STUDENTS SERVING STUDENTS

Faculty Association Task Force Final Report

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
STUDENTS' UNION

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

COUNCIL OF FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS
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Fostering student engagement is a key component of the University of Alberta's approach to providing a valuable and enriching experience for all students. We believe it’s important to offer a range of opportunities for students to get involved, develop crucial leadership skills, and contribute to campus communities. The University’s commitment to student engagement is reinforced in both the President’s vision document Dare to Discover, as well as the academic plan Dare to Deliver: 2011-2015. Dare to Discover outlines the objectives well under the Learning, Discovery and Citizenship cornerstone, noting the goal is to “engage students through mentorship and peer-based activities such as clubs, athletics, and social events to inspire high achievement, improve retention, and enhance graduation rates.”

Faculty Associations play a key role in that regard, but they are also one subset of over 450 registered student groups at the University of Alberta that support student engagement and help to build a vibrant community. The engagement which Faculty Associations offer is key to building connected alumni, enhancing the reputation of the University and allowing students to thrive in and out of the classroom. Representing the student voice on a faculty committee, planning events to engage students in social activities, and supporting academic success are just a few of the important roles that Faculty Associations play on our campuses.

My office was happy to partner with the Students’ Union on the Faculty Association Task Force and is very pleased with the dialogue that led to the recommendations listed in this report. Every undergraduate student on our campuses is a member of a faculty association, and as such, it is imperative that both the University and the Students’ Union provide the support required for faculty associations to function well and serve their membership appropriately.

I look forward to continuing our work with the Students’ Union to support faculty associations and student groups at the University of Alberta.

Sincerely,

Dr. Frank E. Robinson
VICE PROVOST AND DEAN OF STUDENTS
The University of Alberta has always believed that students belong not only in our classrooms, but also in our boardrooms. Fundamentally, students know students best, and understanding and supporting their needs provides value to both students and the University. Our collective commitment to student-side governance and student engagement is something both I and the Students’ Union view as being foundational to the academic excellence of this University.

Faculty Associations are key groups that facilitate student participation in university governance, and build a sense of community pride within each of the Faculties at the University. Faculty Associations cultivate leadership skills among their executives, enshrine the student voice in Faculty governance, and provide services and events that enhance the retention efforts of the University. By all means, Faculty Associations are of tremendous importance to the Students’ Union and the University of Alberta.

For example, consider the mentorship program offered by the Native Studies Students’ Association – first year students are paired up with an older mentor to help them navigate the complex University environment. For many incoming students, their mentors connect them to the University community and help make sure that they continue on with their degrees. This is especially important for rural and aboriginal students, whose may have left their support networks in order to attend the University.

Additionally, look at the Interdepartmental Science Students’ Society’s instructor appreciation night. Dozens of instructors are given letters on how they have changed a student’s life, and celebrated in front of their peers and families. The Faculty Association works not only on building a sense of community between students, but also between students and staff.

I am hopeful that you will see value in committing time, political will, or funding to the recommendations in this report. The risks are real, and while they may not be urgent, we must be proactive in order to avoid damage to the reputation of the University or the Students’ Union, and to the students who run and are served by Faculty Associations.

This Task Force graciously donated their time and ideas over the past academic year, and I am thankful for their commitment. The diverse membership of this task force, and the strategic and cost-effective recommendations coming from it speak to the value of bringing together students and staff to help make the University a better place.

Sincerely,
Dustin Chelen
VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC) UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA STUDENTS’ UNION
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every Faculty and Campus with undergraduate students at the University of Alberta is home to a Faculty or Campus Association (hereafter referred to as “Faculty Association”). They are University and Students’ Union student groups, given special responsibility for representing and serving undergraduate students in their Faculty.

The Faculty Association Task Force was formed in the Summer of 2012 as a joint Students’ Union-University committee. It was responsible for identifying risks that the University, the Students’ Union, and Students face through the unique working structure of Faculty Associations and providing recommendations to address these risks. The task force’s Terms of Reference can be found in Appendix III. The committee met eight times, conducted a review of relevant policy and practice, vetted recommendations through key stakeholders, and approved this final report.

This report first summarizes the role, value, and unique attributes of Faculty Associations. They are representative student groups, owned and operated by their members, with the mandate to serve, build community among, and represent students in their Faculty.

Five unique attributes that differentiate Faculty Associations from other student groups are:

1. University and Students’ Union policies lay out responsibilities for Faculty Associations that go above and beyond the responsibilities of normal student groups.

2. Because of their representative role on campus, Faculty Associations must have opt-out membership structures, where most student groups have opt-in structures.

3. Faculty Associations have special relationships with their respective Faculties, and often with professional associations.

