



Report on the Canadian Federation of Students - Ontario Annual General Meeting

August 2020

Attended by:

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Executive Summary

This is a report by the UTSU's delegation to the Canadian Federation of Students Ontario Annual General Meeting that took place on August 26, 27, and 28, 2020. This report will be submitted to the UTSU Board of Directors, and subsequently published to the UTSU's membership.

This Annual General Meeting was unlike any other that the UTSU has attended in its history as Local 98 of the CFS. With the COVID-19 pandemic making large in-person gatherings unsafe, this meeting was conducted over Zoom, the videoconferencing application. A motion was also adopted at the Opening Plenary of the Annual General Meeting that radically amended the agenda, and changed the structure of the general meeting overall.

For maximum clarity, this report outlines how the Annual General Meeting normally operates, as well as the changes that were made to this year's meeting structure and how it impacted the business of the Federation. It also outlines the motions that Local 98 submitted for consideration, and concludes with the final thoughts and reflections of the UTSU's delegation.



Terms

“CFS”/“CFS-O”/“CFS-Ontario”	The Canadian Federation of Students, or the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario; also referred to in this report as “the Federation”. Where necessary, the national CFS component is referred to as “CFS-National,” and the national services arm of CFS is referred to as “CFS-Services.”
“Circle”	Circle of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Students (Caucus)
“OSD”	Organizational and Services Development Committee
“Local”	A Member of the CFS; the local campus students’ union. For example, the UTSU is Local 98.
“Member”	Refers to the Locals within the CFS. Sometimes (and confusingly) used interchangeably with “Student Member,” which refers to a student holding membership in a CFS Member Local.
“NGM”/“OGM”/“AGM”	May refer to the National General Meeting, the Ontario General Meeting, or the Annual General Meeting of the CFS. Both the NGM and OGM are Annual General Meetings, of the national and provincial components respectively.
“Plenary”	CFS Meetings are based around the Opening and Closing Plenaries. The Opening Plenary is when all motions are considered and approved to send to the various committees. The Closing Plenary is the final decision making body of the General Meeting, wherein the various reports of the committees are considered by the Members. The Closing Plenary is where all final debate takes place.
“Constituency Group”	A Constituency Group, as defined by the CFS-NGM Delegate Guide, is “composed of individual delegates who share a common characteristic as recognized by the Federation.”
“Caucus”	A Caucus, as defined by the CFS-NGM Delegate Guide, is “a grouping of member local associations with common characteristics.”
“Ontario Executive Committee” or “OEC”	A group consisting of the Chairperson, National Executive Representative, Treasurer, and the seven (7) non-voting at-Large representatives, as well as one (1) representative from the thirty-four (34) Ontario Member Locals. The OEC acts as



	the Board of Directors for the CFS-Ontario under the <i>Ontario Corporations Act</i> .
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Structure of a CFS Ontario General Meeting

There is a complex organizational structure behind CFS meetings which will be explained within this section of the report. We will lay out the various organizational structures and how they work.

Meetings of the CFS-Ontario are much like the meetings of the National organization, with slight but meaningful differences. The biggest and most noticeable difference between the two organizations is the ability for Member Locals to have an automatic vote at every committee. This allows member locals to feel more free in their decisions, as they represent their own constituents -- unlike the National system of representing a Constituency Group/Caucus.

Purpose of the Meeting: to allow member locals to engage with the structure, campaigns and long-term plans of the CFS-Ontario. During the time between the Opening and Closing Plenaries of the meeting, delegates are allowed to attend various groups and sessions. Delegates are only permitted to attend the Constituency Groups and Caucuses representing a community they identify with. Each Member Local has the ability to submit motions to the CFS-Ontario for consideration prior to a General Meeting. These motions will be debated by the assembly, and a decision will be made at the Closing Plenary.

The Constituency Groups and Caucuses are as follows:

Constituency Groups:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women's Constituency Group 2. Two-Spirit/Queer Constituency Group 3. Students with Disabilities Constituency Group 4. Ontario Circle of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students Constituency 5. International Students Constituency Group 6. Racialized Students Constituency Group 7. Mature Students Constituency Group 8. Two-Spirit/Trans Spectrum Constituency Group 9. *Council of Constituency Representatives <p>*The Council of Constituency Representatives is composed of one (1) representative of each constituency group listed above.</p>
Caucuses:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ontario Graduate Caucus



2. Northern Region Caucus
3. Francophone and Bilingual Caucus
4. Part Time and Continuing Education Caucus

Constituency Groups and Caucuses

At the CFS-Ontario Annual General Meeting, UTSU delegates were able to register for Constituency Groups based on their individual demographic information. This would have allowed them to participate in discussions about advocating for the particular groups they belong to, as well as discussing motions that were presented to the CFS-O plenary sessions and committees.

