

Students' Council Handbook

2023-24

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Table of Contents

SECTION ONE: Being a Councilor	3
Council's Role in the UASU	3
Your Oath of Office, Core Values, and Code of Conduct	5
Students' Council — How Meetings Work	7
Students' Council — The Documents	10
Students' Council — In Camera Sessions FAQ	12
Spotlight on Committees	14
SECTION TWO: How the Students' Union Operates	16
Representative Mandate	16
Governing Documents	16
Roles of the Executives	17
The UASU Strategic Plan	18
Staff Operations	19
Student-Run Functions	22
UASU Finances in a Nutshell	22
UASU Government Relations in a Nutshell	23
UASU Wins for Students in a Nutshell	25
APPENDICES	28
Appendix A: Governance Meeting Rules Glossary	28
Appendix B: Acronym Reference Sheet	30
Appendix C: Important Contacts	35
Appendix D: Being a Committee Chair	36
Appendix E: Timeline of the Year	38
Appendix F: Guidelines for Presentations at Students' Council	39
Appendix G: Participating in Hiring Committees	40

Section One: Being a Councilor

Council's Role in the UASU

The University of Alberta Students' Union (UASU) is students' official representative to University administration and to the federal, provincial, and municipal government. We run a wide variety of student-centred businesses, services, and events, as well as the Students' Union Building (SUB). All of these functions support our central goal: improving the quality, accessibility, and equity of the student experience.

As members of Students' Council, the UASU's highest governing body, you play a key role in helping the UASU stay close to the student heartbeat. Through personal knowledge and community involvement, Councilors can develop knowledge of diverse student needs, which informs policy stances, strategic priorities, and even course correction. Legally and ethically, Councilors have a core duty of care toward the UASU. Councilors are uniquely positioned to help the Executives consider and reconsider their work, while being positive champions for the UASU's efforts to improve student life. That doesn't mean Councilors can't be critical or upset about something the organization is doing, but how and where that critique is shared is important.

Together we represent and support 35,000 undergraduate students. To that end, Students' Council has delegated a wide variety of responsibilities to the following groups and individuals:

- Council committees and subcommittees, and their Chairs.
- Executive Committee, its operational subcommittees, and individual Executives.
- The Discipline, Interpretation, and Enforcement (DIE) Board.
- The Chief Returning Officer (CRO).
- The Speaker.
- The General Manager (who works for the Executive Committee) and staff.
- Student Representative Associations (SRAs), including the Indigenous Students' Union, the International Students' Association, Faculty Associations, Campus Associations, Departmental Associations, and Residence Associations.

These decision-makers often work closely with each other or overlap with each other. For example:

- Executive subcommittees may include combinations of Executives, non-Executive Councilors, students at large, staff, and/or external partners.
- On various matters, an SRA might have reporting requirements toward (and/or close partnerships with) committees and subcommittees, staff, and Executives.

Some elements of the UASU serve as checks and balances to keep each other on track. For example:

- While the UASU has a professional accounting department, Council's Finance Committee has a strong oversight role.
- While the Speaker answers directly to Students' Council (under the guidance of the Council Administration Committee), Council respects the Speaker's authority.
- While the CRO answers directly to Students' Council (often with the guidance of the Council Administration Committee), Council defers to the CRO's direction on election matters.

At other times, what matters is distance, when parts of the UASU need to operate at arm's length from each other. For example:

- Staff report to the General Manager, who reports to the President. VPs and Councilors do not oversee staff members or staff operations, though some staff may work closely with student officials on specific tasks when UASU legislation requires it.
- Payroll, hiring, and other core staff functions are kept particularly confidential based on legal and regulatory standards, and administered by appropriate professionals.
- The Student Groups Committee is sometimes involved in the resolution of confidential complaints. All related information is kept private.
- When Students' Council needs to consider confidential information (e.g. strategic briefings, some business matters related to contracts, anonymized reports on complaint resolution), it does so in a closed session.
- The DIE Board, which hears appeals and interpretation questions related to student governance decisions, bylaws, and policies, is kept as separate and independent as possible from the rest of the organization.

Members of Students' Council should also understand that what they say and do will face public scrutiny and become part of the public sphere. Personal information may wind up being disclosed to the public (e.g. your photograph, faculty, year of study, age, or expressed opinions). Your words and actions in Council, its committees, and other governance meetings will become permanent public records, except for any discussions and materials presented in camera. Many of the UASU's records are subject to retention and disclosure under Bylaw 500 and Alberta's Personal Information Protection Act.

NOTE: *The UASU's governance documents are referenced throughout this handbook. However, the UASU is in the middle of a major governance overhaul. All citations reflect Council-approved Bylaws and Regulations at time of writing (March/April 2023).*

Your Oath of Office, Core Values, and Code of Conduct

Core Values of the UASU

- **Do what's right, not what's easy** — Acting with integrity and respect is essential to an open, collaborative, and democratic organization.
- **Inspire change for the world** — Demonstrating students' power to effect change inspires the next generation of citizens and leaders.
- **Act with unbridled compassion** — Providing an inclusive and caring environment empowers students to make the most of any challenges they face.
- **Always keep moving** — Adapting and innovating meet the needs of our dynamic community.
- **Learn from the past to improve tomorrow** — Understanding our history is key to building an equitable and sustainable future.

The Students' Council Oath of Office

Regularly take the time to reflect on the Oath of Office. This is your core commitment as a member of Students' Council. Its principles will impact all aspects of your work and support a professional environment of mutual respect.

I am not here for me. I am here for the people that lent me their power in exchange for a promise. I will keep that promise to make decisions with their interest in mind. I will vote after knowing the facts, not before. I will use Robert's Rules for their purpose, not my own. I will oppose ideas, not people. I will think before I speak, not speak just to think. I will take the job seriously or not take the job at all. I will represent my fellow students' interests, not my own. I am not here for me.

Some examples of how these principles can translate into your day-to-day role:

- Under the fundamental legislation that establishes Students' Council, you are a representative not just of your faculty but of the entire student body.
- Make informed decisions by reading the meeting materials in advance, doing all required training, and asking thoughtful questions. Avoid 'thinking out loud' — consider what you want to say, state it succinctly, then let others speak.
- The core purposes of Robert's Rules and other Council meeting rules are to ensure that all members of Students' Council can equitably participate, and to ensure that the meeting can get through the business it needs to conduct.
- Councilors should not obstruct each other from doing their work, e.g. by taking excessive speaking turns or using technicalities to stall the meeting; by leaving so the meeting loses quorum; or by grandstanding to intimidate others.
- While respecting others' feelings and dignity, sincerely engage with ideas on their own merits. Friends can debate — and conversely, people who don't get along (or simply don't know each other) can support and agree with each other's points.

The Code of Conduct

[Regulation 100.02](#) is the Student Governance Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct contains the basic standards of respectful and equitable behavior that Councilors strive to uphold. It also details the functions and responsibilities of your role: if you ever feel you don't have enough substantive work to do, or not enough ways to get involved, the Code of Conduct is your best friend. A summary of the Code of Conduct:

- Attend your meetings and actively participate.
- Follow through with commitments (e.g. in committees) and ask for support.
- Consult with your constituents and stay informed.
- Keep the Executives and Council accountable to the student body.
- Uphold the highest standards of confidentiality.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and conflicts of duty. (One simple example: if Council is voting on a change to Council compensation that takes effect next year, and if you will be on Council next year, you must abstain from voting.)
- Represent the diverse needs of the student body.
- Don't unreasonably obstruct meetings.
- Maintain strong standards of respectful behavior toward Councilors, support staff, and everyone else.
- Don't gossip, slander, discriminate, harass, or retaliate.
- Avoid actions that bring students into disrepute.
- As an elected official, you are still accountable to the Code of Conduct's standards in a wide variety of circumstances, not just in Council meetings.
- There are complaint mechanisms for breach of the Code of Conduct, and all parties retain basic rights. These mechanisms can lead to informal or formal resolutions, which can be appealed to the DIE Board.
- Council has established the Executives, primarily the President, to speak for the UASU publicly and to all third parties; individual Council members should avoid public comments on issues related to their responsibilities.

