



POLICY GUIDE

Created: July 7, 2020

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 What is Policy?
 - 1.2 Why do we need Policy?
 - 1.3 Alternative Approaches
2. Definitions
3. Authorities and Roles
 - 3.1 Council
 - 3.2 Governance Committee
 - 3.3 General Manager
4. Policy Process
 - 4.1 Operating
 - 4.2 Issues
 - 4.2.1 Advocacy Papers
 - 4.2.2 Resolutions
5. Policy Development
 - 5.1 Identification
 - 5.2 Research and Analysis
 - 5.3 Options/Solutions
 - 5.3.1 Areas of Potential Impact
 - 5.4 Logical Progression
 - 5.5 Consultation and Inclusivity
 - 5.6 Proposal Package Checklist
6. Summary Statement

Appendices

- A – Operating Process chart
- B – Issues Process chart
- C – Policy Development and Review Policy
- D – Policy Form

1. INTRODUCTION

This guide has been developed to help support any ASU Member who would like to see a policy implemented in the ASU. The policy process can be overwhelming at first. Our, “ASU Policy Guide” explains the basics: what kind of policies are in the ASU, how policies are developed, and who you will need to get to know and work with. Read this if you or your student group wants to change or make a policy, or if you want to work/volunteer in an area of the ASU overseeing policy development and approval.

1.1 What is Policy?

Policies are mechanisms that evolve continually. Policy can be described as written rules or guidelines that represent the principles and beliefs of an organization. It is important that a policy is prescriptive without being overly restrictive as it can't account for every possible variation of behavior or circumstance.

Some characteristics of good policy are:

- Relevant – the policy is attributable to the ASU's mission and values.
- Realistic – the policy makes sense, has a logical sequence, and can be practically implemented.
- Adaptable – the policy can be applied, and is responsive to, a variety of circumstances and accommodate numerous needs.
- Enforceable – the policy is statutory and there are associated accountability mechanisms.
- Inclusive – the policy scope includes all relevant parties and stakeholders.

1.2 Why do we need Policy?

Policy provides a directional basis for the ASU, which leads to new, refined and redefined programs and procedures to help the ASU function better as an organization to serve the students of Acadia University. The role of policy is useful in facilitating continuity over annual executive transitions and seeks to formalize aspects of the ASU that will benefit from written rules.

1.3 Alternative approaches

Although this guide is specific to regulatory policy development, not every principle or situation may require a regulatory approach. Alternatives include:

Non-Regulatory Approaches - do not use legal instruments or direct economic incentives to accomplish objectives.

This approach generally avoids new interventions into issues where:

- Existing regulations provide sufficient tools to mitigate most negative outcomes.
- There is no significant risk or harm to people posed by the issue.
- Disputes can be resolved directly between the parties involved in the issue through an agreement, dispute resolution, mediation, or the courts.
- The costs of intervention outweigh the benefits to the membership's interest.

Information and education approaches are used to present facts and arguments to affect behaviour. This form of intervention, as an alternative or complement to regulation, is based on persuasive communication. These approaches include best practices, guidelines, voluntary standards, manuals, advertising, and social media campaigns.

Economic Approaches - change the incentives that drive how people, departments, and services behave without directly regulating what they should or should not do. Behavioral Insights projects can involve conducting field and literature-based research to identify potential nudge interventions that shift behaviour and assessing outcomes through statistical data analysis.

Economic approaches are applicable when dealing with ASU interaction with members or staff and there is a need to change the behaviour or choices of a defined subpopulation.

Both of the above alternative approaches can often prove to be applied more quickly, effectively, and efficiently in the right circumstances.

2. DEFINITIONS

Constitution: A constitution is a system, often codified in a written document, which establishes the rules and principles by which an organization is governed as well as how laws should be put into operations. The Acadia Student Union Act 1967 is a vital part of the Constitution. An organization's articles of incorporation generally do not go into great detail about a corporation's operations, which are spelled out in more detail in an organization's bylaws (both the Act of Incorporation and Bylaws comprise the Constitution of the ASU).

