Many USU students changed their vote after a candidate faced criticism

Madison Jenkins

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Some Utah State University students changed their vote for student body president following the final debate between candidates Erik Fogth and Lucas Stevens.

The primary elections resulted in a lead for Stevens by just 15 votes. Then, social media posts criticizing Fogth’s argument spread among USU students following the final debate.

“While watching the final debate, it was extremely difficult to just sit by and listen to Erik diminish and dismiss all of Lucas’ qualifications,” said Jordan Bowcutt, who campaigned for Stevens. “While Lucas talked about his platform, Erik talked about Lucas.”

Bowcutt felt that Fogth was disrespectful and unprofessional in the debate. She posted her response to what he said on Instagram, and it received a lot of attention.

“It was so emotionally draining because we worked so hard to make sure people could see what happened at the debate,” Bowcutt said. “We received feedback that people were actually changing their votes to vote for Lucas due to what I, and many others, had said.”

Lauren Nix voted for Fogth in the primaries but decided to change her vote to Lucas in the final election because of what she had seen on social media.

“It’s not OK to have malicious intent, especially in a public setting,” Nix said. “I want a leader who can be kind in all situations, and I think that persuaded a lot of students to vote for Lucas instead.”

Stevens won the election by 311 votes and was announced the USUSA student body president for 2021-22. He credited the win to those who supported and campaigned for him.

“Erik and his campaign ran an incredible race,” Stevens said. “I think my campaign’s message resonated with students, and my team’s experience helped us focus on the important areas of campaigning.”

Bowcutt believed Stevens’ character was reflected in how the campaign operated.

“He showed up calm and collected, with smart and attainable goals,” Bowcutt said. “This wasn’t just how Lucas showed up for a campaign— this is how Lucas always shows up in life.”