Discovering Students in Governance

2010/11 Overview of Undergraduate in University and Student Governance roles at the University of Alberta

Prepared & Circulated by the Students' Union Office of Student Governance
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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
STUDENTS'
UNION

DISCOVERING
GOVERNANCE
understanding governance & decision-making at the *U of* A

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1. Introduction

The nature and importance of the role that student representatives have in the governance of the academy is one of the defining characteristics of University governance systems. In Canadian higher education, all major universities have student participation on their governing boards and Senates, but the nature of their participation in the governance of the academy varies across institutions.[1]

In recent years, increasing attention is being paid to how essential it is for members of University governing boards and committees to understand their roles and to understand the central importance of the work that they do for the success of the academy.[2] As higher education evolves in its complexity to meet the needs of an increasingly iner-connected, increasingly information-based society, it is becoming critical for those members of the academy who participate in University governance activities to have a sophisticated understanding of the culture and leadership needs of the institution. As these institutions have evolved, so too has our understanding of the roles that students play in their governance. There is an impressive store of literature exploring the benefits that result from having students participate in shared governance structures in higher education to both the academy and the student representatives themselves.[3]

In 2009/10, the University of Alberta Students' Union, in conversations with other stakeholders on campus, identified a shared desire to enhance the support being provided to students who participate in University governance.[4] To that end, the Students' Union created the position of the Student Governance Advisor, with the intent "to improve the quality and effectiveness of all levels of

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[1] Glen A. Jones, Theresa Shanahan and Paul Goyan. "University Governance in Canadian Higher Education." *Tertiary Education and Management* 7 (2001): 142.

[2] Jones et al: 145.

[3] Marie E. Menon. "Students' Views Regarding Their Participation in University Governance: Implications for Distributed Leadership in Higher Education." *Tertiary Education and Management* 11 (2005): 167-82. Alf Lizzio and Keithia Wilson, Student participation in university governance: the role conceptions and sense of efficacy of student representatives on departmental committees." *Studies in Higher Education* 341.1 (2009): 69-84.

[4] January 10, 2010 Supporting Students in Governance Meeting. April 28, 2010 Announcement Letter Re: the creation of the SGA position.

student governance at the University of Alberta...through the provision of orientation, advisory, and support services to individuals and groups involved in all levels of governance."[5]

In order to provide enhanced support to students participating in University governance, there must be some way of accounting for who those student participants are and where they fit into the University governance system as a whole. To that end, one of the preliminary tasks of the Student Governance Advisor was to complete an environmental scan of opportunities for students to participate in University governance and to catalogue what support student representatives are currently able to access at various levels of University governance.

It is our hope that aggregating information about undergraduate participation in University governance will allow us to better understand and support the work students do for the academy in this area. Our intention it to evolve this document into a tracking system that can be updated annually, thus vastly improving the institutional memory of the academy as it relates to undergraduate representation. With that context in hand, we also hope that this document will serve to stimulate collegial discussion about how the role that student representatives play in University governance can be better understood, supported, and enhanced.

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[5] "Student Governance Advisor Job Specification" University of Alberta Students' Union. Last modified Janaury 1, 2011.

2. Executive Summary

At the University of Alberta, undergraduate students are fully integrated into the University governance system, and are active participants at every level of that system. The Alberta *Post-Secondary Learning Act* enshrines student roles through the Students' Union and at the highest levels of University and faculty level governance. The University further establishes roles for students in the residence system, in the judiciary, and at the department and program levels of University governance.

Though our data is not yet complete, preliminary studies provide a good approximation of the number of seats accorded to undergraduate students throughout the University governance system. The preliminary data suggests and impressive quantity of seats accorded to undergraduate students at various levels of the academy though both University governance and Students' Union governance positions. Even without complete figures, we can confidently estimate that there are more than 300 committee seats accorded to undergraduate representatives, as summarized in Figure 2-1.

Summary of Undergraduate Representation on University Boards & Committees		
Name of Body	Ex-officio positions held by members of the Students' Union Executive Committee	Number of Undergraduate Representatives
Students' Union Students' Council	5	33
University Board of Governors	1	1
University General Faculties Council (GFC)	3	40
GFC Standing Committees & the Council on Student Affairs	9	17
University Senate	1	3
Students' Union Student Faculty Association Executives	0	70*
Student Residence Association Executives	0	24*
Faculty Councils	0	93
Department Councils & Program Advisory Councils	0	60*
Miscellaneous Advisory & Administrative Committees	14	18
TOTAL SEAT COUNT	34 positions held by 5 students	359*

*estimate/data incomplete

Figure 2-1 Estimated number of seats accorded to undergraduates in the University of Alberta and University of Alberta Students' Union governance systems. This is a very conservative estimate, particularly of students serving in residence and on student faculty associations.

What follows in this document is a series of detailed summaries of the structure and number of student governance positions available at the University of Alberta. We are intending to develop and release an annual version of this document, which will include a vacancy tracking component. It is also our hope that this report will stimulate further discussion and recommendations for the enhancement of representative participation in University and student governance activities.

3. University of Alberta Students' Union

Legislation

University students associations are enshrined as independent corporations under §93 of the Alberta Post Secondary Learning Act (PSLA).

