Faculty Association and Campus Association

Elections Survival Kit
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**Step 1: Hiring a FADRO**  
*Best Practices*

*What is a FADRO?* A Faculty Association Deputy Returning Officer is the person who runs the election of a Faculty Association or Campus Association. Some organizations have different names for the FADRO, but we will use the term FADRO for the purposes of this document.

*What are the responsibilities of a FADRO?*

1. Ensure that the election bylaws of the association are adhered to.
2. Keep record of the positions to be contested and the candidates for each position.
3. Be familiar with the ballot marking and counting procedures.
4. Maintain contact with the Chief Returning Officer of the Students’ Union (for elections in which the Students’ Union polling stations or electronic ballot are used).

*Who is the Ideal FADRO?*

- Someone who has run an election before, or who is knowledgeable about student elections.
- Someone who is on campus often.
- Someone who is familiar with the election process of your organization, or who is willing to learn it.
- Someone with excellent organization skills.
- An impartial person who is not related to, dating an employee of, or a student of one of the people who is running.
**How to Hire a FADRO**

The FADRO Hiring Process should begin in January

- **Yes**
  - Is the process for hiring a FADRO outlined in your organization’s constitution or policies and procedures manual?
    - **Yes**
      - Use the same process to choose a FADRO
    - **No**
      - Does your organization hire an auditor each year?
        - **Yes**
          - Create a process that works for the size of your organization and enshrine it in policy or bylaw/constitution
        - **No**
          - Use the process that you have outlined to choose a FADRO

- **Ensure that the FADRO is familiar with the election process and you’re done!**

**Other things to consider**

1. The FADRO does not vote in the election. Unless otherwise stated in your organization’s constitution, ties will be broken by a coin toss.
2. It is customary for an honourarium to be awarded to the FADRO in gratitude of their services. The dollar amount of the honourarium is decided by the organization’s executive.
3. It is good practice to have the FADRO sign a letter in which they declare all biases and prejudices that they may have in regards to the election, but this is not necessary unless stated in your organization’s constitution.
Step 2: Follow University Rules  
From Bylaw 5600-8400

Running free, fair, and sound elections begins with following the rules. Faculty Associations and Campus Associations are governed under the Students’ Union Bylaws 5600, 8100, 8200, and 8400. However, Bylaw 8100 is only one that makes mention of elections. Therefore, in terms of elections, FA's and CA's must:

• Adhere to the rules for elections outlined in SU Bylaw 8100.
• Adhere to the rules for elections outlined in their organization’s constitutions.
• Ensure that the election rules in their constitutions align with the election rules in SU Bylaw.

Who Can Vote?  
Bylaw 8100, section 13(c)

All members of a Faculty or Campus Association should be given equal opportunity to vote and each member’s vote should count for the same.

Members of FA’s and CA’s are every student in the Faculty or Campus, provided that they have not opted out of membership.

Distinct Procedures for Each Association  
Bylaw 8100, section 28 (j) & (k)

An Association’s constitution is required to outline how officers of the Association are to be selected and how elections should be conducted. The processes differ between Associations because of entrenched practices and varying demographics. This is far more efficacious than forcing different faculties and campuses to work within a single framework.

Reporting Election Results  
Bylaw 8100, section 30(b)

At least once per year, the Students’ Union must be provided with the contact information of the elected officers of each Association. Preferably, soon after the election happens so that officers of Associations can be included in activities that happen early in the term or over the summer such as COFA Retreat.

Information can be provided in a number of ways. It can be sent through e-mail to Discover Governance (sgo@su.ualberta.ca). A letter containing the information can
be dropped off at or mailed to the Students’ Union Main Office (Room 2-900 Students’ Union Building, University of Alberta, 8900 - 114 Street NW, Edmonton, AB T6G 2J7) or faxed to 780-492-4643.

**FADROs**  
*Bylaw 8100, section 32(f)*

While the procedures for hiring an Association Deputy Returning Officer may differ between organizations, an Association Deputy Returning Officer must be hired to conduct elections.

Faculty Associations and Campus Associations are allowed access to the Students’ Unions online voting system. Students will be able to vote in the Association’s election online. In order to take advantage of this, the FADRO must provide the Chief Returning Officer with the position and candidate information (cro@su.ualberta.ca).
Step 3: Have Campaign Rules
It is good practice for an organization to have rules for elections that they adhere to every year. However, since all organizations are different enough that their elections are run in substantially different ways, it’s difficult to outline specific rules that each organization should always follow. You may find that the specifications below are overly broad, but if you have any questions about your organization’s elections do not hesitate to contact Discover Governance at sgo@su.ualberta.ca.

1. Free, Fair, and Democratic
The most basic rule of any election is that it be run in a manner that is free, fair, and democratic. This is partially done by the election rules an organization follows, and the practices that the FADRO employs, but mostly, it is done by ensuring that all members of your organization (meaning all students enrolled in your faculty/campus) are able to vote, run, and start a referendum/plebiscite. This is with the exception of the FADRO. Significant barriers to any of these things must be removed. For example, polling stations should be located centrally, rather than in a location that will be more convenient to some students than to others.

