University of Alberta Students' Union

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

12 May, 2015
6.00pm
SUB 0-48

AGENDA (CAC 2015-01)

2015-01/1	**INTRODUCTION**
2015-01/1a	**Call to Order**
2015-01/1b	**Approval of Agenda**
2015-01/1c	**Approval of Minutes**
2015-01/1d	**Chair's Business**
	Announcements.
2015-01/2	**OLD BUSINESS**
2015-01/3	**NEW BUSINESS**
2015-01/3a	CAC priorities for the year.
2015-01/3b	Council engagement.
2015-01/3c	Council exposure to constituents.

2015-01/3d   Administrative and resource support.

2015-01/3e   Progress of council legislative agenda.

2015-01/3f   Attendance policy.

2015-01/3g   ZHANG moves to strike the Governance Review Committee based on the attached terms of reference and final report.

                     See Document CAC-15.01.01

                     See Document CAC-15.01.02

2015/01/4   **<u>DISCUSSION</u>**

2015/01/5   **<u>CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE</u>**

                     Tuesday May 26, 2015 @ 6.00pm in SUB 0-48

2015-01/6   **<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>**

Students' Union Governance Structure Review Task Force

Terms of Reference

Purpose

Through conversation with Students' Council over the years, and recurring issues such as councilor engagement, student participation in elections and satisfaction with the Council experience, the structure of the Students' Union's governance has repeatedly been brought forward as a root issue. The last time the Students' Union's governance structure was reevaluated was in 2002 when Students' Council was reformed as a policy board to guide the organization. Given the last review was done 12 years ago, having a conversation about the Students' Union's governance structure comes at an appropriate time and could yield valuable results.

Scope

The task force will provide a report on their findings to Students' Council before April 30th, 2015 that will focus on the following issues:

1. Reviewing the decision made in 2002
2. Examining other student association governance structures
3. Examining literature on governance structures
4. Identifying the challenges student representatives face
5. Identifying the unique qualities of student governance at the U of A
6. Propose recommendations

Due to the large nature of this discussion, the task force may deem that additional review needs to happen once the April deadline is reached. Therefore the task force may issue a recommendation to the 2015/2016 Students' Council to continue the task force and build upon the work accomplished this year instead of issuing a report.

Meetings

Meetings will be held biweekly from June to April

Membership

- 2 Students' Union Executives
- 4 Representative from Students' Council
- 2 Student at Larges
- General Manager of the Students' Union
- Director of Research and Political Affairs
- 2 Students' Union staff members

Membership Selection

The Students' Council and Executive representatives shall be selected by a vote at a Students' Council meeting and an Executive Committee meeting respectively. The student at larges and staff members shall be selected by the rest of the task force at a initial meeting held in early December.

Governance Structure Review Task Force Report

Introduction

Through conversation with Students' Council over the years, and recurring issues such as councilor engagement, student participation in elections and satisfaction with the Council experience, the structure of the Students' Union's governance has repeatedly been brought forward as a root issue. The last time the Students' Union's governance structure was reevaluated was in 2002 when Students' Council was reformed as a policy board to guide the organization. Given the last review was done 12 years ago, a conversation about the Students' Union's governance structure was started, and, while it has not completed its work, has so far shown the value in reevaluating our structures.

First Steps

At the first meeting of the task force we started by reviewing the documentation available on the subject matter so far, mainly the Student Council and Engagement Task (SCET) Force Report and the a summary of the reports form the Council Reform and Progress (CRAP) Committee. We then commissioned research on a scan of the governance structures of the student associations at other institutions and research on the literature of different governance structures. Next we discussed how to solicit feedback and input from different stakeholder groups (Councillors, students at large, SRA representatives, etc.) and decided this would be best handled by a sub group of the task force, the Research and Explorations Subcommittee.

The Research and Exploration Subcommittee

The subcommittee discussion focused on narrowing down the purpose of collecting testimony and feedback, the stakeholder groups to engage, and the process through which the information would be collected. There was only one meeting of the group, but its conversation proved quite fruitful, and a template for primary research has been developed on the strategies recommended for this process. While they are not for recommendation, minutes from the meeting are attached in the appendix for reference.

Discussions of the Task Force

The Task Force had numerous discussions over the course of its lifespan. First we reviewed the CRAP summary and discussed our favorite and least favorite changes from over the last 10 years. At the following meeting, we started to break down the actual areas where we could affect change. The areas we identified so far where: transition, Council functionality and structure, SU culture, councillor development and engagement and executive involvement. The areas that could be improved or restructured are not limited to these areas,

but these are the ones the task force identified as a priority. The last discussion meeting of the task for centered on the specific issues with councillor engagement and transition. We discussed these issues in depth and offered possible solutions to some of the problems we identified. While specific detail is not provided here, the discussion and possible solutions are captured in the minutes for these meetings in the appendix.