4. Faculty Associations have special relationships with the Students’ Union, particularly those who collect student fees.

5. Every Faculty and Campus must have a Faculty Association.
The report then lists five risks that warrant attention by the University, Faculties, the Students’ Union and Faculty Associations themselves:

1. Faculty Associations manage large amounts of student money.

2. Faculty Associations must manage close and complex relationships with their Faculty and the Students’ Union.

3. Frequent turnover of Faculty Association Executives and institutional memory present risks in the form of student leaders losing information that they need to navigate University and Students’ Union rules effectively.

4. Faculty Association Executives may not have the knowledge, skills, or experience needed to manage a complex non-profit organization.

5. Faculty Associations engage with and are responsible to a large membership.

Finally, this report provides a suite of recommendations to address these risks. They are recommendations for the Students’ Union, the University, the Dean of Students, and Faculties to consider in their attempts to reduce risks and support the engagement of students. Cognizant of the budgetary pressures facing the University, the Task Force strove to focus on recommendations that would yield high impacts with minimal financial investment. Recommendations are thus prioritized based on impact, with a focus on engendering sustainable cultural changes within both faculty associations themselves and the University generally.

**Primary Recommendations:**

1. Create a resource document that all incoming Faculty Association Executives are required to acknowledge by signature, which outlines expectations and requirements of Faculty Association Executives.

2. Clarify Students’ Union standards for financial documentation and third-party reviews for both fee-collecting and non fee-collecting Faculty Associations.

3. Develop communication protocols for information sharing between the Students’ Union, Faculties, and the Dean of Students when a Faculty Association faces a serious issue.

4. Develop an information package on Faculty Associations and the role of a Faculty Advisor for staff members being asked to act as Faculty Advisors. This would include information on relevant rules and policies, risks and challenges Faculty Associations face, available supports, and ways Faculty Advisors can support the work of Faculty Associations.

5. Investigate financial supports that will best meet the needs of Faculty Associations, the Students’ Union, and the University.
Secondary Recommendations:

1. Create information sharing agreements between Faculty Associations and the University to allow Faculty Association access to necessary member information.

2. Streamline and prioritize the student group registration process for Faculty Associations, due to the necessity of their existence.

3. Make explicit the role of the Faculty advisor, and ensure that they are recognized by their Faculty for their essential work in supporting Faculty Associations.

4. Host a comprehensive, 2-day transition retreat for incoming and outgoing Faculty Association Executives early in the Spring Term. This retreat would focus on building soft and hard skills, including financial documentation and record-keeping, risk management, private information management, event planning, organizational self-governance, conflict management, and strategic planning. It would also give structured time for outgoing Faculty Association executives to transition knowledge to their successors.

5. Ensure all information available at the Council of Faculty Associations retreat is available in a written form for those unable to attend.

6. Increase Students’ Union representative (Executive and Councillor) participation and attendance in Faculty Association activities, including events and meetings.

7. Encourage greater interaction between Faculty Associations and the senior academic management of their Faculty so that each is aware of the work and priorities of the other. The Faculty Association Task Force will highlight exemplary cases of Faculty Association-Decanal working relationships.

8. Promote the Emerging Leaders Program to those involved in Faculty Associations, including Executives.
WHAT IS A FACULTY ASSOCIATION?

At their core, Faculty Associations are a group of passionate students dedicated to supporting undergraduates in their Faculty. They are student groups registered with both the University of Alberta and the Students’ Union, and bound to the Code of Student Behaviour and Students’ Union Bylaw respecting student groups.

The Post-Secondary Learning Act of the Province of Alberta gives authority to the Students’ Union over student affairs and the promotion of the general welfare of students. In particular, the Students’ Union has a duty to advocate for and serve undergraduate students. The Students’ Union has delegated some representative authority to Faculty Associations in order to ensure that there is sufficient student capacity to represent undergraduate interests at the Faculty level and to provide faculty specific services and involvement opportunities. The University recognizes their representational roles in policies on Dean searches and reviews, as well as Faculty and Departmental Councils. In addition to their representative responsibilities, Faculty Associations coordinate and support Faculty-based student groups, and build a sense of community among undergraduates. This added responsibility comes with a set of requirements, outlined in the 8000-series of Students’ Union bylaw. Faculty Associations must operate with sufficient transparency, including free and fair elections, proper financial management practices, and member-driven general meetings.

