



## POLICY 3.02

### ELECTION, REFERENDUM, AND PLEBISCITE MANAGEMENT

#### *Election of Executive Officers*

#### **POLICY INTENT**

To ensure a fair election of executive officers to Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) council, this policy, written in accordance with Article 6.02 of the AUSU bylaws, sets out the process to be followed when conducting executive elections.

#### **POLICY RESPONSIBILITY**

Council

#### **POLICY**

##### **Application**

- 3.02.01 This policy applies to all executive elections including:
- executive elections after a general election;
  - mid-term executive elections in years between general elections; and
  - when there is an executive office vacancy or vacancies.

##### **Election of Executive Officers**

- 3.02.02 When there is a general election, executive elections will take place at least 2 weeks and no more than three weeks prior to the council changeover meeting which is scheduled in accordance with the AUSU Policy 4.06 Annual Timeline and Executive Work Plan.
- 3.02.02.01 The executive election will take place at a special meeting called for that purpose which will include only councillors-elect, the executive director, and AUSU staff to assist with the election process if needed. Executive election meetings are not public meetings, although meeting minutes shall be recorded, and the results of the meeting and the minutes shall be made public.
- 3.02.02.02 At that meeting, councillors-elect shall elect from among themselves those who shall hold the offices of president, vice-president external and student affairs (VPEx), and vice-president finance and administration (VPFA).
- 3.02.03 In years when there is not a general election, mid-term executive elections will take place around 11 months from the beginning of the executive term following the previous general election and no later than 3 weeks prior to the April changeover meeting.
- 3.02.03.01 The executive director shall inform the council of the impending mid-term executive election 10 months into the current executive term and invite self-nominations from those

who wish to run for a position on the executive.

- 3.02.03.02 At a mid-term election, any executive officer may choose to run again for any executive office.
- 3.02.03.03 The executive election will take place at a special meeting called for that purpose which will include only councillors, the executive director, and AUSU staff to assist with the election process if needed. Executive election meetings are not public meetings, although meeting minutes shall be recorded, and the results of the meeting and the minutes shall be made public.
- 3.02.03.04 At the mid-term election special meeting, councillors shall elect from among themselves those who shall hold the offices of president, vice-president external and student affairs (VPEX), vice-president finance and administration (VPFA), in addition to council committees.
- 3.02.04 When there is an executive office vacancy or vacancies during an executive term, an executive by-election will take place as soon as can be facilitated and must be no more than 21 days following the vacancy.
  - 3.02.04.01 If the situation allows, the executive by-election will be scheduled to allow a changeover period between an executive officer leaving a vacancy and the newly elected executive officer filling that vacancy.
  - 3.02.04.02 The executive by-election will take place at a special meeting called for that purpose if the next regular council meeting is scheduled more than three weeks after the executive office becomes vacant, otherwise the special meeting will take place at the beginning of the next regular council meeting.
  - 3.02.04.03 The office of president may not be vacant. If an executive by-election cannot take place before an outgoing president leaves office, the vice-president external and student affairs shall accept the office of president immediately upon becoming vacant, according to bylaw, and remain in that position for the remainder of the current term of office. The office of vice-president external and student affairs will then be filled by an executive by-election.
  - 3.02.04.02 Before a by-election is held for the vice-president external and student affairs a ratification vote will be held by council to confirm the appointment of the new president. If this is not ratified, an executive by-election will be held to fill the office of president, and the vice-president external and student affairs will revert to that office.

#### **List of Nominees**

- 3.02.05 Any councillor may submit to council a self-nomination to an executive office.
- 3.02.06 Councillors are encouraged to self-nominate prior to the executive election in order to provide adequate preparation, though nominations may also be made from the floor during the executive election procedure.

