

Who is going to be in charge of SLAC and SPSU?

These organizations will be run by students, and the exact structure will be decided over the summer should these be approved

Why is there only a two week campaign period?

This is the current process in place in the bylaws.

How did these referenda come to be?

The referendums were approved by the executive committee, and then were approved by the board. There were approximately 8-10 working group meetings for both SPSU and SLAC since January.

At least one Mass email has been sent to students so far, and more are being sent over the next few weeks.

Why legal service is a separate organization, and why can't we just use the Student Advocate?

There is a student advocate, The Student Advocate is a great program but there are too many cases, and too many complex cases, and too many underreported or unreported cases. As any advocate knows, marginalized people often don't have the support to seek legal support or report cases. In particular, gendered violence is underreported, making it hard to determine how many cases might be missed due to a lack of resources

(<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00017-eng.htm>)

The student advocate is not a lawyer and cannot do legal representation so they can only help up to a point, but there are many other issues that URSU cannot support on.

The purpose of the SLAC referendum is to provide students with personal legal advice & services relating to academic, tenancy, employment, immigration, etc. Lawyers would work at the SLAC, providing not just consultations and advice, but also helping to complete forms, helping to write correspondence, and sometimes issuing correspondence directly from the lawyer. SLAC will also run workshops throughout the year to educate students on their rights, such as when dealing with tenant-landlord issues, and how to navigate legal structures and systems. Systemic issues will also be addressed by the centre, working on systemic legal discrimination, and providing restorative justice supports. Other issues include Criminal law, Debt issues, Accident claims, Immigration and other government matters, Corporate, commercial, and intellectual property issues, Advice on legal documents or proceedings and Notarization or commission documents when appropriate.

Organizations such as SLAC often get supplementary support in the form of grant funding from NGOs and government organizations. Securing grant funding will be a top priority in the summer of 2022.

What types of consultation did Board undertake with students/constituents to come to this conclusion?

These proposals were presented through student feedback from the Student Advocate office, cases dealt with by senior admin, and a stream of student feedback at the front desk.

How many students per semester require legal advice, AND did they exhaust other services available i.e Legal Aid

Most cases that come to us are dealt with, up to a point, by the Student Advocate. Of those, over the last 3 months, 150 cases have come in, of which 20 were not resolved due to the need for legal support. Of course this does not include the numerous underreported or unreported issues, such as immigration or visa needs, tax issues, notary public needs and plagiarism cases

Operating Budget

Linked, with commentary

Why a levy?

A levy is needed for two reasons: a) It ensures the independence of the service. Service Centres like UR Pride, RPIRG (who endorsed the SLAC) and Women's Centre are effective due to their independence. In terms of cutting programs or shifting budget items, URSU is balancing its own budget and has increased support in terms of Advocacy and Communications, and having URSU directly run a service centre/service could compromise URSU's effectiveness, which URSU is working to improve on.

Can students opt out?

While the referendum did not include an opt out clause, we are investigating a grant support system rather than an opt out. Opt Outs at UofR are controversial and are often seen as ineffective, whereas a year round grant for students in need of a refund would be more equitable and more effective.

If the students opt out (in this case, apply for grants) and the operations of the new service centre is greater than the fees collected, who is on the hook?

This is another advantage of having this service as a separate service centre. If the service centre has to shift its operations to match decreased cashflow, then it can manage that on it's own and scale back operations to manage with a smaller budget. Obviously a significant amount of grant support would affect the organization's ability to manage, but we must try in order to make this work.