

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

The US Presidential elections have always been a historic event that are closely followed every four years by people across the globe. It has proven to be a process of great debate, controversy, and anxiety. To many, history was made 8 years ago when the first Black President of America set foot in the White House. History will be made either way this year if Hillary Clinton becomes the first woman to hold office, or if Donald Trump Jr. becomes the first President to never have held any previous public office.

Politics in practice is less about idealism and more about pragmatic realities, especially in a democracy. A politician, no matter how ideal, cannot win without swaying the masses and garnering votes, thus rendering their idealism moot. Bernie Sanders is a good example of this, and while he may have captured the hearts of many, it simply was not enough to contest the Presidential elections.

We hope that over the course of the background guides provided to you, along with your research, you are able to understand the realities of democracy and political contestation. It is to be remembered that the campaign simulations will rarely feature policy debate and shall not unduly concern itself with the rhetoric usually associated with political debate. Since the simulation shall take place in November, the actual campaigns themselves shall be entering their last phase before elections take place, and so we anticipate intense planning and last minute strategies to bolster the numbers as much as possible. Familiarize yourselves with the campaign, the candidates, the voters, the trends, and most importantly, your roles in the campaign. Each of you shall serve an important purpose that will ensure the success of the campaign.

History shall be made. History favors the victors.
You shall write that history.

All the best.

Yours sincerely
Karn Mamgain
Indraneil Chaudhury
Vasundhara Bakhru
Anusuiya Radhika

The Candidates and Where They Come From

The candidates, of course, are the star players in the presidential election. They get all the attention, and they select the issues they'll focus on and the messages they'll convey to voters. They also determine how their campaigns will be run—though the candidate's campaign managers, pollsters, and other advisers usually play major roles in these decisions. How they'll go about their fund-raising, how many debates they'll participate in, how they'll work the Internet, whether they'll “go negative” in their advertising, and how much information they'll provide about their policy positions: These are all aspects of the campaign the candidate must address. These individuals running as candidates more often than not, they come from other elective offices—governorships, the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives—where they have shown they are attractive to voters and where they have built a public record of decision-making and action on a variety of policy issues. To qualify for the Presidency a person must be a natural-born U.S. citizen and at least 35 years old. Because American politics has been dominated by white men for so long, women and minority candidates for the presidency have been few and far between making this year an exception and step forward in American Electoral History with Hillary Clinton being the Democratic National Party's presidential candidate.

Funding for campaign

The effect of campaign contributions on politics has been a concern throughout America's history. Congress passed a law making corporate contributions to federal campaigns illegal in 1907. President Richard Nixon signed into law the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) of 1971. Among other things, the law required candidates and donors to report their political contributions and spending. After the Watergate scandal of 1972–1974, which involved big donors to President Nixon's campaign, legislators revisited the campaign finance issue. The FECA amendments signed into law in 1974 represented the most comprehensive campaign finance legislation ever adopted at the federal level.

Among other things, the law:

- Strengthened requirements for reporting of campaign contributions and spending.
- Set new limits on spending in congressional elections.
- Limited the size of contributions to candidates and parties and put a cap on an individual's total contributions per campaign cycle.
- Created a system of public financing to support the campaigns of presidential candidates who agree to specific contribution and spending limits.
- Created an independent agency, the Federal Election Commission, to enforce the new rules.

Candidates in every presidential election since 1976 have been eligible to receive public funds to cover some of the costs of their campaigns. The idea behind the public funding of presidential elections is to make candidates less dependent on contributions from special interests and wealthy donors. Public money for presidential elections comes from a fund supported by the “taxpayer check-off” on individual tax returns, the public financing system is voluntary for candidates— it offers them a deal, which must be made attractive for them to agree to it. The

deal is: If you agree to limit the amount of money you raise and spend and play by our rules, we will give you lots of money for your campaign—partial funding in the primaries and full funding in the general election. Up until 2000, almost all candidates found this set of trade-offs agreeable and participated. In 2000, the system began to show weakness, when George W. Bush declined to accept public financing for the primaries and instead raised more money from private sources. Both he and his Democratic opponent accepted public financing in the general election, though. It seems very likely that the most serious candidates (that is, the best financed) may forgo public financing in both the primary and general elections in 2008. This can be clearly noticed in these elections and Donald Trump’s “Self-Funded” campaign.

