Faculty Association Membership Fees (FAMFs) & You

A Resource For University of Alberta FAs
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DISCLAIMER
Where this document contradicts Students’ Union Bylaw or Operating Procedure or University regulations, the Bylaw or Policy will be considered the authority – NOT this document.

It is the responsibility of each respective Faculty Association to ensure that their practices conform to the requirements of Students’ Union and University regulations.

This document is not a comprehensive summary of those regulations.

History & Purpose of FAMFs
The Faculty Association Membership Fee was created in 2002-03 to address a proposal submitted by the Engineering Students’ Society working in conjunction with SU Engineering Councilors. The proposal was meant to provide a mechanism for providing financial stability to faculty associations by giving the groups a regulated method of accessing a mandatory membership fee with an opt-out mechanism. The fee is opt-out to recognize that the membership structure of FAs (i.e. that they represent all students enrolled in their faculty) is not adequately reflected in the opt-in membership fees used by most student groups.

Establishing a FAMF
To establish a FAMF, the requirements provided in SU Bylaw 8200 must be followed to the letter. There are no exceptions, and no extensions. The bylaw was set in consultation with FAs and with the Registrar’s Office of the University. The process for Renewing & Establishing is the same, and so more information about that process is included in the “Renewing a FAMF” section below.

Distribution of FAMFs
A FAMF is collected by the Registrar at the same time as students’ tuition, and is then transferred to the Students’ Union to be distributed to the FA. It must go through SU because the SU and the U of A itself are the only bodies that can legally collect mandatory funding from the students.

Organizations that collect a FAMF must conform to the annual reporting requirements of the Students’ Union before their FAMF will be disbursed. Financial
statements from FAs that collect fees must be done by an accountant and Financial Reports must be received within six months of the fiscal year’s end. Once SU Audit Committee has approved the Reporting Form submitted by the FA, the funds will be disbursed in accordance with SU Bylaw 8200 and Operating Policy 5.19. Faculty Association Fees can be terminated by SU council if an organization acquires probationary status.

Renewing FAMFs
Every five years, a FAMF must be renewed by following the Creation Procedure in SU Bylaw 8200. There are no exceptions, and no extensions. Failure to renew the FAMF means that the money is no longer collected.

Steps Required to Renew a FAMF
1. Write a letter of intent saying that you want to renew FAMF. If your organization already has a FAMF, you probably have a copy of your creation letter on file and, if you don't, the SU does. You can request it from the Discover Governance Manager

2. Send the letter to the Vice President (Academic) of the SU (vp.academic@su.ualberta.ca) and the Discover Governance Manager (sga@su.ualberta.ca). This letter needs to be submitted by December 15, but the earlier the better. It is recommended that the letter be submitted by the end of October.

3. Your FA must then consult its departmental associations and other stakeholders as identified in SU Bylaw 8200 to identify purposes for which the funds collected would be applied and/or to review the distribution as previously approved. You should also consult your Dean’s Office to put together a draft plan regarding what you’d like to spend the money on.
   a) Document all that consultation.
   b) Ensure that the proposal conforms with the requirements of SU Bylaw, especially SU Bylaw 8200 section 23.

4. Approve the FAMF proposal through your organization’s own processes, including a bylaw that will govern the FAMF operations, and submit that proposal to the SU Students’ Council – you can do that by asking either a Councilor or the SU VP Academic to sponsor a motion for you. Students’ Council must approve your proposal either before January 31 or within 4 weeks of receiving it, which you must submit before **January 15**. Leave your organization as much time as possible to get that approval; it is recommended that you submit your proposal to Council before the end of November.
   a) Historically, some groups have found it very valuable to give a presentation to Council. Ask a member of Council or the Speaker for assistance with how to go about doing this, and why it might be a good idea.
   b) The proposal, if approved, is how your fee is to be governed and
implemented. It cannot be changed without getting the approval of both your FA Council/Executive and SU Students’ Council.

5. Once Council has passed the proposal, you will need to hold a faculty-wide referendum on it, in accordance with SU rules. This means that the referendum is democratic, fair, respects student privacy, has a minimum voter turnout of 15%, and happens before the end of the year that you got approval from Council in, among other things. Please consult with the Students’ Union to get a comprehensive set of expectations for the referendum process.

6. Forward the results of your referendum to the SU VP Academic and the Discover Governance Manager as soon as possible after the referendum. The Registrar must be officially informed, in writing, by April 15 of the final approval of the fee or it will not be collected for the following year.

**Remember:** Throughout this process, your FA should consult with the Dean’s Office, the Office of the Registrar, and the Students’ Union. Keep in touch with departmental student groups as well.