

SOLIDARITY

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HEU CONVENTION 2022

How it works

A guide to rules and
procedures



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What is Convention

The Convention is the highest authority of the union.

As the constitution puts it, “all sovereign powers including the legislative, executive, administrative and judicial powers of the Union shall be vested in the convention when in session.”

Convention business arises under the following headings:

- Constitutional Amendments
- Resolutions
- Reports from the full-time officers
- Speeches from invited guests
- Elections of a new Provincial Executive

What happens at convention?

Constitutional Amendments

Convention delegates debate and vote on Constitutional Amendments at convention. The Constitution and By-Laws are the union’s rules for governing and can only be changed at convention by an amendment being adopted by the delegates. Passing a Constitutional Amendment requires a two-thirds’ vote of all delegates.

Resolutions

Convention delegates debate and vote on Resolutions at convention. Resolutions are policy decisions that establish the union’s position on issues, which may include internal union matters, local, provincial, national or international issues.

Adopted resolutions give direction to the officers of the union or the incoming Provincial Executive. They do not impact the Constitution and By-Laws. A resolution requires a simple majority of delegates’ votes to become union policy.

Reports

Each of the three full-time officers of the union presents a formal report to convention.

- **PRESIDENT:** Presents a report on activities and a vision for the union’s future.
- **SECRETARY-BUSINESS MANAGER:** Presents a report on behalf of the Provincial Executive that covers the activity of the Provincial Executive and the union since the last convention.
- **FINANCIAL SECRETARY:** Presents a report on the financial affairs of the union and the events that have shaped the financial picture.

After each report, a motion is made to “receive the report.” When it is seconded, delegates may discuss the report before voting on the motion.

This is different than “adopting a report.” When a report is **adopted**, it means that all recommendations within the report are approved and become the policy of the union. When a report is **received**, any recommendations within it are debatable but require a Constitutional Amendment or Resolution to become union policy. This allows the delegates more decision-making authority and is more democratic.

Speeches

It would be easy to spend the full convention simply reviewing and debating resolutions and constitutional amendments. However, convention is also a time to be proud of our union and its achievements. It’s a time to recognize what we have done well, while encouraging our members, officers and staff to do even better.

With that in mind, we invite a few carefully chosen outside speakers to talk to us about important issues that broaden our viewpoints, and make us all better informed. The interaction with different groups has assisted us over the years in a mutual exchange of ideas and information.

Elections

At each Convention, a new Provincial Executive is elected into office to conduct the business of the union for the next term.

There are now 28 members of the Provincial Executive. Typically 26 positions are elected at Convention. The two positions not generally elected by every Convention are:

- **SECRETARY-BUSINESS MANAGER:** The SBM is appointed by the Provincial Executive and ratified at their first convention. The current SBM was ratified in 2021.
- **TRUSTEES:** At every convention, delegates elect two trustees, unless there is a vacancy for the third position. A senior trustee-elect is elected to a four-year term. The trustee is elected to a two-year term.

At this convention, 27 positions will be elected or ratified, due to a retirement of the former Senior Trustee Elect.

As a delegate to convention, you will be voting for the candidates of your choice. You are also eligible to run for any Provincial Executive position.

There are two elected positions that are full-time, paid officers of the union – the President and the Financial Secretary. Both are based in the Provincial Office in Burnaby.

All other Provincial Executive members still work at their facilities and are taken off the job (as

you are this week) to attend to Provincial Executive responsibilities. These range from debating and adopting a provincial budget, developing strategy, policy and campaigns, and assisting with strike and ratification votes.

At convention, delegates intending to run for a position on the Provincial Executive may submit a biography and photo that includes information such as their name, length of membership in the union, and positions held.

As well, there will be Candidates' Forums for candidates, where each candidate may address the delegates, plus a moderated question-and-answer period.

Voting

Voting for the Provincial Executive happens in a set sequence.

- **Monday, October 17** – Diversity Vice-Presidents' Candidates' Forum
- **Tuesday, October 18** – Regional elections; At-Large Candidates' Forum
- **Wednesday, October 19** – Diversity Vice-Presidents' elections
- **Thursday, October 20** – Provincial Executive elections

STEP ONE: REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

Delegates break into five regional caucuses. On Tuesday, each caucus elects Regional Vice-Presidents and two alternates for each position.

The Regional Vice-President seats are as follows:

- Fraser – 3
- Interior – 3
- North – 2
- Vancouver Coastal – 3
- Vancouver Island – 2

This structure ensures that all regions of the province are represented on the Provincial Executive.

This means that anyone wishing to run as an alternate must decide whether they want to be a Provincial Executive or a Regional Vice-President alternate.

STEP TWO: REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

The full convention reconvenes and the convention chair reads out the election results for each region and moves a motion to adopt the report. The convention delegates then vote to adopt the report.

STEP THREE: DIVERSITY VICE-PRESIDENTS AND YOUNG WORKERS' REPRESENTATIVE

Important

It is important to note that a member who has been elected for a Regional Vice-President/Alternate or Diversity Vice-President/Alternate cannot run for any subsequent Provincial Executive positions or Alternates.

A Provincial Executive member – other than the Provincial President, Secretary-Business Manager and the Financial Secretary – cannot also be a member of the Provincial Bargaining Committee.

Delegates will break into equity caucuses for elections on Wednesday. Only those who self-identify as part of the equity group are able to attend the caucus and participate in the voting process. For example, you must self-identify as Indigenous to be part of the Indigenous Peoples' Diversity Vice-President elections. No observers will be allowed for these deliberations.