Their function is to
> *"provide for the administration of student affairs at the public post-secondary institution, including the development and management of student committees, the development and enforcement of rules relating to student affairs and the promotion of the general welfare of the students consistent with the purposes of the public post-secondary institution."[i]*

The PSLA further stipulates that students associations must be managed by a council elected by and from the membership of the association.[ii]

Undergraduate Representation at the University of Alberta

Students' Council

The University of Alberta Students' Union is governed by its Students' Council, which makes all decisions regarding the direction of the organization. Sitting on Council are the President and four Vice Presidents (Operations & Finance, External, Academic, Student Life) the undergraduate Board of Governors representative, and 32 elected faculty councilors, with seats assigned proportional to enrolment in University faculties. The Speaker and General Manager also sit on Council as non-voting members.

Students' Council has seven standing committees and a judiciary board to assist in its activities. A brief summary of each committee's mandate as outlined in Students' Union legislation is included below.[iii]

Undergraduate Representation on Students' Council, its Boards and Committees		
Name of Body	**Number of Undergraduate Representatives**	**Method of Appointment**
Students' Council	38	Elected annually by the membership
Audit Committee	5	Elected annually by Council
Budget & Finance Committee (BFC)	7	Elected annually by Council
Bylaw Committee	5	Elected annually by Council
Council Administration Committee (CAC)	5	Elected annually by Council

Executive Committee (Exec)	5	Elected annually by the membership
Policy Committee	9	Elected annually by Council
Grant Allocation Committee (GAC)	7	Elected annually by Council
Discipline, Enforcement & Interpretation Board (DIE Board)	8 to 14	Selected annually by a nomination committee

Figure 3-1 Undergraduate Representation on Students' Union Students' Council and its Standing Committees

The Audit Committee
Number of members: 5
Audit Committee is in charge of reviewing all SU financial statements, credit card expenditures, and alterations to the budget. Audit Committee also investigates any allegedly inappropriate financial transactions.

The Budget and Finance Committee (BFC)
Number of members: 7
BFC works with the Vice President Operations & Finance to develop the Students' Union's annual consolidated budget, and recommends the budget to Council.

The Bylaw Committee
Number of members: 5
Bylaw Committee is in charge of drafting bylaws and referendum/plebiscite questions. It also makes recommendations to Council on bylaws.

The Council Administration Committee (CAC)
Number of members: 5
CAC oversees the Chief Returning Officer, the Speaker and the progress of Council's legislative agenda. It is able to amend, adopt and rescind Standing Orders of Students' Council.

The Elections Review Committee (ERC)
Number of members: 5 voting, 1 non-voting
The ERC is composed of five voting members of Students' Council, and the Chief Returning Officer as a non-voting member. It is struck as a special committee to review and make recommendations pertaining to Students' Union elections legislation.

The Executive Committee (Exec)
Number of members: 5 voting, 1 non-voting
Membership of the Executive Committee is: the President, the four Vice-Presidents, and the General Manager (non-voting). It is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Students' Union and coordinating its longer-term strategy. The Executive Committee has broad powers of recommendation to

Students' Council.

The Policy Committee
Number of members: 9
The Policy Committee makes recommendations to Council on SU political policies regarding both university and external issues.

The Grant Allocation Committee (GAC)
Number of members: 7
GAC has the authority to disperse money from SU grants to applicants. GAC also makes recommendations regarding the disbursement of funds from the Campus Recreation Enhancement Fund and the Golden Bear and Panda Legacy fund.

The Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement Board (DIE Board)
Number of members: between 8 and 14
The Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement Board (DIE Board) is the highest judicial body in the Students' Union. Meeting only as needed, tribunes interpret and enforce Students' Union bylaws.

Method of Replenishment

Elections are held in March to elect the five executives and the undergraduate Board of Governors representative. Two weeks after the Executive election, representatives to Students' Council are elected. If not all of the seats on council are filled, a by-election is held in September.

Members of Council committees are elected from the membership of Council to serve annual terms, with the following exceptions:
- Members of the Executive Committee are ex-officio
- Members of the Executive Committee have ex-officio seats on several of the Council committees
- Members of the DIE Board are selected by application from the student body to serve for the duration of their membership in the Students' Union.

4. The University of Alberta Board of Governors

Legislation

The Board of Governors (the Board) is established under §16 of the Post Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) as the managing board of the University's bicameral governance structure.

The Board has expansive powers, as laid out in §17 and §59 through §69 off the PSLA.

Section 16(3) of the PSLA stipulates that the Minister of Advanced Education & Technology will appoint two undergraduate students nominated by the council of the students association to serve on the Board.

Undergraduate Representation at the University of Alberta

There are two undergraduate representatives on the University of Alberta Board of Governors. Under Students' Union legislation, the President of the Students' Union has an ex-officio position on the Board, while the other position is accorded to an elected undergraduate.[iv]

There are seven Standing Committees established by the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta that operate on delegated authority from the Board. Several of these Standing Committees have one undergraduate representative on them. That representative may either be the President of the Students' Union or the elected undergraduate governor.