The constitution should be viewed as a fundamental bedrock of policies in which all subsequent policies, regulations, resolutions that are developed and adopted by the ASU should be able to rely on. The constitution should be self-sufficient as a free-standing document that is self-explanatory to the point that there is minimal to no reliance on a single person's institutional memory of how the document operates. Finally, a constitution should have safeguards and strongholds that will prevail against executive transitioning.

Bylaws: A bylaw is a rule governing the internal management of an organization, which cannot countermand governmental law. Bylaws cover topics such as how Council and Executive Members are elected, how meetings are conducted, as well as a description of executive portfolios. Bylaws contain the most fundamental principles and rules regarding the nature of the organization. At the ASU, the terms 'Constitution' and 'bylaws' are used interchangeably.

Regulation: A regulation is a rule created by Council that interprets the bylaws setting out the organization's purpose and powers. A regulation is a form of secondary legislation, which is used to implement a primary piece of legislation (also known as a bylaw). Regulations take into consideration particular circumstances or factors emerging during the gradual implementation of, or during the period of, a bylaw. At the ASU, regulations are pursuant to constitution bylaws and exemplified by policies.

Resolution: A resolution is a formal decision of ASU Council or a committee whose adoption is through the mechanism of a written motion. The substance of the resolution can be anything that is normally posed as a motion. A resolution is often used to express an organization's approval or disapproval of something. Typically, resolutions are created in the context of any standing or ad-hoc committee of the ASU who wishes to draft a position before presenting it to Council for ratification as an official ASU regulation.

Operating Policy: An operating policy operationalizes one or more principles in guiding the decisions and actions of internal ASU staff and departments (e.g. how the ASU hires its employees).

Issues Policy: An issues policy seeks to further the interests of post-secondary education issues according to Council's objectives. Advocacy of the ASU draws on creating policy to influence others. An integral aspect of the ASU is to be advocate of post-secondary education in its ability to develop official positions on relevant student issues.

External Policy: The ASU is bounded by many external policies which need to be taken into consideration when developing policies and programs. Although these external policies are not developed by the ASU, they are integral to the formulation of ASU policies in terms of referencing, application and enforcement.

Stakeholder: In developing policy, the ASU will consult stakeholders to ensure the appropriateness of its actions and to limit any negative outcomes. A stakeholder will be a person, group or organization that has an interest or concern in the Union. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the Union's actions, objectives, and policies.

Advocacy Paper: Advocacy papers not only position the ASU with respect to a given issue, but also lay out a plan for pro-active advocacy and generally commit the ASU to playing an active role in the issue. Typically, an advocacy paper would be topical and broad enough to encompass a multitude of challenges and recommended actions which would then be summarized and turned into an issues policy.

3. AUTHORITIES AND ROLES

The ASU is a not-for profit corporation that exists to advocate on behalf of the Acadia student body at-large serving as a liaison between the student body and Acadia governance, administration, faculty, other universities and colleges, and all levels of government. In the development and adoption of policies, there are three central and distinct levels of authority and responsibility – Council, the Governance Committee, and the General Manager.

3.1 Council

Council is the highest governing body of the ASU. As such, it is Council's responsibility to make decisions which must always be in the best interest of the Union. Our Council is composed of the following voting members:

- five Executive Officers tasked with carrying out the objectives of the Union in day to day operations,
- one First Year Representative,
- Community Relations Representative,
- Diversity & Inclusion Representative,
- Sustainability Representative,
- five Faculty Representatives, and
- two Councilors at large.

Council is composed in this way to ensure there is appropriate communication and representation of views and issues at the highest level of decision making within the Union.

In order for any decision to become policy, it must first be adopted by resolution of Council. No other area of the ASU has the authority to enact policy.

