

How we run an All Candidates Night A Step-by-Step Plan

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- Find out if your club is interested in running the event and, if yes, pass around a sign-up list with various responsibilities. It is very important that members are onboard.
- Search out a venue – we use a mini-theatre in a local high school. It has a raised platform and a capacity of about 200. We book through a Community Use of Schools website and can indicate how many tables, chairs, etc. that are needed. Find out what dates are available. Connect with the principal.
- Identify the candidates and find contact information for the candidate or for the campaign manager.
- Select several possible dates which don't conflict with other known election events.
- Send an introductory letter to each of the campaign offices, via email, informing them that you will be running an All Candidates Night for the upcoming election and hoping that they will be able to attend. Ask them to indicate which dates, of those identified, will be acceptable.
- Book the facility once the date is selected.
- Confirm the date and time with the candidates and indicate that you will be sending more detailed information 10-14 days prior to the event.
- Find out insurance requirements. Insurance is available at no cost through Ontario CFUW.
- Find a sponsor – The local Retired Teachers of Ontario District covers our costs – hall rental, rental permit, gift for student helper, gifts for school staff helper. This also ensures a larger audience.
- Arrange for a visit to the venue for members of the committee.
- Have someone design a poster which can be printed and posted, if desired, and sent by email to members, friends, etc.
- Break down the responsibilities into very small jobs so that no one feels overwhelmed. This is key!! More on this later.
- Send out a list of responsibilities to members of the team.
- Find someone in the club who will be willing to act as Moderator for the event. This is key!

- Find a sub-committee of at least three people who will come up with three questions for the candidates. Election priorities can be found on the CFUW website if this is a provincial or federal election. Consult with the sponsor, if any, to see if any of their concerns can be included.
- Send a letter two weeks in advance, by email, detailing the timing of the event. Include the three questions which the committee has decided upon. Candidates will have time to prepare their answers in advance. Candidates can also be invited to bring election material and a sign which will be taped to the front of their tables.
- Arrange for two microphones – one for the moderator and one to be passed back and forth between the candidates. Less chance for other candidates to interrupt.
- Small jobs that we assign are as follows: bring the banner and set up, greet candidates, greet members of the public and direct to the venue, welcome/introduce/thank, time the responses, transfer the microphone, design poster, contact local newspaper about coverage (community events, press release, reporter at event), update website and Facebook, formulate three pertinent questions, establish order of candidates answering questions (random order), bring paper, pencils, and hand out to people as they enter, bring ice, bring pitchers and fill with water and ice and put on tables, bring glasses, bring strong tape and tape election signs to tables at front, bring a stool for the moderator, collect questions from the floor, consolidate questions from the floor, bring CFUW promotional material and set up display...
- Example of random order: If candidates are numbered 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 they would answer the first question in that order but for question 2, they would answer in this order...6,3,7,2,5,1,4 and question 3 as follows...2,4,6,1,3,7,5, etc.
- Send out a reminder/summary of the event to members of the team, including place, date, time, list of duties and alphabetical list of team members' names and duties, schedule for the event.

The following is sent to members of the team

All Candidates Night for Election.

Date/Time:		7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Venue:	Capacity: approx. ??
Candidates:	Conservative – Green – Independent – Liberal – NDP – Pauper Party of Canada – People’s Party of Canada – Veterans’ Coalition Party –	

Introduction/thank you: _____ usually the President

Banner: _____

Setting Schedule:

- 1) _____ - setting timetable
- 2) _____ - sharing timetable with volunteers

Moderator: _____

Timer: _____

Microphone: _____ (transferring between candidates)

Publicity:

Make directional

- 1) _____ – design poster and send to _____ signs to washrooms, etc.

Community News

- 2) _____ – contact Expositor about coverage,
- 3) _____ – post info on our website
- 4) _____ – post info on Facebook

Formulate questions: Three people

Establish order of candidates: _____ (for answering each question)

Paper/pencils/tape/ice/stool: people as they enter

- 1) _____ – bring paper/pencils/basket, hand out to
- 2) _____ – give out paper/pencils
- 3) _____ – bring ice
- 4) _____ – bring strong tape, tape election signs
- 5) _____ – assist with signs
- 6) _____ – bring stool for moderator

Collect questions from floor: Three people

Consolidate questions from floor and give to Moderator: Three people

Check out venue/set up:

Water:

- 1) _____ – bring three pitchers, fill with ice/water
- 2) _____ – help with water, put on tables
- 3) _____ – bring 8 matching glasses (not disposable)

Reception:

- 1) Two people – direct people to mini-theatre
- 2) Three people – Greet/direct candidates
- 3) Two people – Greet and direct general public

CFUW promotional materials: _____

Venue, Insurance, team, organization: _____

Thank you letters: _____

Brief Overview of CFUW Brantford 2019 Event for federal election

Brantford/Brant County has a population of approximately 140,000. There is one riding.

We keep the same format for each event. Very briefly, the candidates are seated at the front behind their election signs. People are welcomed by the President or alternate and then the microphone is turned over to the moderator who introduces the candidates and manages the event.

Each candidate gives an opening statement and then each candidate responds to three questions which have been sent to them 10-14 days in advance. These are written by a team of three members using input from CFUW's and RTO's key issues. A timer holds up a yellow card 30 seconds before the time limit and a red card when time is up.

We have found that it is best to vary the order in which the candidates answer the questions so that B does not always follow A or come just before C. We mix it up so that B will follow E or C. This is laid out in the moderator's notes. One question per page with the order of candidates clearly shown.

Meanwhile, members of the audience write out questions on pieces of paper which have been given out at the entrance. These are collected by runners and taken to a team of three at the back of the room. The questions are reviewed to determine whether they are appropriate and aimed at the correct level of government. These are consolidated so that there is no repetition. The questions are then taken to the moderator. Members of the public do not directly question the candidates.

After the initial three questions are posed, the moderator begins working through the second set of questions until approximately 15 minutes before the end of the night. Each candidate then has one minute to sum up. The moderator thanks the candidates who then turns the mic back over to the President who thanks all involved, etc. The candidates and members of the audience then have a chance to meet and converse at the back where their literature has been displayed.

We have been very fortunate to have help from the school principal in that he has found a teacher and student volunteer who sets up the sound system for us.

Most times everything falls into place nicely but not always!

Finding a venue and a date which will work for all, or at least, the majority of the candidates can be a challenge and getting candidates to commit is another difficulty. Once the candidates have confirmed their attendance and the venue is booked it is all clear sailing! Usually!! This year we had a candidate, who we didn't know about, register on the last day. We also found out that one of the candidates could possibly say some things which were not appropriate in our setting. We have had to investigate security... and there was a looming CUPE strike which could necessitate the cancellation of the entire event but... all in all... our All Candidates Nights have been popular, well-attended events. We feel that we are contributing to our community and raising the profile of CFUW.