

The ALES Project

**Designing a new Faculty Association for
the Faculty of Agriculture, Life and
Environmental Sciences**

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Introduction

Faculty Associations

Excellence in Student Representation

Faculty Associations (or FAs) are the vital bodies that connect students with their Faculty. They advocate on behalf of students, are the official representatives of their interests, and provide important services to students.

Every faculty must have a Faculty Association and officers of FAs can be selected by any method in compliance with SU bylaws, but are typically elected by the students of their faculty.

Why Restructure?

Modernization, Advocacy, and Service

The Faculty Association for ALES has the challenging, but rewarding task of representing a particularly diverse group of students. Previously, this was accomplished by having representatives from each of the eight program associations operate in a confederate structure. This means that the program associations granted authority to the Faculty Association, rather than the FA overseeing the program associations.

Most Faculty Associations, however, do not use this structure. For the most part, FAs have adopted a hierarchical structure, with six executives on average. The most common executive positions are President, Vice-President External, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President Administration or Secretary, Vice-President Finance or Treasurer, and Vice-President Student Life or Events Coordinator. Each executive is responsible for all affairs under their portfolio and reports to the group regularly.

In the way that the ALES FA is structured now, the members of the FA already have a full set of responsibilities to their own program association. Having FA responsibilities on top of that, not to mention coursework, can get to be too much. As a result, the FA, in the past has not completed reporting requirements that it must do in order to continue operating under SU Bylaw. It has also struggled somewhat with gaining notoriety among members.

Particularly in times of budget cuts, we want to make absolutely sure that student interests are being represented exceptionally. The leader of the ALES FA currently is a paid staff member of the faculty. Faculty Associations are the primary organization that

exists to represent student interests to faculties. Advocacy can be really difficult to navigate when the leader of the FA is a staff member.

Consultation and Values

Creating a System that Works

When the office of Discover Governance did consultations with the majority of the members of the current Faculty Association, we heard that, for the most part, the current structure was not working well and needed to be changed in order to better serve their groups and the students they engage with. We also heard that there were a few common values that needed to be encompassed if we were to proceed with a new organization.

All those that were consulted agreed that the need for a strong community and unity between the clubs and program associations should be reflected in the structure of the new FA. We heard that program associations should still be highly involved in advocacy and have equal representation.

Additionally, consultants agreed that it was important that the efforts of the program associations in terms of events and advocacy should not be duplicated. Many of them feel as though they have a good relationship with the faculty and don't want to lose that.

Finally, the majority of groups thought that having a timeline that recognized the new association by May 1st was a good idea.

Collaborative Proposals

The Value of a Collective Approach

Proposals should aim to include all of the requirements outlined on the 3rd page of this document, but components of other proposals may be merged into the selected proposal.

Procedure

From Start to Finish

The Selection Process

1. Groups or individuals are invited to submit draft proposals that outline what they think the ALES Faculty Association should look like going forward.
 - a. Note the proposal requirements outlined on the next page.
 - b. Note the timeline for submitting a proposal as well as dates of information sessions for interested students found on the last page of this document.
 - c. Proposals should be submitted in hard copy to reception at SUB 2-900, or in digital form to sgo@su.ualberta.ca.
2. All proposals will be reviewed by the Selection Committee

3. The Selection Committee will choose the three best proposals and provide detailed feedback to the submitters. An excellent proposal:
 - a. Meets all the requirements outlined on the next page.
 - b. Reflects the cross-disciplinary nature of the Faculty of ALES.
 - c. Encompasses the values that the program associations outlined in the consulting.
4. Submitters will revise their proposals, taking into account the detailed feedback given by the selection committee, and resubmit them.
5. The Selection Committee will choose the best proposal.
6. That proposal will be transformed into the new Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences Faculty Association.

The Selection Committee Membership

Twelve Voting and Two Non-Voting

- The Vice-President Academic of the Students' Union
- A Delegate of the Dean of Students
- A Delegate of the Dean of ALES
- 1 President or Delegate from each of the 8 Programs of ALES
- The ALES Students' Union Councilor
- The Manager of Student Group Services (non-voting)
- The Student Governance Advisor (non-voting)

Draft Proposal Requirements

Groups should develop a proposal that is no more than three pages in length. The proposal should include the following:

An Introduction

The introduction should be a paragraph or two outlining the broad ideas and values that you hope to encompass in your proposed FA structure. Give an overview of what you think the new faculty association should look like.

The Mechanics

Next, your team should come up with a mission or value statement for the faculty association. This is one sentence that sums up the role of the faculty association. For example: 'The purpose of the ALES Faculty Association is to advocate on behalf of ALES students to the faculty, foster student engagement, and provide relevant services to students'.

Following that, your team should explain who would be on the executive of this faculty association. That involves deciding what the titles of positions will be, and you are encouraged to make recommendations for who should fill those positions in the

upcoming year. This can include members of your team if you feel as though you would like to see the project through its first year.

Finally, in this section, outline how the faculty association will be equipped to advocate on behalf of students, foster student engagement, and provide relevant services for students.

The Structure

In this section, outline the procedures the FA would follow for making decisions. This involves explaining what meetings will be like and how decisions will be made at meetings. Your team will also need to outline some checks and balances on the executive. For example, a council composed of many student representatives to approve big decisions.

Timeline

August 19th, 2013	Calls for proposals released
October 1st – 21st	Meetings with stakeholders
January 6th- February 21st	Marketing Period
January 16th, 2014 5:00 – 6:00pm Location: Blackboard area on main floor of ag/for building	Information session and SU Q&A for students interested in putting a proposal together.
February 21st, 2014 5:00pm – 6:00pm Location: The Pit Main floor of Ag/For building	Draft Proposals Due Town hall meeting at which students will present their proposals and hear feedback from their peers.
March 6th, 2014	Proposals Due
May 1st, 2014 (tentative)	New ALES FA recognized