

The A4SE Petition – Transparency and Democracy Resolutions at a Glance!

These Resolutions aim to increase the governance transparency at the SUO and make its operations more democratic and accessible for students.

Note: This document is just a subjective explanation and interpretation of the original petition and has no legal value. Any legal interpretation of the Resolutions shall only be based on the original petition, dated August 25th, 2024, that can be found here:

https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_38lKA4ysfzx1VvU

Resolution 1 Summary: Aside from the AGM, the SUO Executives and Directors (President, Faculty Reps, etc.) make a lot of their decisions in meetings that aren't accessible to students. All students have the right to go to these meetings and observe them, but it's hard to even find out when and where they are! We want more transparency. This Resolution will make meeting times publicly available on the SUO website, and will ensure that students are able to attend Board meetings, Executive meetings, and other Committee meetings (Policy Committee, Oversight Committee, Finance Committee, etc.) if they so desire.

Resolution 1 Full Text (Special):

Whereas students must have the right to hold their elected representatives accountable by observing Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and other Committee meetings, and

Whereas students need to know when and where Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and other Committee meetings are held to be able to exercise their right to observe them, then

Be it resolved, That Bylaw VII be amended to include two new Bylaws after Bylaw VII:12, which shall read as such:

“The notice and agenda for regularly scheduled Board of Directors meetings shall be posted at least one week in advance of the meeting on the SUO website.”

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“The notice and agenda for non-regularly scheduled Board of Directors meetings shall be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting on the SUO website.”

Be it further resolved, That Bylaw IX be amended to include three new Bylaws after Bylaw IX-8, which shall read as such:

“Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to the membership unless the Executive Committee resolves to move the meeting in camera.”

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“The notice and agenda for regularly scheduled Executive Committee meetings shall be posted at least three (3) days in advance of the meeting on the SUO website.”

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“The notice and agenda for non-regularly scheduled Executive Committee meetings shall be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting on the SUO website.”

Be it further resolved, That Bylaw XVIII be amended to include three new Bylaws after Bylaw XVIII-6, which shall read as such:

“Meetings of all Committees shall be open to the membership unless the respective Committee resolves to move the meeting in camera.”

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“The notice and agenda for regularly scheduled Committee meetings shall be posted at least three (3) days in advance of the meeting on the SUO website.”

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“The notice and agenda for non-regularly scheduled Committee meetings shall be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting on the SUO website.”

Resolution 3 Summary: At board meetings, the SUO has the power to move to an in-camera session. “In-camera session” means that any guest observing the meeting has to leave and the meeting minutes (notes) won’t be published later for the public. In-camera sessions cannot be viewed by the general membership (e.g. students who aren’t executives), as they tend to be about sensitive or confidential topics. This Resolution will require the SUO to include the general topic of the in-camera meeting in the meeting minutes, so students have at least some idea of what’s going on, and will ensure members of the Board of Directors (VPs, Faculty Reps, Directors-at-Large, etc.) approve of these minutes to make sure nothing shady is going on!

Resolution 3 Full Text (Special):

Whereas in camera sessions cannot be observed by the general membership, and

Whereas current and future Boards of Directors have the right to make in camera sessions public, and

Whereas the current way in camera minutes are taken prevents the Board of Directors from exercising this right, then

Be it resolved, Bylaw XVI be amended to include a new Bylaw, which shall be renumbered as necessary, and shall read as such:

“Public minutes of in camera sessions shall state the general topic of discussion in as much detail that does not betray the sensitive information.”

Be it further resolved, Bylaw VIII-1:

“The management, administration, and control of the property, revenue, business, and affairs of the Students’ Union are vested in the Board of Directors. Pursuant to the foregoing, the Board of Directors:

- a. shall approve the Annual Action Plan by Resolution;
- b. shall adhere to the mission statement of the Students’ Union and Annual Action Plan;
- c. may amend the Action Plan as required by Resolution;
- d. shall approve the annual operating budget by July 31st of each year by Resolution;
- e. may amend the annual operating budget by a Special Resolution;
- f. may borrow and raise money upon terms and conditions which the Board of Directors deems appropriate;
- g. shall have the power to amend, repeal, or adopt Regulations by a Special Resolution;
- h. shall appoint the Chief Returning Officer by Resolution;
- i. upon a Special Resolution, may remove any person appointed by the Board of Directors to that position, except for a duly appointed Director, provided that the person to be removed has been provided with seven (7) days notice of the meeting at which such Resolution is proposed;
- j. may by Resolution overrule or amend any item arising out of minutes submitted to it pursuant to the Bylaws or the Regulations;
- k. may make such further rules as may be considered necessary for the Students’ Union, provided such rules and regulations are consistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Regulations of the Students’ Union;
- l. shall approve minutes of committees; and
- m. shall not delegate any of its powers and duties except as may be provided for in the Bylaws.”

