

Selecting Presidential Candidates: Staging a Mock Republican Convention on a Modest Budget

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*Special Report, April 20, 2024, Republican National Convention, Loretto, Pennsylvania:
We have breaking news from the Republican Convention. The ballots have been cast and counted. The delegates have made their selection. The Republicans have selected their 2024 presidential nominee. It will be Donald J. Trump with 1,237 votes. Trump narrowly defeated Nikki Haley for the nomination. Haley finished with 1,192 votes. Wait. This just in -- the delegates have selected Trump's running mate. JD Vance! The Trump-Vance ticket should be a formidable one as the Republicans seek to recapture the presidency following four years of Democratic control. Will Donald Trump succeed in winning a second, non-consecutive term as president? And now we return you to your regularly scheduled programming.*

Wait. The Republicans did nominate Donald Trump and they did pair him with JD Vance, but they met in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in July. However, the above “special report” accurately describes how things turned out months earlier in Loretto, PA at Saint Francis University’s Mock Republican Convention.

Introduction

Students started staging mock national conventions at Saint Francis University (SFU) in 1960. The events have become campus traditions, with mock conventions having been held every four years since. In presidential election years, SFU hosts mock conventions for the party that does not occupy the White House. In 2024, with President Biden in office, it was time for another Republican Convention. This paper describes some of our 2024 experiences in the hope that these comments will be helpful if you decide to stage a mock convention of your own.

Staging mock conventions is labor intensive. Is the effort worthwhile? Our students report that they enjoy and benefit from the experience. If you do not sponsor a mock convention on your own campus, consider accepting our invitation to join us at SFU for our next mock convention in 2028.

Organization

Our mock conventions are designed to resemble national party conventions as closely as possible. We have staged sixteen mock conventions thus far. In 2020, we were prepared to hold a mock Democratic convention. Speakers were scheduled, delegations were in place, the platform was finalized, decorating was about to begin, when COVID struck and campus was shut down. We were unable to hold a live mock convention that year, but we did conduct a mock Democratic primary election instead. Joe Biden won. In 2024, we were able to stage another live convention on campus. One major difference between our mock conventions and the actual party conventions is that ours last a few hours instead of several days. Another is that we run our mock conventions as “brokered” or “contested” conventions. All of our delegates are unpledged. They are free to vote their own preferences. They are not trying to predict how their states will vote at the summer convention, nor are they trying to predict the Party’s nominee. They arrive prepared to listen, cheer, bargain, negotiate, and vote.

Students and other members of the University community serve as campaign managers, state delegates, and state chairpersons. State chairs recruit delegates with whom they plot strategy and prepare posters, banners, and costumes. Campaign managers court delegates, distribute literature, and sometimes arrange appearances at the convention by their candidates or surrogates. Students serve on platform and other committees. They transform the student center into an authentic-looking convention hall. Much direction is provided by faculty but wide student involvement is critical to any successful convention.

Mock conventions are sponsored by the SFU Department of History and Political Science, the History Club, the Pre-Law Club, and the SFU Center for the Study of Government and Law (CSG&L). Students from various majors belong to the Clubs, but many are studying political science and/or History. Department faculty head the Planning Committee. Club officers also serve on this Committee. An officer serves as convention chair. Additional co-chairs are sometimes designated. Other club members choose committees that they will chair including the Correspondence Committee, the Platform Committee, the Credentials Committee, the Rules Committee, the Media and Community Relations Committee, and the Hall and Decorations Committee. Students also served as campaign managers for Donald Trump and Nikki Haley. Additional responsibilities were assumed by these individuals as needed. For example, one student served as recording officer and students and faculty served as convention floor managers. These specialized standing committees reported to the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee oversaw the entire convention -- its procedures, preparations, and committees.

Importance of Early Planning

About one year before the mock convention, we began publicizing coming events through meetings with key stakeholders including interested faculty, staff, and students. First steps were to determine the date of the primary election in our state, set the date for the mock convention, identify the appropriate campus location for the event, and reserve the venue. Book it well in advance. Budget estimates were prepared. Funding normally was supplied through the Student Government Association (parent organization of the History and Pre-Law Clubs), the History and Political Science Department, and the CSG&L. Additional support has been provided by the University president, the academic affairs office, and our dean. The State Republican Party has also contributed funds to help us defray expenses at some of our past conventions. This time, however, budgetary constraints were such that we did not have a dedicated budget line to fund operations. Instead, we drew money to cover basic expenses primarily from departmental and CSG&L accounts. In the past, we have said that it would be possible to stage a no-frills mock convention on a budget of a few hundred dollars, but a larger budget makes it possible to offer potential speakers a reasonable honorarium. In 2024, we put that claim to the test and found it to be true. More details about cost-cutting steps follow.

A special course, "The Road to the White House," was offered during the spring 2024 semester. Using relevant readings, (including Stephen Wayne's, *The Road to the White House: The Politics of Presidential Elections*), a directly relevant C-SPAN series, and related materials, the course studied presidential selection processes, in general, and the 2024 campaign in particular. Seminar students played key roles in the mock convention. These students also functioned as members of the Platform Committee and consulted on various plans. This course ensured that we had a core group of knowledgeable students for convention leadership roles. Student journal entries also provided an indication of the academic benefits that mock convention participants derive.

We usually schedule our mock conventions for a weekend shortly before the Pennsylvania primaries so we can invite campaigning candidates or their surrogates to visit our campus. This time, our convention was held on April 20, just three days before Pennsylvania's April 23rd primary. Regardless of the date you choose, it is important to set the date far in advance so reservations and other facilities arrangements can be made.