- Muntaka Ahmed - registered for the Women’s Constituency Group and Racialized Students Constituency Group
- Tyler Riches - registered for the Two-Spirit/Queer Constituency Group
- Neeharika Hemrajani - registered for the International Students Constituency Group
- Fiona Reuter - registered for the Women’s Constituency Group

With the adoption of 2020/08:N03 at the Opening Plenary, Caucuses and Constituency Group meetings were postponed until September 2020, and so no meetings of Caucuses or Constituency Groups were held during this Annual General Meeting. This is explained in greater detail later in the report.

Committees and Forums

The Standing Committees are as follows:

Standing Committees and Forums
<p>Definitions from the Operations Policy on General Meetings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a draft budget for the upcoming fiscal year for submission to the closing plenary of the annual general meeting; ● Review and recommend budget adjustments for the remainder of the fiscal year to the closing plenary of the Annual General Meeting; ● Assess the availability of funds for proposed projects and/or purchases, including donations; and ● Undertake long-term financial planning for the Federation. 2. Campaigns and Government Relations Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess the recent and ongoing campaigns of the Federation; ● At the Annual General Meeting, adopt a campaigns and government relations plan for the year ahead, for presentation to the closing plenary, that includes but is not limited to goals of the campaigns;



- and
- Make general recommendations concerning the implementation of the campaigns and government relations plan, including:
 - Government relations strategy;
 - Research and information compilation;
 - Communications strategy;
 - Media strategy;
 - Membership mobilization; and
 - Coalition work.
- 3. Organizational and Services Development Committee
 - Review and make recommendations to closing plenary on the structure of the Federation, including:
 - The Ontario Executive Committee;
 - The Ontario office; and
 - All other structures of the Federation.
 - Review and make recommendations to closing plenary on the services of the Federation;
 - Review the development of the profile of the Federation within member local associations;
 - Review and make recommendations to the closing plenary on the communication tools of the Federation;
 - Review and make recommendations to the closing plenary on the development of new members; and
 - Review and make recommendations to the closing plenary on proposed amendments to the Federation's Bylaws and Operational Policy.
- 4. Policy Review and Development Committee
 - "The Policy Review and Development Committee shall review and make recommendations to closing plenary on proposed amendments to the Issues Policy of the Federation."

With the adoption of 2020/08:N03 at the Opening Plenary, Standing Committee meetings were cancelled, and so no meetings of the Standing Committees were held during this Annual General Meeting. The UTSU's delegates did not have an opportunity to attend any Standing Committees. This is explained in greater detail later in the report.



The Meeting

Our Motions

Below are the motions that we submitted to the CFS-Ontario Annual General Meeting for consideration. The COVID-19 pandemic had greatly affected the operations of the Federation, and the processes laid out under Bylaw II, regarding membership, certification, and decertification, were now inaccessible under physical distancing regulations. Our motions were aimed at providing solutions to these problems, and overall making the certification and decertification process more democratic and easier for everyday students to engage with.

Amended sections, or new items, are highlighted in **Yellow**:

Simple Motion on Online Voting (2020/08:N08) Recommended to Organizational and Services Development Committee
WHEREAS Bylaw II section 2.c.i. states that “voting must be conducted by paper ballot and cannot be conducted in any other manner;” and
WHEREAS Bylaw II section 2.c.i. states that “voting must take place at voting stations or, subject to the agreement of the Federation, at a general meeting of the prospective member association or by mail-out ballot;” and
WHEREAS Bylaw II section 4.c.i. states that “voting must be conducted by paper ballot and cannot be conducted in any other manner;” and
WHEREAS Bylaw II section 4.c.i. states that “voting must take place at voting stations or, subject to the agreement of the Federation, at a general meeting of the member association or by mail-out ballot;” and
WHEREAS elections and referenda administered solely by paper ballots are inaccessible to a variety of student demographics, including but not limited to students who commute to campus, students in co-operative education programs, exchange students, students on exchange, and students enrolled solely in online courses; and
WHEREAS online voting increases the accessibility of elections and referenda, allowing voters to cast their ballot anywhere and at any time, provided they have an Internet connection; and
WHEREAS online voting is more cost-effective than elections and referenda run exclusively with paper ballots, and reduces or eliminates error in tabulating votes; and
WHEREAS online voting reduces the environmental impact by reducing the papers, resources, and materials used to administer an election or referendum; and



