



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

UAISA Dual Council Model

The University of Alberta International Students' Association (UAISA, referred to as ISA) is the largest student advocacy body for international students at the University of Alberta. After an unfavourable termination of its operations, the ISA revived in January 2020 and ever since then the ISA has been working tirelessly to represent the interests of international students at the UofA. The ISA works towards representing and safeguarding the unified voice of all international students at the UofA by raising their concerns and issues to various external parties within and outside of the university. The student body at the University of Alberta comprises more than 7000 international students and safeguarding the interests and concerns of this major section of the student body is exceedingly crucial. The ISA acknowledges this necessity and pulls out all the stops to advocate for the international students community at the UofA. However, the international students community of 7000+ students is not limited to just undergraduate students at the UofA. Graduate students also contribute extensively to this vibrant community and thus their presence in the ISA is extremely significant. Thus, every student, both graduate and undergraduate, paying the international student differential fee at the UofA is a part of the ISA.

The ISA has been aiming to become a Student Representative Association (SRA), for about seven years. "ISA for SRA" is a goal that every President of the ISA has aimed at and worked hard for. However, the status of an SRA only delegates the undergraduate section of the ISA, the rights to represent international students on behalf of the Students' Council. Unfortunately, the blend of undergraduate and graduate international students arises numerous complications towards attaining the SRA status for ISA. The ISA values and cherishes the presence of graduate international students in the association and firmly believes that there is an equally strong need to advocate for them. Considering the viability of the graduate international students population in the association, the ISA has decided to split our existing Council into two Councils, one for undergraduate international students and one for graduate international students. Consequently, the ISA will work towards attaining the SRA status for its undergraduate international students' council and will register its graduate international students' council with the GSA, to advocate for both these sections efficiently.

For a clear understanding of the present Council of the ISA, i.e., the International Students' Council (ISC) and how the ISA plans to split it, this Dual Council Model has been divided into two segments: one explaining our present Council's structure and the other explaining the dual model.



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EXISTING COUNCIL OF THE ISA: THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' COUNCIL (ISC)

The ISA strongly favours student involvement and, in an effort to strengthen the membership engagement, the ISA has an open Council known as the International Students' Council (ISC). The International Students' Council (ISC) is the top decision-making body of the ISA, comprising 60 international students, both undergraduate and graduate as its councillors. However, the Council extends to more than just its 60 councillors as any international student is empowered to attend these Council meetings. This right to attend the Council meetings of the ISA provides an essential opportunity to every international student to raise their voice to apprise their desires to the university.

The ISC also comprises of delegates from six major faculties i.e., Engineering(ESS), Arts(OASIS), Science(ISSS), Business(BSA), Pharmacy(APSA), and Nursing(NUA), delegates from two UofA campuses i.e., Augustana Campus(ASA) and Campus Saint-Jean (AUFJSJ), delegates from four regional groups i.e., CSSA, INDSA,KGK and NESA along with an official representative from the Students' Union (SU) and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA). These delegates further strengthen student involvement by bringing international students' concerns from their respective associations of varied backgrounds at the UofA. The ISC also comprises directly appointed councillors who hold a Director/Coordinator position in the ISA along with the ten ISA Board members. Thus, the ISC with its composition is a council to raise international students' issues in our University. Consequently, this Council in all right spirits gives ISA the legitimacy to truly demonstrate the voice of all international students.



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NEW DUAL COUNCIL MODEL

Membership categories:

- i. General members: all international students
- ii. Undergraduates members: all undergraduate international students
- iii. Graduate members: all graduate international students
- iv. Graduate councillors: all graduate international students elected to sit in graduate council
- v. Undergraduate councillors: all undergraduate international students elected to sit on the undergraduate council.
- vi. Undergraduate board members: all undergraduate international students elected to sit on the board, elected by the undergraduate council.
- vii. Graduate board members: all graduate international students elected to sit on the board, elected by the graduate council.