Committees

During the fall semester prior to the spring convention, several committees were established to work on specific projects. Some committee chairs were selected at this time.

The Planning Committee held meetings to discuss possible speakers. Discussions took place with assorted campus officials regarding budgetary and other matters. The keynote speaker's honorarium is

usually our biggest expense. In some of our earlier conventions, we were fortunate to have fairly substantial budgets and we were able to draw prominent keynoters from lists provided by speakers' bureaus. Funds were more limited in 2024 and we adapted. Former Chairman of the Republican State Committee of Pennsylvania, Robert A. "Rob" Gleason, Jr., is a friend on the University and a former SFU trustee. He offered his help and he agreed to serve as our keynote speaker. Mr. Gleason served in Pennsylvania Governor Dick Thornburgh, Bob Casey, and Tom Ridge's administrations. He also held appointments under Presidents George W. Bush and Donald Trump. He was a member of the Republican National Committee and attended numerous Republican National Conventions, chairing the Pennsylvania delegation three times.

We do not invite current elected officials to keynote. Their schedules are fluid and they can seldom provide the advance commitment we need to make firm plans. Such elected officials, however, can serve as additional featured speakers. Our list of 2024 speakers included Pennsylvania Representative Lou Schmitt, Jr. (R-79th). Lou was a 1984 SFU graduate, having earned his B.A. degree with a double major in History and political science. Additional speakers included former Pennsylvania State Senator John H. Eichelberger, Jr., Cambria County Commissioner Scott Hunt, and former Huntingdon County Commissioner William Hoover.

Representative Schmitt, Senator Eichelberger, and Commissioners Hunt and Hoover provided brief welcoming speeches, followed by Mr. Gleason's keynote address. Unlike past years, we decided to ask our speakers to be active participants throughout the mock convention. Each speaker chaired a state delegation and participated in the balloting. As a result, they interacted with student delegates from other states and with the students who were chairing the Trump and Haley campaigns. The speakers and the students enjoyed these interactions and we plan to continue this practice in future mock conventions.

Keynote speakers over the years have included Senator Richard Schweiker, Senator Eugene McCarthy, Georgia State Senator Julian Bond, President Reagan's former campaign manager, John Sears, U.S. Representative Bella Abzug, and Senator Paul Sarbanes. The 1992 keynoter was Senator George McGovern. Not only was he commemorating the twentieth anniversary of his nomination for the presidency by the Democratic Party; he was visiting SFU twenty years after his "mock" presidential nomination by a previous generation SFU delegates. The 1996 keynote speaker was former PA Governor and U.S. Attorney General, Richard Thornburgh. Our 2000 keynote speaker was Marlin Fitzwater, former press secretary for Presidents Reagan and Bush. In 2004, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Lieutenant Governor of Maryland and daughter of the late Robert Kennedy, keynoted. The keynoter in 2008 was former U.S. Representative Lee Hamilton (D-IN). In 2012, former U.S. Representative E.G. "Bud" Shuster (R-PA) keynoted. In 2016, PA Governor Tom Corbett and U.S. Representative Shuster served as keynoters. In 2020, Donald Trump was president and a Mock Democratic Convention was planned. Former U.S. Representative Mark Critz and former PA Senator, Lieutenant Governor, and Acting Governor Mark Singel were slated to keynote. As noted, however, COVID forced us to cancel the live mock convention and to offer a virtual mock primary election in its place.

A Correspondence Committee was also established. This Committee handled invitations and correspondence with speakers and invited guests.

The Platform Committee, naturally, drafted a mock party platform. The Committee included students enrolled in the Road to the White House course. One student served as Platform Committee chair. Students reviewed recent Republican Party platforms. The chair prepared a draft that was shared with members of the Committee. Campaign managers for Donald Trump and Nikki Haley had a chance to weigh in and shape the platform as well. Members provided feedback and the chair prepared a revised draft. The platform was discussed in class and it was approved. At the mock convention, the chair presented the platform and it was approved by a voice vote of the delegates.

The Credentials Committee was also established to assist and welcome non-SFU delegates to the convention. Students from 12 area high schools and some returning alumni participated. Students from other colleges and universities sometimes participate too. The Credentials Committee chair recognized these attendees, approved their credentials, and welcomed them to the mock convention.

A Rules Committee was also established. It was chaired by faculty members from the History and Political Science Department. The Rules Committee worked closely with the Planning Committee. Rules were printed in the program.

The Rules Committee report explained that the party platform was drafted by the Platform Committee, with input from the campaign managers, drafted the platform prior to the convention. The platform was approved at that time and no minority planks could be submitted afterwards. The platform would be submitted to the delegates for approval by voice vote at the mock convention.

The Rules Committee determined that only candidates who were still running on the eve of “Super Tuesday” (March 5, 2024) were eligible for the nomination on the first ballot. Eligible candidates included Nikki Haley and Donald Trump. State delegation chairperson would be able to nominate candidates. Customarily, the home state delegation of a candidate nominates him or her. After a candidate is nominated, his or her campaign manager accepts the nomination and offers some brief remarks, not to exceed two minutes in length.

In balloting, the vote of each state is announced by the chairperson of the state delegation. The number of votes needed to nominate was defined as one half of the total votes plus one (1,215 votes needed to nominate). If no candidate were to be nominated on the first ballot, a second ballot would follow, at which point any person who was constitutionally eligible to serve as President could be nominated.