3.2 Governance Committee

In accordance with ASU Bylaw 6.7 the ASU has a standing committee of Council for the purposes of:

- reviewing current bylaws and policies,
- bringing any inconsistencies with them to the attention of Council,
- receiving and reviewing any policy or bylaw proposals for a recommendation to Council, and
- recommending any necessary changes to bylaws and policies.

The Governance Committee has four voting members:

- the Chairperson of Council (non-voting), who shall Chair the committee;
- the Deputy Chairperson of Council, who shall act as a non-voting Recording Secretary for the committee;
- the President;
- one non-executive, voting members of Council; and
- two ordinary or associate members of the Union.

3.2 General Manager

The General Manager is a full-time staff position in the ASU. This position is the central support for members, Councilors, and staff in understanding and navigating ASU bylaws and policies. Through regular research and analyses on key policy issues and trends in post-secondary education, the General Manager also supports policy development and updates across the ASU.

Members with policy questions can contact this position for guidance and support in the development of their own policies and recommendations prior to submitting their proposal to the Governance Committee if they wish.

4. POLICY PROCESS

Prior to putting forward a policy proposal for adoption by the ASU, here are four key areas for initial consideration:

Student Interest

Does the policy option serve the interest of students at Acadia University?

Role of the ASU

Is there a legitimate, appropriate and/or necessary role for the ASU in this area? Is the pursuit of this policy option undertaken or better served by another organization?

Jurisdiction

Does the policy option apply internally; within the organization of the ASU or externally; within Acadia University, municipally, provincially, or federally?

Pragmatism

Does the policy option pass the test of reason? Is it currently politically tenable? If not, is it ideologically sound? If not, should it be abandoned?

4.1 Operating Policies (see appendix A)

A Proposal for an operating policy should contain each section outlined in the Policy Development and Review Policy (appendix C) along with a completed policy template (appendix E).

When submitting a proposal to the Governance Committee, it's helpful to include a list of resources used in its development. Even if the resource hasn't specifically been referenced, the Committee will know it was reviewed and considered. Additionally, make sure to include a list of stakeholders you consulted with such as:

- Any associated committees
- Clubs or ASU Internal Organizations
- Communities
- Full-time and/or part-time staff

Once your proposal package is complete, you will need to send it to the Chair of the Governance Committee (ASU Council Chair). The Chair should confirm receipt of your proposal and indicate when it will be brought forward for the committee's review.

After the committee has had an opportunity to review your proposal package and meet to discuss it, if you were not able to attend the meeting yourself, the Chair will contact you with an update on the Committee's decision. The Committee can choose to make one of four decisions:

- Accept your drafted policy without revisions and submit it to the Chair of Council for adoption by Council.

- Accept your drafted policy with necessary revisions and submit it to the Chair of Council for adoption by Council.
- Table your drafted policy and request additional information from yourself or other associated parties before bringing it back for review.
- Reject your drafted policy with a summary explanation.

Upon the Committee's decision to put forward a policy to the Chair of Council, the Chair will provide every Councilor with a copy of the policy as a notice of motion at the next scheduled Council meeting which allows Councilors a minimum of one week to review the policy and consult with their members for feedback.

At the subsequent Council meeting, Councilors will have the opportunity to accept, table, or defeat a motion for the policy to be formally adopted by the ASU. Should the motion pass, the policy immediately comes into effect. Important to note is that a policy cannot be applied retroactively but only to those decisions made after it has come into effect.

4.2 Issues Policies (see appendix B)

Much like an operating policy, an issues policy should contain the sections outlined in the Policy Development and Review Policy, however, a key difference is that due to this type of policy setting out the political position of the ASU, the process begins with an Advocacy Paper.