What Do I Do If...?

A reporter asks you for a comment about a story they're working on related to student affairs or the UASU.

You, being an expert on UASU legislative documents, already know that under [Bylaw 130 section 4](#), the President is the primary spokesperson for the Students' Union. Therefore, you forward the reporter's request to the President instead of responding.

Perhaps the story isn't related to student life at UAlberta. Talk with the President anyway to make sure you can appropriately comment.

Students' Council — How Meetings Work

Per Bylaw 110, Students' Council consists of up to 26 members:

- The Speaker (non-voting)
- Up to 19 Faculty Representatives
- The President of the UASU
- The four Vice Presidents of the UASU
- The General Manager (non-voting)

Council generally meets every second Tuesday at 6PM, in Council Chamber, 2-100 University Hall (UNH). Councilors are invited to attend in person and can also participate remotely via Zoom. Meetings are open to the public except when Council moves in camera (a closed session) to discuss sensitive business. Discussions that take place during a closed session are not to be shared outside it. This handbook lays out a wide variety of resources and guidelines that will help you be more comfortable participating in Council.

Role of the Speaker

Hired and empowered by Council, the Speaker runs Council meetings and makes decisions about meeting procedure. The Speaker is an expert in Council's Standing Orders and other relevant governance documents. Unless Council votes to overrule the Speaker or a DIE Board appeal is successful, the Speaker's decisions are final. The Speaker is responsible for ensuring Council can address its business, for making difficult judgment calls, for being impartial, and for ensuring that Council is a respectful and equitable space.

To that end, Standing Orders give the Speaker broad powers (e.g. to rule certain comments and questions out of order if they are inappropriate; to discipline Councilors in certain ways for breaches of Standing Orders; or to limit speaking privileges in certain circumstances). The Speaker executes these powers carefully and rarely.

What Do I Do If...?

In a Students' Council meeting, imagine someone uses discriminatory language, such as residential school denialism or disparaging comments about an equity-seeking group. The Speaker has not yet spoken to rule these comments inappropriate and out of order. Here's one way you could interrupt:

"I need to raise a Point of Order about those comments. Discrimination is against the Student Governance Code of Conduct and our policy on Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity. I'd encourage the member to learn more about why comments like that are crossing a line. I would like my objection noted on the record, and if discriminatory comments continue, I will consider filing a complaint [[see this form](#)] under the Code of Conduct."

What Do I Do If...?

In a Students' Council meeting, you are unsure what motion you're voting on. You're confused about the specific language, or maybe you're not sure if you're voting on an agenda item or whether to change/amend the motion. Here's one way you can interrupt:

"Point of information — I'm not sure exactly what we're voting on at this point. Can the Speaker clarify, please?"

Remember: you always have a right to know exactly what you're voting on.

Territory Acknowledgement and Pronunciations

All Council meetings start with the Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory ([Regulation 100.07](#)). If you are called on (or volunteer) to read the acknowledgement, here are some terms used in the current version at time of writing. If you would like to go over pronunciations with the FNMI Initiatives Specialist, please contact an Executive.

NAME	PRONUNCIATION	REFERENCE
Amiskwacîswâskahikan	a-MISK-wa-CHEE wa-SKA-egan	Link
Nêhiyawak (Cree)	neh-HEE-o-wuk	Link
Niitsítapi (Blackfoot)	nit-SA-pee	Link
Métis	may-tee	Link
Dënesųłíné (Dene)	DEN-ay-SUTE-lin (DEN-ay)	Link
Ojibway*	oh-JIB-way	Link
Saulteaux*	saul-do	Link
Anishinaabe	AH-nish-in'NAA-bay	Link
Haudenosaunee	HAU-din-oh-SHOW-nee	Link
Papaschase Cree	PAW-pahss-chase	Link

*Note that Ojibway and Saulteaux are the Anglicized and French versions, respectively, of the name of the Anishinaabe: all three words refer to the same people.

Meeting Rules

All meetings follow [Students' Council Standing Orders](#) and Robert's Rules of Order (RONR). RONR balances three fundamental principles:

- Protection of the rights of members, and those whom they represent.
- The requirement for a deliberative process of full and free discussion as a prerequisite to democratic decision-making.
- Protection against instability.

While RONR is a large and complex book, very few motions from it are typically used in Council, and many basic summaries of RONR's fundamentals can be found online. (Some examples: [Cornell](#), [PTA.org](#), and [UNC Chapel Hill](#).) Here are some points to remember:

Protection of the rights of members, and those they represent

- All members have the right for their views to be heard.
- 'Points' allow members to ask questions that enable them to participate more fully.
- Members who are absent have the right to attempt to have business reconsidered.
- Quorum requirements make sure a small group cannot take over Council business.

Full and free discussion as a prerequisite to democratic decision-making

- Every member is guaranteed at least one speaking turn.
- Limiting debate in any fashion requires a 2/3 majority.
- Those with strong views to the contrary need not feel like they must compromise their views to let the business of the organization go forward.
- They are, however, expected to respect the will of the assembly once a decision is made because they had a fair opportunity to convince the majority that they were right.

Protection against instability

- It is always harder to reverse a decision than it was to make it in the first place.
- The Speaker is always right about procedure, unless their ruling is successfully overturned by a vote of the assembly.
- Quorum requirements ensure that most of Council is present at all meetings and required for any decision.
- Minutes provide a record of business that serve as institutional memory for the organization.

See **Appendix A: Governance Meeting Glossary** for a list of useful terms. Reviewing Standing Orders, these kinds of reference sheets, and the standards of behavior in the Code of Conduct will equip you with the tools to participate as a fully functional member of Students' Council.

Students' Council — The Documents

Students' Council business is captured in four types of records:

- Order Papers
- Late Additions
- Votes and Proceedings
- Audio Recordings

Order Papers

This is the main agenda of Students' Council meetings. It contains all the business Council will be going over at the next meeting, and is published on the Friday before the meeting. Any member of Council may submit items to the Order Papers. Items can be submitted by using [this form](#) and are due by 8:00 AM on the Friday before the meeting.

Note that confidential or personal information (e.g. some committee business) must not be submitted using this form. Please contact Governance staff directly instead so materials can be distributed appropriately.

Late Additions

This is a second agenda for items that are submitted after the Order Papers deadline. It exists to catch urgent business that may come up between the Order Papers deadline and the Council meeting. These must be items that could have serious impacts on the UASU if not dealt with at that day's meeting; when in doubt if Late Adds are appropriate, contact the President or Speaker. Items on the Late Additions can only be dealt with in Council if it gets voted or special ordered onto the main agenda at the meeting. If an item on the Late Additions doesn't make it onto the main agenda, then it will be added to the Order Papers for the next meeting. Any member of Council may submit items to the Late Additions. Items can be submitted by using [this form](#) and are due by 2:00 PM on the day of the meeting.

Votes and Proceedings

Instead of keeping detailed minutes, which can get quite long when you have four hour meetings, we have a Votes and Proceedings document. This records all motions and votes for each meeting. Although it is not required, we usually include some summarized notes regarding the debate around each motion and presentation as well, to give context to people who are reading the Votes and Proceedings but don't have time to listen to the entire audio recording.

What Do I Do If...?

It can be easy for passionate Councilors to take up more than their fair share of airtime, limiting opportunities for others. What could you do?

- Go to [Standing Orders](#) and search for the word 'minutes' to augment your understanding of who can speak for how long during what parts of the meeting.
- Assert yourself by asking to be added to the list of speaking turns. The Speaker sometimes pauses to prioritize comments from Councilors who have not spoken. If you feel it is necessary, you could even ask the Speaker to do so explicitly. For example:

YOU: Point of privilege. Can the Speaker take measures to make sure that all Councilors get a full opportunity to speak?