Vice -presidential nominations were to be made from the floor. The presidential nominee’s campaign manager announces if a prospective running mate is acceptable. If time constraints preclude approval by roll-call balloting, the Vice-presidential nominee would be determined by voice vote at the discretion of the convention chairperson.

The Rules Committee worked with the Planning Committee in setting the convention agenda. The simulation is reasonably realistic, but we do take some liberties with the rules of actual national party conventions. For example, since we try to complete our business in just two or three hours, we use voice votes when we can. To reiterate, we conduct contested conventions. *All* SFU delegates are unpledged. We do not try to predict who the national party will, in fact, nominate in the summer. SFU delegates nominate the candidate they *prefer*. The 2024 vote was close. Donald Trump prevailed but it came down to the last few states.

Tickets emerging from these mock conventions have included Adlai Stevenson-John Kennedy, Nelson Rockefeller-Charles Percy, George McGovern-Shirley Chisolm, Jerry Brown-Morris Udall, Gerald Ford-John Anderson, Gary Hart-Jesse Jackson, Michael Dukakis-Jesse Jackson, Bill Clinton-Tom Harkin, Bob Dole-Colin Powell, John McCain-Elizabeth Dole, John Kerry-Al Sharpton, Barack Obama-Hillary Clinton, Mitt Romney-Rick Santorum, and, in 2016, John Kasich-Paul Ryan. Add Donald Trump and JD Vance to the list, as of 2024.

The Media and Community Relations Committee worked closely with the Planning Committee and the SFU Marketing Office in coordinating publicity. Releases were sent to newspapers, radio, and television stations. Articles were run in the campus newspaper and on electronic bulletin boards. Electronic and print invitations were prepared and mailed. Press kits including fact sheets about the event were developed and distributed.

In previous years, pre-convention luncheons for our speakers and invited guests (including our student leaders) were held. Press conferences were also held prior to the opening gavel. To cut costs, we dispensed with the luncheon and the formal press conference. Instead, we offered pastries and a coffee service for our speakers and other early-arriving guests. This provided the speakers and others a chance to talk casually and informally. Reporters were also encouraged to attend so they could speak with participants. We plan to continue in this practice in the future. In addition to saving money, conversations were more candid and animated than they were at formal luncheons.

The Hall and Decorations Committee normally secures art and construction supplies and transforms the student center into a convention hall. State delegation chairpersons bring delegates with them to a staging area at an assigned time before the convention to construct state and candidate posters. This time, we did not have a supplies budget available so we improvised. Upward Bound students

prepared posters for each state and for the candidates, Donald Trump and Nikki Haley, at one of their Saturday follow-up sessions. The afternoon before the convention, a construction crew installed flags, prepared the stage and seating areas, tested podium and floor microphones, set up musical equipment, and made sure that the “convention hall” would be ready for the following day’s festivities. Large flags supplied by a former congressman are displayed prominently. We store these flags and retrieve them as needed. Each of these flags once flew above the U.S. Capitol. We also display several large Pennsylvania flags that were donated to us by our former Lieutenant Governor. Hundreds of small American flags were donated to us years ago. We place them outside lining roadways approaching the convention hall. In the past, shortly before the convention, students went to the hall to fill and place helium-filled balloons. We learned the hard way that helium-filled balloons sag noticeably if they are set up too early. In 2024, we had no “balloon budget” so we lived without them. The flags and posters more than made up for the absence of the balloons.

At past mock conventions, our campus radio station provided music. We no longer insist on traditional, patriotic music. Instead, we ask students to develop a playlist of contemporary, popular, upbeat, energetic music designed to keep the delegates bouncing and dancing throughout the event. Music plays when the delegates are arriving and finding their places. It is turned off during the speeches. It is turned on during the balloting. When a state chair is announcing votes, the music is turned down but not off. When no one is speaking, we pump up the volume again. The importance of music to the overall atmosphere can’t be overstated! Students seem to enjoy creating the playlists as much as they enjoy listening to the music.

Campaign Managers

Students volunteered to act as campaign managers for Nikki Haley and Donald Trump. They conducted research about their candidates and contacted candidates’ campaign headquarters to obtain literature and other materials. They delivered brief nominating speeches for their candidates at the convention. They negotiated with the Platform Committee, tried to make deals with state delegation chairs, discussed the vice-presidency, and generally tried to win support for their candidates. Our guest speakers who were also serving as state delegation chairs were struck by the persistence and creativity exhibited by the campaign managers who were vying for their support. Some years, the campaign managers squared off in public debates prior to the convention. At such debates, questions are posed by a student moderator and by audience members. Students from residence halls, athletic teams, and student organizations have posed videotaped questions too. The inclusion of such interactive elements varies from convention to convention and depends largely on the inclinations of student organizers and campaign managers.

State Delegates and State Chairpersons

State delegation chairs are very important. During the months preceding the convention, they selected states on a master list posted outside departmental offices. They were briefed about their responsibilities and given informational handouts. Chairs recruited delegates for their states and submitted their delegate lists a few weeks before the convention. It is helpful to recruit residence hall assistants, fraternity and sorority officers, student government officers, and other campus leaders for these positions whenever possible. Chairs were in charge of their states’ voting at the convention. During roll calls, they polled their delegates, tallied votes, and announced them. Some state chairs placed names in nomination at the convention. Some encouraged their delegates to dress in state-related costumes. Some offered some state-related “fun facts” before announcing their votes. For example, one said “Mr. Chairperson, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, home of the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, and Yuengling’s, the Nation’s Oldest Brewery, wishes to cast its votes as follows. . . .” In short, chairs recruited delegates, led them, and encouraged creativity (within somewhat loose boundaries of good taste and decorum).