Undergraduate Representation on the Board of Governors and its Committees		
Name of Body	Number of Undergraduate Representatives	Method of Appointment
Board of Governors	2	Ex-officio (President); elected annually by the membership of the students' association (representative)
Board Audit Committee	none	n/a
Board University Relations Committee (BURC)	1	appointed by the Board from its undergraduate membership, upon consultation with those members and the Committee Chair
Board Finance & Property Committee (BFPC)	1	appointed by the Board from its undergraduate membership, upon consultation with those

		members and the Committee Chair
Board Human Resources & Compensation Committee (BHRCC)	none	n/a
Board Investment Committee	none	n/a
Board Learning & Discovery Committee (BLDC)	1	appointed by the Board from its undergraduate membership, upon consultation with those members and the Committee Chair
Board Safety, Health & Environment Committee (BSHEC)	1	appointed by the Board from its undergraduate membership, upon consultation with those members and the Committee Chair

Figure 4-1 Undergraduate Representation on the Board and its Standing Committees

Method of Replenishment

Under Students' Union legislation the Undergraduate Board of Governors Representative is elected at the same time and in the same fashion as the Students' Union President and Vice Presidents. [v] Elections for those positions are held annually in March. The elected students are recommended to the Minister of Advanced Education & Technology for appointment and, if the Minister accedes, are appointed by an Order in Council of the government of the Province of Alberta.

Committee assignments are determined by the Board Chair and respective Committee Chairs in consultation with members.

5. The General Faculties Council & Council on Student Affairs

Legislation

The General Faculties Council

The General Faculties Council (GFC) is enshrined under §26(1) of the Post Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) as the academic half of the University's bicameral governance structure.

The mandate of the GFC is summarized broadly in the PSLA as follows:

> *"Subject to the authority of the board, a general faculties council is responsible for the academic affairs of the university…"[vi]*

Its powers are further expanded upon in §22 - 26, 31 and 32 of the PSLA.

The PSLA stipulates that there must be undergraduate representation on the GFC. By virtue of a motion passed by the GFC at its February 1971 meeting, the number of undergraduate representatives has parity with the number of elected faculty members.[vii]

The Council on Student Affairs (COSA)

The Council on Student Affairs is established under §32(1) of the PSLA, which states:

> *"A general faculties council may establish a council on student affairs to exercise immediate jurisdiction over student affairs with respect to any matters and in any manner the general faculties council determines and to exercise or perform any other powers, duties and functions the general faculties council determines."[viii]*

Undergraduate Representation at the University of Alberta

There are 3 categories of undergraduate representation on the GFC.
1. Statutory student members of GFC nominated by the council of the undergraduate students association
2. Undergraduate members of the Board of Governors
3. Appointed student members elected and nominated by the Students' Union.[ix]

Taken together, these 3 categories of undergraduate representation yield 43 seats on the GFC.

There are eleven Standing Committees established by GFC pursuant to §26 and §31 of the PSLA, each with undergraduate representation.

The majority of COSA's membership is composed of student members, with a majority of the student representatives being undergraduate.

Undergraduate Representation on General Faculties Council and its Standing Committees		
Name of Body	Number of Undergraduate Representatives	Method of Appointment
General Faculties Council (GFC)	43	3 ex-offcio members (SU President as Governor, SU VP Academic, SU VP Student Life, 40 elected-then-appointed
Council on Student Affairs (COSA)	6	5 ex-officio (SU President, RHA representative, IFC representative, Pan-Hellenic Council Representative, SU Student Group Services Representative), 1 elected by GFC via Nominating Committee
Academic Planning Committee (APC)	2	1 ex-officio (SU President), 1 appointed by Nominating Committee
Academic Standards Committee (ASC)	2	1 ex-officio (SU VP Academic), 1 appointed by Nominating Committee
ASC Subcommittee on Standards (ASCSOS)	1	Ex-officio (SU VP Academic)
Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)	2	1 ex-officio (SU VP Academic), 1 appointed by Nominating Committee
Campus Law Review Committee (CLRC)	3-4	2 ex-officio (SU VP Student Life, RHA President), 1-2 appointed by Nominating Committee
Executive Committee (Exec)	2	1 ex-officio (SU VP Academic), 1 appointed by Replenishment Committee
Facilities Development Committee (FDC)'	2	1 ex-officio (SU VP Academic), 1 appointed by Nominating Committee
Nominating Committee	1	Ex-officio (SU VP Academic)
Replenishment Committee	1	Ex-officio (SU VP Academic)
Undergraduate Awards & Scholarship Committee (UASC)	2	Appointed by Nominating Committee
University Teaching Awards Committee (UTAC)	2	Appointed by Nominating Committee

Figure 5-1 – undergraduate representation on the GFC, COSA & Standing Committees.

Method of Replenishment

Under GFC rules[x] and as mirrored under SU legislation,[xi] appointed student members are elected and nominated by the Students' Union. Elections are held annually in March in conjunction with the Students' Union Students' Council elections. If not all of the seats on council are filled a by-election is held in September.

Undergraduate-at-large members of the GFC Standing Committees are selected annually by the GFC Nominating Committee, except for the undergraduate-at-large on the GFC Executive Committee, who is selected annually by the GFC Replenishment Committee.