SPEAKER: Your point is well taken. I see we have several names left on the speaking list, but as all have already spoken to this item, are there any Councilors who have not already spoken to this item who would like to do so now?

- If you feel discussion has gone on long enough, Robert's Rules offer Council many options. If you're unsure of how to make a motion, you can simply ask the Speaker during the meeting. For example:

YOU: Point of privilege. I think the discussion has gone on long enough but I'm not sure of the right motion to use here.

SPEAKER: What would you like to happen? Would you like to take us to a vote, postpone this to another meeting, send it to a committee...?

YOU: We should vote on this motion and get it over with; we're going around in circles.

SPEAKER: That would be 'move the previous question,' then?

YOU: Thank you. I move the previous question.

SPEAKER: Does anyone wish to second the motion? Good, thank you. This motion is not subject to debate but it does require a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote to pass. The motion is to move the previous question, meaning to end debate and move on...

Audio Recordings

All meetings of Council are recorded, and the recordings are uploaded to the Students' Union website. We do recordings in place of detailed minutes, as it saves us staff time and paper, and ensures accuracy. We record the entire meeting, both the public and the in-camera portions, for future reference needs. However, we always remove in-camera sections before posting the recordings publicly.

What Do I Do If...?

You've finished your term on Students' Council and you're not sure if the confidentiality agreement you signed still applies to things you learned as a Councilor.

It does. Don't break confidentiality, even after you finish your term.

Students' Council — In Camera Sessions FAQ

Sometimes, Students' Council or its committees need to go 'in camera' to discuss confidential matters as part of their fiduciary responsibilities.

What does it mean to 'go in camera'?

'In camera' is Latin for "in chambers," and it means to go into a confidential session. Whatever is discussed cannot leave the room.

How do you make a meeting go in camera?

A motion to go in camera is undebatable, is in order as long as you don't interrupt someone who already has the floor, and requires a simple majority to pass. To go out of camera is the same motion except that you move out of camera instead of into it. It is prudent for a Councilor to speak (vaguely) to the topic of conversation before moving to go in camera, so members have some sense of the reason for the motion.

What, exactly, is covered by the confidentiality of in camera proceedings?

Every single thing that happened in the meeting after you moved in camera is confidential. This often includes the topic of the discussion itself, and always includes everything that every person in the room said. For groups that don't automatically make motions public, it also includes the text of motions and the results of votes.

What in camera doesn't cover:

Things that were already public

For example, if you discussed the results of the 1967 World Series while in camera, the fact that the Red Sox lost doesn't suddenly become confidential. What you can't discuss outside the room is the fact that you talked about the 1967 World Series while in camera, or what anyone in the room said about it.

Your opinion

If you think that The Empire Strikes Back is the best of the Star Wars films and say so in camera, the fact that you believe that doesn't become a secret. However, you can't disclose that you shared this opinion while in camera. Your opinions that are directly and obviously related to, or informed by, confidential Council business should be kept to yourself.

The behavior of people who aren't in the room

If your group is in camera discussing negotiations with a third party organization and that organization discloses things about your in camera proceedings, that doesn't automatically mean they did anything wrong. Most importantly, if a third party reveals information that Council discussed in camera, that does not necessarily mean that you are now free to discuss in camera proceedings publicly as well. Please consult the Speaker and President.

Should we take minutes when we're in camera?

No, we do not take minutes of in camera meetings.

Can a body move motions in camera?

Only if the motion will only affect people who are privy to the in-camera proceedings.

Exception: **all motions made by the Students' Council of the University of Alberta Students' Union are automatically public.** Although a motion may be made in camera at one of these meetings, the motion itself will be published with the minutes.

Can I discuss in camera proceedings with people outside of the meeting?

Only if they're a member or they were specifically authorized to hear about the in camera proceedings. In other words, you can talk to people who were present during the in camera discussion or had the right to be present either because they're a member of the group or because the group explicitly authorized them to be there. You cannot talk to anyone else about what was discussed.

What Do I Do If...?

An issue has been discussed in committee and Council meetings, sometimes in closed sessions. You're not sure about the extent to which you can discuss that issue in public meetings, and you can't remember exactly what details were discussed privately.

- Check the minutes of those meetings. Since the minutes only reflect the open sessions, stick to the details mentioned there.
- Talk with Executives and/or relevant committee chairs, who will probably have a good sense of the big picture.
- Governance staff can arrange for you to view the full meeting recordings. That might give you a clearer idea of what was said when. (We're also happy to point you toward resources, contacts, or legislative documents that might help you understand what's appropriate.)
- If you're in this situation, it's probably a sensitive subject that could have an impact on other individuals' welfare. Consider erring on the side of caution.

Is it bad for a democratic body to do things in private?

No. All organizations will occasionally need to have private discussions so they can uphold their responsibilities. Certain issues, such as intra-group conflicts, member discipline, private personal information related to group business (e.g. health information, academic, human resources, or family issues), discussions about ongoing legal proceedings, or other kinds of sensitive negotiations require more candid, confidential conversations. However, an in camera session, like any tool, is open to abuse. The decision to move your group in camera should always be made carefully. In camera should not be the default setting for your group's discussions.

Can in camera proceedings be retroactively made public?

Yes. The easiest way to make things retroactively public is to move a new motion specifying which motion or which part of the in-camera proceedings you would like to see made public. That motion is handled the same as any other main motion. However, fully publicizing proceedings that are not recorded in the minutes may not be possible. You should consult the Speaker and Governance staff before trying to retroactively publicize proceedings.

What happens if I disclose in camera proceedings?

You can face disciplinary action. Depending on the severity of the breach that could include anything from censure to fines to expulsion. You may even be sued or charged with a criminal offence. You also breach the trust of your organization and the other members of your group, which almost always severely damages its ability to operate effectively. You may also cause other kinds of damage, such as opening your organization to being sued or causing resignations of members who feel like they've been professionally compromised by your actions.

Don't breach confidentiality. It's a terrible idea.

Spotlight on Committees

The following committees are primarily Students' Council's domain. They hold delegated authority over functions that are directly related to Council's role, but that would be too time-consuming and inefficient to deal with in Council meetings. Councilors can serve as members or Chairs of these committees.

- Council Administration Committee: Maintains Council Standing Orders and oversees the Speaker and Chief Returning Officer.
 - You might hear mention of Nominating Committee, which no longer exists: its functions have been rolled into CAC.
- Finance Committee: Disperses grants, oversees Dedicated Fee Units (DFUs), and recommends the annual operating budget.

- Audit Committee: Reviews financial statements, and audits Student Representative Associations (SRAs).
- Bylaw Committee: Makes draft recommendations of bylaws and referendum and plebiscite questions.
- Policy Committee: Makes draft recommendations of political policies.
- Sustainability and Capital Fund Committee (SCFC): Oversees the operations and funding mechanisms of the SCF, including the Student Project Green Fund.
- Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Committee (ARRC): Helps guide the UASU's efforts toward reconciliation and guide its relationship with the ISU.

The Executive Committee oversees a group of operational subcommittees; Councilors sit on most of these.

- Student Group Committee
- Sustainability Committee
- SUB Planning Committee
- Health and Dental Plan Committee
- SUB Art Committee

Like Students' Council, committees operate according to [Standing Orders](#). These documents outline who is a member, how members are chosen, how and when meetings are scheduled, how a chair is chosen, what kind of business gets done, and anything else you may need to know. Standing Orders are approved at the beginning of the year, and may also experience changes throughout the year.

If you are a member of Council or a committee, you may submit a motion to change Standing Orders if you feel something should be done differently. If Standing Orders will be changed, be sure to notify Governance staff immediately.

Note that several committees have operating manuals to supplement Standing Orders. Manuals and other relevant links are available [on the UASU committees page](#).

Section Two: How the Students' Union Operates

Representative Mandate

The Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) and its regulations establish student associations as independent entities with a mandate to work towards students' best interests, promote student welfare, and advocate on their behalf toward the university and all levels of government. The PSLA is the same legislation that establishes the University and its governing structures.

