



# Cornell University

## Trustee Nominating Committee

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March 17, 2006

The Trustee Nominating Committee was established by the Board of Trustees to oversee the election of student and employee trustees. It includes faculty-, student- and employee-elected trustees as well as additional undergraduate and graduate students. The Trustee Nominating Committee met on Thursday, March 9 and again on Friday, March 17 to review challenges filed against candidates in the Student Trustee Election of Spring 2006 and to review the response of the University Ombudsman to the candidates' appeals.

The Committee made the following unanimous determinations:

### **Challenged candidate: Mao Ye**

1) On the challenge filed against Mao Ye that he exceeded the \$100 limit for out-of-pocket spending, the Committee found insufficient evidence.

Decision: Challenge rejected.

### **Challenged candidate: Joseph Rudnick**

1) On the challenges filed against Joseph Rudnick for improper campaigning tactics (use of an instant messaging "away message" and favorable student columns in the *Cornell Daily Sun*), the Committee found that these were not campaign violations.

Decision: Challenge rejected.

2) On the challenges filed against Joseph Rudnick for observed association with a political ticket of the Student Assembly election, the committee found evidence of electronic communications in which his name was explicitly linked with the undergraduate "Clean Slate" ticket. This was a clear violation of rule 8(b), which states that "all campaign materials, either physical or electronic, published by candidates and/or their supporters are to promote only the Student Trustee candidate." The Committee found that his association with the undergraduate elections coalition known as "Clean Slate" was also implied to voters in other ways.

Decision: Candidate disqualified as violations altered the fairness of the election.

### **Challenged candidate: Rayon Taylor**

1) On the challenge filed against Rayon Taylor for not complying with the posting policies for residence halls, the committee found insufficient evidence.

Decision: Challenge rejected.

2) On the challenges filed against Rayon Taylor for improper use of electronic communications, the committee found evidence of email sent by a Cornell staff member using restricted, administrative electronic mailing lists to all undergraduate students in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations on March 6, 2006 that included his campaign message and photo. The Committee found that this was a violation of rule 7(c), which states that "lists provided or supported by University departments may not be used for campaign purposes."

Decision: Candidate disqualified as this violation altered the fairness of the election.

3) On the challenges filed against Rayon Taylor for observed association with a political ticket of the Student Assembly election, the Committee found an implied association with the undergraduate elections coalition known as "University Voice." This was a clear violation of rule 8(b), which states that "all campaign materials, either physical or electronic, published by candidates and/or their supporters are to promote only the Student Trustee candidate."

Decision: Candidate disqualified as this violation altered the fairness of the election.

The Committee regrets having to disqualify two of the four candidates for election violations. The rules that they violated were put in place specifically to avoid the unfair campaign practices that had characterized previous elections. Additional changes to the election process and the rules that govern it will likely need to take place in the future. The Committee notes that the other two of the four candidates conducted a fair campaign.

The Committee believes strongly in the importance of preserving the integrity of the electoral process for the protection of the rights both of candidates and the student body as a whole. Few universities have students on their Board of Trustees, so it is essential that the election of student trustees is conducted at the highest standard.

The Committee's examination of the challenges and judgments regarding them were made before the results of the balloting were known.

This election was conducted according to the Hare System. As a result of these disqualifications, those who voted for Joseph Rudnick or Rayon Taylor as their first choice had their votes redistributed to their second choice (if one was expressed) before the votes were counted.

The winner of the Spring 2006 Student Trustee election is Mao Ye.

Signed,

Trustee Nominating Committee  
Chair, Kathleen Rasmussen, Faculty Trustee  
Michael Esposito M'ILR '03, Employee Trustee  
Douglas Mitarotonda BA '02, MEng '03, Grad, Student Trustee  
Michael Walsh Grad, Student Member  
Linda Louie '08, Student Member  
Derek Schaeffer '07, Student Member