Faculty Associations are student run, with Executives normally elected by undergraduates each year. Most Faculty Associations do not have staff support, with the exception of the Augustana Students’ Association and the ALES Students’ Association. Each Faculty Association is granted office space in buildings designated to their Faculty, and these spaces are hubs for both the services that they offer and for their organizational activities.
FACULTY ASSOCIATION SNAPSHOT

The University of Alberta has 14 Faculties or Campuses that accept undergraduate students, and each of these has a Faculty Association. The smallest, the Native Studies Students’ Association has approximately 130 members, while the largest, the Interdepartmental Science Students’ Society, has just over 6500. Just like the Faculties on campus, the cultures, practices, and budgets of Faculty Associations are diverse. The information below is meant to give a better idea of this diversity, and contextualize the risks and solutions in a more complex landscape.

Number of Faculty Associations: 14
Number of Faculty Association Executives: 85
Approximate 2011–2012 Faculty Association Combined Operating Budgets: $750,000
Number of Faculty Associations that collect funds through the Students’ Union: 5
Number of student representatives appointed by Faculty Associations: 208

Faculty Association 2011-2012 Operating Budgets
Faculty Association Membership Distribution

- **ALES Faculty Student Association**: Coordinates and provides funding to student groups in Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences, and rents out lockers for students.

- **Alberta Pharmacy Students’ Association**: Hosts the long-standing Blue and Gold Ball and Mr. Pharmacy competition, and helps fund pharmacy student professional development.

- **Augustana Students’ Association**: The student representation in the Augustana Faculty, responsible for governance, social events, and advocacy for their students.

- **Association des Universitaires de la Faculté Saint-Jean**: Builds community and oversees le Salon des étudiants (the student café), while coordinating key events like la fête de la rentrée (orientation).

- **Business Students’ Association**: The official representative of University of Alberta Business students, the BSA coordinates clubs which host events like 5 Days for the Homeless.

- **Collective Body for Arts Students**: Supports department associations, advocates to the Faculty, and hosts Arts Week and Arts Cafés.

- **Education Students’ Association**: In addition to hosting Professional Development seminars, Education Week, and offering a Tutor Registry, the ESA represents students within Education, the ATA, and campus-wide.
- **Engineering Students’ Society**: Over one hundred years old, the ESS sells merchandise, coordinates student clubs, hosts “Geer Week” and the Engineering Headshave for cancer research.

- **Interdepartmental Science Students’ Society**: Coordinates study groups for over 800 science students, and hosts an appreciation night for excellent teaching staff.

- **Law Students’ Association**: Sells course notes and study aids for first-year law courses, and coordinates the annual Law Show.

- **Medical Students’ Association**: Advocates on behalf of medicine and dentistry students, oversees clubs, and provides social, academic and athletic events.

- **Native Studies Students’ Association**: Runs the pathfinders mentorship program for incoming students and hosts an annual bannock and bison burger sale.

- **Nursing Undergraduate Association**: Builds a sense of community for undergraduate nursing students through a mentorship program, academic advising, and social events.

- **Physical Education and Recreations Council of Students**: Oversees the “rookie camp” orientation to the Faculty, and provides services like intramurals or low-cost printing.
Faculty Associations have existed at the University of Alberta since 1922, and have played an integral part of the student experience throughout the University’s history. Their role in student governance has been enshrined by the Students’ Union, and they have since been responsible for the provision of services, the building of community, and the representation of students in each of their respective faculties.

In 2010, the Students’ Union hired its first Student Governance Advisor, tasked with supporting Faculty Associations and other student representatives. Since then, it has become increasingly clear that there are a number of risks and issues faced by the Students’ Union and the University related to Faculty Associations, and that a diverse group of stakeholders needed to gather to address them. The terms of reference for the Faculty Association Task Force were approved by Students’ Council on July 24, 2012, and the Faculty Association Task Force met throughout the 2012-2013 academic year.

The Task Force was chaired by the Students’ Union Vice-President (Academic), and included representation from the Students’ Union Audit Committee, the Dean of Students’ office, the Faculty of Arts, the School of Business, the Physical Education and Recreation Council of Students, the Medical Students’ Association, and resource personnel from Discover Governance and Student Group Services.

The Task Force reviewed relevant legislation around Faculty Associations, discussed factors that made Faculty Associations unique from other student groups, brainstormed significant risks and challenges Faculty Associations face, reviewed existing support structures, and then drafted a list of recommendations to address the risks and issues. These recommendations have been reviewed by the Students’ Union Executive Committee, the Office of the Dean of Students, Student Group Services, Discover Governance, Students’ Council, and the Council of Faculty Associations.
The Task Force recognized the following five broad categories of risks and issues as being within our purview to address:

**Financial Management**

a. Faculty Associations have larger memberships, host numerous events, and thus make a greater volume of transactions compared to other student groups.

b. Faculty Associations have the ability to collect mandatory fees from students, and must be accountable to students for the use of these funds.

c. While Faculty Associations are required to follow student group policies respecting bank accounts, they are reliant on the banking institutions to uphold those policies.

d. Faculty Associations have the ability to, and often choose to, raise large amounts of money through various means.

e. Elected Faculty Association student executives may commit or invest funds beyond their term.

f. Faculty Associations handle and store large amounts of cash as part of operating their events and services.