Governing Documents

The UASU relies on five kinds of governing documents:

- The PSLA and its regulations, which can be found [here](#).
- UASU Bylaws, the core set of rules through which Students' Council directs the operations of the Students' Union. Typically, they are written or amended by the Bylaw Committee, and then ratified at Council. All Bylaws can be found [here](#).
- UASU Political Policies, which lay out the UASU's stances on many issues, giving the Executives guidance for their advocacy efforts. Policy changes are approved by Council. All Policies can be found [here](#).
- UASU Standing Orders, which we've discussed. Standing Orders changes are approved by Council. All Standing Orders can be found [here](#).
- UASU Operating Policy, which gives staff and the Executives guidance and professional standards. Operating Policy changes are approved by the Executives and reported to Council. The full Operating Policy can be found [here](#).

Legislative Process for Bylaws

Stage 1: Idea Generation

An idea for a change is researched and consulted on as necessary.

Stage 2: First Principles

The idea is brought to Council as first principles. This is typically a concise outline of the basic principles of the idea that you wish to see turned into bylaw, outlined in point form. This should not be the bylaw itself, but rather an idea of what the bylaw will be.

Example:

*Whereas the UASU has a large budget that requires careful management;
Therefore a bylaw shall be drafted outlining responsible financial practices.*

Stage 3: Drafting

Bylaw Committee takes the first principles and uses them to draft the actual bylaw that will be enacted if approved at Council. This is called the second principles.

Stage 4: Second Principles

Council debates and votes on the final version of the bylaw drafted at committee.

Legislative Process for Political Policies

Stage 1: Idea Generation

An idea for a change is researched and consulted on as necessary.

Stage 2: First Principles

The first principles of political policy looks a little bit different than for bylaw. It includes a list of the reasons why a policy needs to be created, and Council votes on whether or not they agree with it and want to draft a policy. An example:

Facts: University is too expensive.

Stage 3: Drafting

Policy Committee drafts the political position the UASU is going to take on the issue, and adds it to the facts agreed on in the first principles.

Stage 4: Second Principles

Council debates and votes on the political policy put forward by the committee. It may look something like this:

Facts: University is too expensive.

Resolutions: The UASU will advocate for lower costs of education.

Roles of the Executives

The UASU's Bylaws, Policies, and Standing Orders lay out specific roles and responsibilities for the Executives.

President

- Sits on the Board of Governors and General Faculties Council.
- As the primary spokesperson of the UASU, talks to media, attends events, and participates in government relations, working in tandem with the VP External.
- Oversees the Vice Presidents' projects and tracks their progress.
- Directs the activities of the General Manager.
- Coordinates efforts on major projects.

Vice President Academic

- Sits on General Faculties Council and many of its committees.
- Coordinates advocacy on academic matters.
- Chairs the Council of Faculty Associations.
- Gives advocacy support on major faculty issues and supports Faculty Associations.

Vice President External

- Represents the UASU at the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), and the Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA).
- Advocates to federal, provincial, and municipal governments.
- Represents the UASU on the Alumni Council and the Senate.
- Talks to media and attends events.

Vice President Operations and Finance

- Oversees the operation of UASU businesses and other operations.
- Responsible for the \$14 million annual budget.
- Oversees the Students' Union Building.
- Chairs the Executive Committee and directs the General Manager in the absence of the President.

Vice President Student Life

- Chairs the Council of Residence Associations.
- Supports advocacy on major residence issues.
- Coordinates advocacy for student groups.
- Communicates with the Dean of Students on student group issues.
- Sits on General Faculties Council.

The UASU Strategic Plan

The SU's Strategic Plan helps define the long-term direction and priorities of the SU. It is updated every 4-5 years by a Strategic Planning Committee made up of Councilors, Executives, students, and UASU staff. The [current Strategic Plan](#) is the 2019-2023 version, so strategic planning will be on the agenda this year.

Our vision of a successful future is one where students:

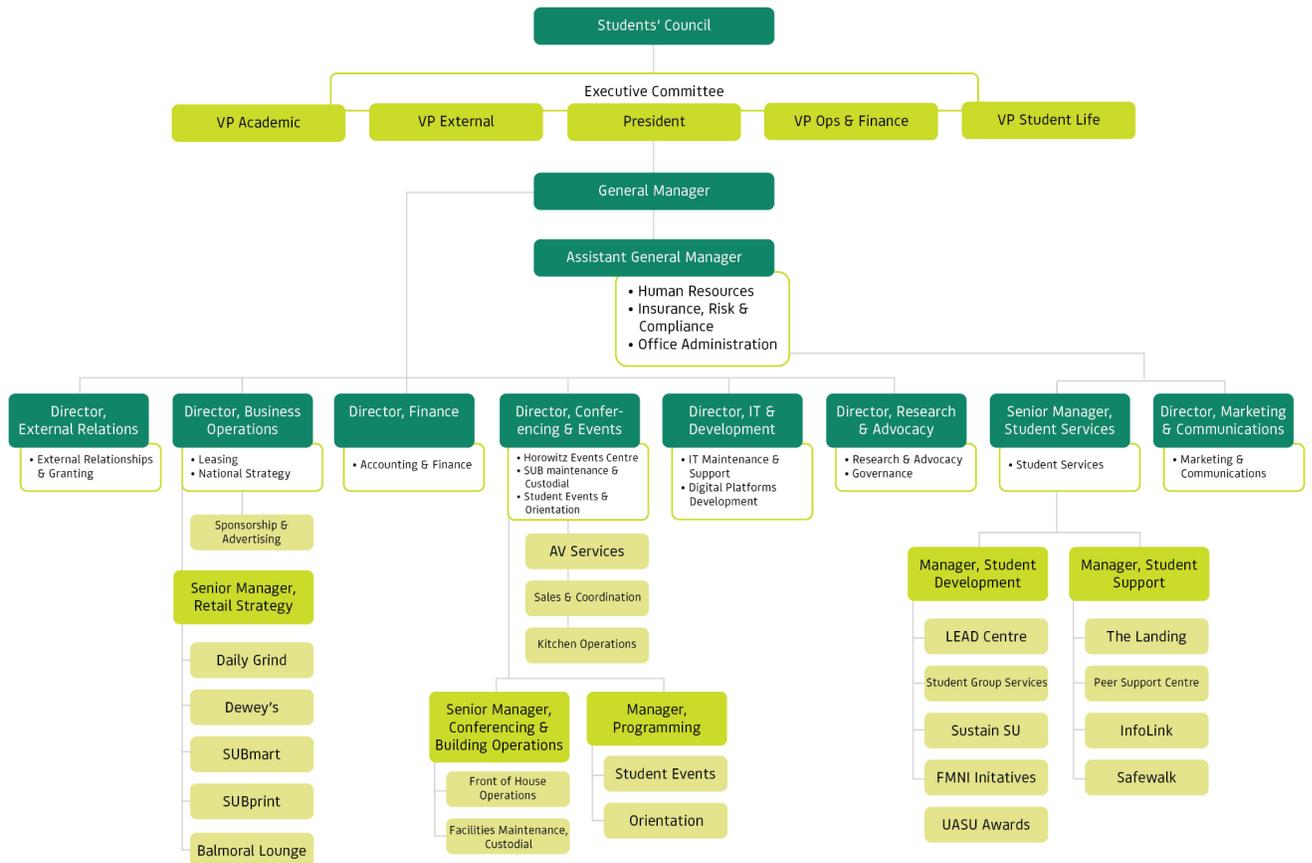
- Feel safe, accepted, and welcome on campus;
- Thrive in a diverse intellectual community;
- Are empowered and confident in their ability to succeed;
- Contribute to society as active citizens and effective leaders; and
- Know they have a voice and the power to effect change.

