

Students' Council Policies

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FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

Number: 1

POLICY

Effective: August 3, 2014

Replaces: April 30, 2010

Secrecy in University Governance

WHEREAS the essence of higher education is open and free discussion;

WHEREAS this ideal is not realized when the governance of institutions of higher learning is conducted in secrecy;

WHEREAS in such situations students staff and faculty are unable to exercise their rights and responsibilities as members of the institutions; and

WHEREAS a restricted flow of information produces unnecessary and harmful tensions within the institution; and

WHEREAS an atmosphere of openness, integrity, accountability and transparency are highly valued and are crucial to the effective operation of the University,

BIRT All decisions in the government of an institution of post-secondary education should be made in a democratically open, transparent, and accountable manner; and

BIFRT Every exception to the principles of open decision-making must be justified by the person or persons making it;

BIFRT Non - confidential documents should be available upon request by a member of the student body in a timely fashion.

FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
POLICY

Number: 2
Effective: April 30, 2010
Replaces: April 3, 2005

Hours of Teaching Buildings

WHEREAS the Federation of Students recognizes the right of all students to receive equal access to their respective faculty teaching buildings; and

WHEREAS there are at present some discrepancies, with some buildings being open 24 hours per day and some closing for the night and on weekends;

BIRT The teaching buildings of all faculties be open on a 24-hour basis to best facilitate a student's access to study areas.

FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
POLICY

Number: 3
Effective: June 8, 2014
Replaces: April 30, 2010

Statement of Autonomy

WHEREAS the Charter of Incorporation of the Federation of Students approved by the Board of Governors of the University of Waterloo charges the Federation of Students with the responsibility for administering its own affairs; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students cannot tolerate any arbitrary interference in its internal operations that opposes the spirit of the Charter of Incorporation;

BIRT While the Federation of Students welcomes the opportunity to hear advice and discuss policies, no external entity will be permitted to exercise any control over the activities of the Federation of Students.

FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
POLICY

Number: 4
Effective: June 8, 2014
Replaces: March 12, 2005

University Ancillary Enterprise Operations

RESCINDED – June 8, 2014

Parking

WHEREAS the Federation of Students seeks to facilitate an egalitarian parking system at the University of Waterloo;

BIRT The Federation of Students hereby declares that all parking lots and spaces at the University of Waterloo should be open to all members of the University community on a first-come, first-serve basis (except for a number of spaces by certain buildings which will be designated for service vehicles or as parking spots for individuals who for accessibility reasons require easy access); and

BIRT That the Federation of Students will seek to have this proposal implemented by appropriate means.

BIFRT The Federation of Students supports the use of fines as penalties for breaking University parking regulations;

BIFRT All members of the University community should be equally liable to fines;

BIFRT The Federation of Students approves in principle the levying, by the University, of a user's parking fee insofar as this fee covers only the costs of maintenance and operating for the lots; and

BIFRT The Federation of Students believes no costs associated with Parking Services, including expansion of existing and creation of new lots, should be funded by the central university fund.

AND WHEREAS all members of the University community have a right to safety on campus;

BIRT All lots should be properly lit at night, and equipped with easily accessible emergency help lines.

FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
POLICY

Number: 6
Effective: June 8, 2014
Replaces: April 30, 2010

Counselling Services

RESCINDED – June 8, 2014

Request for Minutes of University Bodies

WHEREAS communication between various members of the University of Waterloo should always be developed;

WHEREAS Students' Council believes that the widespread and accessible circulation of minutes of various governing bodies throughout the University will maintain accountability and transparency; and

WHEREAS Students' Council maintains a policy of making its minutes available through the Federation of Students website and upon request by any member of the Federation of Students;

BIRT Students' Council request complete minutes, save business dealing with confidential matters, from each existing faculty council, the Senate, the Board of Governors, and any President's Advisory Councils which may be in place or created.

Childcare

WHEREAS the cost of childcare seriously impedes a person's ability to get involved and actively participate in the Federation of Students' Council, Committees, and Executive;

BIRT the Federation of Students will reimburse all reasonable childcare costs for members of the following:

- Students' Council;
- Committees of Students' Council;
- Executive Board; and
- Board of Directors

who attend meetings that are held after normal childcare hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday);

BIFRT all childcare expenses must be pre-approved by the Vice-President, Operation and Finance;

BIFRT childcare subsidization will be disbursed when the recipient of childcare services presents a receipt to the Vice-President, Operation and Finance who will arrange for the refund.

FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
POLICY

Number: 10
Effective: July 11, 2010
Renewed: November 02, 2014

Professional Development

WHEREAS it is understood that the Federation of Students continually strives to improve the service given to students on an ongoing basis; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students values its staff members and dedicated volunteers having opportunities for continued professional learning within their roles.

BIRT the Federation of Students Council supports the opportunity for staff members and dedicated volunteers to take part in sessions and or courses to enhance their ability to perform their duties in an efficient and professional manner.

Academic Cost Recovery

WHEREAS post-secondary education is not a commodity but a real and substantial investment in people and society, which provides economic, social and political benefits; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students' Council maintains that university funding should be based on the principle of shared benefit and shared responsibility; and

WHEREAS students have a responsibility to contribute a reasonable portion of the cost of their education; and

WHEREAS tuition must be predictable to allow students and families to engage in responsible and effective long-term financial planning;

WHEREAS market forces do not provide a stable or accurate notion of the monetary or market value of a post-secondary degree; and

WHEREAS funding for post-secondary education in Ontario comes from the province of Ontario;

WHEREAS in 1988 Ontario domestic students paid 19% of the cost of their education as tuition;

BIRT the Federation of Students believes that tuition for all programs should be set by the Provincial Government, as they are publicly accountable; and

BIRT The Federation of Students' council believes all tuition must be regulated by the Provincial Government and that students should never pay for more than 30 percent of their education; and

BIFRT Tuition should reflect a fair portion of the actual cost of program delivery, and not the perceived market value of the degree in question, nor the potential earnings of the student upon graduation; and

BIFRT the Federation of Students' Council does not support the deregulation of any tuition fees, and believes that any form of tuition deregulation is unjust.

