

2022.03.21

Respecting the LSA Constitution:

- Article **VIII-B** "Voting at a General Meeting shall be by a show of hands unless requested to be by secret ballot by a majority of members present at the meeting."
 - o **Move** to have votes done by secret ballot for the following amendments, which relate to race / racism. LSA Council has acknowledged in the past that these are sensitive topics. Under secret ballot, students will feel more comfortable voting with their own conscience as opposed to feeling pressured based on who they may think they need to please.
 - # 12 to Article V S.15 (land acknowledgements)
 - # 18 to Article III S.3 (diversity training)
 - # 21 to Article III S.2 (harassment policy and code of conduct)
- Article **VIII-D** "All L.S.A. members will be notified at least seven (7) days prior to a General Meeting of any proposed amendments."
 - o **Ask** the LSA executive: when was notice of these amendments first made to LSA members?
 - o This is important, because amending our Constitution is a significant thing to do, and we need enough time for members to be able to review and consider amendments, and to prepare to discuss them at the General Meeting.
 - o It is up the LSA Council to interpret its own Constitution (Article III-2-I), but I would suggest that "notify" in Article VIII-D would require something more than communicating generally that some amendments will be proposed. We already know that amendments can be proposed at a General Meeting; Article VIII-D seems to have the purpose of requiring notice with meaningful description of the amendments so that students can be prepared to discuss them.

Respecting the "land acknowledgements" amendment:

- From a meme I saw this week: "Tradition is just peer pressure from dead people". As an overall frame for thinking about what should go into our Constitution, I think about when we are justified to bind future years of students to do things rather than leaving those things up to the discretion of those students.
- Importantly, there is nothing currently preventing the chair from doing a land acknowledgement, as we can see the current chair is doing so without any constitutional requirement.
- One question for us to ask is whether we want to put into the DNA of the LSA that this body will explicitly take a stance on political, philosophical, or legal issues.
- As I understand it, the point of a land acknowledgement is something like how SCC has talked about reconciliation in a legal sense. It is a yet-unresolved philosophical, political, and legal issue of reconciling Crown sovereignty with the error that sovereignty was based on to begin with, being the failure to recognize pre-existing sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples.

- Another question to consider relates to the confrontation of conscience that a land acknowledgement invites us into. For instance, we may be forced to ask whether our actions match our words when making a land acknowledgement for those of us who continue to enjoy the rights and privileges stemming from Crown sovereignty. Or are we just paying lip service? There is perhaps an ironic result that compelling a land acknowledgement through the Constitution could result in students simply going through the motions, whereas making it a discretionary decision might be a better vehicle to bring about the confrontations of conscience that land acknowledgements are meant to provoke.

Respecting the “diversity training” amendment:

- I would divide the question, since my concern is less with whether there is diversity training and more with the diversity training offered from USSU.
- I have taken the USSU training, and it could not possibly be more politically partisan. What I mean is that some students will find it aligns with their politics and think it is very good, while other students will find it terrible.
- The Dean of our own College has recently issued a letter stating that faculty will dedicate resources to helping students have better tools to go about pursuing diversity. I would suggest it is a better idea to wait for the College to take leadership, rather than turn to the USSU training option.
- To expand, the USSU training eschews intellectual and political diversity. I am of the view that neither diversity nor inclusion can be achieved downstream from such an approach. What could sway my view is if anyone had data to show that this kind of training does in fact improve diversity and inclusion more broadly.