shall be amended to include a new item after item (l), to be renumbered as necessary, which shall read as such:

“shall approve minutes of the in camera sessions of committees; and”

Resolution 6 Summary: While student Executives/Board members tend to only serve one or two years working for the SUO, the General Manager has been with the SUO for many years. The General Manager is hired as a full-time staff person and is not voted in by the student body. The General Manager is in a unique position of power and influence. The student Board Members have the power to fire or hire a General Manager but there currently is no routine system to oversee the General Manager. This Resolution will establish a committee to oversee the general manager specifically and conduct quarterly performance reviews.

Resolution 6 Full Text (Ordinary):

Whereas the General Manager has unique influence in the running of the SUO, and

Whereas the renewal, termination, and performance of the General Manager are solely overseen by the Executive Committee, and

Whereas the elected student representatives cannot directly oversee the SUO staff, then

Be it resolved, the SUO shall form a committee, consisting of two Executive Directors, three non-Executive Directors, and two Students-at-Large, with the following purposes:

1. to conduct a quarterly performance review of the General Manager,
2. to offer a recommendation to the Board of Directors regarding the termination or renewal of the General Manager's appointment,
3. to devise a framework for future standardized reviews, and
4. to devise a framework for the involvement of the Directors in the performance review of the SUO staff.

Be it further resolved, the SUO shall prepare amendments to the Bylaws and the Regulations to codify this as a standing committee.

Resolution 7 Summary: Last election, we saw students running for SUO positions act disrespectfully during the voting period. They got in students' faces, made the students feel coerced or intimidated into voting for them, etc. This Resolution would require candidates to stop campaigning in-person once the voting period begins. Also, candidates helping each other, endorsing each other, or running as a party (known as Slating) is currently illegal. But this rule is hard to enforce and breaking it puts the candidates who aren't doing it at a disadvantage. Also, Slating is not inherently bad, Provincial and National Parties (like the Liberals or Conservatives Parties of Canada) are also Slates! This Resolution would establish a formal process for overseeing the registration and participation as a Slate.

Resolution 7 Full Text (Special):

Whereas in-person campaigning during the voting period of SUO Elections results in alleged instances of intimidation, coercion, or manipulation of students by candidates and their volunteers, and

Whereas informal slates are allegedly formed during SUO Elections and anti-slating Regulations are difficult to enforce, then

Be it resolved, That Bylaw V be amended to include a new Bylaw, which shall be renumbered as necessary, and shall read as such:

“In-person campaigning period for the Elections must end prior to the beginning of the voting period and disciplinary action shall be taken against candidates who campaign in-person during the voting period.”

Be it further resolved, That the SUO shall amend the Regulations to remove the ban on slates during elections (Regulation II-24(vi)) and establish a process for registering and running as a slate.

Resolution 8 Summary: Student fees enable the SUO to lease the UNC space to businesses. Yet, students have no say in which businesses operate in the UNC. These businesses are meant to serve students, so students should have a say. This Resolution would require all new and renewed UNC lease contracts to be voted on by students at a General Meeting.

Resolution 8 Full Text (Special):

Whereas, the choice of UNC businesses deeply affects students, and

Whereas, the student fees enable the SUO to lease the UNC space, and

Whereas, the SUO does not currently consider direct student input in which businesses get to lease UNC spaces, then

Be it resolved, That Bylaw XIII be amended to include a new Bylaw, which shall be renumbered as necessary, and shall read as such:

“The signing of new contracts, or renewing existing contracts pertaining to the leasing of Student’s Union spaces (the UNC or any new buildings) to external businesses shall be approved through an ordinary Resolution at a General Meeting.”

Resolution 13 Summary: We pay a Media Fund Fee, that the SUO manages, to fund student news outlets like the Phoenix. There is a Bylaw that theoretically allows the SUO to not give the entirety of that money to the news outlets and instead keep it for its other services. Even though they currently don't do this, This Resolution removes this loophole from the Bylaws.

Resolution 13 Full Text (Special):

Whereas the Media Fund Fee is a separately collected fee, then

Be it resolved, Bylaw XVII-4 "Any unawarded fund shall revert to the Students' Union and be dealt with as a budgetary surplus." shall be struck out and be replaced with a new bylaw which shall read "Any unawarded fund shall be maintained by the Students' Union and can only be accessed for funding accredited Students' Union based media outlets in good standing."