Undergraduate members of the COSA are mainly ex-officio. One member is elected from the GFC.

6. The University of Alberta Senate

Legislation

The University of Alberta Senate is established under §11 of the Alberta Post Secondary Learning Act (PSLA).

The mandate of the Senate under §13(1) of the PSLA is to

> *"…inquire into any matter that might benefit the university and enhance its position in the community."[xii]*

Section 11(3)(b)(vi) of the PSLA stipulates that the Senate will have four undergraduate members, appointed by the students association.

Undergraduate Representation and the University of Alberta

There are four representatives on the University of Alberta Senate. Under Students' Union legislation, the Vice President (External) of the Students' Union has an ex-officio position on the Senate. The three additional positions are appointed via a selection committee, which makes a recommendation to the Council Administration Committee of the Students' Union.[6] Students' Council makes the final recommendation to the University.

Undergraduate Representation on the University Senate and its Committees		
Name of Body	**Number of Undergraduate Representatives**	**Method of Appointment**
Senate	4	Ex-officio (Vice President External); selected by the Students' Union
Executive Committee	1	ex-officio (Vice President External)
Campus Engagement Committee	2	selected from sitting student Senators
Honorary Degree Selection Committee	1	ex-officio (Vice President External)
Local Community Engagement Committee	2	selected from sitting student Senators
Nominating Committee	none	n/a
Provincial and Northern Engagement Committee	1	selected from sitting student Senators
Aboriginal Initiatives Working Group	none	n/a

Figure 6-1 Undergraduate representation on the University Senate and its Committees

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[6] For more information on the structure of the University of Alberta Students' Union Council and its Standing Committees, please see Section 3.

The Senate also has several standing committees with undergraduate members. These positions are summarized in Figure 6-1.

Method of Replenishment

Under Students' Union legislation the Vice President (External) is elected annually in March.

The three appointed positions are replenished annually via a selection process overseen jointly by the Students' Union Council Administration Committee and the Vice President (External) of the Students' Union.[xiii]

The seats on Senate standing committees are accorded to the student Senators selected through the Senate's processes.

7. Advisory & Administrative Committees (Central)[*]

Legislation

As the complexity of University governance activities has grown, the institution has evolved a number of standing advisory and administrative committees to augment its governance processes.

These committees come under a wide variety of legislative frameworks, depending on whose authority they are convened under and what their respective terms of reference specify. Generally, they originate through the ability of the Board of Governors to delegate its authority as enshrined under §62 of the Post Secondary Learning Act (PSLA).

Most advisory and administrative committees of the University are chaired by a member of the senior administration, and have a mandate to provide recommendations to that administrator on a specific aspect of their portfolio. These committees also act as forums for informal discussion on proposals being proposed through the Board of Governors or General Faculties Council.

Undergraduate Representation at the University of Alberta

More than forty administrative and advisory committees, subcommittees and groups with up to date information available online were researched. Of those committees, fifteen have undergraduate representation, as summarized in Figure 7-1.

Method of Replenishment

Elections are held in March to elect the five executives, and so ex-officio positions held by members of the Students' Union Executive Committee are refreshed annually. Executive members may choose to delegate their seats; in that case, the delegate is selected by the Executive Committee member. The other selection methods are summarized in Figure 7-1.

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[*] Faculties and departments may also have advisory and administrative committees that are not a part of the formal Council structure. Data on these was not collected for this report.

Undergraduate Representation on University Advisory & Administrative Committees			
Name of Body	**Number of Ex-Officio Representatives**	**Number of Undergraduate Representatives**	**Method of Appointment**
Budget Advisory Committee (BAC)	2: SU President & an SU Vice President	0	President selects SU Vice President
Residence Budget Advisory Committee (RBAC)	4: SU President, SU VP (Student Life), Augustana Students' Association President, Residence Halls Association President	0	n/a
PAW Steering Committee	1: SU VP (Operations & Finance)	4	undergraduates selected by the SU
Teaching, Learning & Technology Council (TLAT)	1: SU VP (Academic)	0	n/a
Festival of Teaching Steering Committee	1: SU VP (Academic)	0	n/a
Festival of Ideas Steering Committee	1: SU VP (External)	*Data incomplete*	*Data incomplete*
Council on Aboriginal Initiatives	0	4 or more	one undergraduate student appointed at large, one representative from the Aboriginal Students' Council, and no fewer than 2 students from existing and active Aboriginal initiatives
Academic Policy and Process Review Task Force	0	4	selected by the SU
Student Resources Task Force (SRTF)	1: SU President	1	selected by the SU
Standing Advisory Council on International Engagement (SACIE)	0	2	selected by the SU
University Research Policy Committee (URPC)	1: SU VP (Academic)	*Data incomplete*	*Data incomplete*
Alcohol Review Policy Committee (ARPC)	2: SU VP (Student Life), Residence Halls Association President	*0*	n/a
Convocation Committee	1: SU VP (Academic)	0	n/a
Administrative Information Systems Steering Committee (AISSC)	1: SU VP (Academic)	0	n/a
U-Pass Administration Committee	1: SU VP (Student Life)	0	n/a

TOTAL	17, shared by 7 people (5 SU Execs, ASA President, RHA President)	15 or more

Figure 7-1 Undergraduate Representation on University Advisory & Administrative Committees

A note on methodology

Accurate information on advisory and administrative committees is difficult to gather. These committees are not accessible on the University Governance website and there is no 'master list' available detailing which committees are currently active and where their respective terms of reference can be found. Where these committees have websites (and not all do), they are located in different places on the web pages of administrative portfolios and University units.