How Much can be contributed

Individuals may contribute up to \$2,300 to a presidential candidate during the primary election campaign, whether or not the candidate accepts public matching funds. During the general election, major-party candidates who have accepted public funding may not accept individual campaign contributions, with minor exceptions. However, if a candidate does not accept public financing for the general election, then individuals can contribute another \$2,300 to a presidential candidate for the general election. *The sky’s the limit when a presidential candidate refuses to accept public funds and the accompanying restrictions on campaign contributions and spending.*

PACing it up:

Another established practice among would-be candidates long before a presidential election is to establish one or more Political Action committees (PACS). These “leadership PACs” allow candidates to collect contributions that do not count against their presidential fundraising and spending limits—as long as they haven’t officially filed with the Federal Election Commission as candidates for president. The ostensible purpose of the PACs is to make contributions to other politicians in their campaigns for office. With PAC money, however, candidates also are able to travel around the country, hire staff and consultants, and develop mailing lists and fundraising appeals that will form the basis of their presidential campaigns.

Now understanding that the process for running for President starts much before the papers are actually filed or the announcements are made, we can go about discussing the process that follows, about which, every delegate will be expected to have knowledge about superseding this guide and an understanding about how their candidate performed, lacked or capitalized. Also to track the presidential debates that will follow

The process to where we stand now:

The Primaries and Caucuses

Long gone are the days where the party's nominee for president was decided in a room after much wheeling and dealing and nominated at the convention. Realizing that was not a very democratic way to choose a major-party presidential candidate, the Democratic and Republican parties have opened up the process to voters. The result is today's often confusing schedule of primaries and caucuses which make "voters and not party leaders the VIPs" in choosing the party's presidential nominees.

The series of Presidential primary elections and caucuses is a very important step in the long and extremely complex process of electing the President of the United States of America. The goal of the primaries and caucuses are to choose delegates that have committed themselves to a particular candidate that they will represent at the party's national convention. Although voters may see the candidate's name at the primary poll, they are actually voting for delegates that will represent the candidate. Sometimes the delegates name and party is listed and shows the candidate they will represent.

The primary elections are run by state and local governments in the states that *do not have* caucuses. A caucus is a meeting of members of a political party on the precinct level, the smallest election district. Thousands of caucuses occur at the same time and date throughout a state. In most states, only voters registered with a party may vote in that party's primary, known as a closed primary. In some states, a semi-closed primary is practiced, in which voters unaffiliated with a party (independents) may choose a party primary in which to vote. In an open primary, any voter may vote in any party's primary. Also, there are *presidential preference contests*, which are merely "beauty contests" or straw polls that do not result in the selection of any delegates, which are instead chosen at caucuses. Nearly all states have a binding primary, in which the results of the election legally bind some or all of the delegates to vote for a particular candidate at the national convention, for a certain number of ballots or until the candidate releases the delegates. A handful of states practice a non-binding primary, which may select candidates to a state convention, which then selects delegates.

Not many of the of eligible voters participate in the primaries (less than 25%) and even lower percentage of eligible voters for caucuses (less than 10%). These voters tend to be more partisan than general election voters. That means that Republican primary voters tend to be more conservative and the Democrat voters more liberal. Thus, to win over these voters during the primary campaign candidates often speak about issues that are more partisan and ideological.

The Conventions

The voting method at the conventions is a "roll call of the states" – which include territories such as Washington D.C., American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands, and a catch-all "delegates abroad" category. The states are called in alphabetical order (Alabama is first; Wyoming is last). The state's spokesperson (who generally begins his or her speech with glowing

comments about the state's history, geography, and notable party elected officials) can either choose to announce its delegate count or pass. Once all states have either declared or passed, those states which passed are called upon again to announce their delegate count. (Generally, a decision is made beforehand that some states will pass in the first round, in order to allow a particular state – generally either the presidential or vice presidential nominee's home state – to be the one whose delegate count pushes the candidate "over the top", thus securing the nomination.). The national party conventions mark the official turning point in the presidential campaign from the primary season to the general election in the fall. The convention allows the party to put aside any intra-party jockeying and squabbles that occurred during the primaries, unite behind its nominee, define itself for the voters, and set the tone for the fall offensive.

The Function of the National Conventions

The conventions are the highest, most important source of authority for a national party. The conventions are officially the top decision-making body of the parties. The party conventions play some important formal roles. In addition to nominating their presidential and vice presidential candidates, conventions officially establish party rules and priorities for the four years between presidential elections.