Clubs

WHEREAS the Charter of Incorporation of the Federation of Students, as approved by the Board of Governors of the University of Waterloo, names the Federation of Students as the sole representative of undergraduate students at the University of Waterloo;

BIRT Any student organization applying for recognition by the University of Waterloo must do so through the Federation of Students, a society recognized by the Federation of Students, the Graduate Student Association, or the Department of Athletics and Recreational Services; and

BIFRT The Federation of Students reaffirms the rights of students to form associations without undue interference from the University of Waterloo or the Federation of Students; and

BIFRT The Federation of Students encourages contributions to the university community in the form of various student interest groups.

BIFRT The Federation of Students adheres to the following principles in dealing with Clubs:

1. Although the views expressed by members of our community are diverse and sometimes diametrically opposed, we respect the opinions of all those who respect the rights of others.
2. The Federation of Students strives to aid in the development of students on campus by providing forums for academic, artistic, social, political, spiritual and cultural exploration and communication, and personal well-being.

BIFRT The Federation of Students will, when possible, assist its clubs to achieve their mandates by providing administrative, logistical, and financial support.

Enrollment

WHEREAS the University of Waterloo continually surpasses yearly undergraduate enrolment targets; and

WHEREAS the University of Waterloo has reached the undergraduate enrolment targets outlined by the Board of Governors and the University Administration; and

WHEREAS education quality is improved by student and faculty interaction, superior facilities, and ample student services; and

WHEREAS The University of Waterloo, in 2013, had the second highest full-time equivalent students to full-time tenure and tenure-stream faculty ratio among U15 universities; and

WHEREAS admissions are completely determined by the faculties disregarding the market opportunity for co-op jobs in that field.

BIRT:

1. The enrollment levels in all programs should accurately reflect the academic, structural and service capacity and capabilities of the University of Waterloo to accommodate students while maintaining and improving the high quality of their Post-Secondary Education; and
2. That enrollment must not be used as a mechanism to offset financial shortfalls of the University; and
3. That increases in enrollment must be met with proportional increases in resource support for student services and facility capacity.
4. That the establishment of satellite campuses reflects academic objectives and the best interests of students, not economic and private sector objectives.
5. That satellite campuses are considered with the same level of quality expected of main campus as a part of Post-Secondary Education.
6. That campus space must be expanded and repurposed to meet student needs as a result of increased enrollment.
7. That program enrollment in co-op must be justified in relation to the market sustainability for hiring co-op students in that field.

FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
POLICY

Number: 15
Effective: Repealed
Replaces: June 23, 2007

Monetary Impediment

REPEALED

Academic Autonomy

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is responsible for the financing, and overall health and sustainability of the post-secondary sector; and

WHEREAS Universities in Ontario are semi-autonomous, self-governing entities; and

WHEREAS final decisions involving the curricula at the university should only be made at the university level, following all proper and relevant decision-making processes; and

WHEREAS the University of Waterloo should endeavor to maintain its autonomy regarding the academic programs and courses it provides, when it doesn't impede the needs of students, the marketplace and society; and

WHEREAS there may be opportunities for partnerships with third parties from the government or private sector to improve the courses the University of Waterloo provides. BIRT the Federation of Students' Council believes that the university, through its faculty, administration and students, should strive to be the final arbiter of the content of courses and curricula offered at the institution;

BIFRT the Federation of Students' believes that where it is not overly restrictive to academic autonomy, the University, through its administration, faculty and students, should work with the provincial government to achieve a broader system-wide vision for post-secondary education;

BIFRT the Federation of Students' Council believes that where it is not overly restrictive to academic autonomy, the university, through its faculty, administration and students, should pursue opportunities to connect with private and public sector for the purposes of experiential learning and other community partnerships that improve the quality of the broader learning environment;

BIFRT the Federation of Students' Council believes that any and all private sources of funding should in no way infringe upon the academic autonomy of the University and its administration, faculty and students;

BIFRT the Federation of Students' Council believes that private funding should not be viewed as the alternative source for operational funding shortfalls, and that the provincial government has the primary responsibility for providing operational funding.

Open Data Formats

WHEREAS it is important that members of the Federation of Students are able to easily receive communications and information from the Federation;

WHEREAS open data formats are accessible through free software on all major computing platforms, while closed formats frequently require the purchase of commercial software; and

WHEREAS not all students may have access to third party sources;

BIRT documents produced by the Federation of Students should be available in platform-neutral formats, including plain text, HTML, Adobe portable document format, and rich text format;

BIRT promotions or information relayed through third party sources should also be made available without registration on the feds.ca website.

Tuition Set-Aside

WHEREAS tuition set-aside is a policy that stipulates a percentage of students' tuition be reserved for use as financial aid at that institution;

WHEREAS the tuition set-aside policy was established to mandate institutions to use additional tuition revenue to provide financial assistance to students with need;

WHEREAS the tuition set-aside policy is a regressive system, as students are subsidizing students with need;

BIRT The Federation of Students' Council believes financial aid dollars for the public post-secondary education system must ultimately come from the Provincial Government and not from the students those dollars should assist;

BIFRT The Federation of Students' Council believes that the Provincial Government must adequately fund student financial aid, instead of relying on the contribution of students who access the system.

Co-op as Student Financial Aid

WHEREAS cooperative Education is a valuable teaching philosophy but is not offered to every University of Waterloo student; and

WHEREAS the success of a Cooperative Education program relies on the viability of the job market which lies outside the control of the university administration; and

WHEREAS the university imposes strict limits on what is considered appropriate cooperative education employment; and

WHEREAS the job market cannot be guaranteed to grant employment based on financial need or academic excellence; and

WHEREAS the monies received from a student financial aid program act as a response to a student's financial need or academic excellence while the monies received from cooperative education employment act as remuneration for a student's effort and time given to a particular employer;

BIRT The Federation of Students opposes any statements and actions by the University of Waterloo to classify the cooperative education program as a student financial assistance program;

BIFRT The Federation of Students opposes any actions by the university administration to classify funding for the cooperative education program as funding for a student financial aid program.