General Observations and Advice

One cannot anticipate everything that will require attention, but here are some general observations that might help if you decide to stage your own mock convention.

Start early! You will have to delegate many duties to students in leadership positions. Try to recruit your most responsible and conscientious students. The ability to work without direct supervision is important. Flexibility and a good sense of humor help. A thick skin is desirable too. These students should review files of past mock conventions in advance to get a sense of what's ahead. They should collect contact information from national party headquarters. They should research relevant web sites for candidate information, calendars, party rules, and the like. Such early "legwork" early is beneficial.

As any club advisor can attest, levels of enthusiasm, motivation, and competence of student members vary from year to year. The "Road to the White House" course has become a useful tool for organizing and motivating students. You will need the cooperation of assorted campus officials, staff members, and faculty colleagues. Ask your colleagues to participate and ask them to bring their students. You will need financial, logistical, and organizational help. When will you hold your convention? Where do you want to hold it? Anticipate your needs and discuss them with strategically situated individuals well before the convention. Stay in touch with them as the event draws near.

Decide on whether candidates who drop out before your mock convention will be included on your convention ballots anyway. If so, make sure that the campaign managers understand that their candidates will still be eligible for nomination and that they should still be doing their jobs! They can also try for the vice-presidential spot.

It is tempting to seek a current politician with national stature in selecting a keynote speaker. S/he will bring attention and will do so for a relatively low cost. Most cannot accept speaking fees beyond expenses. But as noted, it can be difficult to get a firm commitment from a current officeholder. Any commitment you receive will be, at best, tentative. They might have to cancel at the last minute and you will have to scramble to find a replacement. As such, we seek a keynoter whose schedule is more predictable, even if that means paying a higher fee. Budget constraints, however, necessitated some adjustments in 2024. As noted, Rob Gleason, a supporter of the University, served as keynoter and several elected and former elected officials filled additional speaking spots. Moving forward, I expect that we will proceed in similar fashion. We may imitate the recent practice of the national parties by eliminating the official position of "keynote speaker," inviting several "featured speakers." That way, if a speaker cancels, the "show" will still go on and we will save the speaker's fee for a prominent keynoter.

It is also important to decide how many speakers you want to invite and how long each will have to speak. It is possible to have "too much of a good thing." In 2016, for example, reports, remarks, and speeches were lengthy. While students reported that they appreciated the content and enthusiasm of the speakers' remarks, it was evident that some were growing a bit restless by the time we began balloting for the presidential nomination.

Plan your use of technology carefully. Electronic scoreboards, e-mail messages, web sites, and recording will be featured. Off-site delegations, including alumni, can participate virtually. Selected speakers also can deliver their remarks virtually. Advantages include reduced travel costs and speaking fees. Disadvantages include the loss of personal contact. How much is it worth to your institution, your department, and your students to have a nationally prominent speaker visit your campus in person? Will a "virtual visit" suffice?

Record your convention. Television news coverage is also valuable. Current participants can see how well they have done. Students enjoy watching convention footage in class and seeing themselves and their friends in action. The videos elicit some laughs and good-natured teasing, along with a sense of pride, satisfaction, and accomplishment. The clips can be posted on relevant campus sites and later archived. Such materials are also useful for advertising future conventions and for showing future participants how the convention works.

Hold debriefing meetings with student participants after the convention. Survey participating students for their reactions. What worked and what didn't? Make adjustments. Surveys reveal that students enjoy and remember the costumes worn by state delegations and fun facts mentioned by state chairs when they cast votes. Students overwhelmingly report that they are more likely to watch the actual party conventions after having participated in a mock convention. These responses support the

conclusion that we have achieved one of our convention goals: getting students more interested in and informed about the presidential race.

Recruiting students to participate may be your most challenging task. Some campaigns generate more enthusiasm than others. More than 200 students participated in the 2024 Mock Convention. We were successful in attracting students from area high schools. While the challenge of generating student interest is greater in some years than in others, it is precisely then that activities like mock conventions are most important because they help to generate student interest and focus attention on presidential campaigns.

Latest Lessons Learned

Budgetary constraints necessitated some adjustments to our usual practices. We streamlined and simplified some things, eliminated certain elements, and in the process, produced a tighter and more efficient event that was still beneficial and fun for our students. Some key “takeaway points” and things we learned include the following:

- An official “keynote speaker” secured through a speakers’ bureau is not necessary. The national parties have moved away from having a designated “keynoter.” So can we. Instead, a number of prominent public officials from the area can be invited to speak. Doing so saves money and it provides flexibility in the event that one or more of these invited guests has to cancel his or her appearance.
- The guest speakers should participate actively in the mock convention itself by chairing state delegations. They can cast votes during role call balloting, giving them a chance to interact directly with student campaign managers and student delegates.
- Eliminate the formal pre-convention luncheon for guest speakers, administrators, and selected students. Replace it with an informal pastry and coffee service for guests who arrive early. In addition to saving money, speakers have a chance to talk among themselves and to speak informally with students who come over to talk.
- Eliminate the formal pre-convention press conference. We will continue to prepare press kits including facts, figures, and basic background information about the mock convention, but reporters will be encouraged to talk with our guest speakers over coffee.
- The student center can be transformed into an authentic-looking convention hall by displaying large American and Pennsylvania flags, along with posters produced by high school students in our Upward Bound Program. Greenery, helium-filled balloons, balloon arches and similar ornamentations are not really necessary.
- Remember the music. It should be high energy, it should be contemporary, and it should be loud. We are staging a Mock *Party* Convention. The emphasis is on “party”! But we do not have to outsource or hire a DJ to provide the music. Students are capable of producing their own playlists and they enjoy doing so.