Critical Success Factors and Goals

These are goals laid out in the Strategic Plan that outline ways in which we intend to fulfill our mission, strive towards our vision, and uphold our values. They include:

- Empowering Our Students
- Building Our Relationships
- Strengthening Our Organization
- Serving All Students

Staff Operations Organizational Chart



Role of the General Manager

As Council has established in Bylaw, staff report to the General Manager, who is directed by the President. (If the President is unavailable, the GM is directed by the VP Operations and Finance.) Bylaw also includes ways that the GM provides updates and reports to Council and various committees.

The GM provides support to the whole Executive Committee and implements their directives. (This includes the President's and Executive Committee's decisions about how to operationalize Council's directives and priorities.)

VPs and Councilors do not oversee staff members or staff operations, though some staff may work closely with student officials on specific tasks when UASU legislation requires it.

UASU Departments in a Nutshell

The UASU has over 250 full- and part-time staff at time of writing. All our operations focus on improving the student experience:

- **Conferencing and Events** staff bring in major external revenue (reducing our reliance on student fees) and run a robust schedule of high-quality student events.
 - If you've ever attended Week of Welcome, Night at the Horrorwitz, New Student Orientation, Break the Record, Last Class Bash, Campus Cup, AntiFreeze, live music at SUBstage, or an event at the Myer Horowitz Theatre, C&E staff made it happen.
 - Around $\frac{1}{4}$ of UASU staff work in C&E.
- **Student Services** staff take care of an equally broad range of student-facing offerings: InfoLink, The Landing, the Peer Support Centre, Safewalk, Student Group Services, the LEAD Centre, and more.
 - Around $\frac{1}{2}$ of UASU staff work in Student Services.
- **Facilities staff** keep SUB comfortable, clean, and operational even though it sees higher traffic and usage than almost any other building at the University.
 - Around $\frac{1}{10}$ of UASU staff work in Facilities.
- **Business staff** run SUBmart, the campus corner store; Dewey's and RATT, the two campus bars; and SUBprint.
 - These businesses exist to support and enrich the student experience at a reasonable price, and they also bring in external revenue.
 - Their operations are closely guided by the Vice President Operations and Finance based on shifting student needs and financial sustainability.
 - Around $\frac{1}{4}$ of UASU staff work in retail, bars, or SUBprint.

- **Marketing and Communications ('MarComms') staff** create campaigns, public messaging, branding, posters, and graphics for the rest of the UASU.
 - Much of their work is focused on meeting the organization's communications needs, helping departments promote their student-facing offerings, and project management.
 - MarComms creates the annual student handbook and frequent student newsletters, and manages the UASU's main social media accounts ([Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Tiktok](#)).
 - MarComms plays a key role in communicating with the student body: for example, newsletters asking students to participate in the March 2023 tuition protest were each opened by more than 25,000 students.
 - Around 3% of UASU staff work in MarComms.
- **Governance staff** assist Council, the Speaker, and Committee Chairs through scheduling, taking and editing minutes, arranging Zoom access and recordings, archiving relevant materials, maintaining online records, and other functions related to the UASU's Bylaws, Policies, and Standing Orders.
 - Out of everyone who works for the UASU, Governance staff (including students) are the staff most likely to encounter Council members. A respectful working environment is essential.
 - An hour of Council/committee time = roughly 3.5 hours of staff time.
 - Around 3% of UASU staff work in Governance.
- **Other UASU staff** cover a wide variety of administrative support functions, including IT, accounting, governance, human resources, front-desk support, kitchen operations, research and surveys, media relations, government grant procurement, sponsorship procurement and sponsor relations, Get Out the Vote campaigning, and advocacy toward the University and all levels of government.

What Do I Do If...?

Say you want to get a job with the UASU. It's not forbidden to be both a Councilor and a UASU employee or volunteer. But please be very careful about which hat you're wearing at any particular time, and how your choices might impact others. Naturally, you wouldn't share confidential Council information with coworkers, and would avoid talking about Council business at work, as it could put coworkers in awkward positions. **If you have a UASU job, you must follow the relevant section of UASU Operating Policy (3.22: [Code of Ethics](#)).** If in doubt, **speak with the President.**

Imagine you work at InfoLink. As a Councilor, you are asked about mask distribution. You can discuss information that the UASU has made public (e.g. that masks are available at InfoLink kiosks). However, the size of InfoLink's mask stocks and where they are sourced from are not public information, so you would not discuss it. This public/private information divide is broadly applicable and extremely serious.

Alternatively, imagine Council is discussing the future of a business or service where you work. Since it might impact your employment, and your employment might impact the discussion, you would abstain from participating.

Student-Run Functions

Some elements of the UASU's operations, by Council's design, are intentionally not run through the standard staff structure.

- Elections are run by a Chief Returning Officer, always an undergraduate student, who reports to Council via CAC. Major support is required from IT and Governance staff, but elections are explicitly student-led.
- The Discipline, Interpretation, and Enforcement Board (DIE Board) is the judicial branch of the Students' Union. Governance staff provide basic administrative support, but the DIE Board is fully independent. It is responsible for interpreting and enforcing UASU legislation, and for making rulings on appeals to decisions made by the Chief Returning Officer or the Student Group Committee. It can also be called upon to provide its opinion on reference questions.
 - Any undergraduate student may initiate a complaint about the contravention of UASU legislation, and any member of Council or the Chief Returning Officer can request an interpretation of SU legislation.
 - To initiate a hearing, you must fill out a Hearing Application Form, which can be found on [the DIE Board webpage](#). This page also includes the DIE Board's governing documents and archives of DIE Board rulings.

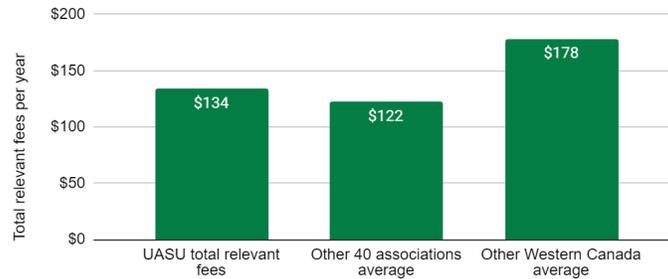
UASU Finances in a Nutshell

UASU budgets and audited financial statements are publicly posted [here](#). More detailed information often comes to Finance Committee for review and oversight. As a member of Students' Council, if you wish to examine the UASU's finances in more detail and learn how they function, the General Manager is happy to assist you.

The UASU works to keep fees as low as possible. In the last three years, while Alberta inflation has risen 13% and average Alberta tuition has risen 27%, the UASU's membership fee has risen 8.6%. In a 2020 environmental scan of 700+ fees related to student associations across the country, the UASU's total operating and capital fees (i.e.

membership fee plus Sustainability and Capital Fund) were slightly above average among comparable fees, but well below the Western Canada average.

Review of operating and capital fees for 41 student associations (2019-20)



UASU Government Relations in a Nutshell

Overview

Students' Council plays a vital role in the student advocacy process by identifying the most pressing issues and concerns affecting students. The priorities identified at Students' Council become the basis for student-led initiatives and campaigns on municipal, provincial, and federal levels of advocacy. The responsibility for undertaking those campaigns and advocacy meetings rests with the Executive team.

- At the **municipal** level, the UASU executive engages with City Councilors in one on ones, through the Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA) and at Edmonton City Council meetings to address critical issues such as housing, transit safety, and transportation.
- **Provincial** advocacy is carried out through the Council of Alberta Undergraduate Students (CAUS), which represents over 100,000 students from various universities in Alberta and advocates for an accessible and high-quality education system. Regular meetings with the Minister of Advanced Education and other relevant provincial government representatives, as well as policy and budget submissions are a key part of advocacy at CAUS.
- At the **federal** level, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) represents over 350,000 students to secure wins at the national level through regular meetings with Members of Parliament, advocacy week, policy and budget submissions and recommendations to federal panels. The work done at Students' Council level is essential to shaping advocacy priorities in all of these spaces.

The summaries below offer some highlights, but not a comprehensive picture. If you have questions about our government relations efforts, by all means start a conversation with the VP External.

