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| . | MemoFrom the office of the…Vice-President (Administration) |
| To: | SRA Members and Committee Chairs |
| From: | Graeme Noble, Vice-President (Administration)Michelle Brown, Associate Vice-President: Internal Governance |
| Subject: | Policy Organization Overhaul |
| Date: | October 18, 2020 |

### Introduction

Dear Members of the Assembly,

As one might expect, the operations of the McMaster Students Union (MSU) continue to change: to ebb and flow; to adapt and to grow. This proposed organizational update comes as a response to the need for increased governmental clarity within the MSU. We, as a representative body, have a duty to community our procedures, expectations, and purpose in a transparent way for all students to review and criticize. Without this level of access, we make ourselves vulnerable to irresponsible actions and disregard for self-accountability.

We hope that by advancing the way our policies are documented through more viable classifications, we can improve MSU-wide communication of our duties to ourselves and the student body. The following memo outlines a brief summary of all proposed changes, along with category definitions, rationales, and implications within this new system.

To clarify the purpose of this document, we only hope that we may seek approval for the system before individual written amendments are proposed for all policies listed.

### Background

What is a policy? Well, under the MSU Constitution, there are very few rules that answer this question. Below is a list of all reference to policies within the MSU, as outlined in the Constitution:

#### Bylaws

**I – Name and Definition**

The following is the Constitution of the McMaster Students Union/Syndicat des Étudiants de McMaster, the organization representing the undergraduate students of McMaster University. In practice, the organization shall be known as the McMaster Students Union or the MSU. In all instances, this document forms a binding terms of reference for all its operations, activities, and policies, except where this document may be superceded by the letters patent and such **bylaws** passed by the McMaster Students Union Incorporated/Syndicat des Étudiants de McMaster Incorporé under the terms of the Corporations Act of Ontario.

**IV – Administrative Structure**

B. Student Representative Assembly (SRA)

1. Membership

b) The number of academic division representatives on the SRA shall be limited to the following conditions:

i) Each academic division on the SRA shall automatically have one (1) representative, and additional representatives shall be allocated among the academic divisions as set out in a bylaw approved by the SRA.

c) All academic divisions on the SRA, as well as the procedures for adding or removing academic divisions on the SRA, shall be defined in a **bylaw** approved by the SRA.

d) Any vacancy occurring in the SRA shall be filled from the relevant division through a by-election to be initiated within fifteen (15) school days of the seat being declared vacant, pursuant to a by-election schedule set out in a **bylaw** approved by the SRA.

C. Officers

5. The Speaker Shall:

a) Uphold and interpret the Constitution and **bylaws** [but not other policies, mind you].

**VI – Bylaws**

A. Bylaws may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the entire SRA, including vacancies, pending ten (10) days prior written notice of the specific bylaw change to the SRA

B. All interpretations of the Constitution made must be in accordance with the bylaws in force at the time the interpretation is made.

**VIII – Recall**

A. Grounds for recall shall be:

1. Failure to make reasonable attempts to carry out the duties of office or obey the policies of the MSU as outlined in the Constitution, bylaws, or other official documents of the MSU.

**IX - Amendments**

E. Authority. If any amendment necessitates changes in the Constitution of any other organization affiliated with the MSU, such changes shall become automatic on its passing. Any such change in the Constitution will require a review of the bylaws to determine whether or not revisions are necessary. Such revisions will take place within sixty (60) days.

#### Policies

**IV – Administrative Structure**

B. Student Representative Assembly (SRA)

2. The SRA shall:

a) Be the **policy** making body of the MSU.

E. Duties of the Executive Board of the SRA

b) To act as an advisory board to the SRA on the effects of SRA **policy** decisions on the day-to-day operations of the MSU.

f) In the case of an emergency situation where the SRA is unable to meet, the Executive Board may make an interim decision, although any **policy** decisions shall be subject to ratification at the next SRA meeting.

