



Consultation Policy

Oversight body: Executive Committee

Date Passed by Council: June, 2018

Date of Next Review: October, 2020

Related policies, bylaws, legislation:

Definitions:

“Consultation” – Seeking and giving of advice, information, and/or opinion, usually involving a specific consideration.

“Stakeholder” – A person, group or organization that has interest or concern in the Union. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the Union’s actions, objectives and policies.

“Membership” – The body of DSU Members.

Purpose:

As the DSU’s mandate is to serve and represent our membership (students of Dalhousie University). This policy outlines the Union’s responsibility to appropriately consult relevant stakeholder groups when looking to propose or revisit a stance of the Union, policy, bylaw, service, or structural development from within it. This will serve to better understand the ramifications and impacts of such decisions/actions on these groups as well as supporting the development of informed, equitable and representative courses of action.

Scope:

The following responsibilities are in respect to proposals brought forward by, or considered for adoption by, Executive Officers and Councillors of the Union.

Policy Statement:

1. General

1.1 Prior to the submission of a proposal to Council, consultation will be undertaken in respect to:

1.1.1 Issue policies;

1.1.2 Positions in respect to Dalhousie Administration;

1.1.3 A new, or significant change to, DSU Office or levied service;

1.1.4 When there is a desire for the DSU to state support or disapproval in respect to a specific situation.

1.2 The general steps to be taken in consulting stakeholders are:

1.2.1 Determine what stakeholder the proposal is in respect to, either in representing their voice and/or the impacts it could have on them.

1.2.2 Provide the identified stakeholder an opportunity to give thoughtful consideration to pertinent issues, consult their members and tender their opinions and advice.

1.2.2.3 The stakeholder must be provided with the same information from which the proposal is being derived so as to foster informed comments.

1.2.3 When determining whether to move forward in taking the proposal to Council, opinions and advice from the consulted stakeholder shall be taken into consideration.

1.2.4 Proposals taken to Council shall note which stakeholder has been consulted with and their support or disapproval of the proposal.

1.2.5 If the stakeholder wishes to make their opinion and advice known to Council, they may provide the Chair a written submission before Council makes a decision.

1.2.6 Where a proposal is under a strict time constraint and a full consultation process cannot happen before a decision is needed, the Councillor or Executive Officer will e-mail any Council Representatives and Societies which would be considered a stakeholder. This e-mail shall:

1.2.6.1 Contain a full explanation of what is being proposed with any supporting information providing context;

1.2.6.2 Be sent no later than 24hrs prior to its submission to Council for debate;

1.2.6.3 State what steps will be taken to more thoroughly consult with the stakeholder after the submission of the proposal;

1.2.6.4 Provide the date, time and location of the Council meeting at which it is to be debated.

2. Stakeholders

2.1 Possible stakeholder groups, in no particular order, include:

2.1.1 Traditionally marginalized communities;

2.1.2 Cultural communities;

2.1.3 Societies;

2.1.4 Full-time and part-time staff of the Union;

2.1.5 The Membership;

2.1.6 Dalhousie University.

2.2 A Stakeholder may bring forward an issue for Council consideration through an Executive Officer or Councillor, who shall then determine if further consultation is required as per this policy.

3. Tools for Consultation and Information Management

3.1 Tools which can be used in the consultation process include:

3.1.1 Survey;

3.1.2 Town Hall;

3.1.3 One on one or smaller group meetings;

3.1.4 Focus groups.

3.2 In attempting to identify which consultation tools to use and how to apply them, the Councillor or Executive Officer should discuss options with the Communications and Outreach Coordinator.

3.3 Individual information collected throughout the consultation process will be archived by the Policy and Governance Coordinator if deemed significant in contributing to the discussion topic as a whole. All other collected materials will be destroyed after the proposal has been considered.

3.3.1 Before carrying out any consultation, the stakeholder must be informed that information gathered can be retained by the Union for ongoing issue analysis unless an individual expressly requests its destruction.

3.4 Only any non-identifiable summary analysis will be made publicly available upon request.

4. Assignment of Responsibility

4.1 The Council Representative or Executive Officer wishing to make a proposal, for which consultation is required under this policy, is ultimately responsible for ensuring an appropriate level of consultation has taken place and reported on prior to its introduction at Council.

4.1.1 An appropriate level of consultation is considered to have been met when the Councillor or Executive Officer can demonstrate:

4.1.1.1 Timely communication with the stakeholder and documented information gathering;

4.1.1.2 A list of measures taken to gather information which the Councillor feels demonstrates a wide enough scope to be representative;

4.2 The relevant Faculty or Community Representative is responsible for communicating proposals for which their Faculty or Community are stakeholders and aiding in the coordination of consultation procedures to do with them.

5. Reporting to Stakeholder

5.1 If a stakeholder has been consulted with, the Councillor or Executive Officer for which it took place shall ensure the summary analysis is made available to the stakeholder along with the result of the submitted proposal to Council.