External Lobby Organization Membership

WHEREAS the Federation of Students advocates for an affordable, accessible, high quality and accountable post-secondary education system at the institutional, municipal, regional, provincial, and national level; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students' Long Range Plan states that Feds will sustain strong and effective lobbying efforts to maintain an affordable, accessible, and quality post-secondary education system; and

WHEREAS membership with external advocacy organizations has been a common strategy for provincial and national advocacy; and

WHEREAS multiple external advocacy organizations exist that are dedicated to post-secondary education and student issues.

BIRT should the Federation of Students wish to join an external advocacy organization with a membership fee associated, the decision must be made via referendum; and

BIFRT the Federation of Students will only seek membership in external advocacy organizations that provide tangible recommendations and solutions to government; and

BIFRT the Federation of Students will only seek membership with organizations that advocate on issues related primarily to post-secondary education; and

BIFRT the Federation of Students will only seek membership with organizations that maintain the autonomy of the Federation of Students through all membership agreements and policies; and

BIFRT the Federation of Students will only seek membership with external advocacy organizations whose decisions are driven primarily by students.

Freedom of Expression

WHEREAS the Federation of Students supports freedom of expression and an environment conducive to student discussion on all issues; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students feels that students should not be unreasonably restricted in what they may wear;

BIRT The Federation of Students opposes the censorship of the freedom to express oneself, unless such an expression is contrary to government established human rights codes.

Plagiarism Detection Systems and Intellectual Property

WHEREAS The Federation of Students seeks to maintain a fair and reasonable academic environment, to promote a culture of academic integrity and to protect intellectual freedom at the University of Waterloo; and

WHEREAS academic integrity is the responsibility of all parties at the university including students, faculty and instructors, and university administration; and

WHEREAS the University Policy 73 forbids the licensing and distribution of intellectual property to external organizations; and

WHEREAS plagiarism detection software may compromise the ownership and protection of student intellectual property; and

WHEREAS plagiarism detection software used as a substitute for qualified professors and teaching assistants can interfere with the quality of education at post-secondary institutions; and

BIRT The Federation of Students believes that student intellectual property should not be mandatorily distributed to or stored by any external organization;

BIFRT The Federation of Students supports the optional use of plagiarism detection systems when used as a learning tool prior to assessment, not as a means to detect plagiarism for assessment purposes;

BIFRT The Federation of Students opposes the use of any plagiarism detection systems that do not protect the creator's ownership of intellectual property, as outlined in the company's privacy statement and policies;

BIFRT where plagiarism detection systems are in place, faculty must to educate students on the consequences with respect to their intellectual property;

BIFRT any alternatives provided to students in place of plagiarism detection systems must be fair and equitable and not create unnecessary or punitive burdens on students.

BIFRT the Federation of Students supports a holistic solution to increasing academic integrity including: education for students and professors regarding the nature of plagiarism, what constitutes violations of academic integrity, and the policies of the University of Waterloo; preventative measures such as regular assignment and exam updating by faculty and instructors; and fair, timely, and just punishment of offenders.

FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
POLICY

Number: 23
Effective: April 7, 2013
Replaces: February 11, 2007

Positive Space

WHEREAS the Federation of Students, University of Waterloo, endeavors to create a climate of inclusivity, diversity, and equality; and

WHEREAS Positive space programs seek to prevent discrimination, and sexual prejudice through education and awareness of these issues;

BIRT The Federation of Students, University of Waterloo supports Positive Space programs at the University of Waterloo.

Online Refundable Ancillary Fee Opt Out System

WHEREAS the current system for processing refunds for non-society, non-endowment, refundable ancillary fees does not encompass a comprehensive online opt-out system; and

WHEREAS the lack of a comprehensive online opt-out system creates an unnecessary burden on University of Waterloo undergraduate students; and

WHEREAS in addition to easing the burden on students, a comprehensive online opt-out system would necessarily make non-society, non-endowment groups more responsive to students;

BIRT The Federation of Students supports the employment of a comprehensive online opt-out system for non-society, non-endowment, refundable ancillary fees levied by the University of Waterloo; and

BIFRT in achieving the aforementioned comprehensiveness, the Federation of Students supports an online system that has as a compulsory component, a display of information about the work of the affected organization before a University of Waterloo undergraduate student can opt out of said organization's fee.

Sustainability

WHEREAS the Federation of students exists to enhance the quality of life for students by promoting a safe, secure and environmentally conscious campus; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students recognizes that it must strive wherever possible to minimize the environmental impact of its operations, reduce barriers to, and provide incentives for environmentally conscious choices on the part of individuals;

BIRT the Federation of Students, University of Waterloo will strive towards ethical and environmental responsibility in the conduct of its operations and practices; and

BIFRT the Federation of Students will conduct continual review of its operations and practices, and make improvements to this end when needed.

BIFRT the Federation of Students will advocate for and support initiatives that lead to the University of Waterloo achieving the Fair Trade Campus designation

Off Campus Housing Advocacy Strategy

WHEREAS the Federation of Students is the body responsible for empowering and representing students on issues that affect the overall accessibility and affordability of their education; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students believes that University of Waterloo students are a key stakeholder in strategic discussions around housing and land development; and

WHEREAS University of Waterloo students make up a significant proportion of rental housing consumers in the City of Waterloo, and the student population is anticipated to continue growing for the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students recognizes that all students have unique housing needs in terms of location, amenities, room sizing, roommates, number of bedrooms, and contract length; and

WHEREAS there are a variety of community stakeholders in the strategic discussions around housing, including but not limited to, University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University students and administration, staff and officials of the Cities of Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge, Stratford and the Region of Waterloo, and permanent residents from these municipalities:

BIRT the Federation of Students will advocate to all relevant decision-making bodies to ensure affordable, accessible, quality, safe, diverse, and sustainable housing options are available to students attending the University of Waterloo;

BIFRT municipal governments and other community stakeholders work with the Federation of Students to collect data in order to identify specific areas of concern for students living in off-campus housing;

BIFRT the Federation of Students commit to providing direction to students who may be living in accommodations that do not meet legislated standards;

BIFRT the Federation of Students commit to working alongside municipal governments and other community stakeholders to actively address student housing issues through programs and initiatives that improve the overall quality of life experienced by students in the community.

