Holding Elections

Holding elections ensures that Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances utilize the democratic process. Elected executive committees spread out responsibility among group members. Elections also help to transfer leadership from one year to the next, ensuring group continuity over time. Serving on the executive committee enables members to find a niche for themselves in the group. It will also strengthen their connection with the Feminist Majority Foundation.

Who should run for a position?
When you talk about elections with FMLA members, be sure to encourage everyone who is interested to run for a position! When you have multiple people running for positions, the group is more likely to elect committed, qualified officers, which improves the overall strength of the group. Be sure to let your members know that they will have the opportunity to work with Campus Organizers to develop relevant skills and improve leadership abilities.

How will you structure your group?
Consider what offices your group needs and would like to create. It is highly recommended that there be at least a president or co-presidents, a recorder (or secretary), a treasurer, and a communications chair. On top of that, your group should consider whether it would prefer leadership with fewer officer positions, or whether more positions would be preferable. Keep in mind that more offices allow more students to gain leadership and career building opportunities, feel ownership of the group, and assume responsibility. Larger executive committees also prevent burnout, improve retention, and can strengthen the group as a whole.

Responsibilites of the executive committee!
Executive committee members are responsible for and are expected to attend weekly FMLA meetings, in addition to executive committee meetings as needed. Committee members are responsible for their specific positions as outlined in the constitution, including leadership of their respective committees. For example, the Community Outreach Chair works with a committee of FMLA members to set and accomplish goals for making connections with the community.

Election Month: Making Herstory for the FMLA
The FMLA should hold elections in March, Women's History Month! Elected officers will officially move into executive committee positions during the beginning of the following school year (September). The advantage to holding elections in March is that incoming officers have the opportunity to "shadow" outgoing officers through March and April. This helps incoming officers learn from outgoing officers and feel comfortable assuming their new role at the beginning of the next school year.

The Election Process
o All members should be informed well in advance (at least two weeks) about when elections will be taking place. We recommend that you ask members to declare their candidacy at least two weeks prior to holding elections. The group should review the responsibilities of each position together at the meeting.
o All members running for a position should declare the position they are running for and be given an allotted time (usually a few minutes) to speak. In addressing the group, candidates should speak about why they are interested in the position and their vision for the group (and how they can contribute to this vision through the position).
o Even if a position is uncontested, interested students should still speak to the group for a few minutes about their vision for the group. This serves as a verbal contract with the group and helps solidify officers' commitment.
o Members should vote through secret ballot. We suggest that you prepare ballots prior to the meeting with a space for members to write in their choice.

- o The President and one member not running for a position or a member of the Faculty and Staff Team can count the ballots.
- o E-mail the election results to your members and your Campus Organizer, in addition to announcing the results at the next meeting. If a faculty or staff member counts the ballots, ask if they can post the results on their office door.