The major items on the convention agenda are:

- Nominate candidates for president and vice president;
- Adopt a national party platform;
- Adopt the rules that govern the party for the next four years;
- Rally the party faithful.

Third party

Candidates belonging to parties other than the main two, that is the Democratic and the Republican are referred to as Third Party Candidates. Though usually sidelined and never have succeeded in winning the presidency, Third party candidates, especially this year, severely impact the voter count and popularity of the other main party candidates. Historically Ross Perot's campaign is the most successful third party campaign in 1992, where he managed to muster 20 million votes, proving that third party can add a dimension to calculations made by polls mostly impacting swing voters.

This year's main Third party candidates are –

- Darell Castle (Constitution party of the U.S.A)
- Dr. Jill Stein (Green Party)
- Gary Johnson (Libertarian Party)

Swing states and Swing Voters

Under the Electoral College system, almost all of the states award their electoral votes on a winner-take-all basis, so that the candidate who receives the most popular votes in a state receives all of that state's electoral votes.

Candidates devote their energies to the largest states that they feel they have a chance of winning. At the same time, they tend to make only token appearances in states where they are assured of victory while conceding those states where their chances are slim. The candidates

generally focus their campaigning on “swing states” that could go either way in the presidential election. Just as there are swing states, there are also swing voters— individuals who don’t necessarily vote along party lines or whose votes are still up for grabs.

With the number of independent voters a sizeable 10 to 12 percent of the American electorate in recent years, presidential campaigns have focused on attracting the support of this all-important group.

What’s to follow:

Presidential Debates

During presidential elections in the United States, it has become customary for the main candidates (almost always the candidates of the two largest parties, currently the Democratic Party and the Republican Party) to engage in a debate. The topics discussed in the debate are often the most controversial issues of the time, and arguably elections have been nearly decided by these debates. Candidate debates are not constitutionally mandated, but it is now considered a *de facto* election process. The debates are targeted mainly at undecided voters; those who tend not to be partial to any political ideology or party.

Presidential debates are held late in the election cycle after the political parties have nominated their candidates. The candidates meet in a large hall, often at a university, before an audience of citizens. The formats of the debates have varied, with questions sometimes posed from one or more journalist moderators and in other cases members of the audience. Between 1988 and 2000, the formats have been governed in detail by secret memoranda of understanding (MOU) between the two major candidates; an MOU for 2004 was also negotiated, but unlike the earlier agreements it was jointly released by the two candidates.

Debates are broadcast live on television and radio. Recent debates have drawn decidedly smaller audiences, ranging from 46 million for the first 2000 debate to a high of over 67 million for the first debate in 2012.

This year the schedule for the Presidential Debates are –

Monday, September 26, 2016

First presidential debate

Moderator: Lester Holt, Anchor, NBC Nightly News

Location: Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY

The first debate will be divided into three time segments of approximately 30 minutes each on major topics to be selected by the moderator and announced at least one week before the debate. The moderator will open each segment with a question, after which each candidate will have two minutes to respond. Candidates will then have an opportunity to respond to each other. The moderator will use the balance of the time in the segment for a deeper discussion of the topic.

Tuesday, October 4, 2016

Vice Presidential debate

Moderator: Elaine Quijano, Anchor, CBSN and Correspondent, CBS News

Location: Longwood University, Farmville, VA

The Vice Presidential debate will be divided into nine time segments of approximately 10 minutes each. The moderator will ask an opening question, after which each candidate will have two minutes to respond. The moderator will use the balance of the time in the segment for a deeper discussion of the topic.

Sunday, October 9, 2016

Second presidential debate

Moderator: Martha Raddatz, Chief Global Affairs Correspondent and Co-Anchor of "This Week," ABC

Moderator: Anderson Cooper, Anchor, CNN

Location: Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, MO

The second presidential debate will take the form of a town meeting, in which half of the questions will be posed directly by citizen participants and the other half will be posed by the moderator based on topics of broad public interest as reflected in social media and other sources. The candidates will have two minutes to respond and there will be an additional minute for the moderator to facilitate further discussion. The town meeting participants will be uncommitted voters selected by the Gallup Organization.

Wednesday, October 19, 2016

Third presidential debate

Moderator: Chris Wallace, Anchor, Fox News Sunday

Location: University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV

The first debate will be divided into six time segments of approximately 15 minutes each on major topics to be selected by the moderator and announced at least one week before the debate. The moderator will open each segment with a question, after which each candidate will have two minutes to respond. Candidates will then have an opportunity to respond to each other. The moderator will use the balance of the time in the segment for a deeper discussion of the topic.