Regional Transit

WHEREAS the Federation of Students is the body responsible for empowering and representing students on issues that affect the overall accessibility and affordability of their education; and

WHEREAS University of Waterloo students make up a significant proportion of transit users; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students is responsible for the administration of the Undergraduate Universal Bus Pass (UPASS) at the University of Waterloo; and

WHEREAS the Region of Waterloo provides public transit for the campus communities in Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge and surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS the City of Stratford provides public transit service for University of Waterloo students enrolled at the Stratford Campus; and

WHEREAS the Region of Waterloo is installing a Light Rail Train system that will significantly impact transit routes across the region;

BIRT The Federation of Students will advocate to all relevant government bodies to ensure affordable, accessible, reliable, efficient transit systems such that all undergraduate students at the University of Waterloo are able to safely and easily travel to and from campus and within the Waterloo region; and

BIFRT The Federation of Students advocate for the University of Waterloo students to be considered a key stakeholder in strategic discussions around transit; and

BIFRT The Federation of Students take measures to educate and seek student feedback about the state of regional transportation issues and their associated costs;

BIFRT the Region of Waterloo, Grand River Transit and the Federation of Students collaborate in order to mitigate the impact of the development of Light Rail Transit on students;

BIFRT the Federation of Students communicate with the City of Stratford and students from the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus in order to better understand and advocate on public transit issues within the City of Stratford.

Gender Neutral Facilities

WHEREAS the Federation of Students and the University of Waterloo is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible learning and work environment for all members of the campus community; and

WHEREAS gender-neutral facilities improve safety in and access to bathrooms, on-campus residences, and change rooms;

BIRT The Federation of Students adopts an advocacy stance that gender-neutral facilities should be accessible to all members of the campus community including, but not limited to, bathrooms, change-rooms, and on-campus residences; and

BIFRT The Federation of Students adopts an advocacy stance that gender-neutral facilities should be integrated in all new, publicly accessible buildings at any University of Waterloo campus; and

BIFRT The Federation of Students adopts an advocacy stance that existing bathroom and change-room facilities should be retrofitted for all-gender use, where possible, at a minimum of one per faculty-associated building cluster.

Ancillary Fees

WHEREAS the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities has mandated that compulsory non-tuition related ancillary fees should remain under the control of students; and

WHEREAS all ancillary fees should be administered in an accountable and transparent manner; and

WHEREAS there are on-campus services that may need supplementary revenue to recover costs of providing those services to students;

BIRT student ancillary fees should only recover costs associated with providing services or activities offered and used only by students;

BIFRT the Federation of Students believes there should only be one protocol between full-time undergraduate students and the University administration to regulate ancillary fees, their introduction, and fee increases;

BIFRT all ancillary fees should be aptly named to describe the department or activity that they intend to fund;

BIFRT any new ancillary fees must be approved by the affected student body through a referendum of the relevant student association;

BIFRT any fee increases above CPI must be approved by a relevant governing body of the Federation of Students.

BIFRT the Ancillary Fee Protocol be overseen by a committee, comprised of a majority of students, to ensure that all ancillary fees remain transparent, student-regulated, and in the best interests of students.

Services

WHEREAS the Federation of Students expects the University to run essential services for students; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students recognizes the importance of student driven services; and

WHEREAS the Federation of students runs services primarily to fill gaps in the student experience that are not filled by the university and to further enhance the university experience; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students also runs services that will serve students more effectively when they are student-driven; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students has limited resources to provide student services and the loss of one service provides an opportunity to operate a new service.

BIRT the Federation of Students is willing to have its services be transferred to and run by the University provided that they meet the following criteria:

- The same or higher levels of service will be maintained;
- It is not essential for the service to be entirely student-driven;
- The Federation of Students are consulted ahead of the change; and
- The service will continue to have sufficient student input.

BIFRT students believe that the student clubs' system, student societies, Orientation Week, and special events serve students to their full potential by being student-run and student-driven; and therefore must always be run by the Federation of Students.

Student Space

WHEREAS student space is defined as space in which most students can comfortably: study, either independently or collaboratively; socialize; run and attend events unrelated to academics; play games; engage in physical activity; or enjoy a coffee or other snack; and

WHEREAS students have expressed a need for increased social and study space; and

WHEREAS student space on our campus has been in a continued decline since 1977; and

WHEREAS the University of Waterloo has less athletics, recreation, and study space than most other similarly sized Ontario Universities;

BIRT the University of Waterloo should increase the total square metres of study space to 12.0% of the actual inventory of space; and

BIFRT students should only be charged for the cost of building student space once it is completed to ensure that students are only paying for space they can use; and

BIFRT students should not pay for space that is primarily academic, service oriented, administrative, or not directly usable by students; and

BIFRT at minimum, the University should fund 50% of all study space; and

BIFRT the University should fund any space allocated for use by the University in its administrative activities, academic activities, or service activities through its operating budget; and

BIFRT the Federation of Students should seek to offset the cost of managing student space through external means and commercial operations; and

BIFRT students and student representatives should be consistently involved with the development of the plans for all student space; and

BIFRT students should have full management control of student space; and

BIFRT the consultation and negotiation process regarding all student space should strive to achieve the highest level of transparency and accountability, through constant communication with the student body; and