Municipal advocacy organization: Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA)

Electoral district: Ward Papastew (PAH-PAH-STAY-OH)

Current representative: Michael Janz

Representative type: City Councilor

On the municipal level, the UASU executive utilizes multiple channels to address crucial issues that impact students' quality of life, including housing, transit safety, and transportation. The UASU's VP External engages with City Councilors through one-on-one meetings, and Edmonton City Council meetings. Councilor Michael Janz, the current ward representative, is among the officials the UASU works with to tackle these critical concerns and advocate for policies that benefit the student body and the larger community.

Provincial advocacy organization: Council of Alberta Undergraduate Students (CAUS)

Electoral district: Edmonton Strathcona

Current representative: Rachel Notley

Representative type: Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)

At the provincial level, the Council of Alberta Undergraduate Students (CAUS) represents undergraduate students from various universities in Alberta, advocating for accessible and high-quality education. Its board consists of representatives from member student associations and unions who identify priorities annually. CAUS has been successful in promoting post-secondary education as a public issue, fighting against funding cuts and tuition hikes, and achieving significant policy victories. One notable achievement was the passing of Bill 19, which included the requirement for consultation and student approval for ETI proposals, tuition being tied to CPI, and guaranteed tuition predictability for international students. CAUS has secured millions in aid and support for students over the years.

Federal advocacy organization: Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)

Electoral district: Edmonton Strathcona

Current representative: Heather McPherson

Representative type: Member of Parliament (MP)

At the federal level, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) is a national voice for Canada's post-secondary students. CASA is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization that brings together student associations from across the country to represent the interests of undergraduate, graduate, and polytechnic

students. CASA played a key role in securing several federal wins, including doubling the Canada Student Grant at the height of the pandemic, the temporary lifting of the 20-hour per week limit for international students, millions in funding for programs such as the Canada Summer Jobs Program and Youth Employment and Skills Strategy, and recommendations for increased support for graduate student research scholarships.

What Do I Do If...?

Say you have questions or opinions about our government relations efforts or priorities, or the value we get from membership in advocacy organizations. Your first step would be to speak with the VP External and/or the President. They can take your feedback onboard to share it with those who need to hear it, and can also arrange for advocacy organizations to make presentations to Council or relevant committees. It is quite normal for these organizations to give such presentations if desired.

UASU Wins for Students in a Nutshell

While our advocacy does not always achieve the results we wish it could — for example, our fight against the last few years of tuition increases — we have created genuine value for students together. The Executives take the lead on these initiatives, and Students' Council and its committees play substantive roles related to setting priorities, gathering essential context, and consulting with stakeholders and subject matter experts. Each of the following examples reflects sustained work by many people. These lists are not exhaustive.

Examples from 2022/23

- \$9.6 million allocated toward needs-based aid for around 3570 UAlberta undergraduates, as the Alberta Student Grant for Full-Time Students (ASG-FT) rose from \$250/month to \$475/month.
- Up to \$7.8 million in savings through courses participating in the Zero Textbook Cost Program. Students can find courses that have ZTC on Beartracks.
- \$1.6 million allocated by the University toward mental health support. This includes an expansion of Counselling and Clinical Services to reduce wait times and provide more accessible and culturally competent support.
- \$1 million in savings by removing the \$40 Instalment Fee for students who pay their tuition over two semesters.
- Our tuition/cost of living protest helped secure \$200,000 in University funding to build a food pantry for the Campus Food Bank. We also expanded food bank services, including the grocery bus, breakfast program and CSJ snack stations.



- \$15,000 donated by internal stakeholders towards improving the infrastructure of the period equity initiative.
- The University has fully implemented new Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policies and Procedures that will improve survivor-centred and trauma-informed support for students.
- The University is finally implementing Exploration Credits, which students can use starting in Fall 2023.
- The University is creating a Student Financial Aid Working Group to re-evaluate the University's moderate standard of living threshold and needs-based aid availability.
- The University is implementing an all-gender washroom pilot project to locate and convert washrooms in buildings across campus to all-gender service. University Commons will have 49 all-gender washrooms.
- The UASU is creating a new student group oversight structure with the University to be implemented by Fall 2024, to put student life back in the hands of students.
- The UASU helped the University create a new Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Policy that includes a new USRI (now called SPOT). It will translate appropriate student feedback into mechanisms that will improve teaching meaningfully and share past student ratings with current students.

Examples from Previous Years

- In November 2021, a student-led mass walkout at GFC, in tandem with a joint letter from the UASU, GSA, NASA, and 20 student representative associations, called the University's attention to much-needed reforms in sexual violence prevention and response. Council members played key roles throughout. The ['November letter'](#) and the walkout supported ongoing government advocacy efforts. Based on student advocates' specific recommendations, Advanced Education ordered Alberta's post-secondary institutions to overhaul policies and practices related to sexual and gender-based violence.
- In early 2021, the University submitted twelve exceptional tuition increase proposals to the provincial government, aiming to raise tuition for specific programs or faculties by 20% to 104%. In cooperation with the GSA and other student associations, the UASU fought these proposals at several levels. Based on Council's input about what was taking place in their faculties, we showed the Minister of Advanced Education that consultation had been insufficient, and he sent the proposals back for a new round of student engagement. While the tuition increases ultimately passed, we 'took the edge off' with \$2.7 million in rate reductions or financial aid set-asides (largely from concessions in the BSc Engineering, JD, PharmD, and DDS/APDDS proposals).
- The 2019 ARRC Recommendations stated that the University should "conduct an Aboriginal Student Success Survey, parallel to the 2014-15 survey. Moreover, the Students' Union should encourage the University to report publicly on the survey's



findings, including both a stand-alone analysis and a comparative analysis with the 2014 survey." Guided by the ARRC Recommendations, successive years of UASU Executives urged the University to relaunch the survey and make the results public. The Indigenous Student Success Survey ran in Winter 2021, and the [report](#) became available in March 2022.

- In 2018, the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (FoPPS) attempted to abolish Fall reading week for non-PharmD students, claiming overwhelming student support and putting the faculty association in a difficult position. The UASU confronted the faculty, ensured a proper and transparent consultation, and convinced the University to rescind its approval of the proposal. Non-PharmD FoPPS students kept their Fall reading week.
- The UASU played a significant role in the affordability advocacy that led to the government's decision to freeze tuition between 2015 and 2020. While a tuition freeze was a less efficient form of aid than improving needs-based student grants, we estimate that the freeze saved Alberta's domestic students around \$190 million, and international students around \$30 million.

Appendix A: Governance Meeting Rules Glossary

MOTION: the 'unit of business' debated by an assembly

- Main Motions: must be seconded and are debatable, amendable, and reconsiderable. They are the motions to which all other motions react.
- All Other Motions: There are 86 kinds of motion that can be made under Roberts' Rules of Order. They act on the business of the assembly in different ways.

DEBATE: a structured discussion about a motion

- A member must be recognized by the chair as "having the floor." They have a limited time to speak, and must stay on topic and respect decorum.

AMENDMENT: a formal process used to propose changes to motions

- Only certain types of motions can be amended.

VOTE: how an assembly decides whether to support a proposed motion

- When put to a vote, motions pass or fail. A motion that passes has a majority (as defined in the organization's bylaws) in favour, and is carried or adopted. A motion that fails does not have a majority in favour, and is not acted upon.

CHAIR: the person responsible for ensuring that the rules are observed

- A chair may be voting or nonvoting. It is their primary responsibility to facilitate the meeting by enforcing the rules, so they must be impartial.

DECORUM: debating in a respectable and orderly manner

- Debate is confined to the merits of the motion before the assembly. Members refer to one another respectfully, do not attack motives, do not interrupt, and do not speak against their own motions.

POINTS: allows a member to ask a question or interrupt debate

- Point of information: a member asks a question of another member. Cannot interrupt a speaker.
- Point of order: a member believes procedure is not being followed and brings it to the chair's attention. Cannot interrupt a speaker, but must be raised as soon as possible.
- Point of parliamentary inquiry: a member asks a question related to procedure. Cannot interrupt a speaker.
- Point of privilege: something is preventing a member from participating. Can interrupt a speaker.

