



BOA Accountability Agenda:

SFUO pursues new Accountability Agenda: Expanded oversight, tighter financial decision-making and revised internal operations among other changes

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OTTAWA—To ensure accountability and open democracy for undergraduates, the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa (SFUO) executive is currently reviewing and overhauling voting practices and financial operations, including a series of measures to tighten up the federation's financial controls.

Mindful of the need to reduce barriers to voting, the SFUO intends to bring in online voting for the by-elections—for vice-president, equity, and vice-president, internal, of the SFUO executive group and the Board of Administration (BOA) position for the faculty of Education—this fall.

These proposals were approved by SFUO's Board of Administration (BOA) on Sunday, Oct. 14.

The BOA is committed to ensuring the stability and integrity of the SFUO to strengthen and secure its role at the University. The student-run body has for nearly 40 years provided an independent, activist voice dedicated to enriching the educational experience. That has included managing health, transit, clubs and other amenities while fighting for justice, equality, freedom from fear, student assistance and other needs.

The SFUO BOA is pursuing a new Accountability Agenda to ensure that in future the internal operations of the student union will be conducted with openness, full accountability to the student body and robust financial integrity. The agenda will lead to expanded oversight, tighter financial decision-making and revised internal operations based on best practices of other institutions, strict conflict-of-interest guidelines and enforcement of the highest fiduciary standards.

The new Accountability Agenda builds on steps already taken to enhance governance and financial management. Notably, PricewaterhouseCoopers was hired to undertake an independent forensic audit of recent controversial financial transactions as well as new rules for university clubs that provide for stronger oversight by the executive and BOA.





Accountability Agenda

Among the new Accountability Agenda measures approved by the Board:

- The BOA's finance committee will develop a task force of executive and BOA members to overhaul financial operations in keeping with the Accountability Agenda.
- The task force will engage accounting experts to set up a modern, rigorous system of controls for SFUO financial operations with upgraded audit functions.
- The task force will engage with other student organizations at post-secondary institutions that have faced similar issues of accountability and financial management to assess lessons they have learned and the best practices they have adopted.
- Financial controls training: All executive officers will be required to take basic financial controls training at the beginning of their mandate to enhance self-directed scrutiny of operations. A professional audit firm would conduct this training.
- To avoid conflict of interest issues, no employees of the SFUO would be allowed to sit on the BOA.
- Chairperson selection: At meetings of the BOA, an external, independent and qualified chairperson would have to be appointed and under no circumstances would a member of the SFUO executive, staff or a board member be eligible to be chairperson.

Election Reforms

- After consultation with the SFUO's membership, an online voting system will be implemented for the upcoming by-elections and all future SFUO elections. This is intended to ensure greater participation from the SFUO membership and an impartial and well-organized voting system.
- Elimination of faculty director candidate slates in SFUO votes: This proposal would eliminate the slating system in SFUO elections. It would help ensure that individual participation in the SFUO comes from all corners of the campus without any connection to executive members.





- The BOA will no longer be able to overturn member votes at a General Assembly. After receiving input from members, the SFUO is implementing internal and legal changes to make the General Assembly the highest decision-making power for the organization. This mechanism change will ensure that SFUO members have greater input in the direction of the organization and BOA and Executive decisions are accountable to the members.

Audits

The SFUO will continue its full cooperation with PricewaterhouseCoopers' audit of its financial operations and will address any concerns and recommendations brought in by the current audit of past financial records. Any additionally recommended audits will be conducted

Renewing Relations with the University

These measures to improve student democracy and overhaul the SFUO's financial accountability and practices are part of the student union's efforts to develop a renewed relationship with the University of Ottawa. Reaching an agreement will guarantee SFUO's ability to continue to provide the wide range of services and assistance to students that are tradition and long-valued in University of Ottawa campus life. This will be in the best interests of everyone involved.

The SFUO Executive will provide regular progress reports on the implementation of the new Accountability Agenda. The executive will also hold a series of consultations with students, staff, stakeholders and service partners to seek feedback and to canvas for ideas that could make Accountability Agenda even stronger.

