



Adelaide University Union Constitutional Reform

BACKGROUND

Over the past 6 months, the AUU board has been considering amendments to the AUU Constitution. The current constitution was passed in 2000 and therefore many of the amendments which relate to the Voluntary Student Unionism legislation which came into effect in 2006. The board has also considered amendments in relation to the board itself aimed at improving the way in which the AUU is governed.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Amendments in relation to VSU

The AUU Constitution currently reflects a pre-VSU environment, when all students were compulsory members of the AUU. The Board has made several amendments, including guaranteeing the right of all students to vote in elections and referenda. All references to the compulsory Student Services Fee have been

removed, while still including clauses to allow the AUU Board to determine a membership fee.

The number of student elected directors

The AUU Board is currently comprised of 18 directly elected student representatives. The AUU Board has proposed that this number be reduced to 16, primarily to improve the level of cooperation on AUU Board, while still maintaining student control of the organisation. Some board directors would like that number lowered further, some would like it retained at 18, but the board came to a compromise position of 16.

Removal of staff representative

The Board proposes to remove the staff representative from AUU Board. This position was relevant when the AUU owned all of the commercial food and beverage outlets on campus and had over 100 staff. Since these outlets were handed over to the University at the end of 2007, the AUU has less than 15 staff, none of whom expressed an interest in nominating for this position which negates the necessity for a dedicated staff representative.

Board term

The current provisions mean that a board is elected in September and take their position on board on the first Monday in October after attending only one meeting. The board feels this is an insufficient time for directors to receive training and learn their roles and is instead proposing that the board changes over at the same time as the President on 1 December. This would allow for better informed directors.

Removal of a board director

A Board Director currently ceases to hold their position if they resign, cease to be a member of the AUU, upon death or any event which would prevent them being a director according to the Associations Incorporations Act, or if they are absent without leave of the board from three *consecutive* meetings. Board would like to amend this to make it four *non-consecutive* meetings, as the current situation means that a board director can attend as little as 1 in 3 meetings. Board would also like to include the capacity to remove a board director for misconduct, if the board decides that director has made a breach by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of all directors.

Insertion of Vice President

There is currently no mention of the Vice President in the Constitution, although by convention and AUU Rule this position has been in existence and acts as the Chair of the Finance Committee for nearly a decade. This insertion is consistent with current operations and would also allow the Vice President to be held to greater accountability.

Committees of AUU Board

The AUU Constitution currently states that a Committee of the Board must be chaired by a member of the board. This is problematic for committees like Union Activities, in that students who might wish to be responsible for organising activities on campus must hold a position on board. The Board would like to make it easier for non-board directors to be involved in AUU Committees by removing this clause.

AMENDMENTS REJECTED BY BOARD

2 Year terms

The Board considered 2 year terms for board directors, with half the board positions being elected each year. The main argument for this position is that it improves continuity of knowledge on the board. However, the board determined that this would mean that students with only one year left at university would be prevented from running and that it would not allow directors to be held democratically accountable on a yearly basis.

Affiliates on board

The Board considered having a representative from each Affiliate on Board. The role of a Board director is to act in the best interest of the organisation and it was felt that it would be unfair and unmanageable for Affiliate representatives to be continually placed in situations that might represent a conflict of interest.

Non-student directors on board

The Board considered having external professionals sit on the Board of the AUU. However, it was felt overall that this was contrary to the purpose of a student organisation. The Board welcomes non-voting professionals on committees of the board, for example on the Finance Committee.

HAVE YOUR SAY

If you have any queries or comments, feel free to email the AUU President via lavinia.emmett-grey@adelaide.edu.au. The AUU will be hosting a forum on Constitutional Reform on Tuesday 9 May

from 12 pm in the Eclipse. If you would like to attend, please register your interest by contacting the President for catering purposes.