

Title & Number:

#E-?: Efforts to curb youth voter apathy through democratic reform

Effective Date/Expiry Date (if applicable):

March 9, 2016/March 9, 2019

Approval Date:

March 9, 2016

Policy Type:

External Policy

Review Date:

This policy shall be reviewed every one (1) year.

Responsible Body:

AMS University and External Relations Committee

Authority:

AMS Code of Procedure Section II, article 11(1)

“Council may create external and internal policies as well as combined policies.”

Purpose and Goals:

This policy is designed to state the AMS's stance on:

- 1) The reduction of the voting age to 16 years;
- 2) Ways that the AMS can work with various government and external entities to identify strategies, in addition to the aforementioned stance, to sustain high levels of youth voter turnout in election campaigns.

Applicability:

This policy is applicable to the AMS's stance towards the Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver, and any other concerned entity. Furthermore, the policy applies to the advocacy of the VP External Affairs to all the aforementioned entities.

Exclusions:

There are no exclusions for this policy.

Definitions:

Voting Age is defined as the legal age requirement to cast a ballot in an election.

Current Voting Age is defined as current the legal age requirement to cast a ballot in an election. As of Feb 23, 2016, this is set at 18 years of age in all Canadian provinces and territories;

Election is defined as the legally enacted process initiated through writs of election by the Crown of Canada nationally through the Governor General or provincially through the Lieutenant Governors.

It is also defined as the process called by the Chief Election Officer of a municipality when the number of candidates for office exceeds that number of positions to be elected;

Youth Voter defined as all eligible Canadian voters between ages 18-25 and Canadians who are otherwise eligible for voting with the exception that they are between 16-18 years of age;

Strategy(ies) is defined as methods employed by the Office of the Vice-President, External Affairs including advocacy, meetings, briefings, committee submissions, public hearings, government consultations, election campaigns, external partnerships, agreements with electoral bodies/commissions, etc.;

Electoral Body/Commission is defined as Elections Canada, a provincial electoral commission (e.g. Elections BC), and any government recognized municipal electoral entity. This definition also recognizes any further electoral body or commission created by the Crown of Canada, the federal government, or the provincial governments.

Policy:

Whereas as per Part 1(3) of the *Canada Elections Act (S.C. 2000, c.9)* every person who is a Canadian Citizen and is 18 years of age or older on polling day is qualified as an elector;

Whereas the AMS is committed to ensuring the continuation of the democratic process through the maintenance of a high voter turnout, especially among youth;

Whereas youth voter turnout has historically been low and youth generally form an underrepresented demographic in democratic institutions;

Whereas the AMS's efforts along with other entities in the 2015 Federal Election has led to one of the highest youth voter turnouts in Canadian history;

Whereas many AMS members are between the ages of 16-18 by polling day, and are thereby precluded from democratic electoral rights while assuming many responsibilities of majority;

Whereas many countries and jurisdictions across the world have reduced their voting age to 16 years and have subsequently enjoyed a higher voter turnout, especially among youth;

Whereas many efforts across Canada and its provinces are currently being undertaken to adjust the voting age to 16 years;

- 1) Be it resolved that the AMS continue to support strategies to encourage high youth voter turnout;
- 2) Be it further resolved that the AMS endorse any and all efforts, including legislation, to reduce the electoral voting age eligibility to 16 years;

- 3) Be it further resolved that the AMS direct the VP External Affairs to work with all relevant entities, including electoral bodies/commissions to ensure a continued high voter turnout, especially among youth;
- 4) Be it further resolved that the AMS direct the VP External Affairs to utilize all afforded AMS resources to ensure that AMS members are adequately catered to and represented during the electoral process;
- 5) Be it further resolved that the AMS direct the VP External Affairs to make recommendations by all possible means on methods to be undertaken by external entities to coordinate with youth in curbing voter apathy.

Consultations:

The following groups have been consulted during the development of this policy:

AMS University and External Relations Committee, AMS VP External Office, AMS University & Government Relations Advisor.

History:

This is the first draft of the first version of this policy

Related Policies:

There are no related policies

Appendix/Appendices:

A note entitled "Voting Data Background/Fact Sheet" accompanies this policy.