



Memorandum

To: SSMU Council
CC: Executive Committee
From: Ivan Neilson, President 2009-2010
Date: 9/15/2009
Re: Internal Audit of the Committees of Council

It has become clear that the committee structure within SSMU Council is outdated and in need of reform. The Constitution and Bylaws reference many of these bodies, but these descriptions fail to accurately reflect our current practices. There are several issues with the current structure which this process will hope to address.

This year, the SSMU will attempt to reinvigorate its Board of Governors (SSMU Council) by thoroughly investigating the efficiency of the committee structure. This area was identified as a priority, and has the potential to be overhauled in a one-year timeframe.

The Internal Audit of the Committees of Council will carry out its business with the following pillars in mind:

Consistency

A lack of consistency has plagued Council from year to year. This is not entirely unexpected as turnover frequently exceeds 50%. Many of the committees described in the constitution and Bylaws have not met in recent years, and are frequently called together on an ad hoc basis. In general, this problem is attributable to the fact that there is no one document which accurately describes the terms of reference for each committee. This would be the first desired outcome of this process.

Simplicity

The project will also target simplicity and ease of use. Currently there are many committees with slightly different mandates. A more efficient structure would involve more centralized teams of councillors focusing on a particular area, breaking into smaller workgroups where



needed. Here, the hope would be to decrease the number of committees, and eliminate redundancies. Ideally this will allow councillors to stay within areas of interest and expertise without a significant commitment of time.

Positive Action and Participation

Recent trends show fewer and fewer recommendations and motions originating from committee meetings. In 2008-2009, council participation was at an all-time low. The legislative branch of the organization had quorum issues, and minimal innovation from council members beyond the executive team. While there are several potential causes, a solid committee configuration will ensure councillors are current on all issues facing the organization, and encourage informed debate. The audit will also look at the chairs of committees, and how executives might be replaced by councillors or members at large.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The process will involve broad consultation from all members. The preliminary tasks will be assigned to the Presidential Affairs Committee. That body will be charged with the creation of a report to be presented to the standing Constitutional Review Committee. Upon completion, the findings will be presented to Council for information and discussion. Final recommendations for approval will follow shortly after.

Those who would like to know more about the project or get involved, should contact the office of the President

Respectfully Submitted,

Ivan Neilson, President 2009-2010