



Acadia Students' Union
Students' Representative Council
Report to Council

Subject: Creation of a Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC)	Author: Samantha Nixon / Oliver Jacob
Report Number: 2018-01-16-02	Title: VP Academic and External / Chairperson
	Date: Tuesday, January 16 th , 2018

Recommendations:

That Council strike a Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC) with the terms of reference attached as Schedule A of this resolution.

Further That this resolution come into full force and effect immediately upon its passing thereof.

Background

During the 2016/2017 term of Council, the Executive position of Vice President Academic and External was retained following a governance structure review conducted by the Governance Committee at the time. The Governance Committee did identify that there may be challenges with maintaining the joint position insofar as the academic and external pieces are distinct and occupy large time commitments by themselves. A number of solutions were suggested including the creation of a Policy Research Coordinator position under the VP Academic and External and the creation of a dedicated committee on external policy to mirror the Academic Affairs Committee, which exists to coordinate the on-campus academic concerns that are relevant to the Acadia University Senate.

When we look at the landscape of other institutions of similar size and demographics to Acadia University, we can see that there seem to be two different paths which are followed; either the academic and external portfolios are exercised as two separate Vice Presidents or the joint position is served by two distinct committees.

- 1) In the first case, the model creates two separate Vice Presidents: one (1) Vice President Academic and one (1) Vice President External and they each have a distinct committee that reports on issues in respect to their portfolio. Institutions who utilize this model include the St FX Students' Union (STFXSU), Mount Allison Students' Union (MASU), and University of New Brunswick Students' Union (UNBSU).

- 2) In the second case, the Vice President Academic and External (or equivalent) is served by a committee on each of the two key elements of the job description; academic (internal to the university) and external (external advocacy and lobbying). Institutions who utilize this model include the Saint Mary's University Students' Association (SMUSA), the University of New Brunswick Students' Representative Council (UNB-SRC) and Bishop's University Students' Representative Council (BUSRC).

Discussion:

Given the background provided above, it seems appropriate to lessen the burden on the office of VP Academic and External by creating an advisory committee dedicated to external policy and research. This committee would mirror the Academic Affairs Committee in role but would include Members of Council and regular Union members to provide a broader perspective on issues pertaining to the external advocacy needs of our students.

Options

- a. Strike Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC) with the draft Terms of Reference as presented
- b. Change the draft Terms of Reference
- c. Reject the Creation of a Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC)

Policy Considerations:

None

Financial Considerations:

None

Meeting Dates:

None


Consultation:

None

Documents:

Schedule A – Draft Terms of Reference

**Report and Process Certified By
Chairperson:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, enclosed in a black rectangular box. The signature is cursive and appears to be the name 'A. J. H.' or similar, written in a fluid, connected style.

Schedule A
Draft Terms of Reference

(1) Mandate

- (a) The Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC) will serve as a bridge between the student body of Acadia University and the external advocacy organizations that the Acadia Students' Union belongs to, currently Students Nova Scotia (SNS) and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). It will also serve to solidify the positions of the Acadia Students' Union on numerous issues of importance to students through the creation of position papers.

(2) Goals

- (a) Act as an advisory body to Council and the VP Academic and External on matters such as;
 - i. Policy and Strategy
 - ii. On-campus Advocacy
 - iii. External Advocacy
- (b) Develop position papers that reflect the external advocacy needs and desires of Acadia students for ratification by Council;
- (c) Develop a lobbying and communication strategy for the dissemination of information to government and to the Acadia community;
- (d) Engage with key people and groups on campus and in the community with external advocacy organizations (ASU-ratified clubs/societies, Internal Organizations, the Academic Affairs Committee, community groups, etc.)

(3) Composition

- (a) The Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC) shall be comprised of the following voting members;
 - I. VP Academic and External (as Chair);
 - II. One (1) additional Executive Member of Council, as appointed by Council (as Vice-Chair);
 - III. Academic Affairs Associate Director(s)
 - IV. Two (2) additional Non-Executive Members of Council, as appointed by Council;

- V. Up to four (4) Regular Union Members, selected by Council as outlined in the *Procedural Policy* as amended.
- (b) The Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC) shall include the following individuals as non-voting members;
 - I. Any other person as the committee may deem helpful in the exercise of its duties
- (c) Quorum for meetings of the Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC) shall be at least 50% of voting members.

(4) Frequency of Meetings

- (a) The Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC) shall meet at least monthly, or as needed.

(5) Term of Appointment

- (a) All members of the Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC) shall be appointed to a term coinciding with the current term of Council, ending on April 31st, 2018.

(6) Mandatory Review

- (a) The Chairperson shall review the Policy and Research Advisory Committee (PRAC) and make a recommendation to Council regarding its continuance by the last meeting of the current term of Council.