**VII - Referenda**

A. A referendum of the general membership of the MSU may be called on a question of **policy** or any other matter.

#### Summary

Overall, no definitions or distinctions currently exist between any MSU policies. Such ambiguity results in all sorts of complications for those who hope to interpret, create, amend, or rescind policy documents at every level of the organization. While the Bylaw that will outline policy distinctions is still in the works, this memo outlines the general ideas that will be included within it, including:

* Rough definitions of each group;
* All policies that will belong within each grouping; and
* A rationale for the changes made.

### Old & New Systems

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| Current  | Proposed | Explanation for Change  |
| Bylaws 1-10 | Bylaws 1-11 | Bylaws have been moved around in accordance with new definitions and a streamlined organizational hierarchy. |
| Bylaws 11–11/F and 15 | Operating Policies (Awards) |  Bylaws are general policies that govern the backbone of the organization. We propose the creation of a section of operating policies dedicated to awards. |
| Operating Policies (Services) | Operating Policies (Services) | N/A |
| Operating Policies (Business Practices) | Operating Policies (Business Practices) |
| Operating Policies (Governance & Advocacy) | Operating Policies (Advocacy & Outreach) | Advocacy focusses on external outreach and lobbying, whereas outreach implies an overall communication strategy with all parties, including the student body. Governance, however (as shown by the AVP: Internal Governance reporting directly to the VP [Administration]), fits better within the administrative umbrella. Hence, communications and outreach policies have been transferred to Advocacy & Outreach, with electoral procedures placed under Governance & Administration. |
| Operating Policies (Administration) | Operating Policies (Governance & Administration) |
| Operating Policies (Employment) | Employment Policies (Part-Time) +Employment Policies (General) | Some of our full-time employment documents sit within Maddison’s jurisdiction under “Employment Policies” while some fit under the AVP IG’s jurisdiction as Operating Policies. The proposed plan is to move them all to Maddison as Employment Policies. |
| Workplace Documents |
| Business Practices | N/A | These documents never had any precedence or jurisdiction. Both documents are being converted to Operating Policies. |

### Category Proposals

#### Bylaws

##### Definition

Bylaws are policy documents:

* That can only be created, amended, or created by the SRA;
	+ Exceptions remain for Executive Board (EB) in emergency situations.
* Whose purpose directly relates to operations of/direct reports to the SRA; and
* Whose contents dictate MSU membership/onus within an external organization.

##### Grouping

* Bylaw 1 - Definitions
* Bylaw 2 - MSU Membership
* Bylaw 3 - Student Representative Assembly
	+ Bylaw 3/A - Assembly Procedures
	+ Bylaw 3/B - Standing Committees of the SRA
* Bylaw 4 - Officers
	+ Bylaw 4/A - Executive Remuneration
* Bylaw 5 - Executive Board
* Bylaw 6 - General Assembly
	+ Appendix A - General Assembly Special Procedures
* Bylaw 7 - Elections
	+ Bylaw 7/A - Electoral Procedure
* Bylaw 8 - Financial Affairs
	+ Appendix A - Fee Schedule
* Bylaw 9 - External Representation
	+ Bylaw 9/A Delegate Selection
* Bylaw 10 - McMaster University Student Centre (MUSC)
* Bylaw 11 - First-Year Council

##### Rationale

These documents were chosen as Bylaws are the only documents outlined within the Constitution, and thus have the strictest rules for how one might alter them. Thus, they only include vital information on governmental proceedings and responsibilities as they relate to the SRA and MSU Inc.

#### Operating Policies

##### Definition

Operating Policies[[1]](#footnote-2) includes documents:

* That can only be created, amended, or created by the SRA;
	+ Exceptions remain for EB in emergency situations.
* Whose purpose only indirectly relates to operations of/reports to the SRA.

#### Operating Policies (Services)

##### Definition

Operating Policies (Services) includes documents whose contents outline the operations of net-neutral or cost-centric services offered within the MSU.