WHEREAS popular online voting platforms, such as SimplyVoting, use robust encryption and security measures that detect unauthorized access, eliminate ballot tampering, and reduces the chance of voter fraud; and

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reduced on-campus operations at post-secondary institutions across Ontario; and

WHEREAS many Ontario post-secondary institutions will be operating remote classes in the upcoming academic year, greatly reducing the number of students on-campus; and

WHEREAS some students have moved residences as a result of the pandemic, and some are out-of-country as a result of the pandemic, ergo they do not have access to campus; and

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the operations of student organizations across Ontario, including the Federation; and

WHEREAS it is crucial that the Federation is able to adapt to the difficult circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and support member locals in doing the same; and

WHEREAS online voting would allow for certification and decertification referenda to continue, at a time when it is impossible to administer referenda with paper ballots; and

WHEREAS it is uncertain how long the COVID-19 pandemic will last, and implementing online voting would future-proof the Federation and its member locals; and

WHEREAS exploring the implementation of an online voting platform could allow the Federation to provide this service at a subsidized rate to interested member locals; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation commission a report on the implementation of online voting for elections and referenda of the Federation, to be submitted to the Ontario Executive Committee by April 1, 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report explore online voting platforms and procedures used at student organizations across the country, and the voter turnout rates in those elections and referenda administered using online voting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report determine the feasibility of the Federation using a pre-existing online voting platform for the purposes of certification and decertification referenda as stipulated in Bylaw II, and provide recommendations on any bylaw and policy changes that would be necessary to enable online voting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report determine the feasibility of the Federation building a secure proprietary online voting platform for the purposes of certification and decertification referenda as stipulated in Bylaw II, contracting student and youth programmers where possible, and provide recommendations on any bylaw and policy changes that would be necessary to enable online voting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report determine the feasibility of the Federation providing a subsidized and secure online voting platform for member locals to use to



administer their own internal elections and referenda, and provide a costed analysis for providing this service to member locals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that updates be provided to the Ontario Executive Committee on the status of this report at each meeting of the Ontario Executive Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon the receipt of this report by the Ontario Executive Committee, the Committee shall review the recommendations of this report, and take the necessary action to implement the report's recommendations, including submitting the necessary bylaw and policy changes to the next general meeting of the Federation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report be presented for information at the next general meeting of the Federation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report be distributed to all member locals prior to the next general meeting of the Federation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report be published electronically on the Federation's website in order to provide members of the Federation access to these recommendations.

Simple Motion on Online Petitions (2020/08:N09)
Recommended to Organizational and Services Development Committee

WHEREAS multiple clauses in Bylaw II section 4.a. indicate that a petition calling for a referendum on decertification from the Canadian Federation of Students - Ontario must be a physical paper petition; and

WHEREAS these clauses imply that an online petition would not be valid under this Bylaw; and

WHEREAS physical paper petitions are inaccessible to a variety of student demographics, including but not limited to students who commute to campus, students in co-operative education programs, exchange students, students on exchange, and students enrolled solely in online courses;

WHEREAS online petitions increase the accessibility of the democratic process, ensuring that students have the tools to start a petition and allowing students to sign a petition anywhere and at any time, provided they have an Internet connection; and

WHEREAS online petitions are more efficient than paper petitions, as it becomes easier to verify signatures and determine the validity of a petition; and

WHEREAS online petitions reduce the environmental impact by reducing the papers, resources, and materials used to organize and circulate a petition; and

WHEREAS organizations around the world administer online petition portals and recognize online petitions, including the Parliament of Canada through petitions.ourcommons.ca; and



WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reduced on-campus operations at post-secondary institutions across Ontario; and

WHEREAS many Ontario post-secondary institutions will be operating remote classes in the upcoming academic year, greatly reducing the number of students on-campus; and

WHEREAS some students have moved residences as a result of the pandemic, and some are out-of-country as a result of the pandemic, ergo they do not have access to campus; and

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the operations of student organizations across Ontario, including the Federation; and

WHEREAS it is crucial that the Federation is able to adapt to the difficult circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and support member locals and students in doing the same; and

WHEREAS online petitions would allow for petitions calling for a referendum on decertification from the Federation to continue, at a time when it is impossible to administer physical paper petitions; and

WHEREAS it is uncertain how long the COVID-19 pandemic will last, and implementing online petitions would future-proof the Federation and its member locals; and