For the purposes of this report, the Students' Union compiled a list of administrative and advisory reports through research into reports received from undergraduate representatives serving on these committees for the past five years. The final reports of Students' Union Associate Vice Presidents Academic for that time period were especially helpful. That list was cross-referenced with the University Acronym list available as of November 2010. From there, extensive web research was undertaken to verify whether or not the listed committees were still meeting and whether or not they still have undergraduate representatives. A major focus of future reports will be to streamline the research methodology used to gather this information and to ensure the completeness and accuracy of our records.

8. Faculty & School Councils

Legislation

Faculty Councils are established under §28 of the Post Secondary Learning Act (PSLA).

The powers and duties of Faculty Councils are detailed in §29 of the PSLA. Faculty Councils are, broadly speaking, responsible for the day-to-day academic affairs of their respective faculty.

The PSLA does not specify that undergraduates be members of Faculty Councils. At the University of Alberta, student representation on faculty councils is established under §55 of the General Faculties Council Policy Manual.

Undergraduate Representation at the University of Alberta

There are nineteen faculties and schools at the University of Alberta that have Faculty or School Councils[xiv], including fourteen that enroll undergraduates. The number of undergraduate representatives serving on Faculty Councils varies from one to thirty-five. For more information, see Figure 9-1.

Most Faculty Councils at the University of Alberta have established a system of Standing Committees. The structure of the Standing Committee systems varies. At the time of this report, complete data regarding undergraduate representation on Faculty Council Standing Committees was not available.

Method of Replenishment

Replenishment of Faculty Council seats is the responsibility of the appropriate student faculty association, using whatever method the association deems suitable, and occurs annually. In the event that selection is not completed by September 30 of each year, the responsibility of replenishment falls to the Students' Union.[xv]

There is a wide variance in the method of selection, though generally the student faculty associations reserve at least one seat for a member of their executive. For further information, see Figure 9-1.

Undergraduate Representation on Faculty Councils			
Faculty or School	**Number of Undergraduate Representatives**	**Appointing Body**	**Method of Appointment**
Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences (ALES)	8	ALES Students' Association (ALESSA)	Election/Appointment
Arts	35	Collective Body for Arts Students (CBAS)	Election/Appointment
Augustana	6	Augustana Students' Association (ASA)	Ex-officio
Business, School of	5	Business Students' Association (BSA)	*Data incomplete*
Education	2	Education Students' Association (ESA)	Ex-officio
Engineering	3	Engineering Students' Society (ESS)	Ex-officio
Extension	n/a	n/a	n/a
Graduate Studies & Research	n/a	Graduate Students' Association (GSA)	n/a
Law	6	Law Students' Association (LSA)	*Data incomplete*
Library & Information Sciences, School of	n/a	*Data incomplete*	n/a
Medicine & Dentistry	10	Medical Students' Association (MSA; 6 seats) Dentistry Students' Association (DSA; 4 seats)	*Data incomplete*
Native Studies	6	Native Studies Students Association (NSSA)	Appointment/Ex-officio
Nursing	*Data incomplete*	Nursing Undergraduate Association (NUA)	*Data incomplete*
Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences	1	Alberta Pharmacy Students' Association (APSA)	Ex-officio
Physical Education & Recreation	6	Physical Education & Recreation Council of Students (PERCS)	Ex-officio
Public Health, School of	n/a	*Data incomplete*	n/a

Rehabilitation Medicine	n/a	Rehabilitation Medicine Students' Association (RMSA)	n/a
Saint-Jean	*Data incomplete*	l'Association des Universitaires de la Faculté Saint-Jean (AUFSJ)	*Data incomplete*
Science	12	Interdepartmental Science Students' Society (ISSS)	Appointment/Ex-officio

Figure 9-1 Undergraduate Representation on University of Alberta Faculty Councils

9. Student Faculty Associations

Legislation

Student faculty associations are established and regulated under Students' Union Bylaw 8100 and Students' Union Bylaw 8200, and are also regulated as registered Student Groups under University and Students' Union policy. They are referenced in §42.3(1)(e) and §55 of the General Faculties Council policy manual as having responsibility for student appointments to Department and Faculty Councils.

Undergraduate Representation at the University of Alberta

There are fifteen registered student faculty associations at the University of Alberta: one for each faculty enrolling undergraduates except for Medicine & Dentistry, which has bicameral representation through the Medical Students' Association (MSA) and the Dentistry Students' Association (DSA).

Method of Replenishment

Student faculty associations are permitted to select their officers by any method they deem suitable, provide that method is established in legislation that meets the requirements of Students' Union Bylaw 8100. Generally this interpretation requires the election of executive officers. Fourteen of the fifteen student faculty associations elect their executive officers. The exception is the ALES Faculty Student Association, which operates as a confederacy of department clubs coordinated by an undergraduate liaison hired by the ALES Student Services Office.

