



POLICY 3.04

ELECTION, REFERENDUM, AND PLEBISCITE MANAGEMENT

Petitions, Referendums, and Plebiscites

POLICY INTENT

To define how AUSU administers referendums and plebiscites.

POLICY

Creation and Format

- 3.04.01 “Referendum” means a vote open to all AUSU members held on a given question, the result of which requires AUSU council to conduct a vote on a resolution of the question.
- 3.04.02 “Plebiscite” means any question asked of all members seeking to obtain an opinion on a given issue or question from the members.
- 3.04.03 “Petition” is the means by which members can require that AUSU council conduct a vote on any resolution pertaining to the affairs of AUSU, including, but not limited to, holding a referendum or plebiscite.

Initiating a Referendum or Plebiscite

- 3.04.04 Prior to initiating a petition, members are strongly encouraged to contact AUSU to discuss the matter as early resolution of the issue may be possible.
- 3.04.05 A plebiscite or referendum can be initiated either by a resolution of council, or by a member in accordance with this policy.
- 3.04.06 Council must vote on the motion to hold a referendum or plebiscite at the next regularly scheduled meeting of council. Should the resolution originate from a member petition, council shall provide time during the meeting for members to comment.

Requirements for a Petition

- 3.04.07 Active members in good standing, as defined in the bylaws, may submit a petition to council. In order to be valid, a petition must comply with and include all of the following:
 - a. The full name, AU student number, phone number, address, and signature of the member who will be the official representative of the petition. The official representative will handle the collection of student signatures and will forward the petition to council;

- b. Accurate wording of the resolution for council consideration, or of the referendum or plebiscite question that will appear on the ballot, and sufficient details to explain the purpose of the resolution or question;
- c. If the petition is for a referendum or plebiscite, the question must be worded in a way that can be answered by a simple “Yes” or “No” vote;
- d. The full name, AU student number, and email address of each active AUSU member who signed 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 to the right of each name. A template document will be made available to the membership, upon request;
- e. Should physical or digital signatures be impossible or impractical to collect from members, an email from the member requesting to be added to the petition can be included in lieu of a signature. The detailed content of the petition must be clearly indicated in the student’s email. All emails must be attached to the petition before submitting to council in lieu of physical signatures and the words “email approval attached” must be written into each student’s signature line by the official representative; and
- f. The petition must have sufficient signatures from not less than fifty (50) active AUSU members to be forwarded to council.

3.04.08 The petition will not be deemed to have been received until all required documentation has been submitted to the president, or a designate appointed by the president, according to this policy.

3.04.09 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.

3.04.10 Should the president or designate be unable to resolve the problem, the petition will be forwarded to council for a vote to determine its validity.

3.04.11 Should a vote to accept a petition fail due to a violation of AUSU bylaws or the Post-Secondary Learning Act of Alberta, or if it is deemed to be confusing, potentially inflammatory, exclusionary, or are too broad or limited in scope, council may choose to put forward an alternative.

Timing of the Referendum or Plebiscite Vote

3.04.12 Voting for a referendum or plebiscite can occur at one of the following times:

- a. In conjunction with the general election; or
- b. At any other time of the year, as long as it does not occur within one (1) month of the general election.

3.04.13 Referendums and plebiscites that are approved by council will be held no later than sixty (60) days from the date of approval of the resolution, or up to ninety (90) days if such an extension would allow it to fall on a general election day.

3.04.14 Rules around the conduct of a referendum and/or plebiscite shall be governed by Policy 3.01 Election Conduct

3.04.15 Each referendum and plebiscite question shall be given its own ballot and shall be voted on individually through a 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 the general council election, then a CRO must be retained to oversee the voting procedures and verify the voting results. A CRO shall be hired according to AUSU Policy 3.01 – Election Conduct.

Advertisement

3.04.17 AUSU will advertise the ballot date and details of an approved referendum or plebiscite question thirty (30) days before the vote date. The advertisement must include at least one (1) mass email to all AUSU members appearing on the official AUSU member list. Additionally, AUSU may use any other method likely to reach a substantial number of AUSU members prior to the ballot.

Policy Updates

3.04.18 This policy can only be revised by a 2/3 vote of council members in attendance at a public meeting of AUSU.

RELATED REFERENCES, POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS

This Policy References

AUSU Bylaws
AUSU Policy 3.01 Elections

This Policy is Referenced by

None

POLICY RESPONSIBILITY

Council

POLICY HISTORY

Original Approval Date: February 11, 2015

Last Review Date: June 17, 2021

Review by Date: May 2023