4.2.1 *Advocacy Papers*

When a member would like to see the ASU have a permanent stance toward an issue, they can contact a Councilor or Executive member to bring forward a motion of Council to create a committee for the purposes of developing an advocacy paper on the issue or which encompasses the issue identified. For example, if a member feels the ASU should oppose any tuition increases on International students at Acadia, a Councilor can motion to strike a committee with the intent of producing an advocacy paper on international students at Acadia. This committee would meet to determine if there are any other positions the ASU should take in respect to international students at Acadia and then begin to draft the paper. In respect to the committee composition itself, the majority of participating members would have to be from the impacted stakeholder group, in this example, international students. This is to ensure the appropriateness and accuracy of the challenges and recommendations identified in the paper.

The term "paper" can seem intimidating at first, but the intent is to divide the consultation, research, writing and presentation across a group of invested members; each drafting one to three-page analysis of a specifically identified challenge and concluding with a recommendation. The four stages of development would be:

Initial Consultation: the committee will reach out into the community and seek out feedback on the topic being addressed.

Research and Writing: once the committee feels they have identified the key challenges, each can be divided up amongst the members to begin accumulating sound research and drafting their section.

Final Consultation: prior to its presentation to Council, committee members will provide an opportunity for feedback on the drafted paper.

Presentation: the completed advocacy paper is presented to Council for adoption.

Each separately identified challenge in the paper would be written with the following structure for consistency and clarity:

1. The identified challenge.
2. The principle being addressed.
3. Associated research and analysis on the specific area of focus.
4. Recommendation.

Upon the adoption of the advocacy paper, the committee itself or, should they wish, the General Manager, is able to draft its accompanying issues policy. Appearing under the “Statement” section of the policy, would be a summary of the adopted principles, challenges, and recommendations contained in the paper. This drafted issues policy would then return to Council for formal adoption.

4.2.2 Resolutions

In the event a Councilor or member would like the ASU to express support or disapproval on a specific issue (that is not already encompassed by an Issues Policy) and it is time sensitive or does not require a long standing position of the ASU, a motion can be put forward to Council. Should Council approve the motion, the resolution will become the stance of the Union on that issue for the duration of that Council year.

5. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Identification

Policies can be developed in anticipation of need (e.g. child protection policies should be in place once an organisation starts to work with children or young people); and in response to need (e.g. a policy position on a government strategy may be developed in response to a consultation paper).

The first step in policy development is to clearly identify what problem is occurring and taking the following initial steps:

- Check for existing policies and with responsible individuals to ensure there isn't an existing policy which addresses the problem or in which the problem would be addressed.
- Check delegations of authority and make sure the issue being addressed falls under the mission of the ASU and for which it can act.
- Check with the General Manager if you cannot locate policy and/or determine the responsible office from other sources as well as making sure there isn't any current work being done in respect to the problem.
- Determine if the policy would be considered an operating policy or an issues policy in order to follow the appropriate process for approval.

As the educational environment is constantly evolving, the ASU will always need to constantly assess its activities, responsibilities and the external environment in order to identify the need for policies and procedures.

5.2 Research and Analysis

Does the ASU have any legal responsibilities in this area? Is your understanding accurate and up to date? Have other organisations tackled the same issue? Are there existing templates or examples that you could draw on? Where will you go for guidance? These are just some of the questions that will be answered with thorough research and analysis.

In order to best determine how the policy should address the identified problem, it's important to start by:

- Reviewing current research literature to do with it.
- Conducting an environmental scan (collecting information on the current state of the problem at Acadia). Importantly, this step will help identify your key stakeholder groups to provide you with information on their experience and roles in respect to the problem.
- Surveying best practices – how has this been addressed elsewhere?

5.3 Options/Solutions

Now that you have collected information and data, you can describe possible policy options, including each one's impactfulness, cost of implementation, and feasibility. This

allows careful consideration on which policy option you feel is best to be instituted in the ASU.

*It is pivotal at this stage that you have a clear understanding of what your goal/outcome is in developing this policy as it will directly inform how you go about determining which options are best and how to operationalize it.

