



Athabasca University
Students' Union

AUSU Council Goals 2015-2016

Updated: February 11, 2016 by Council motion to add The Voice

Updated: March 10, 2016 by motion to add FAC recommendations

Updated: March 23 with progress reporting.

Updated: June 3, 2016 with progress reporting.

Updated: August 26, 2016 with progress reporting.

Website – *Launch and promote new AUSU website to better serve the needs of members and council*

1. Work with the web developers to ensure that all desired content is incorporated or archived into the new website including
 - Digital awards applications (new)
 - Course evaluations (new)
 - All current website content

COMPLETE: The new website was launched at the end of September 2015 with newsletter and social media promotion. The site contains digital awards application, course evaluations, and the previous web content. New member communication features are included such as the upcoming events, news, latest tweets, recent updates and the member poll feature.

2. Work with web developers and AUSU staff to train staff and develop written instructions for maintaining and updating the new website including
 - Posting blogs
 - Updating/uploading policies and documents
 - Creating/deleting pages as needs and services change

COMPLETE: Staff has been trained and are currently posting blogs, updating/uploading policies and documents, and creating/deleting pages as needed.

3. Use social media and other appropriate avenues to promote the new website and its features

COMPLETE: MECC and staff are regularly promoting the site's features to the membership using social media, newsletters and Voice ads.

Communications – *Improve outgoing communications and membership engagement*

1. Develop a procedure to communicate with new members that highlights AUSU's services

COMPLETE: AUSU began sending a new welcome email to all new members in May 2015. The email outlines who AUSU is, and provides information and links to all of our services and social media sites, as well as contact information for AUSU. We have seen an increase in use of our services since the new welcome email was initiated.

2. Develop and implement a social media strategy that incorporates AUSU's Facebook and Twitter accounts

COMPLETE: AUSU developed a new and improved social media strategy and made significant efforts to increase posts to AUSU Twitter and Facebook, as well as the campus feed in the Mobile App and AU Facebook forum. The strategy is overseen by MECC and implemented by the new Communications and Member Services Coordinator.

3. Investigate a Writer in Residence program

COMPLETE: Staff prepared a research paper about writer in residence programs which was circulated to council. No further action items were forthcoming from the report.

4. Analyze the results of the recent survey that closed June 15 and explore possible changes based on member feedback

COMPLETE: The poll indicated a significant lack of awareness surrounding the services that AUSU offers its members. MECC reviewed the results and significantly increased the communications campaign with a focus on services through regular newsletter, Voice ads, social media posts. Access of the services have increased dramatically as shown in data published in monthly reports at council meetings.

External Advocacy – Highlight and communicate AUSU membership’s unique needs and priorities more effectively to external stakeholders.

1. Become familiar with CASA organization (goals, policies, bylaws, etc.)

COMPLETE: AUSU executive officers have all reviewed CASA goals, policies, bylaws and activities and provided regular reports to council meetings. This is now a requirement for any new incoming executive.

2. Actively participate in the 4 yearly conferences with minimum of 1 Exec attending in person

COMPLETE: AUSU executive officers attended two CASA conferences to date. The president, VPEx and VPFA attended the policy and strategy conference in November 2015 and the president and VPFA attended the national lobby conference in February 2016. Budget is in place to attend two further conferences. In addition, AUSU has representatives on six CASA committees. CASA committees are now a part of external committee review for incoming executive.

Services – Successfully launch and monitor new and recent services available to the AUSU membership

1. Work with AUSU staff and Oohlala to successfully launch and promote the new AUSU/AUGSA mobile app

COMPLETE: The mobile app was launched in September 2015 and has been promoted in social media, newsletters and Voice ads.

2. Work with AUSU staff and Ceridian to successfully launch and promote the new Student Life Line (Mental Health Services)

COMPLETE: The Student Lifeline health and wellness program was launched in September 2015 and has been promoted in social media, newsletters and Voice ads. Within the first five months of the program launch, the Student Lifeline program was accessed by over 1000 members, with over 300 different resources used.

3. Review all usage reports provided by Oohlala and Ceridian to gauge uptake of the new services

COMPLETE: Usage reports have been provided to MECC and council meetings regarding both new and continuing student services. This is now an ongoing practice.

4. Work with Gallivan to assess the feasibility of the Health Care plan and discuss the ability of the plan to continue.

COMPLETE: The health and dental plan was reviewed and evaluated thoroughly by the executive and unfortunately found to be unsustainable in the long term Council voted to close the program in October 2015. A plan to wind down the program was developed including a communication plan and plans to develop a health care related bursary.