Why Stage a Mock Convention?

Experiential education allows students to see theories being put into practice. Through role playing, the abstract becomes concrete. Simulations, combined with meaningful reflection, can increase students’ interest in and knowledge of the subject matter. Mock conventions teach students about convention procedures, coalition building, and other aspects of presidential campaigns. The excitement and publicity surrounding mock conventions stimulate student awareness of and interest in presidential campaigns. Students on the Media and Community Relations Committee gain direct experience in dealing with local news media. Campaign managers learn about the candidates and the issues. They learn about negotiating as they try to convince delegates to support their candidate. Delegates and state chairs inform themselves about the candidates. They experience the pressure applied by campaign managers. Comments from students returning in the fall demonstrate that they paid more attention to the actual party conventions during the summer -- and understood them better -- than they would have had they not themselves been involved in our mock convention. Post-convention surveys are distributed to participants. Journal entries are required in some classes. Discussion area questions about the convention are posted in course web sites. Such sources reveal that students find the experience worthwhile. Many

say that the convention was fun, they learned about the campaign, and they plan to watch at least some of the upcoming national party conventions to compare them to their own experiences. Some students go on to attend the Republican and Democratic conventions in connection with academic internship programs. These students report that mock convention give them unique insights and prepare them to better appreciate activities at the actual party conventions.

For the above reasons, a conscious effort is made to involve students from various disciplines and majors. As explained, a varying but substantial proportion of our undergraduate student population participates in these mock conventions. Area high school students and students from other colleges and universities are invited to participate or observe. Press coverage is sometimes extensive, especially so if the speakers are well-known. Mock conventions have academic importance and they attract good publicity for the host institution.

A mock convention brings the campaign, the issues, and even some of the actors to campus. Bringing distinguished visitors to the campus and generating favorable publicity are certainly valuable outcomes. But the primary benefit should go to the students. A successful mock convention increases political interest and campaign awareness. A mock convention is a lot of work but it's also a rite of passage for our students, something they will be talking about for years to come. In short, a successful mock convention is memorable and fun!

Appendix

Some sample materials that were used at Saint Francis University's 2024 Mock Republican Convention are attached. Perhaps you can adapt them to fit your own needs. If you would prefer to participate in an existing mock convention program, we invite you to visit us with your students and participate in Saint Francis University's 2028 Mock Convention - - a Mock Democratic Convention next time.

APPENDIX 1

The 2024 Mock Republican Convention is coming to Saint Francis University on April 20, 2024!

WHAT IS A MOCK CONVENTION?

The Mock Convention is designed to resemble the National Republican Convention in every way, with students acting as campaign managers, state delegation chairmen, and state delegates. Participation is also needed in the areas of convention hall decorations, stage and sound crew, and security. Positions are available for hundreds of students in all these areas. Student political opinion will be reflected by the candidate nominated. The results may or may not be an indication of what to expect at the actual convention this summer.

WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN MANAGER?

The job of the campaign manager is to persuade the state delegates to vote for his/her candidate. The means with which to accomplish this are at the complete discretion of the campaign manager and his staff, in the best tradition of American "backroom politicking." Bribes are permissible but do try to keep it legal.

WHAT IS A STATE CHAIRMAN?

The state chairman will recruit a delegation to represent a state of his/her choice. The more delegates you can bring to the convention, the more effective and exciting it will be. Come prepared for the occasion with such things as signs, banners, noisemakers, etc. Interested students should sign up as soon possible. The popular states will go fast! (The sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board across from Scotus 314.)

WHAT IS A STATE DELEGATE?

A state delegate represents the state of his/her choice and will vote on each ballot until a majority of 50% plus one is reached. Your vote is important. YOUR vote will determine the outcome of the convention.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A CONVENTION?

Almost anything! Actual conventions tend to be rather chaotic; the Mock Conventions at Saint Francis University are no exception. Placards, posters, and political propaganda will be available with which to stage wild floor demonstrations. Improvisation is desired and encouraged. Between ballots, campaign

managers will be busily caucusing the state delegations for votes. There is always the possibility of a deadlock—a few uncommitted voters could make all the difference.

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT POLITICS OR CONVENTIONS?

Prior knowledge or experience is not needed. During the convention itself you will learn a great deal about the American political processes and you'll have some fun doing it! You will experience not only the external aspects of a convention, but also the wheeling and dealing that makes the system exciting. As a bonus, you will be more aware of the issues and the positions of the candidates, making you better prepared to vote in November.

HOW MUCH TIME IS INVOLVED?

Actually, very little. If you want to be more creative, however, the amount of preparation time is up to you. There will be periodic meetings before the convention in which details will be discussed.

WHEN IS THE CONVENTION?

The convention will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2024. Mock conventions can be a lot of fun; post-convention celebrating is a tradition.

APPENDIX 2

2024 MOCK REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

Saint Francis University
Loretto, Pennsylvania 15940

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SAINT FRANCIS UNIVERSITY MOCK CONVENTION

Students originated the idea of staging a Mock National Convention at Saint Francis University in 1960. The event has become a campus and community tradition, as a convention has been held every four years. It has been the tradition among the Saint Francis community to hold the convention of the party not holding the Office of the President.