5.3.1 Areas of Potential Impact

When developing new or amending policies, how to achieve the greatest net benefit and lowest cost to affected groups must be considered. The direct and indirect costs and benefits of the proposed change must be evaluated to minimize compliance burdens on members, staff, volunteers, and the ASU as a whole. This assessment involves identifying affected groups (stakeholders) as well as the nature, magnitude and duration of the impacts.

Always make sure to consult and communicate early in the policy process but particularly when you have determined possible solutions and outcomes from your research and analysis so you can ensure all perspectives and potential impacts are accounted for. We each carry cognitive biases which can be offset through thorough and appropriate consultation. Parties affected by the change should be consulted and have an opportunity to provide feedback.

5.4 Logical Progression

Logic is about the order in which you present the various points you want to make (i.e., sequencing); and making a reasoned case (i.e., one can follow how you arrived at a particular conclusion or recommendation). Now that you have:

- clearly determined a need for a policy and defined the problem and desired outcomes;
- determined potential impacts and performed necessary consultation in determining the best solution;

it is time to draft the policy in a manner that will allow proper understanding and compliance. To do this, you must include the following considerations:

- The policy reader should be able to clearly understand what the ASU and its departments/authorities are being obligated to do to arrive at the stated outcome.
- In the case of an operating policy, the policy should sequentially outline the steps needed to arrive at a decision. For example, in the ASU Hiring Policy it begins at the creation and promotion of the position, the hiring committee requirements, interviewing, and finally decision phase. A good practice is to attempt to reflect your policy in the form of a process chart to visualize the logical stage progression. This way you can identify any possible gaps.
- In the case of an Issues Policy, the logical progression will stem from the advocacy paper where an issue is accompanied by a supported solution and recommended ASU action.

5.5 Consultation and Inclusivity

With your drafted policy complete, return to those stakeholders previously consulted with for final feedback prior to submission. This now closes the information loop and ensures those consulted have an opportunity to review the final product. Additionally, this is a stage where you can reflect on the level of inclusivity in your consultation. In particular, can you think of any populations (e.g. indigenous, women, LGBTQ2S+, accessibility needs, etc.) that have not had an opportunity to participate in the development process? Very often an individual's different lived experience can provide us with a perspective we would not have otherwise considered.

When you are confident each of this section's steps have been completed satisfactorily, all that is left to do will be to submit your proposal package to the appropriate authority (see Appendix A or B for process chart).