10. Department Councils

Legislation

Department Councils are established under §42.3 of the General Faculties Council Policy Manual.

Section 42.3 (1)(e) stipulates that each Department Council of the University of Alberta will include undergraduate students from the programs offered by the department concerned, the exact numbers to be determined by the Faculty Council on recommendation from the appropriate Department Council. [xvi]

Undergraduate Representation at the University of Alberta

There are approximately 62 departments at the University of Alberta that enroll undergraduates, as well as several programs with separate advisory Councils.[7]

At the time of this report, complete data regarding undergraduate representation on Department Councils and Department Council Standing Committees was not collected.

Method of Replenishment

Under §42.3(1)(e) of the General Faculties Council Policy Manual, undergraduate representatives to department Councils are to be selected by the appropriate department student association or, where no such association exists, by the appropriate faculty student association.[xvii]

No data was collected on department council replenishments for this report.

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[7] e.g. In the Faculty of Arts, programs under Interdisciplinary Studies including Comparative Literature, Religious Studies, Science & Technology Studies, and Middle Eastern & African studies have program advisory councils with undergraduate representation.

Acknowledgements

The compilation of this information would not have been possible without the hard work, advice, and support of several members of the University community.

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- Members of the Students' Union Executive Committee, 2007 – 2011
- The Office of University Governance, University of Alberta
- Marion Haggarty-France, University Secretary, University of Alberta

Our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the development of this report.

Appendix A - Recommendations

DISCOVERING GOVERNANCE

understanding governance & decision-making at the U of A

Enhancing Representative

Effectiveness & New Volunteer Engagement

Prepared by: Amanda Henry, SGA – Updated May 2011

Summary

The Student Governance Advisor (SGA) is expected to provide suggestions regarding the recruitment of student representatives and suggestions for improving the quality of student representation. These two areas of activity are intimately related; it follows that the recommendations should also be related.

This report provides some background on the current scope of governance volunteering at the University of Alberta as well as barriers and opportunities related to recruiting students to serve in representative roles. Following on that context, it provides recommendations for improving recruitment and the quality of student representation under these four broad themes:

1. Improve Our Data

2. Make Governance More Accessible

3. Connect Representatives with Discovering Governance

4. Target Active Outreach

Scope of Student Representation at the University of Alberta

The Students' Union is a student-run organization and is responsible for annually filling more than 300 student representative positions within the University of Alberta's governance system. Student positions in governance are ubiquitous, and the students who fill them have important roles to play in influencing the direction of the University and of the Students' Union. Students serve on committees at every level of University and Students' Union governance, including Students' Council, Faculty Councils, student Faculty Associations, and the General Faculties Council.

Summary of Undergraduate Representation on University Boards & Committees		
Name of Body	Ex-officio positions held by members of the Students' Union Executive Committee	Number of Undergraduate Representatives
Students' Union Students' Council	5	33
University Board of Governors	1	1
University General Faculties Council (GFC)	3	40

GFC Standing Committees & the Council on Student Affairs	9	17
University Senate	1	3
Students' Union Student Faculty Association Executives	0	70*
Student Residence Association Executives	0	24*
Faculty Councils	0	93
Department Councils & Program Advisory Councils	0	60*
Miscellaneous Advisory & Administrative Committees	14	18
TOTAL SEAT COUNT	34 positions held by 5 students	359*

estimate/data incomplete

Why do students volunteer?

The following information about why young Canadians do not volunteer more is taken from the latest data available from the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, & Participating (CSVGVP).[8] Students in the post-secondary bracket are more likely than older volunteers to refrain from volunteering because "no one asked." The age group that includes senior undergraduates (20-24) is also the most likely to report time as a factor.

Barriers to volunteering

Age	% of respondents who cited this barrier to volunteering		
	Did not have the time	No one asked	Did not know how to become involved
15-19	**74**	**45**	**35**
20-24	**79**	**39**	**21**
25 and up	**75**	**27**	**11**

For the purposes of improving the number of students who participate in governance, it is also interesting to note that 48% of Canada's volunteers report choosing to do volunteer work because they were asked, compared to 14% who said they became involved after responding to an advertisement such as a poster

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[8]Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, & Participating. 2007. 17 December 2010. <http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/files/giving/en/csgvp_highlights_2007.pdf> p 52.

and 3% who learned about the opportunity on the Internet.[9]

This data matches anecdotal accounts of students who have volunteered for the Students' Union and University in governance capacities between 2002 and 2010.[10] Most former representatives asked cited being asked by a personal acquaintance as the primary reason for their preliminary decision to volunteer in a governance capacity.

Preliminary results from the 2010 Students' Union Student Survey are also in line with these findings, though more analysis will need to be done to determine how strong the correlation is.

Snapshot of an Undergraduate Representative: Working Hypotheses

One of the challenges encountered when attempting to strategize around improving the recruitment and quality of student representatives is that we currently have very little data about who undergraduate representatives are and what barriers there are to the task of increasing their number and effectiveness.

With the data we have, it is not really possible to paint an accurate picture of the average undergraduate representative; however, it is possible to develop some working hypotheses to test about who these representatives might be. These hypotheses in turn illuminate some of the potential pitfalls to developing and implementing a more deliberate outreach strategy. The process of testing them is also the basis for the recommendations in this report.

