



A How-To Guide to Submitting Motions at MSVUSU Annual General Meetings

Overview of the rules:

Any student may submit a motion. In order to be considered, motions must be received by the Vice President of Communications via email to suvpcomm@msvu.ca no later than January 25th, 2021. This deadline is in accordance with the timelines established by the Union's bylaws. Motions can be put forward to create or amend bylaws, policies, operations or campaigns, among other things.

Motions cannot be submitted by fax or mail.

Motions submitted in accordance with the bylaws will be circulated to Mount Students in the second notice for the Annual General Meeting, which will be distributed no less than **10** days before the general meeting at which they are to be considered.

General guideline for motions:

Pay attention to format

Motions have two clause types, 'Whereas' clauses and 'Be it resolved' clauses. Whereas clauses provide context to your motion and are not debatable. They provide readers with the necessary information to understand why the motion is necessary. This information may include what problem the motion is addressing, who benefits from the motion and any background information or facts that support the motions context. Be it resolved clauses direct a specific action, are debatable, amendable and binding if the motion passes. Be it resolved clauses must be clear and complete, meaning that they contain all the information required to direct the action you are looking for.

Some questions to consider when writing your motion's Be it resolved clauses;

- What needs to be done?
- Who should do it?
- When is it due?

Key reasons to submit a motion.

Address a current issue or event

Motions can be used to address current issues. This may include directing the MSVUSU to make a public statement, to take a formal position on an issue, to engage in advocacy on an issue, or to take some action you believe will address the issue or event.

Create a campaign

Campaigns are large scale, deliberate collective action and lobbying used to address an issue or raise awareness on something. For example, you may wish for the MSVUSU to create a campaign that seeks to improve consent culture on campus, or one that seeks to improve online course delivery. When defining the campaign you want created, think about the minimum requirements for success, and the position you want the campaign to come from. For example, a campaign to improve online course delivery may require the MSVUSU to conduct surveys on the topic, and educate students faculty and staff on the results. You may also have a specific change in mind that you want included in the campaign; be sure to describe that in your be it resolved clauses.

Create or change an operation

Operations are services provided to you by the MSVUSU. These include the Fountain Play Center, The Food Bank, The Hub, and others. A list of current services is available at **LINK**. If there is an operation missing that you would like the MSVUSU to create and run, be sure to include information on what the operation should do, the goal it seeks to accomplish, and any specific things you want included in the new operation. If there is an existing operation, and there is something about it you want changed, be sure to both name the operation and describe the change fully in your motion.

Change a policy, by-law, or the constitution

All changes to the Constitution, By-Laws, and policy need to be reviewed by the Constitution and Policy Planning Committee (CPP) before they are finalized. There are two ways to direct a change to these documents; by recommending a change in general terms, or recommending a specific change to the text.

If your motion proposes a change in general terms, and that motion passes, CPP would then update the relevant documents to include the change, and bring the updated documents to a subsequent meeting for approval. For example, if you wanted council members to have regular online office hours, you could propose a motion requiring council members to hold office hours. CPP would then update the relevant governing documents and bring them to a subsequent meeting for approval. Similarly, if there is new By-law or policy you want written, you can propose a motion that includes the topics you want addressed in the new document and a directive for CPP to write the new document. A motion in this form may read

Be it resolved that CPP be directed to draft a By-Law addressing/requiring ...

Alternatively, you can direct the amendment or creation of a governing document by recommending a specific text for the change. If the motion passes, CPP would review the recommended changes and bring them to a subsequent meeting for approval. The Be it resolved clauses for these motions would read

Be it resolved that By-Law ___ be created/amended to address _____; and

Be it further resolved that the following text be recommended to CPP for adoption:

Type the By-law text here, including the title, headings, numbering etc.

Clear language is the way to go

Often times, the post-secondary sector trains us to write in very technical and complex ways. However, inaccessible language can limit the number of members that can understand your motion. It is important to use clear, direct language to get your point across.

What does writing a motion with clear language look like?

- - Use words that all readers can understand
- - Use sentences that are clear, direct and short
- - Include only one main idea per resolution
- - Avoid too many statistics or acronyms that may be confusing to readers of your motion

Comparing Clauses	
Vague	Clear
Be it resolved that the MSVUSU hold events to improve mental health on campus.	Be it resolved that the MSVUSU hold online social events to improve mental health on campus; and Be it further resolved that these events occur at least once a month; and Be it further resolved that the VP Student life will plan these events in consultation with the President, Chief Financial Officer, General Manager, a Student at Large and the director of counselling services; and Be it further resolved that the VP Student life will report to council each month on this initiative; and Be it further resolved that up to \$2000 be allocated to this initiative, subject to approval by the CFO; and Be it further resolved that the first event be held no later than March 15 th , 2021.

Example with Sample Motion

Example: Submitted by Name

Whereas students at Mount Saint Vincent University are facing a shortage of mobile charging stations; therefore

Be it resolved that this issue be addressed.

What's wrong with them? In the example, the Be It Resolved clause is not specific about what the motion is trying to accomplish.

Let's fix it.

Example: Submitted by Name

Whereas students at Mount Saint Vincent University are facing a shortage of mobile charging stations; therefore

Be it resolved that the Students' Union investigate the possibility of securing mobile charging stations for the Mount Saint Vincent University Campus.

Resources

Lastly, Mount Saint Vincent University Students' Union exists to assist members with navigating all aspects of governance, operations, advocacy and student life, including support in drafting resolutions that fit the proper format. If you have any questions about how to submit a motion, please don't hesitate to reach out. Send us an email to svpcomm@msvu.ca