What to Expect:

The first debate shall take place on the 26th of September, and shall set the pace and topics for the following two.

It is likely, considering the rise of terror attacks across the globe, issues of national security shall be raised. The moderator, Lester Holt, has suggested that topics considering the country's trajectory, and plans for America's prosperity shall probably be the other two topics.

The Presidential Debates are important events during campaigns to reverse downward trends in popularity, or set one in motion. It is likely that the two candidates shall try to expose the "uglier" side of their opponent.

Hillary Clinton, is likely to focus on trying to get Donald Trump to lose his cool, and thereby proving her campaign's argument of him being a few cents short of the proverbial dollar. Donald Trump, while not an experienced debater like Mrs. Clinton is a former TV star and is adept at dramatic rhetoric, this is useful if he feels that he may be losing an argument. His showmanship during his campaign has proven his ability to sway a crowd, and ultimately, the Presidential Debate is won not because of who was right, but in whose favor the polls change.

Donald Trump is likely to attack Clinton in such a way that her words seem deceiving. His campaign attack against her has focused on duplicity, and it would be valuable to his campaign if he is able to prove it during the Debate. Clinton, however, is an experienced lawyer, Senator, and Secretary of State. Her legal and political career have taught her the judicious of words, and shall be likely to recognize moments during the debate when Trump would attempt to corner her.

Apart from the tactics itself, the debates shall be an important source of information for understanding the campaign thus far. Dear delegates, if you seem confused about the stance their campaigns take on certain issues, you are likely to find your answer during these debates.

The debates shall also set into motion important trends that decide who wins the swing states. These are the regions that shall be the most critical during the simulation and during the last stages of the campaign.

The responses of voters to the debates shall be an important feedback mechanism to decide the success of the campaign in consolidating votes and maintaining them. It would be a good idea to follow voter polls and trends as soon as the debates begin to develop new campaign strategies.

Understanding Party Ideology

The two parties have had historically divergent ideologies, but not necessarily incompatible. The Democrats are referred to as Liberals, and the Republicans are referred to as Conservatives because of their broad ideological leanings. Both parties among their voter base and party members have a mix of both conservative and liberals, which allows for relative cooperation and reconciliation between the two major Parties.

Liberals and Democrats

The liberals is a term used to represent a variety of worldviews and opinions that can be characterized by the ideals of social justice, civil liberties and equality. The policies they tend to advocate are ones of universal healthcare, universal education, same sex marriage, and gun control.

Amongst the party members there are those who advocate progressive policies such as stricter business controls, social welfare programs, and workers' rights.

Under the Obama administration there has been a push to increase gun control, legalize gay marriage and enforce LGBTQ rights, introduce universal healthcare services. Obama during both his election campaigns promised withdrawal of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, which has been largely unsuccessful. Major foreign policy initiative during his tenure include reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba, and easing sanctions on Iran to ensure that their nuclear program can be monitored.

These are cornerstones of the Democrat campaign and have been used to garner votes amongst college students, women, Native Americans, African Americans, members of the LGBTQ community, and the academia (particularly the liberal arts and humanities).

Conservatives and Republicans

American Conservatism is a broad system of political beliefs in the United States that is characterized by respect for American traditions, support for Judeo-Christian values, economic liberalism, anti-communism, and a defense of Western culture from perceived threats posed by creeping socialism, moral relativism, and multiculturalism. Liberty is a core value, with a particular emphasis on strengthening the free market, limiting the size and scope of government, and opposition to high taxes and to government or labor union encroachment on the entrepreneur. American conservatives consider individual liberty as the fundamental trait of democracy, which contrasts with modern American liberals, who generally place a greater value on equality and social justice.

Questions to consider for research:

- What is the expected voter turnout?
- What is the expected demographic of the voters that turnout?
- What is the probability of winning the swing states?
- What form of campaigning garners the most attention?
- What are the indirect tools at your disposal?
- What are the deployable PR strategies during the Presidential Debates?
- Who are the Third Party likely to support?
- How do we convert Third Party voters?
- How could you indirectly influence the other campaign's voter base?
- What is your role within the campaign team?
- How do you leverage your role to maximize effectiveness?
- How do you influence voter turnout?
- How do you create awareness of the issues raised in the campaign?