, very rarely will they have a vote in a political election that will count so much."

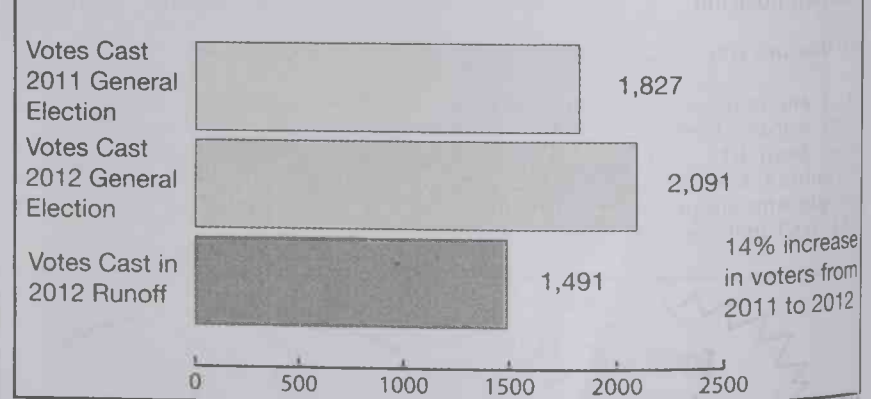
MORE ONLINE

Hear from Sam Warren about the significance of the runoff election.

<http://bit.ly/EPsgareresults>

SHERYL DAVIS | Multimedia Editor

Votes cast in 2011 and 2012



KRISTEN CASE | Design Chief

Vacancies to be filled by new executive president

Ben Donahue
Senior Reporter

While voting for candidates in the recent Student Government Association elections, many Elon students noticed some substantial vacancies in the ballot. More than one candidate was also running unopposed.

These unfilled positions were not for lack of advertising on the organization's behalf according to Rachel Long, executive vice president for SGA. The elections packet

was released during the first week of classes spring semester to give students plenty of time to consider running for a position, she said.

"Additionally, we held an interest meeting with current executive officers and Grant De Roo, the elections committee chair, to provide interested students with valuable insight into a variety of roles on the senate, as well as the elections process before the election packets were due," Long said.

The candidate turnout this year is nothing unusual, Long said. It is typical that some races remain empty — especially in the major spring elections.

"There is generally a bit of fluctuation between years, but rarely a drastically different participation rate for candidates," Long said. "This year in particular is fairly regular, with a bit higher participation in the executive presidential and vice presidential races."

The empty spots in the

ballot remain vacant until Darien Flowers, the new executive president-elect, is sworn into office. All available positions on Academic, which is the coordinating committee of the faculty, and At-Large councils, which consist of class officers and senators for each graduating class, are appointed through a process conducted by the executive president.

De Roo said the process is fairly straightforward.

"How it's really done is that (the executive president)

will go around and see who has an interest in the vacant positions and then he will have the final say on who gets the position," said De Roo.

The normal process of filing for candidacy, as defined by SGA's constitution, requires that all candidates must sign the election rules to verify their knowledge of and adherence to the guidelines, and they must obtain signatures of varying quantity (as defined in the election rules) from voters that pertain to their position.