Students’ Union Governance
Post-Secondary Learning Act

• All governing powers derive from the PSLA (formerly the Universities Act)

• Charges students associations with providing for the administration of student affairs and promotion of student welfare

• Allows Students’ Council to establish committees to handle student affairs and collect fees from students
Governance in a Nutshell

Government of Alberta

DIE Board

Students’ Council

Chief Returning Officer

Executive Committee

Council Subcommittees

Speaker

Research & Political Affairs (Advocacy)

General Manager

Units that report to the General Manager
SU Strategic Plan

• Helps define the SU’s long-term direction and priorities
• **Mission**: to serve, represent, and engage U of A undergraduate students to enrich their experience.
• **Vision**: a future where students feel accepted and welcome, thrive in a vibrant intellectual community, are empowered and confident, and contribute to society as active citizens and effective leaders.
Values

Do what’s right, not what’s easy
- We believe that acting with integrity and respect is essential to an open, collaborative, and democratic organization.

Inspire change for the world
- We strive to create a community where effective involvement shows students that they can change the world.

Act with unbridled compassion
- We help students make the most of any challenges they face by providing an inclusive and caring environment.

Always keep moving
- We adapt and innovate to meet the challenges and opportunities of our dynamic student environment.

Plan for tomorrow
- We act with future students in mind by making sustainable choices.
SU Bylaw and Policy

Bylaws

• Created by Bylaw Committee and ratified by Council
• Set out basic legal structure and operational parameters of the SU

Political Policy

• Statements of principle set out by Students’ Council that direct the Executive Committee in their advocacy efforts

Operational Policy

• Regulations that govern the day-to-day operations of the SU
**SU Bylaw and Policy**

- **Example:**
  - *Bylaw 100*: Outlines the overall structure and procedures of Students’ Council
  - *Bylaw 8100*: Governs how we oversee Faculty Associations

- **Example:**
  - Mandatory non-instructional fee policy: outlines what the Executive must advocate for when fees are being considered
  - Public transit policy: outlines how the Executive must advocate in regards to the U-Pass
Bill to Bylaw

**IDEA**
- Research
- Consultation
- Edits & Drafting

**FIRST READING**
- Council debates principles of idea

**DRAFTING**
- Bylaw/Policy Committee creates first draft

**SECOND READING**
- Council debates new bylaw/policy
- May go back to committee several times

**BYLAW/ POLICY**
- The idea has now become a bylaw or policy
- Same process used for amendments
Elections

• SU Executives, Board of Governors Representative, and Students’ Council are elected directly by students every March

• Overseen by the Chief Returning Officer, who is an employee of the Students’ Union and reports to Students’ Council
Students’ Council

• Highest governing body of the Students’ Union
• Composed of representatives from all undergraduate faculties
• Six standing committees
• Delegates power to the Executive Committee on administrative and business matters
• Keeps Executive Committee accountable
SU Committees

- Students' Council
- Council Administration Committee
- Finance Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Bylaw Committee
- Policy Committee
- Audit Committee
- Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Committee
Executive Committee

- President
- VP Academic
- VP External
- VP Operations & Finance
- VP Student Life

- Academic Relations Group
- Faculty Associations
- Student Market Research Team
- Non-Academic Relations Group
- Council of Residence Associations
President

Primary Spokesperson of the SU
- Sits on the Board of Governors
- Talks to media and attends events

Supervises SU Affairs
- Chairs Executive Committee meetings
- Oversees projects of the Vice Presidents and tracks their progress
- Directs the activities of the General Manager

Heads Major Initiatives
- Chairs the Strategic Planning Committee
- Coordinates efforts on major projects like Fall Reading Week
Vice President Academic

Internal Advocacy
- Sits on the General Faculties Council and most of its standing committees
- Coordinates advocacy activities as they relate to academic affairs

Faculty Associations
- Chairs the Council of Faculty Associations
- Responsible for ensuring FA compliance with Bylaw 8100
- Gives advocacy support on major faculty issues

Academic Relations Group
- Advisory committee to the VPA
- Provides student input on advocacy activities
- Members act as delegates of the VPA to some committees
Vice President External

External Advocacy

- Sits on CAUS and CASA
- Advocates to Federal, Provincial, and Municipal governments
- Coordinates all external advocacy efforts

Council of Alberta University Students

- Chair of CAUS for the 2014/15 academic year
- Responsible for advocating on issues that affect all post secondary students in Alberta
Vice President Operations & Finance

**Operations**
- Oversees the operation of SU businesses
- Chairs Executive Committee and directs General Manager in absence of President

**Finance**
- Oversees Executive Committee budget processes

**SMaRT**
- Student Market Research Team
- A focus group to improve SU businesses
Vice President Student Life

Non-Academic Advocacy
• Directs advocacy efforts on non-academic issues that impact students
• Works with RHA and Residence Services

Events
• Initiates and directs some large events

Student Groups
• Coordinates advocacy for student groups
• Communicates with the Dean of Students regarding student group issues
SU Operations
SU Operations

The SU has a large budget and staff structure to run its operations.

- Businesses
- Services
- Support Staff
Businesses

Most of the SU’s revenue comes from it’s businesses

- Restaurants/cafes
- Catering
- Printing
- Retail
Services

The SU provides many services to students

- Events
- First Year Orientation
- Student Group Services
- Counseling and Peer Support
- Job/Career Assistance
- Granting and Scholarships
Support Staff

The SU’s governance, advocacy, and business activities would not be possible without a large number of support staff:

- Administrative Support
- Governance Support
- Research and Political Affairs
- Marketing and Communications
- Accounting and Personnel Management
- Event Planning
Decision Making

SU Style
Making Decisions

Idea

Operational?

Research

Consultation

Draft Outline or Plan

Consultation

Draft Bill

Approved in First Reading

Bylaw Committee Drafts New Legislation

Approved in Second Reading

May have to go back for multiple readings

Approved By Executive or Senior Manager