The 1960 Democratic convention began amid parades and fanfare. The Honorable Philip Lepresti, a member of the State House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, delivered the keynote address. The event set standards for future years. The first mock convention ended with the nomination of Adlai Stevenson for president and John Kennedy for vice president. The event was deemed a tremendous success by all participants.

The convention continued to grow in 1964, when it was staged in Doyle Hall amid shouts and cheers. The purpose of the event began to become clear as a 1964 passage from the University newspaper *The Loretto* indicated: "This convention affords our students an opportunity to learn more about our political system and enjoy themselves at the same time."

By 1968, the campus event had begun to attract outside notice. Students weren't the only ones who watched Senator Richard Schweiker, who then represented the 13th Congressional District near Philadelphia, deliver the keynote address. Various states nominated their favorite candidates, later yielding these decisions to other delegations. In the fashion of a true political convention, floor demonstrations were conducted for each candidate following the nominating speeches. After six hours of balloting, caucusing, and vice-presidential nomination, the convention was adjourned with Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Senator Charles Percy as the students' choices for the Republican presidential and vice-presidential nominees.

The renowned Senator Eugene McCarthy was the featured speaker at the 1972 convention. Included in the nine-point plan he outlined was a suggestion that the Democratic National Platform include a firm commitment to end the war in Vietnam. Political maneuvering became an integral part of this event. Following the third ballot, Senator George McGovern was selected for president, and Shirley Chisolm was given the vice-presidential slot by the student body.

By 1976, the convention, held in the Maurice Stokes Field House for the first time, had developed a high degree of organization. Georgia State Senator Julian Bond, the keynote speaker for the bicentennial year, stated that "the convention at Saint Francis University mirrored national conventions I have seen." In that year, the tension ran high as Governor Jerry Brown edged Congressman Morris Udall for the presidential nomination. Udall supporters had to remain content with the vice-presidential spot

awarded him. The atmosphere of the 1976 convention was often a lighthearted one, as reflected by these observations offered by one of the student participants: "As expected, the crazies were out in force. One delegate appeared costumed as the Wild Man from Borneo. Another fashioned bicentennial shorts with bright green sunglasses to match."

In 1980, a mock Republican convention was held. George Bush, then a Republican presidential candidate, was forced to cancel his engagement as keynote speaker. John Sears was a late replacement, and he filled in quite ably. Once again, enthusiasm was high and the convention nominated Gerald Ford to be the presidential nominee, and John Anderson as the vice-presidential nominee.

The 1984 Democratic meeting was one of the most controversial in the history of the convention. Bella Abzug delivered the keynote address amidst the picket lines and protests outside the Stokes Fieldhouse of Ms. Abzug's pro-choice stance. Despite the controversy, the convention was a large success and generated much enthusiasm. Gary Hart was chosen as the presidential nominee of the Democratic Party, and Jesse Jackson was the vice-presidential nominee.

The 1988 Democratic Convention was another rousing one. Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland was the keynoter and the delegates nominated Michael Dukakis for the presidency and Jesse Jackson (once again!) for the vice-presidency.

In 1992, the Democratic Convention was graced with the presence of Senator George McGovern as keynote speaker. Not only was Senator McGovern commemorating the twentieth anniversary of his nomination for the presidency by the Democratic Party; he was visiting Saint Francis University twenty years after his presidential nomination by a previous graduation of our mock convention delegates. Nominated for president was Governor (soon-to-be president) Bill Clinton, and for vice-president was Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, who was present at the convention representing the Clinton Campaign.

In 1996, another Mock Republican Convention was held. Former Pennsylvania Governor, U. S. Attorney General, and Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, Richard Thornburgh, was the keynote speaker. The delegates nominated Bob Dole for the presidency and Colin Powell for the vice-presidency.

In 2000, yet another Mock Republican Convention was held. Marlin Fitzwater, former press secretary for Presidents Reagan and Bush, delivered the keynote address. The delegates nominated John McCain for the presidency and Elizabeth Dole for the vice presidency.

The successful 2004 Mock Democratic Convention keynote speaker was Kathleen Kennedy Townsend. The 2004 participating delegates nominated John Kerry for president and Al Sharpton for vice president.

In 2008, with President Bush completing a second term, it was time for another Mock Democratic Convention. The keynote speaker was former Congressman Lee H. Hamilton (IN-9th). Other speakers included PA Auditor General Jack Wagner, PA State Senator John Wozniak, and several surrogates representing Hillary Clinton including, U. S. Representative Alyson Schwartz (PA-13th) and Jehmu Green, President of Rock the Vote Education Fund. The delegates nominated a 2008 ticket of Barack Obama for president and Hillary Clinton for vice president.

In 2012, Barack Obama was president so another Mock Republican Convention was held. U.S. Rep. Bud Shuster keynoted. Other featured speakers included PA Sen. John Eichelberger, PA Sen. Robert Jubelirer, PA Rep. Mike Fleck, and County Commissioner Douglas Lengenfelder. Mitt Romney won the nomination on the second ballot. Rick Santorum was selected as Romney's running mate.

President Obama was still in office in 2016 so we staged another Mock Republican Convention. Speakers included PA Gov. Tom Corbett, US Rep. Bud Shuster, PA Republican State Committee Chair Robert A. Gleason, PA Sen. John Eichelberger, PA Rep. Jerry Stern, and County Commissioners Bruce Erb, Terry Tomassetti, and Bill Hoover. Delegates nominated John Kasich for the presidency and Paul Ryan as his running mate.