WHEREAS some member locals use petitions for their own internal processes, such as to call for referenda on fee increases or for removal from office procedures; and

WHEREAS exploring the implementation of an online petitions portal could allow the Federation to provide this service at a subsidized rate to interested member locals; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation commission a report on the implementation of online petitions for submission to the Federation, to be submitted to the Ontario Executive Committee by April 1, 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report explore online petition portals, the legality and precedent of online petitions, and procedures used by organizations within the country and around the world; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report determine the feasibility of the Federation building a secure proprietary online petitions portal for the purposes of petitions calling for decertification referenda as stipulated in Bylaw II, contracting student and youth programmers where possible, and provide recommendations on any bylaw and policy changes that would be necessary to enable online petitions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report determine the feasibility of the Federation providing access to a secure online petitions portal for member locals to use to administer petitions for their own internal processes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that updates be provided to the Ontario Executive Committee on the status of this report at each meeting of the Ontario Executive Committee; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon the receipt of this report by the Ontario Executive Committee, the Committee shall review the recommendations of this report, and take the necessary action to implement the report's recommendations, including submitting the necessary bylaw and policy changes to the next general meeting of the Federation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report be presented for information at the next general meeting of the Federation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report be distributed to all member locals prior to the next general meeting of the Federation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this report be published electronically on the Federation's website in order to provide members of the Federation access to these recommendations.

Changes to Certification & Decertification Process (2020/08:N10)
Recommended to Organizational and Services Development Committee

WHEREAS the petitioning process required to initiate a vote of decertification as stated in Bylaw II, Section 1.a.vi requires that students collect the signatures of 15% of the population of its member local association; and

WHEREAS member local associations are not permitted to initiate the petition process in any official capacity, requiring student members to organize such a process independently of the member local association; and

WHEREAS many member local associations operate within sprawling and/or decentralized campus systems, making it difficult for their students members to mobilize any meaningful cross campus operation in a timely or feasible manner independent of the Executives and/or Board of Directors of their member local association; and

WHEREAS students wishing to petition the Federation to initiate the process of decertification must commit to countless hours of unpaid labor in order to obtain the proper number of signatures indicated in Bylaw II, Section 1.a.vi., especially if the member local association represents many tens of thousands of students; and

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of a member local association may not easily be able to obtain and/or compose a full list of its constituent members; and

WHEREAS an independent group of students who wish to petition the Federation with no connection to their University's administration may have an even more difficult time trying to obtain and/or compose such a list; and



WHEREAS the ambiguity as to the number of students affiliated with a member local association at any given time makes it difficult to ascertain what number would constitute 15% of its members; and

WHEREAS amending Bylaw II, section 1.a.vi to include the option of gaining a minimum number of petition signatures rather than a percentage would make it more accessible for students of a member local association wishing to initiate the process of decertification to gain the appropriate number of signatures; and

WHEREAS schools thinking about initiating the certification process to join the Federation, who may have concerns about the previously described difficulties and inaccessibility of the decertification process, may be more inclined to join the Federation if the process was made more accessible; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that Bylaw II section 1.a. be amended as follows, and all subsequent clauses renumbered as needed:

a. Membership Status – Full Membership

i. A local students' association in Ontario is eligible to apply for full membership only if its members have approved full membership in a referendum held within the preceding nine (9) months. The referendum must have included approval of a membership fee totalling the Canadian Federation of Students fee, the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario fee, and the Canadian Federation of Students-Services fee.

ii. The official wording for a referendum to join the Federation shall include only the following:

- "Do you wish to become a member of the Canadian Federation of Students?"

iii. Full membership status becomes effective at such time as it is approved by:

- The plenary of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario; or

- The plenary of the Canadian Federation of Students.

iv. The Federation's full membership fee for each member local association comprised exclusively of full-time students, or of both full and part-time students, shall be no less than \$2.50 per semester, or \$5.00 per academic year, per local association individual member, pro-rated as per the practice of the member local association with regard to the levying of its local association fee. The Federation's full membership fee for each member local association comprised exclusively of part-time students, shall be no less than \$1.25 per semester, per local association individual



member, pro-rated as per the practice of the member local association with regard to the levying of its local association fee.

v. Beginning in 1996, the Federation's membership fee shall increase on August 1 each year by the rate of increase in the national Consumer Price Index during the previous calendar year.

vi. Students collectively belonging to a member local association will have the sole authority to initiate, by petition signed by either fifteen per cent (15%) of the students or three-thousand (3000) students, whichever is less, and served to the Federation's Executive Committee, a vote on decertification as described in this Bylaw, and that also entails a vote on decertification in the Canadian Federation of Students, subject to compliance with the Bylaws of the national chartering organization.

vii. The students collectively belonging to a member local association have the right to have their interests represented collectively in the Federation through their member local association, but, for greater certainty, are not members of the Federation and accordingly will not have voting rights at Federation general meetings.