Next Steps

The task force was incredibly well received by all members, managed to accumulate a significant amount of background documentation for its short life span, and fostered some of the most in depth discussion that has happened on our governance systems in recent memory. With the ground laid for the broad solicitation of input from all stakeholder groups, and the discussion framed, it is the Students' Union Governance Structure Review Task Force wholehearted recommendation for the 2015/16 Students' Council to restrike this task force with the same terms of reference to continue this important discussion.

Recognizing that this is a longer-term discussion, the committee recommends further that the committee begin meeting over the summer to review the collected materials and finalize the research tools needed to conduct further stakeholder researcher. This will allow the Fall semester to conduct primary research to be reviewed for the committee during the remainder of the year.

Appendix

Meeting Minutes

Governance Structure Review Task Force

January 7, 2015
11:00am
Room 0-48 SUB

Attendance

Cory Hodgson *VP Operations & Finance*
Nicholas Diaz *VP Student Life*
Lok To *Councillor*
Justis Allard *Councillor*
Bo Zhang *Councillor*
Travis Dueck *Councillor*
Fahim Rahman *Student at Large*
Sarim Mirza *Student at Large*
Marc Dumouchel *General Manager – arrived 11:22am*
Justin Williams *Director of Research and Political Affairs*
Rebecca Taylor *Discover Governance Manager*
Craig Turner *Initiatives Manager*

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by HODGSON at 11:07am.

Approval of Agenda

HODGSON MOVED THAT the Task Force approve the agenda as presented.
 CARRIED (friendly)

Introductions

Members in attendance introduced themselves.

Appointment of Members

HODGSON/ZHANG MOVED THAT the Task Force appoint Fahim Rahman and Sarim Mirza to the Task Force as Students at Large, and appoint Rebecca Taylor and Craig Turner to the Task Force as SU Staff representatives.
 7/0/0 CARRIED

Timeline for the Task Force

The Task Force reviewed its Terms of Reference, and discussed how it will go about fulfilling each component:

1. Reviewing the decision made in 2002 – TAYLOR to provide research briefs to the Task Force
   a. Reviewing external changes since then (i.e. provincial legislation)
2. Reviewing the Students' Council Engagement Task Force Report – HODGSON to provide to the Task Force
3. Examining other student association governance structures – WILLIAMS to provide research briefs
4. Examining literature on governance structures – TAYLOR to provide research briefs
5. Identifying the challenges student representatives face – to be dealt with through discussion and a subcommittee
6. Identifying the unique qualities of student governance at the U of A – to be dealt with through discussion and a subcommittee
7. Propose recommendations – final task of the Task Force

The Students' Council Engagement Task Force Report is readily accessible and would therefore be a good starting point to discuss at the next meeting.

Selection of Chair

HODGSON MOVED THAT the Task Force have a rotating Chair for each meeting, to be selected by the Task Force at each meeting.
> **CARRIED (friendly)**

Creation of Subcommittee

There was general agreement amongst the Task Force members that a fact-finding subcommittee should be struck. The subcommittee would be responsible for development and execution of a process to gather information from individuals in student governance, and to report back to the Task Force.

The Subcommittee may employ interviews, focus groups, surveys, discussions with individuals, etc.

HODGSON MOVED THAT the Task Force create the Research & Exploration Subcommittee and appoint MIRZA, DUECK, HODGSON, TAYLOR and WILLIAMS to the Subcommittee.
> **11/0/0 CARRIED**

Meeting Schedule

HODGSON MOVED TO adopt a meeting schedule of every 2nd Wednesday at 11:00am.
> **CARRIED (friendly)**

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40am.

SU Governance Task Force – Research & Exploration Subcommittee

Jan 29, 2015
10:00am
Room 0-48 SUB

Attendance:

- Cory Hodgson
- Justin Williams
- Craig Turner
- Rebecca Taylor
- Travis Dueck
- Sarim Mirza

Meeting Discussion:

- Purpose:
    - Expectations of student leadership role
        - Desired
        - Perception
        - Challenges / barriers to entry
    - Expectations of structure
        - Relationship between SU and SRAs
        - Committees / workflow
        - Role of the institution
        - Relationship between Council and Exec
    - Knowledge level
        - Knowledge test
        - Comfort level with knowledge
        - Sources of knowledge – what is useful and what is not
            - PD/training
            - Transition
            - Curricular
        - How do they prefer to receive knowledge
    - Value
        - Participatory (i.e. of Council)
        - Do they have purpose
- Collection:
    - Rebecca/Kathryn to gather data from their existing SRA / student rep surveys
    - Focus Groups:
        - Council
        - SRA
        - Staff
    - Interviews:
        - Former councillors
        - Current councillors