Governance – Review and revise the AUSU policy manual as needed

1. Evaluate the current bylaws and policies and their current compliance with the PSLA. Review previous legal opinions and suggestions regarding bylaws. Make appropriate updates as a result of recommendations and implement changes.

Complete: The executive completed significant research and consultation surrounding the AUSU bylaws and compliance with the PSLA of Alberta and made recommendations to council for a process to make the first round of required amendments. A member consultation process was completed and first reading of a motion to amend article 10 of the bylaws was passed on March 10, 2016. Second reading is planned for April 14, 2016. Policy 3.04 was also identified as being contrary to the PSLA and edits have been drafted, will be presented to the membership at the AGM.

Amendments to the AUSU bylaws in order to bring them inline with the PSLA were passed at the second reading during the April 14, 2016 council meeting. Although further review of the bylaws is required, they currently comply with the PSLA. An action plan for further review will be made following the June council working retreat.

Policy 3.04 was also updated by motion of council at the April 14, 2016 council meeting and is now in compliance with the PSLA.

2. Conduct a successful general election.

COMPLETE: The 2016 general election was successfully completed with the appeals period ending March 22, 2016.

3. Complete all policy review and revision in the 2015 / 2016 year as outlined in Policy 1.01

ON TRACK and ONGOING: Council is up to date with policy revision and has revised or created additional policies as needed outside of the regular review schedule.

Significant changes were passed to Policy 1.01 at the May 10, 2016 council meeting which will hopefully allow for a more consistent and timely review of policy moving forward. An appendix to the policy, outlining standing review dates has been posted to the AUSU website. An action plan for upcoming policy review has been communicated to council by the VPFA based on due date and priority and is on track for completion.

4. Investigate Governance Training for staff and exec members.

COMPLETE: Executive has investigated governance training for staff and council and has identified two online video courses, a handbook from CSAE, and the In Brief version of Robert's Rules of Order that will provide a good overview for councillors. The councillor handbook has also been updated.

Internal Advocacy – Improve services and support to AUSU membership within the AU community

1. Continue to foster a positive working relationship between AU and AUSU through regular meetings and discussions with AU executives.

ON TRACK and ONGOING: Executive has instituted regular meetings (at least twice per year) with AU president, vice-presidents, deans and other key persons including the registrar. Meetings have been well received and interim communication by email or telephone has regularly been used to ask questions and provide information.

The Voice – Support The Voice as an important member service and form of communication of AUSU

1. Work collaboratively with The Voice to help create a meaningful action plan to improve the publication and increase readership by

- Providing support to The Voice as requested to ensure a successful consultation process
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the action plan as presented by The Voice
- Supporting the implementation of the action plan through non-financial resources as agreed

Ongoing: Staff is in the initial planning stages to create a team including the editor, editor in chief, writers, readers and councillors to develop specific goals and create an action plan.

Sarah, Executive Director and Editor in Chief, and Karl, Managing Editor, have been working in May/June to create an initial TOR for a committee to help complete this goal.

Committee members were appointed by council in July 2016 and committee work started in August. Several meetings have been held to date and a regular schedule has been set. The committee is working well together in accomplishing the goals outlined in the TOR. Due to the committee only starting in August, the chair anticipates that the final report will likely be available for the October council meeting, rather than the September council meeting.

2. Work collaboratively with The Voice to develop a procedure to review and reassess the action plan on a regular basis that shall include
 - Inviting The Voice to meet with council to discuss the successes and challenges at defined points in the action plan
 - Making recommendations to The Voice on potential ideas where AUSU can help with the identified challenges

TO FOLLOW ITEM 1: This will follow the work in item 1 above.

Executive councillors have had one meeting with The Voice editor and will continue to have regular meetings to share information between the 2 groups. Any further recommendations from the committee will be considered once available.

Forensic Audit Recommendation Committee Recommendations – *Implement the recommendations contained in the report to council of the Forensic Audit Recommendation Committee by the end of the 2015/2016 fiscal year.*

1. Work to provide clear and open answers to the members' questions, and address their concerns by:
 - Council formally adopting the committee report at the March 10th regular meeting, making the report readily available to the AUSU membership immediately thereafter,
 - Including each of the committee's recommendations on council's action sheet to be tracked.

COMPLETE: Council adopted the report and recommendations and set a deadline of the end of the 2015/2016 fiscal year for completion of the recommendations. Recommendations have been added to this goals list and the council action sheet.