Changes to Certification & Decertification Process (2020/08:N11)
Recommended to Organizational and Services Development Committee

WHEREAS Bylaw II, Section 4.a.i states that "a petition calling for a vote on decertification in the Canadian Federation of Students– Ontario" must be "circulated, collected and submitted by individuals belonging to the member local association;" and

WHEREAS the process of certifying a member of the Federation simply requires a vote of the local member association's board of directors as outlined in Bylaw II, Section 1.b.i. instead of a petition; and

WHEREAS Bylaw II, Section 1.a.vii states that "members of the Federation [...] will not have voting rights at Federation general meetings," but are instead represented by the Executives of their local member associations at said meetings; and

WHEREAS local member associations that act as the sole representatives of their students at meetings of the Federation cannot trigger a referendum of decertification by way of a vote of their board of directors in the same way they can trigger a referendum on certification through an application for prospective membership; and

WHEREAS a referendum on decertification should be discussed with the constituents of a local member of association prior to the initiation of the decertification process; and

WHEREAS General Meetings are the best way for local member associations to interact with their members in determining whether their student members want to decertify; and



WHEREAS providing an option for a local member association's Board of Directors vote as an alternative to a petition option to decertify would save both the Federation and local member associations money in administration and staffing costs to certify petition signatures; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that Bylaw II, Section 1.a be amended as follows and all subsequent clauses renumbered as needed:

1. *Membership*

General Description – There is one (1) category of member of the Federation: local student associations representing individual students who have been admitted as members by the Federation (the “member local association”). Membership entails membership in the chartering organization, Canadian Federation of Students.

a. Membership Status – Full Membership

i. A local students' association in Ontario is eligible to apply for full membership only if its members have approved full membership in a referendum held within the preceding nine (9) months. The referendum must have included approval of a membership fee totalling the Canadian Federation of Students fee, the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario fee, and the Canadian Federation of Students-Services fee.

ii. The official wording for a referendum to join the Federation shall include only the following:

- “Do you wish to become a member of the Canadian Federation of Students?”

iii. Full membership status becomes effective at such time as it is approved by:

- The plenary of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario; or

- The plenary of the Canadian Federation of Students.

iv. The Federation's full membership fee for each member local association comprised exclusively of full-time students, or of both full and part-time students, shall be no less than \$2.50 per semester, or \$5.00 per academic year, per local association individual member, pro-rated as per the practice of the member local association with regard to the levying of its local association fee. The Federation's full membership fee for each member local association comprised exclusively of part-time students, shall be no less than \$1.25 per semester, per local association individual member, pro-rated as per the practice of the member local association with regard to the levying of its local association fee.



v. Beginning in 1996, the Federation's membership fee shall increase on August 1 each year by the rate of increase in the national Consumer Price Index during the previous calendar year.

vi. Students collectively belonging to a member local association will have the authority to initiate, by petition signed by not less than fifteen per cent (15%) of the students and served to the Federation's Executive Committee, a vote on decertification as described in this Bylaw, and that also entails a vote on decertification in the Canadian Federation of Students, subject to compliance with the Bylaws of the national chartering organization.

vii. The member local association will additionally have the authority to trigger a vote on decertification as described in this Bylaw, and that also entails a vote on decertification in the Canadian Federation of Students, subject to compliance with the Bylaws of the national chartering organization. Students may propose a motion to initiate a vote on decertification at their member local association's general meeting that must pass with a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of those present. The motion must then pass with a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of those present at the member local association's Board of Directors before being served to the Federation's Executive Committee.

viii. The students collectively belonging to a member local association have the right to have their interests represented collectively in the Federation through their member local association, but, for greater certainty, are not members of the Federation and accordingly will not have voting rights at Federation general meetings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Bylaw II, Section 4 be amended as follows:

4. Vote to Decertify

Students belonging to a member local association may vote on whether to decertify, by petition or by a conditioned vote of the board of directors of a member local association subject to the following rules and procedures:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a new Bylaw II, Section 4, article b. be included and all subsequent letters changed to fit the new article:

b. Vote of the Local Member Association Board of Directors

i. A decision calling for a vote on decertification in the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, that has been approved by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of the local member association's General Meeting and subsequently, by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority at the local member association's Board of Directors. A letter signed by legal counsel that witnessed both votes at the general meeting and board of directors must be delivered by registered mail to the head office of the Federation not less than six (6) months prior to the vote;



ii. The letter and decision must include the exact dates of the proposed vote, provided that there shall be no fewer than two (2) and no greater than five (5) days of voting. No vote on decertification shall be scheduled between April 15 and September 15 or between December 15 and January 15;

iii. There shall be no more than two (2) votes on decertification in any three-month period. In the event that there are more than two (2) valid letters calling for a vote on decertification during any three-month period, the Executive Committee shall:

- Consider the letters in the order in which they are received; and

- Schedule alternate voting dates for the third and subsequent letters that call for a vote on decertification within any three-month period.

iv. The motion to vote on decertification at a local member association must include the wording as follows: "Be it resolved that the _____ request from the Executive Committee of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario to conduct a vote on decertification from the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario," with the blank being filled by the name of the local member association;

v. The original, unaltered letter must be delivered in its entirety. Letters that are not original copies, have been altered in any manner, or have been received by any means other than registered mail are not valid.

vi. In order to be valid, the letter must contain an original signature from legal counsel and a representative of the local member association;

vii. The Executive Committee will have the sole authority to determine whether the petition described in Bylaw 2, Section 5.a. Is in order;

viii. Failure to adhere to the provisions in Article 5(a) shall invalidate the results of the vote.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following change be implemented into the new article "h":

h. Minimum Period Between Decertification Votes

In addition to Articles a. to **h.**, in order for a vote on decertification to take place, a member local association may not have held a vote on decertification within the previous twenty four (24) months.

Changes to Certification & Decertification Process (2020/08:N12)
Recommended to Organizational and Services Development Committee



WHEREAS Bylaw section 4.a.vii states that “in order to be valid, a name on a petition must be reasonably legible, include the proper full name, be accompanied by a valid and corresponding student identification number and a unique signature;” and

WHEREAS the requirement for members of the Federation to use their proper full name could result in transgender students being required to sign with their deadname; and

WHEREAS students who are members of the Federation and have chosen to reside in Canada may exclusively or frequently use a preferred or alternative name rather than their given full name; and

WHEREAS the student identification number is the most critical piece of information; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that Bylaw II section 4.a.vii. be amended to delete the word “proper,” as follows:

vii. In order to be valid, a name on a petition must be reasonably legible, include the full name, be accompanied by a valid and corresponding student identification number and a unique signature;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that “full name,” for the purposes of Bylaw II, be interpreted as the petition signer’s preferred full name.

Motion 2020/08:N03

The first member motion that was presented on the agenda was 2020/08:N03, moved by Local 97: the Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students at the University of Toronto (APUS). It proposed a revised AGM agenda that included consideration of the proposed 2020-2021 budget and the audited financial statements, the election of the 2020-2021 at-large executives and the 2021-2022 at-large executives, and any emergency motions submitted for consideration. This effectively removed most member-submitted motions from the AGM agenda, and cancelled committees, caucuses, and constituency groups. This motion was considered immediately following the approval of the plenary agenda.

The motivation that was given by APUS was largely based on feedback from the Circle of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Students; some of that caucus’ members had expressed concerns over the lack of access to internet or adequate technology. This presented accessibility concerns around the AGM. There were also concerns about the length of the AGM agenda and how long delegates would be on Zoom; most days ran from roughly 9:00am to 9:00pm. This would present mental and physical health detriments for AGM attendees.

After amendments to 2020/08:N03, it was decided that all motions that were not being dealt with at this AGM would be forwarded to the Ontario Executive Committee for consideration. If the Executive Committee were unable to deliberate



on a motion -- for example, if a bylaw change were proposed -- the motion would be considered at next year's Annual General Meeting. Additionally, while committees would remain cancelled, constituency groups and caucuses would meet throughout September to deliberate on the motions being forwarded to the Ontario Executive Committee, in order to provide advice and recommendations to the Committee. A small number of emergency motions would remain on the AGM agenda.

2020/08:N03 was adopted by the plenary. The UTSU delegation abstained.