BIFRT student space should strive to accommodate students' technology needs; and

BIFRT the university should enhance existing spaces on campus to improve its student friendliness and use, by adding better seating, lighting, power sources, and work space; and

BIFRT any fee charged to students for student space must pass through referendum; and

BIFRT the Federation of Students believes that non-academic ancillary buildings should be eligible for funding from the provincial government; and

BIFRT students should either comprise the majority of a decision making body, or hold a percentage proportional to their financial contribution to the project budget, whichever is higher, in student buildings; and

Course and Instructor Evaluations

WHEREAS student course evaluations are currently used by all six Faculties at the University of Waterloo and the Centre for Extended Learning to assess course content, structure, and teaching quality; and

WHEREAS course evaluations are currently administered by individual Faculties, Schools, departments and units, not by the central administration of the University; and WHEREAS student course evaluations when used appropriately can provide important information regarding the quality of teaching, relevancy of course content, and course structure; and

WHEREAS students should not be primarily evaluating teachers on their knowledge of a subject or the provided course content as they may not have a strong enough background in the subject matter; and

WHEREAS the Students' Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) model is utilized by many universities for its adaptability to the needs of Faculties, departments, and individual instructors; and

BIRT student course evaluations should be administered centrally through the Office of Institutional Analysis & Planning;

BIFRT the Federation of Students recommends the SEEQ model of student course evaluations for use at the University of Waterloo; and

BIFRT student course evaluations should contain some questions that are the same across all faculties to provide common data for comparison, while providing opportunity for faculty-, department-, and instructor-specific questions; and

BIFRT student course evaluations should assess both the quality of the instructor and their teaching practices as well as the course structure itself; and

BIFRT student course evaluations should be administered both mid-term and at the end of the term to allow instructors to alter their teaching style in response to the evaluations; and

BIFRT faculty members should evaluate instructors' teaching abilities and knowledge and presentation of subject matter through peer evaluations; and

BIFRT the results of student course and peer evaluations should be made available to the University community through an authenticated access point; and

BIFRT the results of course and peer evaluations by students and faculty should be tied to faculty performance reviews, including tenure and promotions decisions, to incent teaching excellence and reward faculty with superior teaching methods and outcomes.

Student Discipline

WHEREAS the Federation of Students' seeks to maintain a fair and reasonable academic environment and to promote a culture of integrity for all campus community members at the University of Waterloo; and

WHEREAS integrity is a core value of an academic environment, involving honesty and truthfulness in one's actions, including the unique creation of one's own academic work, and attributing credit to others' work where quoted or referenced; and

WHEREAS the value of the education received at the University of Waterloo is only upheld when all faculty, staff, students, and administrators conduct their university-related activities with integrity; and

WHEREAS the University of Waterloo administration has taken steps to discipline the non-academic behavior of students when viewed to reflect negatively on the image and reputation of the University,

BIRT the Federation of Students supports education directed at all campus community members regarding maintaining integrity in all academic and university-related activities; and

BIFRT that the University of Waterloo should require faculty and staff to regularly update coursework and assessments to prevent inappropriate collaboration and academic misconduct; and

BIFRT the Federation of Students opposes the regulation and discipline of any non-academic off-campus conduct when an individual is not completing duties or responsibilities required of them by the University of Waterloo; and

BIFRT any suspected misconduct by a student should first be investigated by University staff designated for such purposes and thereafter discipline should be determined by a panel including student peers; and

BIFRT any disciplinary or punitive action must be directed only at the offending individuals, and never against a whole group of students associated with the offending individuals; and

BIFRT any disciplinary or punitive outcome of an investigation into academic or university-related non-academic discipline must be appealable by the disciplined student.

Grading Equity

Context

I have been receiving multiple complaints from students enrolled in ECON 371 (Business Finance I) about grading equity in their course. The grading system essentially penalizes students for good performance on their first and only midterm, whereas students who do poorly are given exclusive redemption options.

The grading scheme is as follows: If a student does 20% better on their final exam than on their midterm, their entire midterm mark will be discounted and shifted to the weight of their final exam.

To illustrate how this is unfair, consider the following example:

- Student A scores 71% on their midterm, and 90% on their final
- Student B scores 45% on their midterm, and 90% on their final
- As a result, Student A ends up with a final mark around 80, since their final exam mark was not 20% greater than their midterm mark
- Student B ends up with a final mark of 90%, since they received a final exam grade that exceeded a 20% difference from their midterm mark (their poor midterm mark was dropped)
- Meanwhile, although Student A and Student B had the same final exam mark, Student A did far better on the midterm yet still received a lower mark in the course

While some may argue that it is unlikely for a student to get 45% on a midterm and 90% on a final, this system is still unjust and inequitable. Student A may be a hard-working student who devotes all their effort into all tests, even if they know they could technically ‘throw’ the midterm to have their entire grading weight transferred to their final exam. Student B could be a student who decides to put minimal effort into the midterm because they know if they actually try to perform well on the final, they will be able to. Student B also realizes that by doing poor enough on the midterm, they are more likely to end with a difference greater than 20% between their midterm and final exam mark, causing their poor midterm mark to be dropped.

This creates an environment in which dishonest students can benefit from taking advantage of the system and putting less effort into the course prior to the final exam, only to end up with a higher mark than a student who consistently works hard throughout the course.

As a solution, instructors should devote a certain percentage of a student's mark to the weight of the assessment in which they perform better on, regardless of whether the assessment is a midterm or a final exam. So, if the final exam is worth 60% and the midterm is worth 30%, the remaining 10% would be added to the weight of the assessment in which the student performs better on. This dampens the impact of an unexpectedly poor performance (if the instructor wishes to do so) while still providing equal opportunity and benefits for all students.