5.6 Proposal Package Checklist

___ Completed Policy Submission Form (Appendix D)

___ Completed Policy Draft

___ List of consulted stakeholders

___ List of information sources

___ Primary contact information

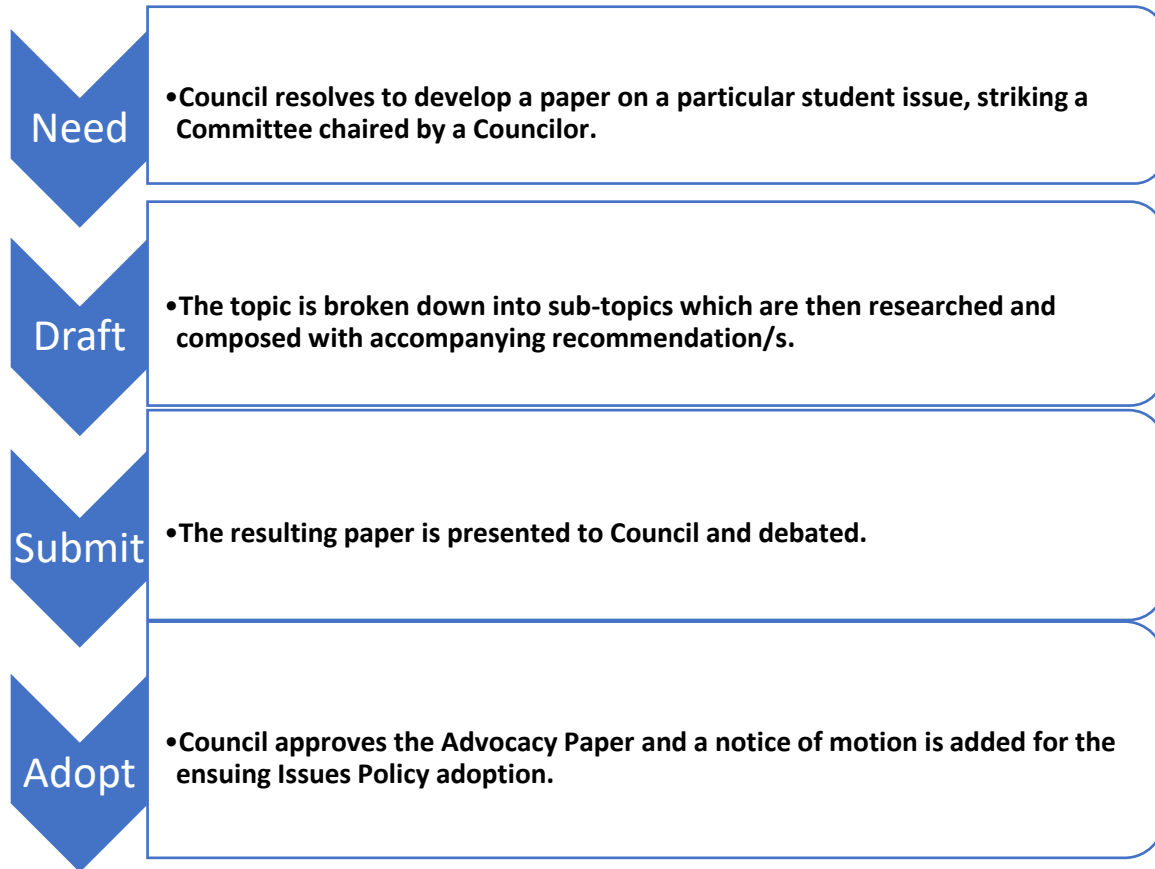
6. SUMMARY STATEMENT

The ASU exists to serve the students of Acadia and as such, it will always be important our members can help us to identify areas of need and aid us in evolving our policies. Through good policy we can ensure the ASU has proper guidance and demonstrate consistency, accountability, efficiency and clarity in our actions.

APPENDIX – A
OPERATING POLICY PROCESS



**APPENDIX – B
ISSUES POLICY PROCESS**



APPENDIX – C

Policy Development and Review

Oversight body: Governance Committee

Date Passed: July 20, 2020

Date of Next Review: September 2023

Related policies, bylaws, legislation: ASU Policy Guide

Definitions:

Policy	A rule passed by Council.
Committee	The Governance Committee.
Executive Officer	A Member who is elected as an Executive Officer of the ASU as per the bylaws.
Member	An individual who meets the membership criteria as outlined in the bylaws.
Operating Policy	A policy that operationalizes one or more principles in guiding the decisions and actions of internal ASU staff and departments.
Issues Policy	A policy that seeks to further the interests of post-secondary education issues according to Council's objectives.
Advocacy Paper	Advocacy papers position the ASU with respect to a given issue, but also lay out a plan for pro-active advocacy and generally commit the ASU to playing an active role in the issue.

Purpose:

In recognition of:

- a) the significant impact a new or amended policy can have on operations,
- b) the need to evaluate the appropriateness of a new or amended policy in respect to existing bylaws, policies, and applicable municipal, provincial, and federal legislation.

This policy addresses the procedures surrounding a policy proposal or amendment for adoption. In addition, it is also meant to ensure policies are developed, presented and adopted by the ASU in a clear, democratic and timely manner.

Scope:

All ASU Members, Representatives and staff.

Policy Statement:

1. Operating Policy Submissions

1.1 Before a new policy proposal, or amendment to an existing policy, is brought to Council for approval, it should be submitted to the Committee using the proposal template that can be retrieved by contacting the Council Chair.