2. Work to address issues surrounding Jason Nixon collecting executive director salary by:
 - Creating policy specifically around compensation in the event of the president taking on the role of executive director.
 - Considering policy to limit the time period that a president can take on the role of executive director.
 - Having the executive committee look at a procedure for executive motions in addition to recent changes at council level.

Complete: Recommended changes to Policy 2.10 were approved by council at the June 14, 2016 council meeting. These changes address the issue of compensation when the president temporarily steps in to the Executive Director role, and procedures and time limits for this.

A process for executive motions has been put in place, as well as a mechanism for public reporting and council adoption. Written procedures have been created and added to the Executive Manual. Executive motions have been used by the executive committee and were documented in the Executive Meeting Report, and the VPFA monthly report as of April 2016.

3. Work to address issues surrounding the 2015 executive compensation increase by:

- Ensuring the current ad hoc Executive Compensation Review Committee fulfils its mandate in a timely manner and that council duly consider the committee's recommendations.
- Making the Executive Compensation Review Committee, or a comprehensive executive compensation review process, permanent.

IN PROGRESS: The ECR committee completed its work, provided a report to council which was adopted March 10, 2016. Recommendations are being implemented. In consultation with council, executive will create a process/policy and recommend to council for approval.

TOR for a permanent Executive Compensation Review are provided to council for consideration and approval at the September 13, 2016 council meeting. The ECR report and TOR of the first ECR committee were considered when creating this new TOR. If passed, this action item will be complete.

4. Work to address issues surrounding general overage in budgeted expenses by:

- Continuing VPFA, executive director, and finance committee awareness of, and compliance with, the policy requirement for expenses above budgeted amounts.
- Considering amending policy to include a dollar value as well as a percentage value for expenses over budgeted amounts requiring council approval.

Complete: The VPFA, executive director and finance committee are continuing to watch budgeted expenses. Complete review of all financial policies was completed by council at the August 10, 2016 council meeting. Changes to policy were made to ensure a clear approval process for expenditures that are over budget, or that are unbudgeted.

A renumbering of the GL accounts has taken place which will provide more clarity and consistency in budget variance reporting and expense coding. The changes were adopted by the finance committee on May 30, 2016.

5. Work to address general concern over unclear decision-making processes by:

- Directing the executive director to facilitate council education by ensuring thorough orientation and governance training
- Directing councillors to continue to take responsibility to ensure they are aware of governance, policy and procedures.
- Completing bylaw and policy review by end of 2016.

IN PROGRESS & ONGOING: The executive director is planning orientation and executive has identified governance training resources. Bylaw review has started and will continue under the new council.

Orientation information including an updated Councillor Manual, a committee and governance booklet, and a governance training video were distributed to councillors. Time was dedicated at the June Council Working Retreat to discuss orientation, answer any questions and get feedback from new councillors. This feedback was positive and comments were recorded for consideration during future councillor orientation.

As noted previously, changes to policy review were passed at the May 10, 2016 council meeting and a subsequent informal action plan was communicated to council in order to address all policy review that has been recommended by ECR committee and FAC, in addition to any policies identified by councillors to be needing review and what is regularly scheduled for review.

Bylaws were discussed at the June Council Working Retreat and an action plan was developed based on those conversations. Currently a small group is working to create a first draft and is on track to complete the process of adopting changes by December 31, 2016.

6. Work to address general concern over lack of documentation regarding decisions and financial information by:
 - Complete review of all financial management policies.
 - Continuing with meeting processes and documentation and adopting a habit of continual improvement in this area.

Complete: All financial policies were reviewed and suggested changes were approved by council at the August 10, 2016 council meeting. Additionally, financial documents are now posted on the AUSU website each month for members to view. Meeting process and documentation continue to improve.

7. Work to address general concern over lack of communication and transparency to membership regarding decisions and financial information by:
 - Posting regular financial reports on the AUSU website similar to the way meeting minutes are posted.
 - Continuing council and staff efforts at increasing transparency to the membership regarding decision making and financial information and adopt a habit of continual improvement in this area.

Complete: A protocol for posting financial reports has been identified by executive. Council and staff efforts at transparency are continuing.

A page on the AUSU website has been created to post the annual AUSU budget and monthly financial statements (Income Statement with Variance, and Balance Sheet). This is ready to go live and will start with April 2016 financials. Moving forward, financial reports will be posted in a timely manner (usually within one week) after the reports have been approved at the monthly finance committee meeting. For example, the April 2016 financial reports were approved at the May 30, 2016 finance committee meeting.

Additionally, an internal procedure for communicating email motions in a timely manner to the membership has been established.