- o Surveys:
  - Students at large

Governance Structure Review Task Force

February 4, 2015
11:00am
Room 0-48 SUB

Attendance

Cory Hodgson *VP Operations & Finance*
Nicholas Diaz   *VP Student Life*
Justis Allard   *Councillor*
Tavis Dueck   *Councillor*
Fahim Rahman   *Student at Large*
Marc Dumouchel   *General Manager*
Justin Williams   *Director of Research and Political Affairs*
Rebecca Taylor   *Discover Governance Manager*
Craig Turner   *Initiatives Manager*

Discussion

The committee discussed the timeline of events and decisions made by the Council Reform and Progress (CRAP) committee, including favorite and least favorite decisions and other issues that came to mind.

Favorite CRAP

- Not giving the BoG seat to the VPA – we need diverse opinions.
- The new meeting structure is better, although the increased prevalence of presentations causes meetings to run too long.
- Idea of having two year terms (which was brought up but not implemented by CRAP).

Least Favorite Crap

- Driving change as a councillor can be difficult, though it's not always that way and Council or the Executive are able to drive change.
- Average duration of time people spend on Council seems to have decreased.
- The Executive tends to set up their own committees for feedback – this could be improved if we gave first dibs to committee seats to Councillors.
- Concerns over filling high number of committees when number of Councillors shrunk.
- New Standing Orders were difficult to read and understand.

Other Issues and Ideas

The Council presentation issue can be dealt with by restricting presentations to things that are directly relevant to Council and sending all other information as a one-pager instead. Presentations are being used as non-consultative consultation by the university, which can hurt our advocacy efforts.

Idea of two-year term, if considered, should be presented as an option not a requirement. It could also cause problems for one-seat faculties.

Need to explore not just policy and operations, but also how people see the role of Council.

Also need to look at how Council interacts with SRAs and other demographics on campus, since RHA and athletics seats were removed.

In some places, the Speaker is also a governance officer. We could consider reforming the role of the Speaker.

Governance Structure Review Task Force
February 25, 2015
11:00am
Room 0-48 SUB

Attendance

Cory Hodgson *VP Operations & Finance*
Nicholas Diaz   *VP Student Life*
Lok To   *Councillor*
Bo Zhang   *Councillor*
Sarim Mirza   *Student at Large*
Marc Dumouchel   *General Manager – arrived 11:22am*
Justin Williams   *Director of Research and Political Affairs*
Rebecca Taylor   *Discover Governance Manager*
Craig Turner   *Initiatives Manager*

Discussion

Focus of today's meeting: areas to impact change

Transition
Be clearer about expectations and roles for Councillors.
- Deal with them during elections, not just after.
- Market positions better, and have more concrete deliverables for the positions.
- Avoid setting false expectations.

Tenure:
- Students aren't spending as many years on Council as in the past, leading to faster loss of institutional memory and talent.

Council Functionality

Meetings are too long and not productive enough. Need to look at:
- Council composition
- Engagement
- Defining roles of Councillors, committees, and other parts of the SU
- Stock formats for committee standing orders
- Reduced redundancy between standing orders and bylaw

Consider Student At Large involvement, especially on committees.
Increase administrative support.
Do a better job of planning/prioritizing for Council
- Involve staff
- Get Council to identify areas of interest rather than creating specific plans

SU Culture

Integration of Council into broader organization:
- Disconnect between Councillors and committees, and operational side of SU.
- Consider having staff members as committee resources.

Adoption of SU culture:
- Council has been distanced from organizational culture and lacks one of its own.
- Need to increase knowledge of strategic plan.
- The SU is more of a multi-culture, so each area can have its own individual culture centered around core values – Council can have its own culture, but will need the help of the Executives to build it each year.
- Need to include vectors – Executive culture is maintained by permanent staff, but because Council oversees everything it should be somewhat separate from staff. We also need to avoid creating a cult.
- Prestige or pride of being a Councillor can be improved.

Do a better job of consolidating SU-related advertising and tabling during Week of Welcome to make connecting with the SU (and Council) easier.

Councillor Development

We should consider looking at the role of the Councillor from an educational perspective.
- Focus on leadership development.
- Contemporary students have grown up in more structured environments and we haven't adapted to their learning and organizational styles.
- Should make GovCamp attendance sound more mandatory.

Figure out what Councillors want out of their experience and then work to create it.
- Could be done at GovCamp.
- Bo expected more interaction with the organization, but has found that it feels like the SU sees Council as something it has to put up with.
- Bo was happy with personal development, but not satisfied with the amount he was able to tangibly achieve. For example, he wanted to improve the way job opportunities are promoted to students, but the initiative quickly became overwhelming and he didn't have the resources to handle it on his own.
- Lok got the most personal development out of committee involvement.
- Give Councillors cheat-sheets on how to get things done within organization.