1.1.1 Proposals may only be submitted by Members of the ASU.

1.2A proposal should be directed to the Committee Chair to ensure proper review and record keeping.

1.3Materials seen as supporting, or providing further context to, the proposal can be submitted in conjunction with the draft proposal but will be presented to Council only at the discretion of the Committee.

1.4Supporting materials cannot be submitted to the Committee without an accompanying proposal.

1.5The Committee will bring proposed policies and amendments to the relevant Executive Officer(s) and General Manager for consultative feedback and advice prior to reaching any decision.

1.6The Committee Chair will communicate the status of the proposal to the individual who made the submission after each Committee meeting where it appears on the agenda.

1.7Upon completing a review of the proposal, the Committee will bring forward their recommendation to Council for consideration with a notice of motion.

- 1.7.1 Recommendations to Council must fall into one of three categories: adoption, adoption with committee edits, dismissal.

2. Issues Policy Submission

2.1 An Issues Policy must be provided to Council through a notice of motion.

2.2. An Issues Policy can be adopted by Council only upon the successful adoption of an Advocacy Paper (see ASU Policy Guide).

2.2.1 Advocacy Papers must comply with the following:

- 2.2.1.1 be commissioned by a majority vote of Council,
- 2.2.1.2 researched, developed and written by a committee of which the majority of members are from the impacted stakeholder group/s,
- 2.2.1.3 all contained principles and recommendations are supported by committee members by a 2/3 vote prior to being presented to Council for adoption.

2.2.2 Council retains the right to adopt in full, adopt a portion, or reject those recommendations contained in an Advocacy Paper.

2.3 Only those Council adopted recommendations from the associated Advocacy Paper will appear in the Issues Policy.

3. Request for Review

3.1 A Member does not need to propose a policy amendment in order to make a request for a policy review.

3.2 Requests must include a detailed statement of the reasons as to why a policy review should be conducted.

3.3 The Committee Chair will communicate the status of the review to the requestor after each meeting where it appears on the agenda.

4. Approved policies and amendments

4.1 The Council Chair will send any newly adopted policies and/or amendments to the General Manager the following day.

4.2 Every policy will indicate a maximum five year review date.

4.3 The Vice-President Events and Promotions shall ensure the new or amended policy is updated and publicly available on the ASU web site after Council minutes are approved.

4.4 Expired versions of a policy will be appropriately archived.

4. Policy Structure

4.1 Each policy will contain the following information:

4.1.1 Policy Name

4.1.2 Oversight Body

4.1.3 Date Passed by Council

4.1.4 Date of Next Review

4.1.5 Title of Related Policies, Bylaws, Legislation

4.1.6 Definitions

4.1.7 Purpose

4.1.8 Scope

4.1.9 Policy Statement

5. A Stance

5.1 In the event a Councilor or Member would like the ASU to express support or disapproval on a specific issue (that is not already encompassed by an Issues Policy) and it is time sensitive or does not require a long standing position of the ASU, a motion can be put forward to Council. Should Council approve the motion, the resolution will become the stance of the Union on that issue for the duration of that Council year.

APPENDIX – D
Operating Policy Submission Form

Please submit the following information if you are proposing a new policy for the ASU.

Policy Name:

Are you aware of any other ASU policies/bylaws or legislation your proposed policy references or impacts? If so, please provide the name/s.

Pertinent Definitions (any word for which a reader may need clarification, include any short forms or acronyms here):

Scope (defines the areas of the ASU to which this policy will apply, e.g. Executives, all hiring, service operations):

Purpose (why is this policy necessary? What does it aim to accomplish? This is normally a concise paragraph of a few sentences):

Policy Statement (include the steps necessary to be in compliance, with sufficient detail that end users will be able to readily understand and comply with the policy)*

*This section can be lengthy. Those individuals submitting a new policy are asked to attach a separate word document file containing their proposed Policy Statement.