**Relationship with the Students’ Union and the University**

a. Faculty Associations are required to present their reviewed financial statements to the Students’ Union’s audit committee, but compliance has been inconsistent.

b. Faculty Associations that use the Students’ Union’s ability to collect a fee must be accountable for the use of those funds.

c. Faculty Associations that have the Faculty and University’s blessing to collect a fee must be accountable for the use of those funds.

d. Some Faculties rely on the Faculty Association for events or services that are jointly hosted.

e. Faculties rely on Faculty Associations for student representatives on Faculty Councils, appeals bodies, and Dean search and review committees. If an FA is unable to do so, this may result in failed searches or reviews, or the loss of the student voice from Faculty governance.
f. The Students’ Union relies on Faculty Associations to provide representation to students in their Faculty before Faculty-based issues reach the central university governance structure.

g. The unique relationship between the Faculty Association and Faculty means that mismanagement of the finances, events, or services of a Faculty Association can reflect poorly on the Faculty.

h. The student voice from the Faculty Associations is not always valued in every Faculty.

i. When the University or the Students’ Union sanctions an activity, reviews the registration of a student group, or works closely with the group, each assume potential legal risks with such association.

j. Faculty Associations are responsible for overseeing Departmental Associations, which also have clear responsibility in university governance.

k. Faculty Associations may have and/or need access to private student information.

l. Faculty Associations must meet higher governance and electoral standards set in place by the Students’ Union.

**Turnover**

a. Faculty Associations may lose contact or have inconsistent communication with the Students’ Union and their Faculty, as student executives turn over.

b. Faculty Associations may be unaware of information or documentation on Students’ Union and University policies and resources.

c. Faculty Associations may not retain institutional memory on risk management, financial management practices and historical successes and failures.

d. Yearly transition can result in an inconsistent quality of events, programs and services.
Inexperience

a. Faculty Association executives will likely not possess financial record keeping experience.

b. Faculty Association executives will have insufficient legal experience and may not have access to legal expertise for sponsorship or contracts.

c. Faculty Association executives will likely have little to no risk management experience.

d. High stress and high risk environments can damage Faculty Association executives academic success and mental health.

e. There is the potential for interpersonal conflict to interfere in Faculty Association operations, when improperly managed.

Engagement

a. Faculty Associations can and do host higher risk events due to the size of their membership.

b. Some Faculty Associations have insufficient resources to engage and communicate with their large memberships.

c. Some Faculty Associations may have difficulty contacting their membership based on the complexity of rules surrounding the management of private information.

d. Faculty Association owned technology may not integrate with Students’ Union or University technology for election or communication purposes.

e. Faculty Associations possess access to office space in University buildings.
The Task Force discussed a number of remedies to the risks and issues, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the operations of Faculty Associations, reducing barriers to successful engagement activities, and protecting the University and the Students’ Union from legal, reputational, or financial risks. The Task Force divided the recommendations into primary recommendations that address issues of an urgent nature and secondary recommendations that address issues of a persistent nature.

Primary Recommendations

1. Create a resource document that all incoming Faculty Association Executives are required to acknowledge by signature, which outlines expectations and requirements of Faculty Association Executives.

Owing to inadequate transition, Faculty Association executives can often be unaware of the policies which student groups and Faculty Associations are bound to. Moreover, they may not be aware of the resources available to support them. An agreement developed by Discover Governance, which Faculty Associations sign upon transition, will allow for structured communication and enforcement of basic student executive requirements. This would complement agreements signed by all student group executives.

2. Clarify Students’ Union standards for financial documentation and third-party reviews for both fee-collecting and non fee-collecting Faculty Associations.

Through amendments to the Students’ Union’s own bylaws the qualities of a financial review that the Students’ Union’s audit committee requires to ensure appropriate oversight of Faculty Associations should be clarified. In particular, as the Students’ Union must ensure that fees collected through its power of taxation are used transparently and fairly, it should have a clear and well-reasoned minimum bar for acceptable financial reviews of fee-collecting Faculty Associations.
3. Develop communication protocols for information sharing between the Students’ Union, Faculties, and the Dean of Students when a Faculty Association faces a serious issue.