##### Grouping

* Operating Policy - Services
	+ Operating Policy - Service Creation & Review
* Operating Policy - Child Care Centre
	+ Operating Policy - Child Care Centre Advisory Committee
* Operating Policy - Clubs Status
	+ Operating Policy - Clubs Advisory Council
	+ Operating Policy - Clubs Financial Procedures
	+ Operating Policy - Clubs Operations
* Operating Policy - Compass Information Centre
* Operating Policy - Emergency First Response Team (EFRT)
	+ Operating Policy - EFRT Advisory Committee
* Operating Policy - MSU Campus Events
* Operating Policy - MSU Diversity Services
* Operating Policy - MSU Food Collective Centre (FCC)
* Operating Policy - MSU Horizons
* Operating Policy - MSU Macademics
	+ Operating Policy - Teaching Awards Parameters
* Operating Policy - MSU Maccess
* Operating Policy - MSU Maroons
* Operating Policy - MSU Pride Community Centre (PCC)
* Operating Policy - MSU Spark
* Operating Policy - MSU Student Health Education Centre (SHEC)
* Operating Policy - MSU Student Walk-Home Attendant Team (SWHAT)
* Operating Policy - MSU Women & Gender Equity Network (WGEN)
* Operating Policy - The Silhouette
	+ Operating Policy - The Silhouette Board of Publication

##### Rationale

Operating Policies (Services) were essentially kept the same.

#### Operating Policies (Governance & Administration)

##### Definition

Operating Policies (Governance & Administration) includes documents whose contents outline governmental procedures, administrative guidelines, and electoral protocols outside of primary SRA operations.

##### Grouping

* Operating Policy - Bereavement
* Operating Policy - Central Support Services
* Operating Policy - Document Management
* Operating Policy - Elections Department
	+ Operating Policy - Elections Committee
* Operating Policy - Information Systems Committee
* Operating Policy - Internal Document Distribution
* Operating Policy - Key Access
* Operating Policy - Network Access Protocol
* Operating Policy - Room Bookings
* Operating Policy - Space Allocation & Audit Committee
* Operating Policy - Sustainability
* Operating Policy - Vice-Presidential & Speaker Elections

##### Rationale

The categories of governance and administration possess significant overlap and cannot/should not be separated. Hence why they’ve been combined within this new policy framework.

#### Operating Policies (Advocacy & Outreach)

##### Definition

Operating Policies (Advocacy & Outreach) includes documents whose contents detail the advocacy initiatives, communication strategies, and promotional efforts used to the bridge any gaps between the MSU and the student body, the University, and external political bodies.

##### Grouping

* Operating Policy - Communications Strategy
	+ Operating Policy - Role of the MSU During Labour Disputes
	+ Operating Policy - Role of the MSU in Federal, Provincial, & Municipal Elections
* Operating Policy - Education & Advocacy Department
* Operating Policy - Interfaith Council
* Operating Policy - Marketing & Communications Department
* Operating Policy - MSU Governance & You Committee
* Operating Policy - MSU Sustainability Education Committee
* Operating Policy - Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)
* Operating Policy - President's Council
* Operating Policy - Promotions & Advertising
* Operating Policy - Sponsorships & Donations
* Operating Policy - SRA Communication & Outreach

##### Rationale

This category encompasses all outward-facing initiatives that function within the MSU. While it can be argued that OUSA belongs as a Bylaw, all other policies cozily fit within this classification.

#### Operating Policies (Business Operations)

##### Definition

Operating Policies (Business Operations) includes documents whose contents outline the business practices, lease agreements, and operations of revenue-generating services within the MSU.

##### Grouping

* Operating Policy - Ancillary Operations
* Operating Policy - Business-Related Expenses
* Operating Policy - Food & Beverage Services
	+ Operating Policy - Central Liquor Facilities
	+ Operating Policy - TwelvEighty
		- Operating Policy - Guest Policy
		- Operating Policy - Twelve Eighty All-Ages Policy
	+ Operating Policy - Union Market
* Operating Policy - Retail Services
	+ Operating Policy - Underground Media + Design

##### Rationale

Operating Policies (Business Operations) were essentially kept the same.