2. A Semblance of Equality
Organizations should try to actively avoid giving or allowing advantages of one candidate over another. The same rules should apply to all candidates. No candidate should be able to run for more than one position. Candidates should have an equal distribution of resources, for example, there should be a limit on campaign expenses, and incumbents should forgo office access during the campaign period.

3. Consistency
It’s important that once your organization chooses rules that they will follow, those rules are presented to candidates up front and adhered to strictly. It is good practice to have rules and principles in writing. A good way to create a specific set of rules (if you don’t already have some) is to refer to the Students’ Union’s general election rules, or to look on issues that were had with elections in the past and be proactive about fixing them.

4. Advertising
Election dates and nomination deadlines should be advertised well and in advance. The FADRO should announce the candidate’s names prior to the voting days.

5. A Means of Appeal
If a FADRO makes a decision that a candidate think is unfair, there should be a higher authority to appeal to. Bylaw outlines that authority as being the Vice-President Academic of the Students’ Union. But an organization may decide to have their council handle issues. This will be discussed in further detail in the section about handling complaints.
**Step 4: Conducting Voting**

**When can voting be conducted?**
The executives of a Faculty or Campus Association are typically elected in March at the same time as the Council/GFC elections.

While elections do not have to be held in March, it is the most convenient time. Officers of an Association begin their term on May 1st of each year. The officers must be elected by that time, and should be given an adequate period beforehand to orient themselves with the position. Furthermore, if Faculty and Campus Association elections are held at the same time as SU elections, students may vote for Association executives at the same time they vote for their councilors and GFC representatives. This makes it easier for students and boosts participation.

**How can voting be conducted?**
Voting is most commonly conducted through the Students’ Union’s online voting system. In order to use the online voting system, the FADRO must provide the contested positions and the candidate names to the Chief Returning Officer of the SU in advance. Students will then be able to vote for Faculty Association executives directly after they vote for their SU councilors and General Faculty Council representatives. It is strongly advised that your organization use the online voting system, especially if you represent a large faculty.

Voting can also be conducted at a Town Hall or General Meeting that all students of a faculty are invited to. If this is the method used, your organization still requires a FADRO to conduct elections, and voting should be conducted through secret ballot. The FADRO is in charge of counting the ballots in this instance. Town Halls and General Meetings are more applicable to smaller faculties, but online voting has the potential to include more students.

Faculty Associations and Campus Associations must have procedures for electing new officials in their bylaws or constitutions. If you are ever in doubt, refer to these documents.

**By-Elections**
By-Elections are conducted every year in early October to fill the executive positions that may not have been filled in March. By-elections should also have a FADRO. Again, Associations are welcome to use the SU online voting system in tandem with the councilor and GFC by-elections, or voting can be conducted at a Town Hall or General Meeting. Don’t forget to advertise the election!
**Step 5: Handling Ballots and Complaints**

**Ballots**
If you use the SU's online election system, you don't have to worry about ballots!

If it is a Town Hall or General Meeting style election, then the FADRO will be in charge of passing out ballots (or blank slips of paper) and pens. The FADRO will also collect the folded ballots after everyone has marked them. The FADRO will count the ballots, count them again to check, then announce the winner of each race. No one should see the ballots except for the FADRO. After the election is over the FADRO is responsible for destroying the ballots. Shredding, burning, and phasing out of existence are all acceptable methods for destroying ballots.

**Complaints**
All complaints from candidates or voters should initially be handled by the FADRO. It is important that rules and principles are outlined at the beginning of the election, and that the FADRO stick to the rules at all times. The FADRO should first try to handle complaints informally, and mediate between the candidates, to come to a resolution.

There should, however, be a process for appeal if candidates think that the FADRO's decision is unfair. While Campus Associations have a judiciary branch, Faculty Associations do not. So, in SU bylaw, it is outlined that appeals can be made to the Vice-President Academic of the Students' Union.

If a Faculty Association would like to form an ad hoc committee of unbiased individuals for the purposes of the election to act as a judiciary, that is acceptable as well.
Who to Ask for Help

Discover Governance
Discover Governance Manager: Rebecca Taylor, rebecca.taylor@su.ualberta.ca.
Student Governance Officer: Braiden Redman, sgo@su.ualberta.ca
Discover Governance is available to assist Faculty and Campus Associations in all election processes and to answer questions about this document.

Chief Returning Officer
Jessica Nguyen, cro@su.ualberta.ca
As the Chief Returning Officer of the SU, he will be the one who Associations send their election information to in order to use the online voting. Additionally, he can advise FADROs on practice and procedure.

Vice-President Academic
Kathryn Orydzuk, vp.academic@su.ualberta.ca
The Vice President Academic can advise Faculty Associations on proper procedure as well as answer broader questions about advocacy. He is also the person who will handle appeals during elections.