



POLICY 6.1
ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Elections

POLICY INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to govern the annual elections for the AUGSA Executive Committee, AUGSA Council Members, Labour Relations Representative and the Labour Relations Committee members.

POLICY

Eligibility

6.01.1. Individuals eligible for the AUGSA Executive Committee and Council positions include:

- a. all AUGSA members who are in good standing with the organization in accordance with AUGSA Bylaws.

6.01.2. Individuals eligible for the AUGSA Labour Relations Representative (LRR) and Labour Relations Committee member positions include:

- b. The LRR must be an academically employed graduate student at the time of their election or have been academically employed within the preceding academic year under the AU/AUGSA Collective Agreement.
- a. Labour Relations Committee Members must be academically employed graduate students under the AU/AUGSA Collective Agreement at the time of their election.

6.01.3. Athabasca University staff and faculty are not eligible for elected positions at AUGSA.

Elections and Referenda Committee

6.01.4. The Elections and Referenda Committee shall be established by the Association no later than the end of January of each year or earlier if necessary to run by-elections.

6.01.5. The Elections and Referenda Committee shall normally be comprised of the following

individuals:

- a. the Chief Returning Officer who shall be the chairperson;
- b. two (2) voting members of Council who cannot be running for re-election; and
- c. one (1) member-at-large who cannot be running for election.

6.01.6. If outgoing councillors cannot be found to sit on the Elections and Referenda Committee, up to two students-at-large will be selected, by a 2/3 majority vote of the Council of the Association, to sit in their place.

6.01.7. The Elections and Referenda Committee shall be responsible to the Association for the following:

- a. remaining impartial and unbiased on the election and referenda issues or candidates and make no public statements concerning the election or referenda except in respect to procedural matters;
- b. approving or rewording all referenda questions once they are approved by the council or at an annual or special general meeting to ensure questions are not biased;
- c. ensuring that elections and referenda are properly advertised to members of the Association;
- d. ensuring that elections and referenda are run fairly based on the Council documents on elections and referenda;
- e. ruling on all allegations made against candidates or referendum committees; and
- f. reviewing appeals submitted against AUGSA election results.

Chief Returning Officer

6.01.8. The Chief Returning Officer shall be responsible for the following:

- a. reviewing all nomination forms to ensure that candidates are eligible to hold office with the Association;
- b. notifying candidates of recognition of their candidacy by way of email;
- c. reviewing and approving all materials that candidates and campaigns submit;
- d. ensuring that all decisions of the Elections and Referenda Committee are reported to the Council of the Association;
- e. setting all appropriate deadlines necessary for compliance with all rules for candidates;
- f. communicating between candidates and the Elections and Referenda Committee;
- g. preparing a report for the Council of the Association no later than the last day of April outlining any decisions made by the Elections and Referenda Committee and recommending changes based on information gathered during the election; and
- h. preparing, updating, and reviewing a document of past Elections and Referenda Committee decisions to ensure that the committee considers past decisions in the decision-making process.

Elections

6.01.9. The elections of the Association shall consist of a:

- a. nomination period,
- b. preparation period,
- c. campaign period, and
- d. polling period.

Elections of the Executive Committee

6.01.10. During the nomination period, any Active Members of the Association may nominate themselves for one of three (3) Executive Committee positions by submitting an official declaration of intent form, which shall be posted on the Association's official website.

Elections of Council

6.01.11. During the nomination period, any Active Members of the Association may nominate themselves for one of eight (8) Council positions across the four Athabasca University faculties, namely the Faculty of Business, Faculty of Health Disciplines, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, and the Faculty of Science and Technology) by submitting an official declaration of intent form, which shall be posted on the Association's official website. There will be two (2) positions per faculty and students are eligible to represent within their faculty only.

Elections of the Labour Relations Representative

6.01.12. During the nomination period, any Active Members of the Association who are academically employed under the AU/AUGSA Collective Agreement may nominate themselves for the position of Labour Relations Representative by submitting an official declaration of intent form, which shall be posted on the Association's official website.

Elections of Labour Relations Committee Members

6.01.13. During the nomination period, any Active Members of the Association who are academically employed under the AU/AUGSA Collective Agreement may nominate themselves for one of four (4) Committee positions across the four Athabasca University faculties, namely the Faculty of Business, Faculty of Health Disciplines, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, and the Faculty of Science and Technology) by submitting an official declaration of intent form, which shall be posted on the Association's official website. There will be one (1) position per faculty and students are eligible to represent within their faculty only.

Elections Timeline

6.01.1. The Association shall hold elections during January, February, and March each year.

6.01.2. The nomination period shall be announced and widely advertised by the Chief Returning Officer or Executive Director no later than the second Monday of January.