	Undeatable	Opens main question to debate	Cannot be amended	Cannot be reconsidered	Requires a 2/3 majority vote	Must be Seconded	Can interrupt a speaker
Adjourn	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Adjourn, Fix the Time to which to	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Amend	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Amend an Amendment	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	-
Amend the Rules	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Appeal, relating to indecorum	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓
Appeal, in all other areas		-	✓	-	-	✓	✓
Call to Order	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	✓
Close Debate, motion to	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Commit to Refer	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-
Extend the Limits of Debate, motion to	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Fix the Time of which to Adjourn	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Continue Speaking after indecorum	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	-
Lay on the Table	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Limit Debate, motion to	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Objection to Consideration of a Question	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓
Orders of the Day, motion for the	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	✓
Postpone to a Certain Time	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Postpone Indefinitely	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-
Previous Question	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-
Priority of Business, questions relating to	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Privilege, Question of	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Reading Papers	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	-
Reconsider a Debatable Questions	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Reconsider an Undeatable Question	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Refer (same as commit)	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-
Rescind	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-
Rise (in Committee equals Adjourn)	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Special Order, to make a	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Substitute (same as Amend)	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Suspend the Rules	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-
Take from the Table	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-
Take up a Question out of its Proper Order	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-

Appendix B: Acronym Reference Sheet

Based on a chart created by Julia Viloso, VPOF 2022-23.

AASUA	Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta
ACFA	Association Canadienne-Française de l'Alberta
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ALES	Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences
APC	Academic Planning Committee
APIRG	Alberta Public Interest Research Group
APSA	Alberta Pharmacy Students' Association
ARRC	Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Committee
ARWG	Academic Restructuring Working Group
ASA	Augustana Students' Association
ASC	Aboriginal Student Council (former name of ISU)
ASOB	Alberta School of Business
BFPC	Board Finance and Property Committee
BGC	Board Governance Committee
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour
BLRSEC	Board Learning, Research and Student Experience Committee
BoG	Board of Governors
BRPAC	Board Reputation and Public Affairs Committee
BSA	Black Students' Association OR Business Students' Association
CAC	Council Administration Committee

CAG	Campus Alberta Grant
CASA	Canadian Alliance of Student Associations
CAUS	Council of Alberta University Students
CDI	Committee on the Documentation of Indigineity
CIP	Comprehensive Institutional Plan
CLE	Committee on the Learning Environment
COFA	Council of Faculty Associations
COI	Conflict of Interest
CORA	Council of Residence Associations
COSA	Council of Student Affairs
CRO	Chief Returning Officer
CSJ	Campus Saint-Jean
DA	Departmental Association
DFU	Dedicated Fee Unit
DIE Board	Discipline, Interpretation, and Enforcement Board
DoS	Dean of Students
DRO	Deputy Returning Officer
ECV	East Campus Village
EDI	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
ESA	Education Students' Association
ESS	Engineering Students' Society
FA	Faculty Association
FAMF	Faculty Association Membership Fee

FAUnA	Faculty of ALES Undergraduate Association
FDC	Facilities Development Committee
FLE	Full-Load Equivalent
FPH	First Peoples' House
FTE	Full-Term Equivalent
GFC	General Faculties Council
GoA	Government of Alberta
GPO	GFC Executive Subcommittee on Governance and Procedural Oversight
GSA	Graduate Students' Association
GFCSC	GFC Student Caucus
ISA	International Students' Association
ISAC	International Student Advisory Committee
ISS	International Student Services
ISSS	Interdepartmental Science Students' Society
ISU	Indigenous Students' Union (formerly ASC)
KSRSS	Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation Student Society
LSA	Law Students' Association
MNIF	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fee
MOOC	Massive Online Open Course
MSA	Medical Students' Association OR Muslim Students' Association (MSA UofA, often abbreviated as MSA)
NASA	Non-Academic Staff Association Committee
NSSA	Native Studies Students' Association

NUA	Nursing Undergraduate Association
OASIS	Organization for Arts Students and Interdisciplinary Studies
OLEP	Official Languages in Education Programs
PAWSOC	Physical Activity & Wellness Strategic Operating Committee
PBF	Performance-Based Funding
PDFA	Postdoctoral Fellows Association
PSE	Post-Secondary Education
PSI	Post-Secondary Institution
PSLA	Post-Secondary Learning Act
RBAC	Residence Budget Advisory Committee
RO	Registrar's Office
SC	Students' Council
SCPC	Student Conduct Policy Committee
SET	Service Excellence Transformation
SRA	Student Representative Association
SU	Students' Union
SUTV	Students' Union Television
UAB	University Athletics Board
UAI	University of Alberta International
UASU	University of Alberta Students' Union
UTAC	University Teaching Awards Committee
VPA	Vice-President Academic
VPC	Vice-President Consultation

VPE	Vice-President Engagement
VPER	Vice-President External Relations
VPFO	Vice-President Facilities and Operations
VPIPR	Vice-President Indigenous Programming and Research
VPOF	Vice-President Operations and Finance
VPSF	Vice-President Services and Finance
VPSL	Vice-President Student Life
VPX	Vice-President External
WIL	Work Integrated Learning
WOW	Week of Welcome
WUSC	World University Service of Canada

Appendix C: Important Contacts

ROLE	NAME	EMAIL
President	Christian Fotang	president@su.ualberta.ca
Speaker	Christian Zukowski	speaker@su.ualberta.ca
Chief Returning Officer	Jacob Verghese	cro@su.ualberta.ca
CAC Chair	TBD	TBD
General Manager	Marc Dumouchel	marc.dumouchel@su.ualberta.ca
Governance team	N/A	governance@su.ualberta.ca
Assistant Manager, Governance Support	Courtney Graham	courtney.graham@su.ualberta.ca
Director of Research and Advocacy (backup support for Governance)	Jonathan Olfert	dra@su.ualberta.ca

Appendix D: Being a Committee Chair

The specific roles of each Chair may vary depending on their committee's Bylaw mandates (as found in Bylaw 120 for Standing Committees, and Bylaw 130 for Executive subcommittees), as well as Standing Orders and any relevant manuals. Chairs' most foundational responsibility is to know those documents. Chairs should do so early in their terms, before committee workloads escalate and members call on the Chairs' expertise more frequently.

This responsibility is achievable and can be straightforward. For example, consider Finance Committee, which has a large number of responsibilities.

- Its total Bylaw mandate, including membership requirements, is a little over 400 words.
- Its [Standing Orders](#), some of which duplicate Bylaw elements, are around 6100 words.
- Its [most recent manual](#) may seem intimidating at 43 pages, but largely duplicates Standing Orders and a portion of a previous Council handbook.
- All these materials are fully searchable with the ctrl+F function, and reading them start to finish (or using assistive technology to get through them) is well within a Chair's capabilities.

Although circumstances may necessitate adaptation, here is an approximate division of labor between Chairs and Governance staff for some common tasks.

- Chairs help the committee manage the work of its mandate. For example, the Chair of Policy Committee or Bylaw Committee would ensure that work on specific policies or bylaws would be assigned to specific groups of committee members, and check in on progress.
- Chairs will work closely with Governance staff to ensure meetings are scheduled and supported. Part of this responsibility is to avoid last-minute meetings and meeting extensions as much as possible, as minute-taking staff are often part-time student staff with their own scheduling constraints.
- All room booking is done by staff.
 - If a special meeting becomes necessary, staff still book the rooms for a variety of reasons, e.g. to ensure spaces are not double-booked.
- Coordinating regular meeting times around committee member availability is done by staff. If a special meeting becomes necessary, Chairs may wish to schedule it themselves, and staff may support the scheduling functions based on their availability.
 - If a special meeting becomes necessary and staff are not available for minute-taking and recording purposes, the Chair is responsible for ensuring that the meeting is recorded and notes are taken. Staff would then produce a standard set of minutes.