The Policy

WHEREAS instructors should establish a learning environment through course design that challenges students to take all methods of assessment seriously, and

WHEREAS students should be able to reasonably expect that they will be graded in a fair and equitable manner, and

WHEREAS students should never be incentivized to not put forth their best effort on any coursework, now therefore be it

BIRT an instructor must only use final grade calculations that are explicitly communicated in the course syllabus; and

BIRT amendments to the syllabus, including new final grade calculations or optional bonus assignment, should only be allowed through unanimous consent of all those enrolled; and

BIRT if an instructor uses differing final grade calculations, they may only use the final grade calculation that corresponds to the highest final grade for the students; and

BIRT instructors should only assign the amount of coursework required to adequately evaluate the students enrolled in their course.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Access

WHEREAS the Federation of Students (Feds) recognizes the historical and persistent inequities and barriers to equitable participation that exist in society and on campus.

WHEREAS the Federation of Students strives to be an equitable and inclusive community, rich with diversity, preserving the human rights of all persons, and based upon understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of every person.

WHEREAS the Federation of Students upholds and promotes the values and policies outlined in the Federation of Students' [Mission and Value Statements](#), the University of Waterloo's [Policy 33 – Ethical Behaviour](#), the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#), and the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#); now, therefore, be it hereby

BIRT the Federation of Students upholds and promotes the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, based on the following understanding of these terms:

- Equitable treatment involves acknowledging diversity, recognizing and celebrating our differences, and eliminating the barriers that prevent the full participation of all peoples. ([Campus Climate](#), University of Minnesota Duluth);
- Diversity includes every aspect of a human being and all the ways in which people differ. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that is valued. Diversity includes visible and non-visible attributes that includes but is not limited to: race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, physical appearance, ideas, perspectives, and values. ([Glossary of Terms](#), University of California, Berkeley, Division of Equity and Inclusion; Trainer's Diversity Source Book);
- Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. ([Glossary of Terms](#), University of California, Berkeley, Division of Equity and Inclusion); and
- Accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. ([Understanding Accessibility](#), Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Trade, and Employment);

BIRT the Federation of Students will advocate for an equitable and inclusive community, rich with diversity, preserving the human rights of all persons, and based upon understanding and

mutual respect for the dignity and worth of every person; a community that ensures the opportunity for undergraduate students to participate as they see fit in a full range of activities.;

BIRT the Federation of Students will ensure to the greatest extent possible that all members enjoy the opportunity to participate as they see fit in the full range of activities that the Federation of Students offers, and to achieve their full potential as members of the Waterloo community;

BIRT the Federation of Students will ensure that its staff and volunteers receive diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility training to assist them to serve, empower and represent all undergraduate students of the University of Waterloo; and

BIRT the Federation of Students will undertake reasonable efforts to provide goods or services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities; including but not limited to access to Feds office space, meetings, and events.

Campus Wellness

WHEREAS the Federation of Students supports the definition of Wellness as “the capacities of each and all of us to think, feel, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of spiritual and emotional wellbeing that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections, and personal dignity” (Government of Canada, 2006). We recognize that Wellness it is not simply the absence of illness, but also the capacity of the campus community to support one another and promote healthy choices.

WHEREAS the Federation of Students continually strives to create a healthy, vibrant campus community, and acknowledges that this is in great part made possible by the wellbeing of the students;

WHEREAS this policy aims to reduce the proportion of students declaring mental illness; now, therefore, be it hereby

BIRT the Federation of Students will aim to reduce the barriers to access to service for students whose academic performance may be negatively affected by stress, anxiety, depression or other forms of mental illness;

BIRT the Federation of Students will raise awareness of and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and mental illness;

BIRT the Federation of Students will initiate and endorse activities, events and campaigns aimed towards promoting a healthy lifestyle, which includes but is not limited to nutrition, exercise, sleep in order to ensure that students’ mental health is adequately supported by their physical health;

BIRT the Federation of Students will advocate for better utilization of existing resources in Counselling and Health Services and reduced wait times for students;

BIRT the Federation of Students will form partnerships with the university administration, Campus Wellness, and other invested stakeholders in order to achieve these aims to the greatest efficiency and effect.

Resolved, that the Federation of Students will form committee(s) operating under the umbrella of Wellness as necessary in order to evaluate existing programs, endeavour to establish new ones, and advocate for change throughout campus.

English Language Proficiency

WHEREAS each Faculty at the University of Waterloo includes an English Language Proficiency Requirement; and

WHEREAS the Final Report of the Task Force on Support for English Language Competency Development at the University of Waterloo (the Final Report) was released in October 2012; and

WHEREAS the Final report provided the suggestion that the English Language Proficiency Examination (ELPE), as it is currently structured, be discontinued and the English Language Proficiency Requirement (ELPR) be re-visioned by each Faculty; and

WHEREAS the University plans to discontinue the ELPE as of Fall 2015; and

WHEREAS English admissions requirements may not be sufficient to prepare students for completion of their ELPR;

BIRT undergraduate students support the discontinuation of the ELPE as it is currently structured; and

BIFRT students support the English Language Proficiency Requirement as plan requirements providing discipline-specific English language development; and

BIFRT students support the use of a diagnostic examination or other evaluation mechanism to determine the suitable pathway for a student to complete their ELPR; and

BIFRT support for students should be provided for students to ensure successful completion of the ELPR; and

BIFRT the number of courses required to complete an existing degree should not be raised to include English Language Proficiency; and BIFRT tuition should not be charged for non-credit-granted English language course requirements that may be beyond existing degree requirements and not mandatory for completion of the ELPR.