#### **Election Procedure**

- 3.02.07 Outgoing councillors may not vote or participate in the executive election procedure.
- 3.02.08 The executive director, or other delegate not in conflict with the election, shall preside over the meeting during the election process and conduct the executive election. The delegate must be agreed upon by the current council at least one week prior to the executive election. If another delegate is to conduct the election, that delegate shall replace “executive director” in the remainder of this policy.
- 3.02.09 Those who wish to run for an executive position must disclose any elected position they currently hold. Upon electing the nominee as an executive officer, council accepts the disclosed elected position.
- 3.02.10 Nominations for the office of president are to be declared and voted on first, followed by the office of vice-president external and student affairs, and finally the office of vice-president finance and administration. If any additional executive positions are created by council, nominations and voting will then occur.
- 3.02.10.01 If not all executive offices are to be filled, the same order of elections shall apply for the vacant offices.
- 3.02.11 Each candidate shall be allotted up to five minutes to present an election speech. The candidate may also forward a written statement of intent to all councillors eligible to vote prior to the date of the executive election. After the speeches, councillors eligible to vote will be able to ask questions of each candidate prior to voting.
- 3.02.12 If a candidate for the office of president is unsuccessful, that individual may self-nominate from the floor for the office of vice-president external and student affairs. If a candidate for the office of vice-president external and student affairs is unsuccessful, that individual may self-nominate from the floor for the office of vice-president finance and administration.
- 3.02.13 The executive director shall open the floor to self-nominations for the office of president. After all nominations have been accepted, the executive director will declare nominations closed and the election will proceed for the office of president.
- 3.02.14 Council shall not elect a councillor to an office of vice-president while the office of president is vacant according to bylaw.
- 3.02.15 Once the new president has been elected, the executive director shall open the floor to self-nominations for the office of vice-president external and student affairs.
- 3.02.16 After all nominations have been accepted, the executive director will declare nominations closed and the election will proceed for the office of the VPEX. Once the vice-president external and student affairs has been elected, the executive director shall open the floor to self-nominations for the office of vice-president finance and administration.
- 3.02.17 After all nominations have been accepted, the executive director will declare nominations closed and the election will proceed for the office of the VPFA
- 3.02.18 In the case of additional executive councillor positions deemed necessary by the council, the council may create another executive councillor position by passing a motion. If the motion carries, the council shall then open the floor to self-nominations for the new executive councillor office.

- 3.02.18.01 No additional executive councillor positions may be created or filled by council if there is a vacancy in any of the standing executive offices.
- 3.02.19 After all nominations have been accepted, the executive director will declare nominations closed and the election will proceed for the extra executive office.
- 3.02.20 If there is only a single candidate for any office, the executive director shall conduct a YES or NO vote confirming the executive officer's acclamation, using the voting procedures outlined below, modified as needed.
  - 3.02.20.01 Only a candidate who receives more YES than NO votes shall be considered elected.

### **Voting**

- 3.02.21 Voting will be conducted by secret ballot.
- 3.02.22 Councillors attending the meeting via teleconference will submit their votes using an online voting system.
- 3.02.23 A provision for alternate ballots may be made available, with councillors giving their vote either verbally or electronically to the executive director.
- 3.02.24 The executive director will tally the votes and announce the complete results including vote tally to the meeting
- 3.02.25 Should any vote result in a tie, each tied candidate for that particular office will be given two minutes to speak, after which a second vote will be held with the ballot including only the tied candidates.
- 3.02.26 Candidates are allowed to vote, and no election shall be declared complete until all councillors eligible to vote have had the opportunity to cast a ballot. Abstentions shall not be permitted.
- 3.02.27 Once all executive offices have been filled, the executive director shall declare the election closed and turn over control of the meeting to the appropriate chair.
- 3.02.28 In the event that any vice-president office is not filled, the executive will move forward without that position until it can be filled.
- 3.02.29 All committee appointments to Athabasca University and other external committees must be reviewed within two weeks of a mid-term executive election.

### **Executive Changeover**

- 3.02.30 Executive officers elected under section 3.02.02 in conjunction with a general election will take office at the close of the council changeover meeting scheduled in accordance with AUSU Policy 4.06 Annual Timeline and Executive Work Plans.
- 3.02.31 Executive officers elected under section 3.02.03 in conjunction with a mid-term executive election will take office at the close of the April council meeting scheduled in accordance with AUSU Policy 4.06 Annual Timeline and Executive Work Plan and within 13 months of the previous executive officers taking office.
- 3.02.32 Executive officers elected under section 3.02.04 to fill a vacancy will take office immediately or as

agreed on by council and shall serve for the remainder of the term which they are assuming, or for the remainder of their term on council, whichever comes first.

- 3.02.33 Executive officers whose terms end shall turn over any properties of the AUSU without delay, remove all private AUSU materials and student data from their computers, and destroy all hard copies of such materials which are not returned to the AUSU office as per AUSU Policy 4.03 Administration: Records Management.
- 3.02.34 In the case of a new executive officer who has a significant existing barrier to undertaking the full duties of office during the transition period, such as full-time employment or other commitments, the executive will meet within one week of the executive election to plan accordingly. Such a transition plan may include, but not be limited to:
- a) a relaxation of the hours of work required in the first month of office with the executive honorarium prorated accordingly;
  - b) a team approach to the sharing of responsibilities for the first weeks of office;
  - c) an unpaid leave of absence for a maximum of two weeks; and/or
  - d) other such accommodations appropriate to the situation that do not jeopardize the operation of AUSU.
- 3.02.35 The transition plan will be immediately communicated to council by the executive committee.
- 3.02.36 Subsection 3.02.34 does not affect when an executive officer takes office.

#### **RELATED REFERENCES, POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS**

##### **This Policy References:**

AUSU Bylaws  
AUSU Policy 4.06 Planning and Council Schedule  
AUSU Policy 4.03 Records Management

##### **This Policy is Referenced by:**

None

##### **Forms:**

None

#### **POLICY HISTORY**

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