- All minute-taking and editorial work is done by staff. For a variety of reasons, the minutes are typically heavily summarized and framed as neutrally as possible.
 - Chairs and committees may have relevant preferences and are welcome to provide staff with the wording of suggested amendments before the committee approves the minutes. Chairs are responsible for ensuring that committee members treat staff, their time, and their work with respect and courtesy. If a Chair has concerns or strong preferences about minute-taking practices, they are encouraged to contact Governance management privately.
- Staff would accept agenda item submissions and create agendas, but Chairs would typically distribute the agendas to committee members. This allows Chairs to be fully in the loop about committee business and retain an important oversight function.
- Chairs interact primarily with Governance management rather than directing minute-taking staff themselves.
- For hiring/replenishment processes, Chairs ensure a motion is made to open a posting, at which point staff would open/close Bamboo postings and provide Chairs with all applications received. Chairs would be responsible for sharing the application materials with committee members and coordinating all interview/selection processes. (If the Chair is an Executive, their Bamboo access may allow for streamlining and adaptation.)
- Chairs are responsible for ensuring that their committees meet deadlines set in motions of Council or in standing orders.
- Although staff track committee attendance, Chairs are responsible for enforcing attendance rules.

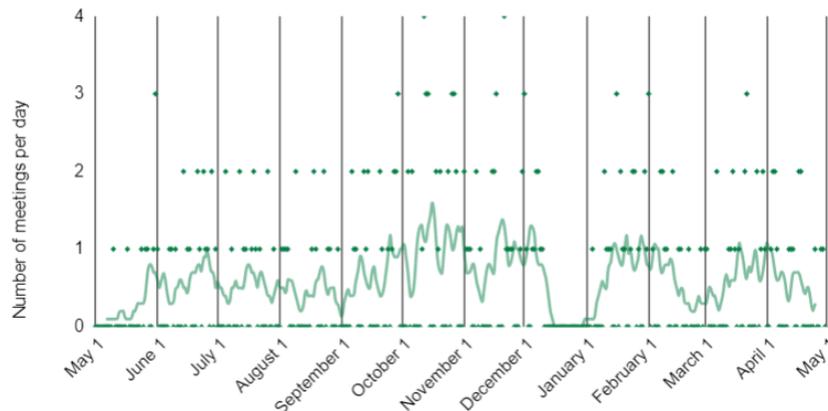
When in doubt about how your committee does its work, please see **Appendix C: Important Contacts**. Everyone listed should be able to provide useful context, or connect you with someone who can.

Appendix E: Timeline of the Year

Though meeting frequency and scheduling can vary widely based on tasks, member availability, and shifting committee mandates, last year's meeting schedule looked like this:

2022-23 Council and Committee Meetings (not including Exec)

With ten-day average



Some times of special note:

- **GovCamp:** During the summer, Council receives comprehensive training opportunities, develops the year's territory acknowledgement together, and learns much more about the function of the UASU. Much of this takes place at Students' Council's GovCamp, a weekend event.
 - In a follow-up survey for last year's GovCamp, participating Councilors became more likely to feel comfortable asking questions and participating in Council, and more likely to feel like they understood their fellow Councilors and appreciated where they were coming from. Most Councilors reported that they felt engaged in each session, and that each session would help them make Council a better place.
- **Start of Fall Semester:** This is a time when Councilors are often asked to sit on various working groups and be part of New Student Orientation, faculty-specific orientation, Clubs Fair, the President's Address, Week of Welcome, and so forth.
- **Budget season:** Budgetary matters and relevant consultations generate a great deal of work throughout Winter Semester. The UASU's Bylaws lay out strict timelines for the development and approval of the budget. For example, after consulting with various other committees, Finance Committee recommends the Budget Principles to Council no later than February 15; Council then has one month to approve the principles; and then Finance Committee submits the final Operating and Capital Budget to Council no later than March 31.
- **Elections:** As laid out in [Bylaw Article III](#), UASU elections take place in early March (Executives and Board of Governors Representatives), late March (Council and GFC), and September (by-elections).

Appendix F: Guidelines for Presentations at Students' Council

These guidelines lay out expectations for bringing presentations to Students' Council and explain relevant requirements in Students' Council Standing Orders. While Students' Council can suspend parts of Standing Orders, that does not mean it should or will, so it is best practice to consider Standing Orders mandatory.

Timelines and Submission

- Presentations must be sponsored by a voting member of Students' Council.
- Presentation materials must be submitted via the [Students' Council Agenda Submission Form](#) by either the presenter or the sponsoring Students' Council member.
 - You must submit an abstract/summary of 50-100 words.
 - While you do not need to use slides, you must submit any slides you use in your presentation.
- Council receives Order Papers (its primary document package) on the Friday before each meeting. The deadline to be included in Order Papers is 8:00 AM on Friday.
- Submissions received after this deadline may be considered for inclusion in the agenda via the Late Additions. The deadline for Late Additions is 1:00 PM on the Tuesday of the Students' Council meeting.
- To ensure Students' Council has the appropriate time to go through its agenda, presentations may need to be rescheduled to a later meeting.
 - This may be based on whether agenda items are time-sensitive, required under Bylaw or provincial regulation, or not submitted in time for Friday's Order Papers, or whether other presentations were received first.
 - A maximum of four presentations may take place during a Students' Council meeting.
- Standing Orders include a seven-day delay mechanism to ensure Students' Council has time to appropriately consider presentations before making a decision. If your presentation requires Students' Council to make a motion/decision, please ensure you plan to present at least a week in advance.

Delivering Presentations

- Each presentation, including discussion/Q&A, lasts a maximum of 15 minutes.
 - 10-minute extensions are possible with a two-thirds majority vote, but please plan for your presentation and discussion to take a total of 15 minutes unless you are bringing a major issue to Students' Council.
- Councilors, presenters, and the Speaker of Students' Council share a responsibility to maintain decorum and professionalism.

When in doubt, please connect with the Governance team: governance@su.ualberta.ca

Appendix G: Participating in Hiring Committees

Councilors are sometimes called upon to participate in hiring (e.g. for DIE Board replenishment, University positions, or selection of the Speaker at Students' Council). Here are some general guidelines to ensure a positive experience.

- Keep confidentiality rigorously. Hiring involves personal information (including contact information and employment history) and is legally sensitive. Never share application materials or discuss what happens inside a hiring process.
- Read all application materials in advance of interviews.
- All interactions with candidates should be as part of the hiring committee; do not engage/meet with candidates separately.
- Watch out for preconceptions and implicit biases. Some examples:
 - Be wary of affinity biases (biases toward people who are 'like you' in some way) and confirmation bias (tendency to lean more toward evidence that confirms your initial impression of a candidate), as well as stereotype biases.
 - Some things about a candidate could seem potentially relevant, but would actually be seriously inappropriate as decision-making factors (e.g. speculating about whether a single parent could meet a position's time commitment).
- Stick to the script. Though getting to know candidates may feel appealing, many kinds of personal or non-job-related questions, no matter how innocent, can be inappropriate or even illegal. Plus, keeping interview questions consistent is important for fairness.
- Be extremely wary of injecting any outside information, especially rumor.

What Do I Do If...?

You're part of a hiring committee and you've learned credible information that calls into question a candidate's fitness for a position. The hiring committee likely has a chair or primary support staff, so discuss this with them privately. They can help you navigate whether it would be appropriate or fraught to mention this to the committee.

- If you have a conflict of interest, recuse yourself. You should never be in the uncomfortable position of, for example, ratifying the selection of a candidate when your business partner, sibling, or roommate applied for the same job. (Another example might be if you are involved in a current or probable upcoming DIE Board case; you would abstain from any vote related to DIE Board replenishment.)
- Carefully weigh priorities. Focus on whether the candidate would care about doing the job well; how their experience and judgment do or don't match the position's needs; any equity and diversity factors; and how the candidate would interact with relevant colleagues or teams.