When a Faculty Association faces a serious issue, the SU, University, Faculties, and SGS may each play a role in supporting the Association and mitigating risks. Where an incident or judicial decision has relevance to the Students’ Union, the Dean of Students, or the Faculty, the University should develop a communication protocol that encourages early and open communication between these three bodies so that they may manage their risks and responsibilities appropriately.

4. Develop an information package on Faculty Associations and the role of a Faculty Advisor for staff members being asked to act as Faculty Advisors. This would include information on relevant rules and policies, risks and challenges Faculty Associations face, available supports, and ways Faculty Advisors can support the work of Faculty Associations.

Faculty Advisors play a key role in supporting the work of Faculty Associations. They act as mentors, resource personnel, and advisors to Faculty Association executives. The Students’ Union and the Dean of Students should develop an information package for these advisors that includes relevant Students’ Union bylaws, student groups’ policy, and the Code of Student Behaviour, so that they can help provide institutional memory for Faculty Associations when needed.

5. Investigate financial supports that will best meet the needs of Faculty Associations, the Students’ Union, and the University.

The Task Force agreed that either the Students’ Union or the University need to provide student executives more training or support if they are to adequately manage $750,000 in student money. However, the Task Force didn’t have sufficient time or information to determine which supports will best suit the unique needs of student-driven Faculty Associations. A smaller working group consisting of representation from the Students’ Union, Discover Governance, Student Group Services, and the Dean of Students should convene to further explore the financial management support needs of Faculty Associations.

Secondary Recommendations

1. Create information sharing agreements between Faculty Associations and the University to allow Faculty Association access to necessary member information.
The Vice President Academic should first survey the needs and current usage of confidential information from Faculty Associations. The Students’ Union should then help Faculty Associations liaise with the Information and Privacy Office and their Faculties in order to build suitable information sharing agreements that allow them to access member information in a protected way for elections and outreach purposes.

2. Streamline and prioritize the student group registration process for Faculty Associations, due to the necessity of their existence.

Pending any upcoming changes to policy pertaining to student groups, Student Group Services and Discover Governance should work to develop a process that reduces the administrative work for both the Students’ Union and the Faculty Association, while ensuring that Faculty Associations and the Students’ Union quickly have the information they need to support the students they serve during the registration process.

3. Make explicit the role of the Faculty advisor, and ensure that they are recognized by their Faculty for their essential work in supporting Faculty Associations.

During the registration process, Faculty Associations are required to list a UofA staff member as a Faculty Advisor. As highlighted in Appendix IV, these advisors can be instrumental to a successful and stable Faculty Association. Yet many Faculty Advisors have the responsibility as an “add-on” to their job description, and aren’t fully recognized for the stability they provide to the student community in their faculty. Faculties should determine whether or not the current Faculty Advisors are sufficiently recognized for the key work that they do.

4. Host a comprehensive, 2-day transition retreat for incoming and outgoing Faculty Association Executives early in the Spring Term. This retreat would focus on building soft and hard skills, including financial documentation and record-keeping, risk management, private information management, event planning, organizational self-governance, conflict management, and strategic planning. It would also give structured time for outgoing Faculty Association executives to transition knowledge to their successors.

The Students’ Union should coordinate a comprehensive retreat for Faculty Association executives early in their term. Presenters can be sourced from the University and Students’ Union, and funding should be provided through stable Students’ Union funds, sponsorship, and a contribution from the University. Ensuring that Faculty Association executives start their term with sufficient knowledge of key topics is the best way to proactively prevent mismanagement and dysfunction.
5. **Ensure all information available at the Council of Faculty Associations retreat is available in a written form for those unable to attend.**

The Students' Union should dedicate staff time and resources to ensuring that Faculty Association executives who are unable to attend the retreat, or Faculty Association executives elected later, have full access to the key information provided at the retreat. Faculty Association members at the Faculty Association Task Force emphasized that “just in time” resources are key for busy student executives.

6. **Increase Students' Union representative (Executive and Councillor) participation and attendance in Faculty Association activities, including events and meetings.**

Some Faculty Association executives expressed the view that their work isn’t perceived to be valued by the Students’ Union and that Faculty Associations don’t have a clear connection to the governance of the Students’ Union. Students’ Union Executives and Faculty-specific Councillors should attend Faculty Association events and should better communicate with Faculty Association executives about University or Students’ Union initiatives that affect them.

7. **Encourage greater interaction between Faculty Associations and the senior academic management of their Faculty, so that each is aware of the work and priorities of the other. The Faculty Association Task Force will highlight exemplary cases of Faculty Association-Decanal working relationships.**

The Task Force thought that Faculty Associations would benefit from more face time with the Deans, Associate Deans, and other managers of their respective Faculties. Increased interactions would allow both to learn more about the complex contexts that each group works in and allow a direct student plug-in to the Dean’s office. Faculty Associations and Dean’s offices should make attempts to openly communicate with each other throughout the academic year. Examples of positive Faculty Association-Faculty relations are included as part of Appendix IV.