Multi-Faith Spaces for Spiritual Practice and Study

WHEREAS the students of the University of Waterloo are comprised of different ethnicities, cultures and faiths; and

WHEREAS, the University strives to create an equitable and welcoming environment for all students as per the University of Waterloo's [Policy 33 – Ethical Behaviour](#), and the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#); and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students upholds and promotes religious freedom as part of its values and policies outlined in the Federation of Students' [Mission and Value Statements](#), and the University of Waterloo's [Policy 61– Religious Accommodations](#); and

WHEREAS, the University of Waterloo, as part of its [Strategic Plan](#) is committed to “enrich the student experience with a student-focused approach to services”;

BIRT the Federation of Students’ adopts an advocacy stance that multi-faith spaces for spiritual practice and study should exist on the main campus and on satellite campuses; and

BIFRT that multiple facilities should exist in various parts of the main campus so that they are conveniently accessible to all members of the campus community; and

BIFRT that the integration of these facilities should be considered in all new, publicly accessible buildings at any University of Waterloo campus to meet the needs of the growing student population.

Communications

WHEREAS the mission of the Federation of Students is to serve, empower and represent the undergraduate students at the University of Waterloo; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students is committed to respecting the diversity of its membership; then

BIRT all communication shall be free from discrimination based on, but not limited to: race; ancestry; place of origin; colour; ethnic origin; citizenship; creed/religion; sex; sexual orientation; age; record of offences; partnership status; family status; receipt of public assistance; mental or physical ability; and

BIFRT No communications shall be fraudulent, deceptive or misleading; and

BIFRT No communications shall be published for personal incentives or personal purposes; and

BIFRT No communications may compromise the mission and values of the Federation of Students in any shape or form.

WHEREAS the Federation of Students is committed to transparency and accountability in communications with its staff, membership and external partners; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Students understands that clear communication between its governance bodies and volunteers is important to the progress and success of the organization; and

WHEREAS Students' Council is responsible for determining the policies of the corporation, and the Board of Directors has fiduciary duty over the organization;

BIRT Council and Board communicate between each other and with staff; and

BIFRT any form of communication made on behalf of Feds, must not be against any stance adopted by Council or Board and must involve the Executive whose portfolio best fits with the topic; and

WHEREAS The Marketing and Communications Department leads the external marketing and communication efforts of the organization; then

BIFRT The Marketing and Communications Department inform the student community the ways their student union serves, empowers and represents them.

WHEREAS The Executives are the designated spokespeople for the organization;

BIRT it is the responsibility of the Executive to inform and educate their direct staff on organizational changes and media pieces relevant to that area of Feds; and

BIFRT if a member of the Executive team is unable to communicate on behalf of the Federation of Students they will designate an individual to speak on their behalf.

WHEREAS the Federation of Students Executive has goals for the corporation; then

BIRT these goals and strategies will align with the Feds Long-Range Plan Strategic Goals; and

BIFRT that the Executive publish their goals and strategies for their term in office within the first month to ensure that students are aware of the Executive goals and provide updates and progress to the student community.

Satellite Campus Policy

WHEREAS the University of Waterloo has three satellite campuses that offer undergraduate programs – the School of Pharmacy in Kitchener, the School of Architecture in Cambridge and the UW Stratford Campus in Stratford, Ontario;

WHEREAS all undergraduate students enrolled in courses in these satellite campuses pay the Federation of Students fee and are members of the Federation;

WHEREAS students on satellite campuses pay all or part of the university's Student Services Fee;

WHEREAS students on satellite campuses may face unique issues and challenges compared to students on main campus;

BIRT the Federation of Students executive or their designate shall strive to meet with student representatives of every University of Waterloo satellite campus at least once per academic term

BIFRT that the objective of these meetings shall be to identify any academic and/or non-academic campus life issues facing undergraduate students at each of the satellite campuses

BIFRT the Federation of Students Council shall strive to adopt specific policy and/or advocacy stances in order to address unique issues faced by students on satellite campuses and the executive or their designate shall advocate to the university and/or relevant level of government on these issues

BIFRT the Federation of Students shall actively promote its Student's Council (including open seats, committee positions and elections) to satellite campuses.

BIFRT the Federation of Students shall strive to improve access to Federation events and services for undergraduate students on satellite campuses

BIFRT the Federation of Students adopts an advocacy stance that students on satellite campuses must have adequate access to Health, Counselling, Athletics, Shuttle, academic advising, co-op services and any other university services for which they pay the Student Services Fee

BIFRT the Federation of Students adopts an advocacy stance that students on satellite campuses must not be charged through the Student Services Fee for any services not accessible to them

Political Non Partisanship

WHEREAS the Federation of Students acknowledges the necessity for our executive and key staff members to communicate with federal, provincial, regional and municipal politicians and parties and;

WHEREAS the Federation of Students is a politically active advocate on issues pertaining to students that will continue to highlight these issues but do so in a manner reflective of our position and the position of our members and affiliates;

WHEREAS maintaining political impartiality is essential to ensuring cordial working relations with all external political organizations and is crucial to our work as an advocacy organization and;

WHEREAS partisan political activities refers to a public activity, statement or message in support of, within or in opposition to a political party; a candidate; or someone seeking nomination as a candidate.

BIRT the Federation of Students as represented by the Executive agrees, so long as they hold office, to adhere to the following principles regarding external political organizations:

1. We will not, in any capacity be it electronic or in person, expressly endorse a municipal, regional, provincial or federal candidate or party.
2. We will not, in any capacity be it electronic or in person, make public statements that oppose a municipal, regional, provincial or federal candidate or party.

BIFRT the Federation of Students as represented by the Executive and all other full and part time employees and volunteers agree to adhere to the following principles in dealing with external political organizations:

1. We will not allow a candidate or political party to unilaterally use the Feds equipment, facilities, or other resources unless it is in conjunction with a Feds club and all external political

parties and candidates are given equal access, including, but not limited, to: posters, booths, and web servers.

2. We will not make public statements that attribute Feds support or opposition to a municipal, regional, provincial or federal candidate, party, policy or platform.

3. While at work or engaged in a Feds activity related to work, we will not promote or make statements, verbally or otherwise, that expressly endorse or oppose a municipal, regional, provincial or federal candidate or party.