Structure:

1. The ISA shall have a Board, an Undergraduate Council, and a Graduate Council.
2. Respective Members of the Board shall represent the Council they have been elected to represent. For instance, the Vice President External can represent only the Undergraduate Council and the Graduate Chancellor can represent only graduate international students. [bylaw 8100, 5.4.d, thus the Undergraduate Council can elect undergraduate Board members and delegate them the right to represent the Council as per the Bylaw. However, the Board does not represent students as only the council can represent students. The Council shall also provide the Board with an authority to meet with external parties on behalf of the Council but Council will still be the official representative of international students.]
3. The SU will be delegating its representative authority to the Undergraduate Council of the ISA.
4. The Graduate Council of the ISA will be registered with GSA, with a Graduate Chancellor and Vice President Academic as its executives.
5. The board as a whole will represent ISA as one organization, and the President of the ISA will lead the Board.
6. The Board is a neutral executive body with no voting and will consist of ten (10) members.
 - a. Board composition:
 - i. President (undergraduate)
 - ii. Undergraduate Chancellor
 - iii. Graduate Chancellor
 - iv. Vice President Academic (graduate)



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- v. Vice President Communications (undergraduate)
- vi. Vice President External (undergraduate)
- vii. Vice President Finance (undergraduate)
- viii. Vice President Graduate Affairs (graduate)
- ix. Vice President Internal (undergraduate)
- x. Vice President Student life (undergraduate)

7. Impeachment:

Any council can initiate the impeachment of any board member but the final verdict will lie with the council that elected for that particular board position.

8. Appointment:

The selection committee will consist of an equal amount of members from both the councils but will only suggest a candidate for the respective positions to the respective councils, at the end only the council that elects for that position can vote and make the appointment giving the representative right of the council to the elected board member [undergraduate council will provide recommendations in selecting graduate board candidates but only graduate council will make the final decision, thus decisions will not be influenced by undergraduate council and it will act as a recommendation body only][if the board is elected by students directly then it will not essentially be neutral towards both the councils, as only one section of the student population will be electing the board. This model ensures that board members can have their position only if they are neutral towards both the councils]

9. Confliction between the Councils:

- a. None of the councils can influence each other's decision since they operate independently, and the board does not have a vote on Council decisions. The Board members can only advocate on matters proposed by the Councils and the respective board members can represent their respective Council only in all engagements.
- b. If both the Councils propose completely different matters for the Board to advocate on, the board shall not advocate on any of the matters and rather the Chancellors from the respective Councils shall advocate on the respective matters proposed by their Council. For instance, the undergraduate council proposes to advocate for a no-credit policy while the graduate council advocates for a credit policy, then the undergraduate Chancellor shall advocate to the SU about the opinion of undergraduate international students while the graduate Chancellor shall advocate to the GSA about the opinion of graduate international students.



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10. ISA's Registration:

- i. The Graduate Council will be bound to the political policies of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and will be registered with the GSA.
- ii. The Undergraduate Council will be bound to the political policies of the SU on, however in absence of an SU policy on a particular issue, the ISA's undergrad Council may determine its own political policies for undergraduate students.
- iii. The ISA as a whole shall only be bound to the political policies for its Councils and the university.

Note: The Board does not have any vote since that may cause a conflict between the interests of graduate and undergraduate international students' interests.

Roles of the Board:

1. Manage ISA's day to day operations
2. Execute tasks and advocate on the matters assigned by the Councils
3. Conduct student engagement activities - events and welcome activities
4. Represent both Councils in all official meetings

Roles of the Councils:

1. Discuss the political standings of the ISA
2. Make decisions on student issues
3. Hold the board accountable for its actions

For ISA it is extremely important to be the voice of the entire international students' community, thus we have prepared this strong model to better independently advocate for both graduate and undergraduate international students. The sole ambition of the ISA is to stand strong as an association with the status of an SRA and with its graduate and undergraduate members working as a unified body.