Outcomes & Concluding Thoughts

With the passing of 2020/08:N03, the CFS-Ontario Annual General Meeting agenda was shortened considerably. Now, the only substantive items over the course of the three days were Opening Plenary on August 26, the Elections Forum on August 27, and Closing Plenary on August 28. None of the motions that the UTSU submitted met the threshold to be considered "emergency" motions. While we are waiting for confirmation, we believe that our first two motions, 2020/08:N08 and 2020/08:N09, will be considered by the Ontario Executive Committee at its next meeting, likely in October. However, because 2020/08:N10, 2020/08:N11, and 2020/08:N12 all proposed bylaw amendments, we don't believe that these will be considered until next year's Annual General Meeting.

Constituency Groups will be meeting before September 30 to deliberate on the motions being forwarded to the Ontario Executive Committee. The UTSU delegation will be participating in these meetings, and the UTSU Vice-President Public & University Affairs will provide updates to the Board of Directors in the coming months as to the progress and status of these meetings, the Ontario Executive Committee, and the fate of the UTSU's motions.

CFS Budget

While most of the substantive debate of the CFS-OGM was pushed to the OEC, the Closing Plenary did offer us a chance to review the 2020/2021 budget. Although we were certainly appreciative of this chance to ask questions, it was disappointing to see that there was so little time devoted to reviewing such a large budget. This was especially concerning as 2020/08:N03 prevented the Budget Committee from meeting. The UTSU delegation raised concerns with the time, and were supported by other locals in this. Nevertheless, CFS-O 2020/2021 budget was approved. We did raise a fair number of questions to the CFS-O At-Large Executive, which are summarized further in-depth below, along with the responses we received. It should be noted that we were often disappointed with the quality and clarity of their answers, and often had to repeat our questions.

Logistical Questions

We asked a number of logistical questions, including: 1) where items like legal costs would fall under, 2) clarification about why the allocation to the Two-Spirit/Trans Spectrum Constituency was only \$100 versus the \$1000 for other constituencies, 3) why the anticipated revenue from donations was substantially less than the past fiscal year, and the 4) differences between their 2019/2020 budget and actuals. Respectively, we received the following answers: 1) legal costs were mostly under the item 'Professional Fees', 2) the allocation difference was a typo and will be fixed, 3) the current situation meant they anticipated less donations, and 4) the differences were due to large under-budgeting for SCI.

The UTSU delegation also commented on the budget's readability and ease of use, as most member-serving organizations strive to make a comprehensible budget. We received assurance that this would be noted for next year.

COVID-19 Questions

We also asked a number of questions about changes made with respect to COVID-19. Primarily, we were wondering why there were still in-person costs associated with the OEC meetings, which have been taking place online at the time of writing. Unfortunately, we received no answer to this and why there were still these in-person expenses being incurred. Additionally, we also commented on what could be a mis-step in their long-term financial planning. A large portion of the expenses for the OGM were removed this year (as it was held online), thereby causing concern as to how their budget - and other items who received higher allocations this year - would be impacted when this item again needed more funding. We asked what their plan to readjust was, and received no clear answer, even after repeating the question twice.

CFS Financial Structure

Moreover, we also asked about the schedule for collecting membership fees, as locals collect their fees at different times over the course of the year, and subsequently how this impacts the spending of the CFS-O over the course of the year if some fees wouldn't be collected until later. We received no clear answer.

Further, we asked for more information on the usage of their contingency fund. While of course, this is a normal financial practice to have such a fund, we wanted to know more about why the transfer to the Contingency Fund was \$25,000 this year, versus only \$5,000 last year. We also asked for an example - besides SCI - of when they had accessed and used their contingency fund. We did not receive much of an answer to the first part of our question, besides a



reaffirmation of the importance of contingency funds. The only example the At-Large Executive could offer of the Contingency Fund being used was SCI.

Finally, we asked about the financial relationship between CFS-Services, CFS-National, and CFS-Ontario. We were told that part of the national budget is slotted into overall revenue, and part goes to the campaigns and services schedules. Services are offered both provincially and nationally, and there is a separate budget for both CFS-National and CFS-Services.

Budget vs. Actuals

We further asked about changes between the budget and actuals of 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021. In particular, the UTSU delegation asked about Schedule 2: Campaigns & Government Relations, and the changes between the original 2019/2020 budget, 2019/2020 actuals, and the substantive 2020/2021 allocation. The Executives overviewed the campaigns and projects that had been run under Schedule 2, but we still wondered where they received such a massive amount of additional funding from. We also got a chance to ask about the changes to staff wages. Under many schedules, the item 'Wages' increased substantially, but we noticed there was no comparative increase in 'Benefits & Employer Expenses'. We were told that this was because a fair number of staff were laid off the previous fiscal year, and were then rehired this year.

