



POLICY 3.04

Election, Referendum & Plebiscites

Referendums and Plebiscites

POLICY INTENT

To define how AUSU administrates referendums and plebiscites.

POLICY RESPONSIBILITY

Council

POLICY

Definitions

- 3.04.01 “Referendum” means a vote open to all Members held on a given question whose result is legally binding upon AUSU.
- 3.04.02 “Plebiscite” means any question asked of an elector on the ballot of a nonbinding nature seeking to obtain public opinion from the Members.

Initiating a Referendum or Plebiscite

- 3.04.03 A plebiscite or referendum can be initiated by one of the following methods:
- a) a Councillor may present Council with a resolution for a referendum or plebiscite which includes the question and details to be voted on, or,
 - b) an AUSU Member may present council with a petition for a referendum or plebiscite in accordance with section 3.04.6 of this policy.
- 3.04.04 Council must vote on the motion to hold a referendum or plebiscite no later than 30 days from receiving the resolution. Should the resolution originate from a Member petition Council must inform the membership as to why the resolution was not approved.

Requirements for a Member Petition

- 3.04.05 AUSU Members in good standing may petition Council to hold a referendum or plebiscite vote. In order to be valid, a petition must comply with, and include, all of the following:
- a) The name, university identification number, phone number, address and signature of the official representative of the petition. The official representative will handle the collection of the student signatures and forwarding of the petition to Council.
 - b) An accurate wording of the referendum or plebiscite question that will appear on the ballot and sufficient details to explain the purpose of the question.
 - c) The name, postal address and phone number of each AUSU member who signs the

petition. Contact information must be accurate so that AUSU can verify the Member's active status. The names should be listed in a column with signatures occurring to the right of each name. A template document will be made available to the membership.

- d) Should physical signatures be impossible to collect from members, an email or fax from the Member requesting to be added to the petition can be included in lieu of a signature. The referendum or plebiscite question must be clearly indicated in the student's email or fax. All emails and faxes must be attached to the petition before submitting to Council in lieu of physical signatures and the words "email or fax approval attached" must be written into each student's signature line by the official representative.
 - e) The petition must have sufficient signatures from active AUSU members to be forwarded to council. This number shall be equal to or greater than 1% of the undergraduate full load equivalent (FLE) student population of AU, as determined by the most recent confirmed figures in the annual Athabasca University report.
- 3.04.06 The petition will not be deemed to have been received until all required documentation has been submitted to the President or designate according to section 3.04.5.
- 3.04.07 Should the President or designate deem the petition to be incomplete, the President or designate shall discuss the status of the petition with the official representative in order to resolve the problem.
- 3.04.08 Should the President be unable to resolve the problem, then the petition will be forwarded to Council for a vote to determine its validity.
- 3.04.09 Should the President deem that the petition is valid; a resolution to approve the petition must be voted on by council within three weeks of receipt of the petition.
- 3.04.10 The petition must be worded in a way that can be answered by a simple Yes or No vote.
- 3.04.11 Should the resolution to accept the petition be defeated, the membership must be informed no later than 5 days following the Council meeting. Sufficient detail must be included explaining why the motion was defeated. Should the petition fail due to wording that is in violation of AUSU constitution, bylaws or be deemed to be confusing or potentially inflammatory, the official representative will be given the opportunity to resubmit the petition with new wording.
- 3.04.12 Should the resolution to accept the petition carry, the referendum or plebiscite item will be added to the next ballot date. The wording of the referendum or plebiscite item will match the wording used in the approved petition.

Timing of the Referendum or Plebiscite Vote

- 3.04.13 Voting for a referendum or plebiscite can occur at one of the following times:
- a) In conjunction with the bi-annual student Council election, or,
 - b) At any other time of the year, as long as it does not occur within 1 month of the bi-annual Council election.
- 3.04.14 Referendums and Plebiscites that are approved by Council will be held no later than 60 days from the date of approval of the resolution. Or up to 90 days if such an extension would allow it to fall on an election day.

Voting Procedure

- 3.04.15 Each Referendums and Plebiscite question shall be given its own ballot and shall be voted on individually through AUSU's secure online voting system. The question shall match the one approved by Council and the voting shall consist of a "Yes" or "No" vote.
- 3.04.16 Should the ballot not occur in conjunction with a bi-annual Council election, then a CRO and Scrutineer must be retained to oversee the voting procedures and verify the voting results. CRO and Scrutineers will be hired according to the election policy.
- 3.04.17 The results of the referendum or plebiscite must be forwarded to the President by the CRO no later than 3 business days from the conclusion of voting. The President must announce to the membership the results of the vote, no later than 1 business day following receipt of the results.

Appeals

- 3.04.18 An appeal regarding referendum and/or plebiscite procedures must be filed with Council no later than 15 business days following the announcement of the voting results.

Advertisement

- 3.04.19 AUSU will advertise the ballot date and question of an approved referendum or plebiscite question, to the membership in the 30 days preceding the ballot. The advertisement must include at least one mail-out to all AUSU members and/or any other method that is guaranteed to reach all AUSU members prior to the ballot.

Fees for Petitions

- 3.04.20 A \$50 dollar deposit is required to file the petition with council. If the petition is accepted through a motion of council, the deposit will be refunded to the official representative.

Policy Updates

- 3.04.21 This policy can only be revised through a resolution at a General Meeting.

POLICY HISTORY

- Original Approval Date: May 7, 2007
- Updated Date: March 8, 2008
- Review-by Date: March 8, 2010 (AGM only)