



POLICY 6.1

ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Elections of Council

POLICY INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to govern the elections of AUGSA Council members and appointment of the Council Chair, and Vice-Chair.

POLICY

Eligibility

6.01.1. Individuals eligible for AUGSA Council positions include:

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

6.01.2. Athabasca University staff and faculty are not eligible for positions on AUGSA Council.

Elections and Referenda Committee

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

6.01.4. The Election and Referenda Committee shall be responsible to Association for the following:

- a. remaining impartial and unbiased on 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 a 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

6.01.5. 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 Election 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 Election 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 Election and Referenda Committee and recommending changes based on information gathered during the election; and
- h. preparing, updating, and reviewing a document of past Election and Referenda Committee decisions to ensure that the committee uses past decisions as precedent in making decisions.

Elections of Council

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

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

6.01.7. During the nomination period, any Active Members of the Association may nominate themselves for one of two Council positions within their program faculty (i.e., for a total 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.

Elections Timeline

6.01.8. The Association shall hold elections during the months of February and March each year.

6.01.9. The nomination period for Councillor elections shall be announced and widely advertised

by the Chief Returning Officer or Executive Director and begin no later than the second Monday of January.

6.01.10. Nominations shall close the last Friday in February.

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

6.01.12. The campaign period shall last for at least 7 days.

6.01.13. The polling period shall last two consecutive days and take place no later than the end of the third week of March of each year.

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

Rules for Candidates

6.01.15. 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 institution and 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.

6.01.16. 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 he or she has access to solely by virtue of his or her current position that he or she would not have access to if he or she was not holding an Association role presently.

6.01.17. 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 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. widely communicate campaign information in a period outside of the campaign period; and
- f. spend any money on advertising.

Allegations

- 6.01.18. 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.
- 6.01.19. All allegations must include the rule believed to be broken and supporting evidence.
- 6.01.20. The Chief Returning Officer shall report all allegations to the Elections Committee and the accused within twenty-four (24) hours of the allegation being filed.
- 6.01.21. 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.
- 6.01.22. 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 Election and Referenda Committee, the Chief Returning Officer shall hold a meeting of the Election and Referenda Committee to determine the validity and severity of the accusation.
- 6.01.23. After reviewing the accusation and the evidence, the Election and Referenda Committee will either rule the accusation frivolous, deny the accusation or rule the accusation to be true.
- 6.01.24. Accusations ruled to be in contravention to the Rules for Candidates shall result in disqualification by the Election and Referenda Committee.
- 6.01.25. Decisions of the Election 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

- 6.01.26. Results of elections for the Association shall normally be announced the day after the close of polling by the Chief Returning Officer.
- 6.01.27. Individual requests to view the vote count can be submitted as long as the request is made to both the Chief Returning Officer and Executive Director.

Voting

6.01.28. Single Transferable Voting is to be used to determine the winner of elections of Council Representatives. In the event of a tie, the Election and Referenda Committee shall make a ruling on the outcome of the vote.

Chair and Vice-Chair Appointments

6.01.29. At the next Council Meeting after Council has been confirmed (i.e., after April 1st), Council members shall vote anonymously to select a Council Chair and Council Vice-Chair. For this vote, the Executive Director shall also hold a vote.

6.01.30. Any elected Council members interested in either the Chair or Vice-Chair roles shall be given time (up to a maximum of 5 minutes) to express their interest and/or competencies.

6.01.31. The Chief Returning Officer shall chair the first Council Meeting and will facilitate this self-nomination process.

6.01.32. At the end of the meeting and before the Council meeting adjournment, members shall vote anonymously to select the Council Chair and Council Vice-Chair.

6.01.33. The Chief Returning Officer shall facilitate this vote and will handle any vote disputes.

6.01.34. The Chief Returning Officer may be supported (as needed) by other members of the Election and Referenda Committee; however, as the Executive Director holds a vote in this process, she/he should not participate in ruling on any Chair/Vice-Chair voting disputes.

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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