8. **Promote the Emerging Leaders Program to those involved in Faculty Associations, including Executives.**

The Students’ Union and Dean of Students should better promote the Emerging Leaders Program to future and current Faculty Association executives, so that they have opportunities to improve their people and time management skills.
ISSUES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

In addition to the recommendations provided in this report, the Task Force explored a number of other issues and recommendations related to the role of Faculty Associations in student life. While no agreement was reached on these recommendations, they contain ideas or perspectives that may be useful for future groups to consider as we continue to support student engagement at the University of Alberta. They are included as Appendix V.
Faculty Associations exist within their special context thanks to the representative authority that has been delegated to them from the Students’ Union. They are bound by three sets of Bylaws respecting Faculty Associations: Students’ Union Bylaw 8100 covers basic criteria a student group must meet to acquire or maintain Faculty Association status, and the structure for derecognizing or probating a Faculty Association. Students’ Union Bylaw 8200 describes financial requirements, and the process and limitations for those that wish to collect dues through the Students’ Union. Students’ Union Bylaw 8400 details Faculty Membership Fee requirements, and has jurisdiction over a special class of fees. Because of their length, they are not included in this report, but can be found online at www.su.ualberta.ca

Faculty Associations must also be registered Students’ Union and University Student Groups. As such, they are bound to section 30.8 of the Code of Student Behaviour, and Students’ Union Bylaw 5600. These provide basic requirements for composition, recognition, and usage of campus facilities by student groups, and provide basic rights to the group. Student groups are subject to disciplinary decisions of either individuals, or the group as per the Code of Student Behaviour.

Faculty Associations also have enshrined voices within Faculty governance, as they are responsible in section 55 of GFC Policy Manual for appointing students to Faculty Councils, and their relevant appeals subcommittees. In the UAPPOL Selection of Faculty Deans procedure, they are also responsible for appointing an undergraduate student to Dean Selection committees.
APPENDIX II

EXISTING SUPPORTS FOR FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS

The following list details ways that the Students’ Union currently supports Faculty Associations and their Executives.

1. Council of Faculty Associations (Council of Faculty Associations) Retreat

Following the election of new Executives, Discover Governance hosts a transition retreat for up to four members from each Faculty Association. For approximately 5 hours on campus, the following topics are covered by internal and external speakers:

- Transition
- Advocacy
- Student groups
- Sponsorship
- Risk management
- Engagement
- Stakeholder relations
- Organizational governance

There is also time allotted for a meeting of all of the Faculty Associations, called the Council of Faculty Associations, social activities, lunch, and an address by the Students’ Union Vice President Academic.

2. Leadership Summit and Transition Resources

Student Group Services hosts a Leadership Summit in the Fall Term and provides transition resources of multiple types (events, workshops, and online documents) that are accessible to Faculty Associations.

The Leadership Summit occurs in the early Fall Term, spans two days, and includes external speakers on multiple topics, including the following:

- University environment and structure
- Student Group Services supports and resources
- Leadership theory
- Financial management
- Group dynamics
- Meetings and governance
- External communications and outreach
Transition events (either a one-day Transition Summit or smaller Transition Workshops) are hosted in March, with transitional resources being developed year-round. Transition supports address the topics covered in the Leadership Summit, but with a specific focus on the following:

- Transition theory
- Leading a transition workshop for student groups
- Transition trouble-shooting and case studies
- Position Manual development
- Document storage and revision
- BearsDen basic functionality
- SGS supports
- Fundraising
- Meetings
- Event planning
- Risk management
- Policies
- Volunteer management
- Crisis management
- Goal setting

3. Council of Faculty Associations Meetings

Each semester, specific Executive portfolios from each Faculty Association meet to share best practices and make recommendations to the Students’ Union. These three “congresses” (services, finance and administration, and advocacy) forward formal recommendations to the Students’ Union through the Council of Faculty Associations “Assembly of Presidents”, which allows Faculty Association Presidents to connect once per semester and discuss priority issues. Presentations on topics relevant to each of the portfolios allow Executives to build their skills and knowledge throughout the year.
4. Individualized Advising

Discover Governance is able to provide one-on-one and group advising to Faculty Associations, as need arises. Topics typically covered as requested by Faculty Associations include:

- Constitutional interpretation and advice
- Stakeholder relations
- Financial reporting
- Fee accountability
- Roberts Rules of Order
- Meeting facilitation
- Strategic planning
- Group dynamics
- Crisis intervention and management
- Advocacy
- University and Faculty governance

5. Probationary Support

If serious significant issues arise that affect a Faculty Associations ability to function effectively, transparently, or appropriately, the Students’ Union can place the Faculty Association on probation as per Bylaw 8100. Probationary level support is time-intensive, and typically requires 20 – 30 hours of staff time per month for 8 – 16 months. Probationary level support involves the following:

- A thorough constitutional review
- Support in developing rules and processes
- Review and redevelopment of operating procedures
- Review of financial procedures
- Meeting facilitation support
- Budgeting and financial advice
- Intervention in potentially harmful practices
- Increased supervision over financial activities
- Increased supervision over elections
- Specialized advice based on issues leading to probation
6. Student Group Granting
Faculty Associations have access to up to $2500.00 per year through the Students Group Granting Committee (or $5000.00, pending attendance of two executives at the same year’s Leadership Summit). These grants are adjudicated on a competitive basis by a panel of students and staff and are jointly funded by the Dean of Students Office and the Students’ Union.

7. Governance and Advocacy Advice
Faculty Associations have access to specialized advice from the Students’ Union Vice President Academic and Discover Governance on navigating university and Faculty governance, including an introduction in to how Faculty Associations fit into the collegial governance structure of the University of Alberta.

8. Student Group Services
Faculty Associations have access to services available to all student groups, including:
- Use of the University of Alberta name and logo
- Access to centrally booked space
- Limited coverage under University insurance
- Resources on event management, marketing, and volunteer management
- Alcohol awareness training
- Access to a BearsDen
- Information on risk management practices
- Equipment rentals

9. Election Platform
The office of the Students’ Union Chief Returning Officer provides marketing, logistical support, and an election platform that Faculty Associations can access for a small fee.

10. Student Fees
Only the Board of Governors and the Students’ Union can levy mandatory fees on students. The Students’ Union collects four types of fees on behalf of Faculty Associations, with added financial reporting and procedural requirements.
Faculty Association Task Force
Terms of Reference

Purpose
Student faculty associations (Faculty Associations) play a key role in both University and Students' Union governance, and are important centers of engagement for their members. In addition to their representative functions, most Faculty Associations also offer robust programming and services that serve to provide faculty specific opportunities for student engagement. This task force will create a place for all stakeholders to come together to frankly discuss challenges and risks related to the management and support of Faculty Associations, and draft tangible, actionable recommendations that will enhance Faculty Association organizational functionality and sustainability.

Scope
The task force will publish a report before November 30, 2012 that will seek to answer the following questions.

1. How can we help Faculty Associations flourish and enhance the service and representation they provide to the students in their faculties?
2. What issues and risks are we seeking to address?
3. What solutions can we implement to mitigate these risk factors?
4. What would the resource implications be for implementing these recommendations?
5. Who would be responsible for providing the resources for implementing these recommendations?
6. Where would the responsibility be shared, and how?
7. What conversations being had by other bodies (e.g. Alcohol Policy & Review, accreditation bodies) do we need to be mindful of in developing our recommendations?
Meetings

Meetings will be held as follows:
1. 3rd week of August
2. 2nd week of September
3. 4th week of September
4. Right after Thanksgiving
5. Right after the Fall Term/Remembrance Day Break
6. Final meeting: last week of November

Membership

In order to maximize the diversity of faculty perspectives, no members will be from the same faculty, with the exception of the member of the Students’ Union Audit Committee and the Chair.

- **Dustin Chelen** – Students’ Union Vice President Academic, who will serve as the Chair
- **Norma Rodenburg** – Dean of Students’ delegate, who will serve as the Vice Chair
- **Cory Hodgson** – Representative of the Students’ Union Audit Committee
- **Iys Bhaskar** – Representative from student faculty associations and/or campus associations
- **Jennifer Bertrand** – Representative from student faculty associations and/or campus associations
- **Robin Cowan** – Faculty liaison for student faculty associations and/or campus associations
- **Elaine Geddes** – Faculty liaison for student faculty associations and/or campus associations

Resource Personnel

- Amanda Henry - Students’ Union Student Governance Advisor
- Kelin Flanagan - Student Group Services Manager
- University Legal Counsel and Risk Management (as-needed)
- University Office of Student Judicial Affairs (as-needed)
APPENDIX IV

SNAPSHOT OF FACULTY ASSOCIATION–FACULTY RELATIONS

The Faculty Advisor plays a key role in supporting and sustaining Faculty Associations. Below are two summaries of the role and qualities of the Faculty Advisors from Business and Arts, respectively.