Plan more informal interaction outside of Council so that Councillors can learn to communicate with each other better.

Executive Involvement
Executives could become agents of Council.
- Councillors can more easily see tangible returns on initiatives they want to accomplish
- the possibility of introducing separate agents of Council, but was determined to be infeasible because it would result in staff having multiple managers
- Would introduce a formal mechanism for Councillors to carry out initiatives more successfully

The possibility of removing voting powers of executives was discussed, but ultimately determined to be a bad idea as it would further distance them from Council.

Create clear protocols of who can talk to who about starting a new initiative – currently, Councillors must talk to executives about everything, who can then talk to managers, but we want to move to a more collaborative approach.

Future Meetings

We will begin writing out ideas into reports, recommendations, or plans.

Governance Structure Review Task Force
March 18, 2015
11:00am
Room 0-48 SUB

Attendance

Cory Hodgson *VP Operations & Finance*
Lok To   *Councillor*
Bo Zhang   *Councillor*
Sarim Mirza   *Student at Large*
Rebecca Taylor   *Discover Governance Manager*
Craig Turner   *Initiatives Manager*

Next Steps

Cory will write a draft of the committee's year-end report, and will bring it back to the committee for edits/suggestions/approval.

We will continue to meet into April to ensure we can reach our goals for the end of the semester.

Discussion

Focus of today's meeting: Transition and Council engagement.

Problem/concern	*Possible solution*	*Other notes*
New councillors uneducated	Make training mandatory.	Maybe not mandatory, but

about how council works. People campaign on things they can't do.	Make pre-campaign training mandatory to run. Include presentation in mandatory candidates meeting.	should be heavily implied instead of mentioned casually.
Takes whole year to learn job.	GovCamp needs to be better at imparting knowledge Extend Govcamp to be a week long.	Participation too low to extend time period.
Don't want people to be interested only in one area or issue.		Most people don't know a lot coming in, and will fall easily into the existing structure without causing a problem.
Poor Council attendance.	Make attendance mandatory – introduce possibility of removal for poor attendance. Make removal a procedural process. Fill seats vacated due to poor attendance with nomination and appointment system. Attendance not taken after 10pm. Make sure new Councillors know it's a semi professional position.	In order to introduce mandatory things you need to be able to discipline – hard to do without compromising democratic principles. Don't want empty seats. Whole other problem: can you appoint Councillors? Length and location of meeting would have to be considered.
We try to have perfect democracy but it doesn't help people become effective actors in the organization.	Find a way to better balance the voice of students with the effectiveness of the organization.	Effectiveness more important than exact representation of student voice.
Purpose and duties of council unclear.	Look more closely at the point of council and make sure it's accurately reflected in procedures and practices. Councillors required to report on what they're doing on committees every meeting	
Council is the best place to disseminate information, but presentations take too	Should explore limit on presentations. Need to be more explicit	30 minute presentation time allows time for questions. City Council only has 3

much time.	about the correct avenue for disseminating different types of information. Giving Councillors more of an operational role can reduce the need for presentations, because they're already engaged and knowledgeable.	minutes.
A lot comes to council that's irrelevant, and a single person can drive it. Can't stop presentations until the presenters are already there, at which point it's hard to say no.	Council needs to decide what kind of presentation they want to see. Make Speaker role more developed and have them decide (would require more permanent speaker).	Who enforces what kind of information is brought as presentations? Majority of useless presentations come from exec.
Debate is inefficient. Suspending rules can be beneficial but it's overdone and leads to longer meetings.	Do better job of teaching Councillors how to debate. Push questions (especially those for clarification) about a motion to Question Period and them keep out of debate. Encourage more written questions.	City Council is moving to a facilitator structure, with someone in the middle reporting/running debate.
Committees do work, then Council re-does the work (such as making major amendments to bills during debate), so those on committees do the same work twice. Committee agendas go out late so those who might be interested in a topic have no way of knowing at which meeting it will be discussed and have to bring their ideas to Council.	Give more authority to committees so council doesn't have to debate as much. Make committees do agendas earlier, and make agenda items more explicit.	Caused big problems for GFC in terms of function and relevancy. If we remove debate from Council we may as well remove Council. Council should be for deciding whether or not something should be passed, denied, or moved back to committee, and for explaining why and giving further direction to committees.

Meeting Recap

Talked about more committee structure, written reports, and publicly shared info.

Next meeting: talk about report and what happens next.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
STUDENTS' UNION

University of Alberta Students' Union

Cory Hodgson — Vice President Operations and Finance

vp.finance@su.ualberta.ca

780-492-4236