Concluding Thoughts

Overall, this Annual General Meeting was disappointing. The vast majority of member-submitted motions were postponed, including all five of the UTSU's motions. While the need for meeting accessibility is certainly important, we don't believe that the Federation did enough to find alternative solutions to ensure all delegates could adequately participate. As a result, many important motions were left unaddressed. While this is the first year that campus media was allowed to attend the plenary sessions (see "Resources & Further Reading" for *The Varsity's* coverage of this meeting), the vast majority of motions will be debated without media presence at the Ontario Executive Committee, or forwarded to next year's Annual General Meeting.

As for our five motions regarding the decertification process, it's frustrating that the CFS will not be adapting their bylaws in time to ensure that despite most campuses operating remotely this year, student members can still exercise their one right under the CFS bylaws: the right to initiate the certification and decertification processes. COVID-19 will now render this process impossible for at least the next year.



Past UTSU reports have cited a toxic and unwelcoming environment at CFS general meetings, however our delegation generally did not experience this. This may be attributed to the online nature of the general meeting, and the overall lack of opportunities for our delegates to engage in the meeting with the passage of 2020/08:N03. However, we did have a similar observation as past UTSU delegations regarding the CFS' use and adaptation of Roberts' Rules of Order. Whenever a motion was being discussed, the Chair would allow a speaker's list of 3 speakers in favour and 3 speakers against. Once that list was exhausted, a motion was needed to extend the speaker's list. This is an extremely restrictive procedure that can muffle debate and discussion. In our experience, it also made it difficult to raise points in discussion that were neither in-favour or against, but were rather intended to provide context or a new perspective for other delegates to consider. Since we were forced to speak either in-favour or against, we had to carefully word both our questions and our discussion points as points of information, in order to navigate around this rule. This speaker's list format is not provided for in the 12th edition of Roberts' Rules of Order, but is rather the CFS' own procedure.

Regarding the budget, we did not receive strong answers to many of our questions. We were concerned to learn that the Budget Committee would not be meeting as a result of the passage of 2020/08:N03, despite the fact that the proposed budget would still be debated at Closing Plenary. As a result, we debated a \$2 million annual budget for roughly half an hour. The UTSU delegation ultimately abstained from the approval of the budget.

Finally, due to a weird solution to the recent move to one annual general meeting a year, rather than two semi-annual general meetings, the new CFS-O At-Large Executives were elected for both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 terms. This election raised a number of concerns amongst our delegation, and confusion as to why we were electing the next two executives. In order to be eligible to run, a candidate must either be a current delegate of the general meeting, or currently be an At-Large Executive. This can result in executives running for multiple consecutive terms, with no term limits. This also allows non-students, such as full-time student union staff, to run for these executive positions and represent students in an official capacity within the organization. Unique to this meeting, the 2020-2021 At-Large Executives were elected and took office immediately, with their terms ending on April 30, 2021, while the 2021-2022 At-Large Executives were elected at this meeting to serve from May 1, 2021 to April 30, 2022. The reason for this irregularity was cited to be that there will not be another general meeting until summer 2021, after the 2021-2022 executive is supposed to take office. However, this could have been solved by a Special General Meeting taking place prior to April 30, 2021. This alternative solution was not proposed by the CFS-O.



The candidates for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 At-Large Executives were the same, and all ran unopposed. The 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 CFS-O Chairperson is Sébastien Lalonde. The 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 CFS-O National Executive Representative is Kayla Weiler, who currently serves as the CFS-O National Executive Representative. The 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 CFS-O Treasurer is Sarah Abdillahi, the current President of the Scarborough Campus Students' Union (SCSU).

Resources & Further Reading

- [CFS-Ontario: Bylaws- Amended as of August 2019](#)
- [CFS-Ontario Issues Policy: Amended as of August 2019](#)
- [CFS-Ontario Operations Policy: Amended as of August 2019](#)
- [2015 UTSU Draft Report on the CFS](#)
- [2018 UTSU Report on the November CFS NGM](#)
- [2019 \(June\) UTSU Report on the CFS National S-AGM](#)
- [2019 \(August\) UTSU Report on the CFS-Ontario AGM](#)
- [2019 \(November\) UTSU Report on the CFS National AGM](#)
- ["UTSU's proposed decertification motions at CFS-O General Meeting forwarded to executive committee," *The Varsity*, September 7, 2020.](#)