Audit Committee
Transition Manual

Information for the Members of the Audit Committee
Last updated: April 2015

Where this transition manual deviates from Standing Orders or Bylaw, the Standing Orders or Bylaw will be taken as correct. You should always read them in addition to this manual in case information in the manual has become out-of-date.

What is Audit Committee?

The Audit Committee is one of the busiest committees of the SU. It oversees the use of funds collected by the SU, such as Faculty Association Membership Fees (FAMFs), Dedicated Fee Units (DFUs), as well as overseeing how the SU spends its money. Because of the nature of the Audit Committee’s work, no SU executive is permitted to sit on the Audit Committee as a member or as a proxy.

Audit Committee’s duties are outlined in its Standing Orders and in Bylaw, and they're summarized here so they'll be more readily accessible to you:

1. **Oversee Dedicated Fee Units.**

   Audit Committee reviews financial reports and proposals submitted by DFUs, and makes a decision regarding the disbursement of their funds. DFU disbursement must be reviewed with the DFU Council representative present, and after all proper documents have been submitted by the DFU. A decision must be made within 4 weeks of the complete submission of the documents required of the DFU.

   This oversight does not involve telling the DFU how to spend their funds or managing their finances, but ensuring that the DFU follows good fiscal practices and is spending students’ money responsibly.

2. **Oversee Faculty Association Finances.**

   With the exception of the Augustana Students’ Association, the Audit Committee reviews financial reports of FAs on a trimesterly basis. Because Augustana conducts a full audit of their finances to fulfill the requirements of their status as a registered society, they need only send in a copy of their budgets and completed audit on an annual basis. If a FA collects a FAMP, they must submit a financial report and receive approval from Audit Committee before their funds may be released to them. Audit Committee must review and approve FA financial reports within 4 weeks of receiving them.

   This oversight does not involve telling the FA how to spend their funds or managing their finances, but ensuring that the FA follows good fiscal practices and is spending students’ money responsibly.
3. **Coordinate the SU’s annual audit.**

   This requires selecting an auditor and overseeing their activities. Audit Committee must also review the audited financial statements and present them to Council.

4. **Oversee budgeting process.**

   Audit Committee reviews alterations made to the SU’s budget for the purpose of verifying compliance with SU legislation. This does not mean coordinating the whole budgeting process, which is driven by several different actors within the SU including SU staff, executive, and Finance Committee.

5. **Review SU transactions.**

   Review all transactions of SU organizational units for appropriateness and compliance with the SU budget. Also reviews all expenditures made on SU credit cards, and investigates any inappropriate transactions or significant variances against the SU budget. Audit Committee may require staff or executives to appear before the committee, provided a reasonable amount of notice is given of the requirement.

6. **Monitor granting activities of the Finance Committee.**

   This oversight does not involve telling the Finance Committee how to allocate granting funds or managing the allocation, but ensuring that the Finance Committee follows good practices and is spending students’ money responsibly.

7. **Report activities to Students’ Council.**

   This report should follow each meeting, and should consist of a summary of proceedings, a list of motions, and an appendix of documents voted on. This report is usually handled by the Chair, and may be compiled with the help of Discover Governance if necessary.
Duties of Chair

Generally, your duties as the Chair involve making sure that the duties of Audit Committee are fulfilled. This can mean handling them yourself, delegating them to other Councillors or SU staff, or facilitating the entire committee in carrying them out, depending on the situation. However you get things done, everything should be discussed and approved at Audit Committee first.

In addition to making sure Audit Committee fulfills its mandate, the Chair also has some more specific duties outlined under the Standing Orders:

1. Preside over debate at meetings of the Audit Committee.
2. Submit report to Students’ Council.
3. Ensure there is an agenda for each meeting.
4. Work with Speaker and SU staff to ensure the logistical needs of Audit Committee are met.
5. Ensure all communication and decisions involving a DFU will be forwarded to the Councillor that sits on the DFU’s board.
6. Receive monthly summaries of SU organizational units and select those that should be reviewed by the committee, subject to consent of the committee.
7. Receive all minutes and agendas from Finance Committee and provide a monthly report to Audit Committee on Finance Committee’s activities.

Being a Chair can be stressful and time-consuming, so don’t be afraid to ask for support from SU administrative staff, Discover Governance, fellow Councillors, or SU Executives.
So, you’ve just become Audit Committee Chair…

If you’re starting at the beginning of the year, SU staff should have coordinated the first meeting of Audit Committee at which you were elected Chair. Now you have a set Standing Orders for the year and a meeting schedule, so it’s time to get to work on Audit Committee stuff. Your first meeting as Chair should include some kind of strategic planning and goal-setting session to keep the Committee on track during the year. Your plan/goals should reflect your mandate, the broader goals of Council, and the SU’s strategic plan.

If you’ve taken this position in the middle of the year, you should read the Standing Orders to better understand the committee and check up on the following:

1. Does Audit Committee have a strategic plan for the year and, if so, what is its progress? If it doesn’t, consider creating one at your first meeting as Chair. It will help you get into the leadership role, and give you an idea of how you should be directing the committee.
2. When was Audit Committee’s last progress check on the activities of Council and its Committees? Does one need to be done?
3. Who is your recording secretary, and have all minutes been received, approved, and updated on the committee page of the SU website? Discover Governance should be able to help you with this.
4. Has Audit Committee missed any important deadlines, and have all time-sensitive duties of Audit Committee been fulfilled up to the current date? Check the timeline below for important dates and deadlines.
5. What projects has Audit Committee been working on, and what’s the progress so far? Ask other committee members, or check past meeting minutes.

Audit Committee Timeline

Much of the Audit Committee’s activities are spread out through the year. DFU reports must be reviewed as they are received, and reviews of the SU’s finances and expenditures happen at regular intervals.

May:
- Create a strategic plan for Audit Committee’s activities and goals for the year.
- Do an overview of all duties and ensure that all members understand them.
- Attend GovCamp at the end of the month.

August:
- End of August is the deadline for Councillors to resign their position if it is to be filled in the September by-election.

September:
- Week of Welcome
- By-elections
- Review FA summer financial reports.
- Review the Augustana Students’ Association annual financial report.

January:
- At your first meeting in January, you should check in on last semester’s business to ensure that all business is on track to be finished by the end of the year.
- Review FA Fall financial reports.
February:
  • Nominations for SU General Elections are due, and Campaigning begins.

March:
  • At your first meeting in March, check in on the progress of your goals and business.
  • General Elections and Councillor/GFC elections are held.

April:
  • Ensure that all necessary documents, such as committee goals tracking documents and survey results, are prepared to be passed on to the next Audit Committee Chair.
  • Review FA Winter financial reports.