#### Operating Policies (Awards)

##### Definition

Operating Policies (Business Operations) includes documents whose contents outline the procedures and members of committees who dictate the allocation of awards offered by the MSU.

##### Grouping

* Operating Policy - Valedictorian Selection
* Operating Policy - Welcome Week Awards
* Operating Policy - Awards & Distinctions
	+ Operating Policy - Honour M Award
	+ Operating Policy - J. Lynn Watson Award for Community Service
	+ Operating Policy - MSU Merit Scholarship
	+ Operating Policy - MSU Spirit Award
	+ Operating Policy - MSU Students of Distinction
	+ Operating Policy - Rudy Heinzl Award of Excellence

##### Rationale

8/9 of these documents were filed under Bylaws for no apparent reason. As they don’t fit within the new definition of Bylaws, they have thus been relocated to their own section under Operating Policies.

#### Employment Policies (General)

##### Definition

Employment Policies (General) includes documents:

* That can be created, amended, or created by the SRA, EB, and the Board of Directors (BoD);
* Whose purpose directly relates to employment standards, wages, and directives for all employees within the MSU.

##### Grouping

* Employment Policy - Accessible Customer Service Plan (AODA Policy)
* Employment Policy - Anti-Violence, Harassment, and Sexual Assault Prevention Policy (Prevention & Response Plan)
	+ Employment Policy - Anti-Discrimination & Sexual Harassment
* Employment Policy - Employee Conflict of Interest
* Employment Policy - Occupational Health and Safety Policy

##### Rationale

These documents largely pertain to legislative requirements that are mandated at the municipal, provincial, or federal level. As such, oversight for these documents has been distributed amongst all political bodies within the MSU, since they often require a significant amount of oversight and research to amend or update. Also, because they are often tied to legally binding documentation, they cannot be easily skewed in anyone’s favour.

#### Employment Policies (Full-Time)

##### Definition

Employment Policies (Full-Time) includes documents:

* That can be created, amended, or created by the BoD and Full-Time Employment Issues Committee; and
* Whose purpose directly relates to employment standards, wages, and directives for full-time employees within the MSU.

##### Grouping

* Employment Policy - Full-Time Staff

##### Rationale

This category currently only fits one policy that’s governed exclusively by a committee of full-time staff to working procedures, expectations, and benefits. The bodies in charge of this document have been kept the same, as the policy is often limited in similar ways to the General Employment Policies but pertains only to full-time non-student staff. Of course, if the SRA has issues with this policy, they may always bring those concerns to the BoD for consideration and propose alterations.

#### Employment Policies (Part-Time)

##### Definition

Employment Policies (Full-Time) includes documents:

* That can be created, amended, or created by SRA and EB; and
* Whose purpose directly relates to employment standards, wages, and directives for part-time employees within the MSU.

##### Grouping

* Employment Policy - Disciplinary Procedures
* Employment Policy - Part-Time Staff
* Employment Policy - Employment Wages

##### Rationale

These documents currently fall under the Operating Policies category but are rarely ever engaged with by SRA members except within the context of EB. Since EB directly handles reports from part-time staff on a weekly basis (during the academic year, at least), we propose that these policies fall under their jurisdiction, in addition to the SRA, under a regular basis.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us via email prior to the meeting.

Kind regards,

Graeme Noble

Vice-President (Administration) & Chief Administrative Officer

vpadmin@msu.mcmaster.ca

Michelle Brown

Associate Vice-President: Internal Governance

avpinternal@msu.mcmaster.ca

1. Operating Policies all require the same procedures for creation, amendment, and rescission. Therefore, the only real difference between them is for ease of access and categorization. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)