School of Business – Elaine Geddes and the Business Students’ Association

Faculty Associations are required to have a Faculty Advisor, an individual who is on the fulltime permanent staff in the Faculty in question. The Advisor should be a member of the senior academic or administrative staff, ideally someone at a Dean/Associate Dean/Chair/Associate Chair level. The Advisor should be an individual who has both the time and inclination to provide support, counsel, and (where necessary) discipline to the Faculty Association.

Support means encouraging appropriate student activity, whether academic or social. It means supporting students in their role as advocates for their fellow students. It means providing them with appropriate financial support within the Faculty’s budget that enables them to be successful. It means providing them with space and resources to fulfill their role as student representatives. Each Faculty has to decide within the restraints operating on them at any time, how much in the way of resources can be given to the Faculty Association. The Faculty Advisor should be the advocate within the Faculty for ensuring that the appropriate level of resources is given to the Faculty Association.

Counsel means providing advice and guidance to the Faculty Association on their activities and events. It means being available for them to discuss ideas and plans. It means raising red flags where appropriate and referring students to other resources to deal with matters outside the Advisor’s area of expertise. It means being aware of the existence of those other resources. Counsel can be routine where the Advisor checks in with the Faculty Association from time to time to see how things are going, or schedules regular meetings. Definitely, this type of routine meeting should take place when a new Executive are elected or chosen. Faculty Advisors should know the Executive and the executive should feel that the Faculty Advisor is there as a resource for them.

Counsel can also mean dealing with an emergency or a single anomalous situation. Faculty Associations need to feel that they are safe going to their Faculty
Advisor for advice and help. They need to know they will be listened to. The Advisor needs to encourage the Faculty Association to come to them in those circumstances and not attempt to ignore, downplay or evade problems. The Advisor needs to create an environment in which the faculty Association does not even think twice about where to go for advice or help.

Discipline means being familiar with the requirements of The Code of Student Behaviour, and all other policies of the University of Alberta that students are obliged to follow. It means ensuring that students are properly educated in these requirements and abide by them throughout the year in all events and activities. Discipline means being willing to call the Faculty Association out on unacceptable behaviour and stopping that behaviour before it escalates or goes beyond the ability to repair the harm. Advisors should not be afraid to require students and student associations to behave in mature and professional ways.

Faculty of Arts – Robin Cowan and the Collective Body for Arts Students

The Faculty Advisor plays a multifaceted role in supporting the work of Faculty Associations at the University. Fundamentally, the Faculty Association is a lynchpin that connects the Faculty to its students, providing a grassroots method of reaching students. Fundamentally, students listen to other students before they listen to staff. Faculty Advisors should leverage that relationship to make the Faculty a better place for students.

A Faculty Advisor should:

- provide support and facilitate initiatives of the Faculty Association
- facilitate communication between the Faculty Association and its students.
- ideally, provide funding (e.g. operational, grants) to facilitate Faculty Association initiatives
- facilitate student voice, via the Faculty Association in Faculty initiatives that have major consequences for students
- provide issues management/advice and a channel to escalate issues/concerns that arise
- ideally, provide modest space for activities
- maintain regular contact (meetings, discussions) and encourage two way communication so that the Faculty Association and the Faculty are aware of each other’s priorities

We also recommend that the “Faculty Advisor” be someone from the Faculty/Dean’s Office as these staff are generally aware of the overall state of affairs within the Faculty, faculty at large do not necessarily have this connection/knowledge.
APPENDIX V

ISSUES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

The below issues were also discussed as part of our attempt to address the risks faced by Faculty Associations.

1. Create a staff position with expertise and availability to help Faculty Associations and other student groups manage and appropriately document their finances. They would be able to provide training, troubleshooting, and if need be, external validation of financial statements of student groups.

2. Fund security enhancements to Faculty Association offices, or secure cash storage devices.

3. Encourage greater use of BearsDen as a storage place for records and documents.

4. Purchase the financial management module for BearsDen.

5. Develop more financial management resources in Student Group Services.

6. Link Faculty Association volunteers who interact with students with information about the Helping Individuals at Risk program.

7. Increase availability of drop-in hours at Discover Governance.

8. Require Faculty Associations to use the same bank, with agreements with SGS and the Dean of Students on permitted activities.

9. Investigate the possibility of granting signing authority to a University staff member.

10. Automatically register students as members of their Faculty Association in BearsDen.

11. Expand our ability to provide simultaneous, targeted, on-site support for Faculty Associations, over one-size-fits-all solutions.

12. Help Faculty Associations deal with banking relationships, to ensure that they get accounts with appropriate levels of access.