Those hypotheses are:

1. **Most students who take governance positions were involved in other volunteer activities first.**

   Before taking a governance position with the University or the Students' Union, most students first volunteer with a student group, a community organization, or for Students' Union services and programming. If this is the case, it makes sense to seek avenues of indirect outreach to students from groups that they are already a member of rather than seek them out directly. The downside to this approach is that it excludes active outreach to students who many not traditionally be involved in campus, despite the fact that they are still a part of the student body being represented. This is a particularly serious risk factor to manage at a commuter campus.

2. **Most seats are filled by word-of-mouth**

   It appears that personal networks play a very influential role in how

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[9] Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, & Participating. 2007. 17 December 2010. <http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/files/giving/en/csgvp_highlights_2007.pdf> p 47

[10] The SGA has some of those anecdotal accounts on file after conducting an informal electronic focus group with former SU student staff and representatives.

individuals choose their volunteer opportunities. This is good news because it is an existing peer-based strategy for active outreach that works. There are cons that need to be managed though. One of the major cons is the strong possibility that word-of-mouth- creates a reinforcing self-select bias by increasing the number of people from particular segments of campus (people who know one another) who are involved in governance.

It also presents a particular challenge when developing a professionally supported active outreach strategy. Word-of-mouth recruitment is a kind of targeted outreach that involves the individual doing the asking making implicit judgments about what makes a "good" representative. Those are not judgments that non-student staff of the Students' Union are in a position to make; in order to be effective and appropriate, word-of-mouth outreach requires significant buy-in from students already serving as representatives.

3. **Students' time is valuable and we have to do a better job of articulating why governance is a good use of it.**

Students already juggle a lot of commitments, and the benefits associated with governance opportunities are not as easy to articulate as many of the other opportunities available. And, like most learning opportunities, the real benefits of doing governance become more apparent with time. The benefits do exist, though, so this is a matter of better communication rather than any sort of role restructuring.

4. **There are structural barriers to volunteering for governance positions that better outreach strategy alone cannot fix**

These may include:

- Meetings during the day being difficult for students who work during the day (part-time, mature), students with laboratory class commitments, or students with inflexible cohort class schedules.

- Co-operative and work placement terms don't line up with terms on Students' Union or University bodies, making it difficult to commit for the full term.

- Financial barriers for students having to choose between work, degree completion, and volunteering.

- Students with children will face challenges in finding the time.

- Women, aboriginals, international students, persons with disabilities and minority groups do not appear in applicant pools or as candidates with frequency proportional to their enrolment. The reasons for this are complex, and it's unlikely that targeted or strategic outreach will dramatically improve participation from these groups in the short term.

In other words, active and targeted outreach may improve participation in

governance, but it is unlikely to perfect it.

Recommendations

1. Improve Our Data

The first step to improving student recruitment is to improve our knowledge of who current volunteers are, which opportunities they are accessing and what barriers to increased participation are being encountered.

Steps that can be taken immediately include

- **Improve vacancy tracking.**
  - o Finish cataloguing the positions that exist. The Student Governance Officer will complete this catalogue through direct research and by liaising with University personnel who have information about Department Council composition and other committees that may exist and be doing governance work.
  - o Restructure SU policy and reporting channels to ensure that student faculty associations provide timely and complete FACA reports.
  - o Compile this information along with information available from the office of the Students' Union Chief Returning Officer in a format that can be refreshed annually. Ideally, this format will also be compatible with University database software and processes.
  - o Develop a strategy for compiling information about department level vacancies.
- **Develop an understanding of students currently accessing governance opportunities.**
  - o Use the results of the 2010 SU Survey to cross-tabulate between students involved, why they are involved, and demographic data. Do a qualitative cross-tabulation of which student groups correlate to students involved in governance opportunities.
  - o Develop feedback mechanisms and exit interview-style processes for students participating in governance opportunities similar to Samara Canada's MP Exit interviews.[11]

2. Make Governance More Accessible

If students are likely to volunteer for governance opportunities as a result of being asked to, we should strengthen the ability of students already participating to ask, and articulate why they themselves are involved.

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[11] http://www.samaracanada.com/mp_exit_interviews (May 2011)

- **Structure the Discovering Governance program to harmonize with recruiting timelines and objectives.**

    o Explore the possibility of partnering with the University to run a student-focused Governance 101 session in advance of the Students' Union election season.

    o Explore strategies for maximizing the engagement and involvement of students in Discovering Governance programming, including opportunities for students to be involved in the delivery of Discovering Governance programming.

    o Explicitly relate changes to the program to the emerging needs of students serving in governance roles based on student feedback on the program.

- **Partner with Students' Union Student Services where applicable to collaborate on the introductions to governance already offered**

    o This may include the work done by Student Group Services, especially through the Student Group Leadership Summit and Transition Summit.