In 2020, Donald Trump was president and another Mock Democratic Convention was planned. Former U.S. Rep. Mark Critz and former PA Sen., Lt. Gov, and Acting Gov. Mark Singel were scheduled to be featured speakers. All arrangements were in place when COVID hit and the campus went into a full lockdown. Unable to proceed with our live mock convention, we staged a virtual alternative Democratic

primary election instead. Joe Biden won!

Excitement mounts every four years here at Saint Francis University as preparations for the mock convention are made. State delegation chairpersons promote state unity and enthusiasm. State costumes, signs, and flags are constructed. Campaign managers craftily secure the votes of as many state delegates as can be persuaded. They flood the campus with slogans, posters, and other paraphernalia in support of their favorite candidates. Construction crews work hard to create an authentic looking convention hall.

The 2024 convention scheduled for Saturday, April 20, promises to be no exception! Don't miss it!

APPENDIX 3

2024 MOCK REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

Saturday, April 20, 2024, 12:00 noon

JFK Student Center, Saint Francis University Loretto, Pennsylvania 15940

HOW WILL THINGS WORK AT THE MOCK CONVENTION

AND WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?

Agenda:

1. Call to Order: Chairperson
2. The Pledge of Allegiance
3. The National Anthem
4. Invocation: Fr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D., President, Saint Francis University
5. Introductory Remarks: Chairperson
6. Welcoming Speeches
7. Featured Speakers: T.B.A.
8. Credentials Committee Report
9. Rules Committee Report
10. Platform Committee Report (followed by voice vote)
11. Nominations of Presidential Candidates; Campaign Manager Acceptances of Nomination
12. Balloting by Roll Call of States for Presidential Nominee
13. Announcement of Convention Presidential Nominee: Chairperson
14. Nomination of Vice-Presidential Candidates
15. Balloting by Roll Call of States for Vice-Presidential Nominee
16. Announcement of Convention Vice-Presidential Nominee: Chairperson
17. Adjournment

Rules of the Convention:

1. The Convention shall proceed in the order of business stated above.
2. The party platform will be drafted by the Platform Committee prior to the Convention. Campaign managers for eligible candidates may offer their recommendations. The platform will be submitted to the Convention delegates for approval by voice vote. A minority report or plank must be submitted in writing to the Planning Committee at least 72 hours prior to the Convention. A minority plank will be submitted to the full Convention only if it has received the support of twenty-five percent (25%) of the membership of the Planning Committee.
3. To place a candidate's name in nomination, the state delegation chairperson should rise and wave the state's identification placard. Once recognized by the Convention Chairperson, proceed to the nearest floor microphone to make your nomination.
4. No campaign manager's nominating speech shall exceed two minutes in length.
5. In balloting, the vote of each state shall be announced by the chairperson of the state delegation.
6. The number of votes needed to nominate shall be defined as one half of the total votes plus one (1,215 votes needed to nominate).
7. Vice-presidential nomination will be by roll call. If we encounter time constraints, the Vice-presidential nominee will be determined by voice vote at the discretion of the chair.

General Instructions:

Before the Convention--

1. All state delegation chairpersons will receive a memo which explains some of your responsibilities. The memo also tells you how many votes your state will have and how you will cast them. If you have misplaced these materials, get new copies from Dr. Damico, Dr. Gentry, Gentry or Dr. Melusky.
2. All state delegations should have:
 - a. state identification placard (this will be provided at the convention);
 - b. additional state signs;
 - c. candidate signs and banners;
 - d. other distinguishing items (e.g., state costumes).
3. The state delegation chairperson should submit complete lists of state delegates to Dr. Gentry. This should be done **immediately** (if you have not already done so). **Be sure that none of your delegates have signed up to be members of some other state delegation.**
4. If possible, report to the JFK Student Center on **Friday, April 19, 2024 (the exact time will be announced)** with as many volunteers as you can round up to hang signs and banners and help with convention set up.
5. Assemble your delegation and have them seated in your state section on the Convention floor before 11:45 p.m. on April 20. **When you arrive, check in at the registration desk.**
6. All participants are encouraged to get into the "spirit" of the Convention and to have a good time but please remember that we are trying to project a positive image of Saint Francis University to the surrounding community. Remind your delegates that this is a simulation and they should at least **pretend** to have enthusiasm for the Republican Party, even if their actual personal preferences lie elsewhere.
7. Your state delegation is entitled to cast _____ votes. See the State Delegation Master List on the bulletin board across from Scotus 314. The apportionment of votes within the delegation is up to the delegation and its chairperson. For example, if your state is entitled to cast 50 votes and your delegation has five members, several things might happen. If all five delegates agree to vote for candidate X, the chairperson will cast all 50 votes for candidate X. But if four delegates vote for candidate X and one delegates vote for candidate Y, the chairperson will cast 40 votes for candidate X and 10 votes for candidate Y.
8. Each state delegation should caucus before the Convention to decide if it wishes to participate in candidate nominations. If you decide to nominate a candidate, the state delegation chairperson will announce the nominee and that candidate's campaign manager will then make a **brief** acceptance speech.
9. During April, campaign managers can begin placing signs for the respective candidates around campus. In designing signs, all persons are asked to observe standards of "good taste." Following the Convention, you will be responsible for removing your own signs. Please do so immediately.
10. Campaign managers should caucus before the Convention to discuss the vice-presidency. Candidates who have withdrawn from the race might be considered for the second spot on the ticket. If candidate X wins the presidential nomination, his or her campaign manager will accept the nomination and will announce candidate X's preference(s) for a running mate. The campaign manager will be encouraged to **identify at least two acceptable running mates.** The Convention Chairperson will ask a state delegation chairperson to nominate this person (or these persons). Wave your state placard to be recognized. If more than one candidate is nominated for the vice-presidency, balloting by states will proceed in the same order as the presidential balloting. The number of votes to nominate will again be 50% plus one -- 1,215. If only one candidate is nominated for the vice-presidency, balloting will be by acclamation (voice vote).