6.01.3. Timelines for elections will conform to the schedule posted on the AUGSA website. The website should be updated with the election schedule no later than the second Monday in January.

6.01.4. By-elections shall reflect the timeline of Council Member elections following a 10-day nomination period.

Executive Committee and Labour Relations Representative

6.01.5. The nomination period shall last for a minimum of one (1) week and close by the last Friday in February.

6.01.6. If there are no positions without candidates, the nomination period may be extended only for those positions that have no candidates.

6.01.7. The preparation period shall last for a minimum of five (5) days following the close of nominations.

6.01.8. The campaign period shall last for a minimum of seven (7) days.

6.01.9. The polling period shall last two (2) consecutive days. This includes the final two (2) days of the campaign period, or the two (2) days just after the campaign period.

Council Members and Labour Committee Members

6.01.10. The nomination period shall last for a minimum of one (1) weeks and close no earlier than four (4) days following the conclusion of the Executive Committee polling.

6.01.11. The preparation period shall last for a minimum of five (5) days following the close of nominations.

6.01.12. The campaign period shall last for a minimum of seven (7) days.

6.01.13. The polling period shall last two (2) consecutive days at the end of the campaign period. This includes during the final two (2) days of the campaign period, or the two (2) days just after the campaign period.

Rules for Candidates

6.01.14. Throughout the course of the campaign period, candidates have the right to the following:

- a. communicating their candidacy and campaign in any way they see fit, provided said communication does not extend beyond the campaign period;

- b. expressing opinions about candidates, the University, the Association and the issues affecting students of the Association;
- c. enlisting the assistance of volunteers to perform campaign duties; and
- d. soliciting and communicating endorsements of their campaign.

6.01.15. Candidates for positions in the Association shall be responsible for the following:

- a. submitting and updating a list of official campaign volunteers to the Chief Returning Officer;
- b. ensuring that all campaign methods utilized by their volunteers are above reproach; and
- c. when a student is running for re-election, avoiding the use of AUGSA resources (access to website, newsletter, staff time, budget, and materials) that they have access to solely by virtue of his or her current position that they have would not have access if they were not holding an Association role presently.

6.01.16. Candidates for positions in the Association shall be responsible for ensuring that they or a member of their campaign team does not do the following:

- a. misrepresent or negatively portray the position or character of other candidates in the election;
- b. endorse candidates in their own or other races;
- c. distribute gifts that have more than nominal value for the purpose of campaigning;
- d. disseminate deliberately libelous or purposefully incorrect information about another candidate;
- e. communicate campaign information to any members of the Association in a period outside of the campaign period; and
- f. spend any money on advertising.

Allegations

6.01.17. Any member of the Association may privately make an allegation to the Chief Returning Officer if they believe that a candidate has broken the rules of the Association. Allegations must be delivered to the Chief Returning Officer.

6.01.18. All allegations must include the rule believed to be broken and supporting evidence.

6.01.19. The Chief Returning Officer shall report all allegations to the Elections and Referenda Committee and the accused within twenty-four (24) hours of the allegation being filed.

6.01.20. Candidates who are accused of breaking a rule of the Association shall be given

twenty-four (24) hours after they are notified by the Chief Returning Officer to provide the committee with evidence against the allegation.

6.01.21. Upon receipt of evidence from an accused candidate or the end of the time period allotted for evidence to be provided by the candidate to the Elections and Referenda Committee, the Chief Returning Officer shall hold a meeting of the Elections and Referenda Committee to determine the validity and severity of the accusation.

6.01.22. After reviewing the accusation and the evidence, the Elections and Referenda Committee will either rule the accusation frivolous, deny the accusation, or rule the accusation to be true.

6.01.23. Accusations ruled to be in contravention to the Rules for Candidates shall result in disqualification of the candidate by the Elections and Referenda Committee.

6.01.24. Decisions of the Elections and Referenda Committee may be appealed to the AUGSA Council if the accused or accuser believes that the committee did not properly follow the rules of the Council in making their decision.

Results

6.01.25. Results of elections for the Association shall normally be announced within two business days after the close of polling by the Chief Returning Officer to the candidates.

6.01.26. Individual requests to view the vote count can be submitted if the request is made to both the Chief Returning Officer and Executive Director.

Voting

6.01.27. Single Transferable Voting is to be used to determine the winner of elections of Council Representatives. In the event of a tie, the Chief Returning Officer shall make a ruling on the outcome of the vote by random draw.

RELATED REFERENCES AND POLICIES

This Policy References

AUGSA Bylaws

This Policy is Referenced by

AUGSA Bylaws

POLICY RESPONSIBILITY

Executive Director

POLICY HISTORY

Original Approval Date: January 10, 2023

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