- **Strengthen our focus on linking non-governance volunteer opportunities that allow students to get involved in the Students' Union with student governance opportunities where appropriate.**

- **Re-conceptualize and institute mechanisms for members of the Executive Committee to delegate specific committee responsibilities.**

    o This would allow students to be involved in lower intensity governance opportunities.

    o In order to be effective, delegates of the Executive Committee would need to be held accountable and would need to be supported in performing their delegated duties as much as is feasible.

    o Tracking instances of delegation will improve overall representative effectiveness by improving our data and strengthening our ability to support students serving in this unique capacity.

- **Provide targeted support for strengthening student faculty associations to improve their ability to devote time to effective recruitment.**

- **Strategize to improve our ability to reach students outside of the traditional communities of governance volunteers.**

3. Connect Representatives with Discovering Governance

One of the priorities of the Student Governance Advisor in 2010-11 was

developing a conceptual framework for a University of Alberta–specific, Students' Union-led governance professional development program as well as to develop an understanding of how scaleable such a program would need to be in order to serve all student representatives at the University of Alberta. Solid progress has been made in these two areas, and early indications are that the Discovering Governance Program is on the right track.

- Full implementation of the Discovering Governance program should take place over the next 12 to 18 months, including the development and roll-out of a complete suite of materials and workshop formats.

- A concerted effort should be made to ensure that the outreach strategies recommended here include a focus on connecting new student representatives with the support and resources available through Discovering Governance.

- The Discovering Governance program should be data driven and informed by scholarship on adult learning and governance training.

4. **Target Active Outreach**

It is important to ensure that students are aware of vacancies that exist in a timely fashion, and also to raise the profile of the support offered to students as well as of the professional development aspects of governance volunteering. It is equally important to balance this advertising with a sensitivity to the autonomy of representatives appointed or elected to serve in particular governance capacities, and to avoid introducing recruitment biases that are not compatible with selection criteria. The following recommendations should be considered with a view to balancing these needs:

- **Capitalize on the effectiveness of word-of-mouth advertising.**

  o Support the Students' Union Council Administration Committee (CAC) in strengthening the Council Mentorship program or similar outreach initiatives.

  o Develop an outreach strategy that focuses on student-driven presentations to groups that may have an interest in governance positions on campus.

- Develop a strategy for targeted advertising to groups whose members already volunteer in student governance and/or have experience with internal organizational governance (e.g. fraternities and sororities, the Debate Society, etc).

- Conduct a review of the allocation of advertising budgets for vacancy advertisements to optimize the efficiency of allocations.

- Develop a social media advertising strategy for governance programs and advertising for vacant positions

  o Utilize social media including facebook and BearsDen to pilot a

Groupon-style[12] opt-in for facilitated governance workshops.

- If there is a demand for face-to-face workshops, focus on engaging and informative session structures and topics.

o Utilize twitter to advertise sessions, vacancies, 140 character trivia quips, and answer student questions or connect with a view to scheduling future in-person discussions.

- A databank of suitable trivia needs to be developed in advance of an account launch.

- If we adopt a model where students are involved in offering Discovering Governance or where student coordination of some committee delegations occurs, we could also utilize twitter to organize governance tweet-ups and outreach sessions.

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[12] Group-on Business Model on Wikipedia. 20 December 2010.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupon>

Notes

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[i] *Post-Secondary Learning Act,* SA 2003, s 93(3). © Alberta Queen's Printer 2003.

[ii] *Post-Secondary Learning Act,* SA 2003, s 95(1) a. © Alberta Queen's Printer 2003.

[iii] *University of Alberta Students' Union Bylaw 100* SU Bylaw 100 s 12 & 15

[iv] *University of Alberta Students' Union Bylaw 100* s 18(3).

[v] *University of Alberta Students' Union Bylaw 100* s 18(4)

[vi] *Post-Secondary Learning Act,* SA 2003, s 26. © Alberta Queen's Printer 2003.

[vii] *University of Alberta General Faculties Council Terms of Reference.* http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/governance/pdf/GFC-Terms-of-Ref-2007-Nov-26.pdf last accessed April 15, 2011.

[viii] *Post-Secondary Learning Act,* SA 2003, © Alberta Queen's Printer 2003.

[ix] *University of Alberta General Faculties Council Terms of Reference.* http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/governance/pdf/GFC-Terms-of-Ref-2007-Nov-26.pdf last accessed April 15, 2011.

[x] *University of Alberta General Faculties Council Terms of Reference.* http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/governance/pdf/GFC-Terms-of-Ref-2007-Nov-26.pdf last accessed April 15, 2011.

[xi] *University of Alberta Students' Union Bylaw 2000*

[xii] *Post-Secondary Learning Act,* SA 2003, §13(1). © Alberta Queen's Printer 2003.

[xiii] Bylaw 100 §18(5)(e), §20(1)

[xiv] University of Alberta General Faculties Policy Manual s. 55.3.1 http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/gfcpolicymanual/content.cfm?ID_page=37717#38573. Last accessed April 15, 2011.

[xv] University of Alberta General Faculties Policy Manual s. 55.3.1 http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/gfcpolicymanual/content.cfm?ID_page=37717#38573. Last accessed April 15, 2011.

[xvi] University of Alberta General Faculties Policy Manual s. 42.3
http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/governance/pdf/Dept%20Council%20Info%20-excerpt%20from%20GFC%20PM%20Sec%2042.3.pdf

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