BIFRT that any Feds clubs for which their primary activity is advocacy on behalf of a political party that is recognized by Elections Canada or Elections Ontario, are hereby exempt from the standard timelines regarding purging and inactive status.

BIRT the failure to observe these principles may result in warning, censure, or other disciplinary measures at the discretion of the Board.

Undergraduate Course Syllabi

Whereas the undergraduate calendar at the University of Waterloo requires all course instructors to develop a syllabus and provide it to students by the last day of the first week of classes;

Whereas the Federation of Students believes that unfettered access to course syllabi is essential for effective degree planning and a benefit to students' long term academic success; and

Whereas the Federation of students believes that the widespread and accessible circulation of course syllabi will enhance accountability and transparency and support the ability for students to independently verify whether or not courses are meeting the expected curricular standard;

Whereas the Federation of Students understands that course content may change from term to term, but believes that all students should have as much information as possible available to them when selecting courses;

BIRT the Federation of Students believes that all syllabi from the most recent undergraduate course offerings should be made available before the start of course selection period in a given term and, prior to the first day of class, a preliminary syllabus should be provided to the respective undergraduate faculty offices where a publically accessible digital repository of current and recent syllabi should always be maintained;

BIFRT after the first week of class, syllabi should only be changed with the unanimous consent of the students in said class and while course syllabi should clearly describe course structure, content and class-specific policies, the University should provide general, non-specific components with a one-time digital communique at the beginning of each term;

BIFRT the VP Education shall work with the undergraduate operations committee to ensure adherence across campus to this and related university policy on syllabi and the Academic Affairs Commission shall be responsible for liaising with the student societies on a regular basis to verify that each Faculty is updating their repository consistently.

Commercial Services

Whereas no entity on campus, Feds or otherwise, should have a commercial monopoly on providing services to students;

Whereas the Federation of students provides services to further enhance the student experience and to fill gaps in the student experience that are not filled by the university;

Whereas the Federation of Students recognizes the importance of student driven services and providing leadership opportunities for students is a key pillar of the Feds mandate;

Whereas it is not the intention of commercial services to profit at the expense of students and incidental profits, if any, are reinvested into students, student services and the overall undergraduate university experience;

BIRT commercial services will continue to ensure that the overwhelming majority of our employment opportunities are for students;

BIRT commercial services will ensure that students will have access to food and retail services twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week

BIRT commercial services will continue to offer products at reasonable and affordable rates based on a service driven, not for profit, breakeven philosophy;

Local Transit Policy

WHEREAS the majority of students in Waterloo use public transit to get to campus making transit a critical part of students ability to access and excel in post-secondary education;

WHEREAS a transit strike would be a significant barrier to accessing campus; and

WHEREAS the Toronto Transit Commission was deemed an essential service in 2011;

BIFRT the Federation of Students believes that the provincial government should legislate that local transit in the Waterloo Region be an essential service while still respecting transit workers' rights to negotiate for a fair and safe workplace conducive to high-quality student service; and

BIFRT the Vice President Education will lobby stakeholders to designate Grand River Transit an essential public service with the right to arbitration;

BIFRT the Vice President Education will be responsible for educating and informing students about disruptions of transit service in the case a strike should ever occur; and

BIFRT the Vice President Education should work with the University of Waterloo administration to develop university regulations regarding accommodations for students who are unable to access campus in the event of a transit strike.

With the proviso that this policy shall expire after one (1) years in the absence of a full review by Students Council.

Partial Grade Return

WHEREAS the academic withdrawal deadline is a crucial date in the academic term for every student; and

WHEREAS a course withdrawal beyond the termly deadline poses significant risks to a student's academic standing and continuing status at the University; and

WHEREAS it is critical that all students be provided with sufficient information regarding their standing in a course prior to the withdrawal deadline; and

WHEREAS the absence of a University regulations respecting the return of graded work on early grade returns facilitates a disparate and frustrating undergraduate academic experience, thereby exacerbating problems related to student stress and psychological wellbeing; and

WHEREAS ongoing assessment in courses is known to be significantly more effective than single, large cumulative assessments;

BIRT the Federation of Students believes that instructors should weight course material and return graded assignments such that students know the majority of their grade prior to the withdrawal deadline and thereby have sufficient opportunity to withdraw from a course with no academic penalty;

BIFRT the Vice President of Education, in concert with the Academic Affairs Commission, shall liaise with all relevant University committees, senior administrators, and the faculty association for the purpose of drafting a University regulation respecting the timely return of graded assignments, in accordance with this policy; and

BIFRT the aforementioned regulation shall include exceptions for nonconventional courses, including but not limited to capstone design projects, reading courses, and final-year theses.

FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
POLICY

Number: 46
Effective: April 2, 2017

Ombudsman's Office

Whereas the Federation of Students believes that organizations are most effective when they are committed to accountability and having the ability to report shortcomings in the institution;

Whereas pursuing the establishment of a new university position is a long lobbying process.

BIRT the Federation of Students calls upon the University of Waterloo to establish an ombudsman's office; and,

BIFRT The Federation of Students requests that the Federation be part of any consultation conducted on the establishment of an Ombudsman's office.

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response

Whereas the University of Waterloo has committed to fostering a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all community members and as the University has a responsibility to promote a safe and respectful environment;

Whereas the University of Waterloo has the ability to create policies and programs which can both assist in the prevention of sexual assault and shape the experience of those who are victims of sexual assault; and

Whereas the Federation of Students is committed to proactive and informed action to prevent and effectively respond to incidences of sexual assault;

Therefore, BIRT Feds calls on the University to empower the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator by providing them the resources, independence, autonomy and mandate to protect and serve the university community.

BIFRT the university shall ensure all students receive mandatory, wellgrounded and substantive sexual violence prevention and response education.

BIFRT the university commit to conducting periodic surveys to investigate the climate on campus.

BIFRT the university should conduct periodic, thorough and methodical campus safety audits.

BIFRT Feds shall also advocate for bystander intervention training on other drinking establishments on campus.