At the Convention --

Presidential Nominations:

According to the rules of this Convention, only the Republican candidates still running on

Super Tuesday, March 5, 2024, are eligible for nomination on the **first** ballot. Eligible candidates include **Nikki Haley and Donald Trump**. **If** we go to a **second** ballot, the field is wide open.

The Convention Chairperson will announce that the following candidates are eligible for the party's presidential nomination [See names listed above.] S/he will then ask if anyone wants to place a name in nomination. Suggestion: It is likely that the candidate's home state would place the candidate's name into nomination.

To place a candidate's name in nomination, the state delegation chairperson should rise and wave the state's identification placard or state sign. Once recognized by the Convention Chairperson, proceed to the nearest floor microphone to make your nomination.

If you are placing a name in nomination, say this: "Mister/Madam Chairperson, the state of _____ would like to nominate _____ as our party's presidential candidate." The Chair will ask for a second from another state. (Delegates will applaud wildly after the nomination is seconded.) Then the Chair will ask if the candidate's campaign manager is present and would like to offer brief remarks on his or her behalf. If not, the Chair will give **you** the opportunity to offer some remarks in behalf of the candidate you nominated. You can "respectfully decline" to do so.

The campaign manager will have two minutes to make a speech placing his/her candidate's name in nomination. A "spontaneous" demonstration of enthusiasm may follow.

2. Roll Call for **Balloting** for **President**:

Each state delegation chairperson will announce the votes from his/her state. The states will be called in alphabetical order. **PLEASE BE NEAR A FLOOR MICROPHONE SO THE ROLL CALL CAN PROCEED QUICKLY AND SMOOTHLY. ANTICIPATE YOUR STATE.** For example, the Convention Chair will call "Alabama." The Alabama state delegation chairperson will go to the microphone and will announce "Mister/Madam Chairperson, the state of Alabama (you can insert a few colorful, historically significant, or otherwise interesting comments or "fun facts" about your state at this time) casts its votes as follows: ..." (Alabama will cast 50 votes. The Alabama delegation chairperson will calculate the apportionment of these 50 votes among the candidates. If all 50 votes are not being given to a single candidate, the Alabama delegation chairperson should save the largest count for last.) Subsequent state delegation chairpersons will follow the same procedure.

After all states have cast their votes, the Convention Chair will bang the gavel and call the balloting to a close. At this point, the Recording Officer will approach the podium and will announce the results. Remember, it takes a majority of the total available votes to win. That is, the nominee will require at least 1,215 votes.

If there is no winner on the first ballot, the Convention Chair will reopen the nominations. At this point, all nominations from the first round are "erased." New candidates can be nominated or candidates who were nominated in the first round can be nominated again. Rise and wave your state placard to gain the Convention Chair's attention.

Any state delegation chairperson can now nominate a new candidate. At this point, **any** Republican who is constitutionally eligible for the presidency could be nominated. ("Eligibility" means the person is a U.S. citizen, at least 35 years old, has not engaged in an insurrection against the United States, and has not already served two terms as President of the U.S. (George W. Bush is not eligible for a third term). Next, a second round of balloting will take place following the same procedures used during the first round. Rounds of balloting will continue until a candidate is able to secure the nomination. (Note: bargains concerning the vice-presidency might be especially useful to break such deadlocks.) If we encounter time constraints a voice vote may be substituted for roll-call balloting at the discretion of the Rules Committee.

After the Recording Officer announces the winner of the presidential nomination, yet another "spontaneous" burst of enthusiasm may be called for.

3. Selection of the **Vice-Presidential Nominee**:

The Convention Chair will announce the start of vice-presidential nominations. The

campaign manager for the winning presidential candidate will inform the Convention of his/her candidate's preference(s) for a running mate. As noted previously, the campaign manager will be encouraged to **identify at least two acceptable running mates**. The Convention Chair will then ask state delegate chairs for nominations. Only running mates identified as "acceptable" by the presidential nominee's campaign manager and who are constitutionally eligible for the vice-presidential spot on our Party's ticket can be nominated. Wave your state placard to be recognized. The Convention Chair will call for seconds. Anyone from the floor can shout out, "I second the nomination." After nominations have been closed, balloting by states will proceed as above. The number of votes needed to nominate will again be 50% plus one – 1,215. If we encounter severe time constraints a voice vote may be substituted for roll-call balloting at the discretion of the Rules Committee.

4. **Final Note:**

Try to hold your delegates on the floor for the entire convention. One helpful way of doing this is to caucus and poll them before each vote.

THIS IS NOT EXACTLY HOW REAL CONVENTIONS WORK, BUT IT IS A PRETTY CLOSE APPROXIMATION. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO HAVE FUN, PAY ATTENTION TO THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, AND TUNE IN TO THE NATIONAL PARTY CONVENTIONS THIS SUMMER TO SEE HOW CLOSELY THESE SPECTACLES MATCH OUR OWN!