The Diversity Vice-President and Young Worker Representative positions will be elected in the following order:

- Indigenous Peoples'
- Young Workers
- Pink Triangle
- People with Disabilities
- Ethnic Diversity
- 2-Spirit, Women, Non-Binary

Alternates will be elected directly in the same caucus group on Wednesday.

STEP FOUR: AT-LARGE POSITIONS

Next, elections for “at-large” positions are held. All delegates vote for the candidate of their choice. Normally, the positions are elected for a two-year term in the following order (with the exception of the Senior Trustee Elect).

1. President (2 year)
2. Financial Secretary (2 year)
3. First Vice-President (2 year)
4. Second Vice-President (2 year)
5. Third Vice-President (2 year)
6. Senior Trustee Elect (4 years)
7. Trustee (2 year)

STEP FIVE: ALTERNATES

Finally, after the elections for Provincial Executive are completed, one ballot is cast to determine eight (8) alternates to the Provincial Executive.

With the exception of Regional Vice-Presidents, these alternates are called in to fill vacancies that may arise between Conventions.



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Convention Committees

Preparations for the Convention begin months in advance of the first session.

There are five (5) convention committees. The two (2) main convention committees are the Resolutions Committee and the Constitutional Amendments Committee. These two committees begin their work prior to convention. They review every resolution and constitutional amendment submitted, and prepare them for recommendation to the convention delegates. In addition, there are three (3) other committees: Credentials Committee, Sergeant-at-Arms Committee and Tabulations Committee. The overall function of committees is to assist in and expedite the convention proceedings.

Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee is responsible for reporting to the convention the number of delegates, staff and visitors present throughout the convention. This is needed to determine quorum and the number of delegates required for voting.

Resolutions Committee

The Resolutions Committee meets prior to convention and considers all resolutions submitted.

They may combine two or more resolutions on the same or similar issues into Composite (substitute) Resolutions. The committee cannot introduce ideas or elements into a Composite Resolution that are not part of one of the resolutions that make up the composite.

All resolutions, including these Composite Resolutions, are submitted to convention with a recommendation of either concurrence (yes) or non-concurrence (no). In other words, they recommend to the convention that delegates either concur (agree) or not concur (disagree) with the resolution.

Once on the Convention floor, the resolution is discussed or debated.

All delegates at the Convention, then **vote on the committee's recommendations.**

Resolutions require a vote of 50 per cent plus one to pass.

Constitutional Amendments Committee

The Constitutional Amendments Committee meets prior to Convention and considers all Constitutional Amendments submitted.

Like the Resolutions Committee, they may combine two or more Constitutional Amendments on

the same or similar issues into a composite. They cannot add ideas or elements into a Composite Constitutional Amendment that are not part of the original Constitutional Amendments that make up the composite.

All Constitutional Amendments, including these composites, are submitted to Convention with a recommendation of either concurrence (yes/agree) or non-concurrence (no/disagree).

The convention then discusses and votes on the committee's recommendation. Constitutional Amendments require a two-thirds majority to pass.

Sergeant-At-Arms Committee

Members of this committee ensure that only registered delegates are permitted on the convention floor and “tile” the doors during elections and certain votes.

Tabulations Committee

Members of this committee provide all delegates with the Resolutions and Constitutional Amendments daily agenda, composite resolutions and other required materials.



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Procedure

How debate is conducted

The Constitutional Amendments and the Resolutions Committees use the same convention procedure, so we will use the Resolutions Committee as an example of both committees.

EXAMPLE:

The spokesperson will say,

“Composite Resolution 171 covers Resolutions 173 and 182. HEU will oppose privatization of public services.”

“The committee moves concurrence (yes) and on behalf of the committee, I second the motion.”

At this stage, the committee spokesperson will usually give reasons for the committee’s recommendation. These are arguments that support the resolution and it is assumed that everyone has read them.

The convention chair will say, “the motion is one of concurrence. The floor is now open for discussion.”

The motion is then debated on the floor.

Debate

This is your opportunity to express your opinion in 3 minutes. The floor mics are marked “Pro” (in favour of the committee’s recommendation) and “Con” (against the committee’s recommendation.)

Speakers are recognized in the order they come to the microphones, alternating between pro and con mics. Delegates are allowed up to three (3) minutes to speak. A timer will be visible to you when you speak and you will be cut off if you’ve reached your time limit.

Debate continues until there is no one left at the mics, or by a motion to “call the question.” (See Other Rules.)

The Convention Chair will draw attention to the end of debate in various ways, i.e. “seeing no further speakers!” or “are you ready for the question?”

The Question?

Any motion is described as a question. When the convention chair says: “Are you ready for the question?” it means “Are you ready to vote on the motion on the floor?”

Important

It is always important to remember that you are voting on the committee’s recommendation of concurrence (yes) or non-concurrence (no) and not on the resolution itself.

For Example:

Committee Recommendation	Majority Vote	Result
Concurrence	Yes	Resolution Carried
Concurrence	No	Resolution Defeated
Non-concurrence	Yes	Resolution Defeated
Non-concurrence	No	Resolution Carried

Important

Remember: A resolution requires a simple majority to be adopted. A Constitutional Amendment requires a 2/3 vote in order to amend the Constitution and By-Laws.

Other Rules

There are a variety of other rules that may be applied when a resolution is on the floor. The most common are as follows:

MOTION TO REFER (NON-DEBATABLE, SIMPLE MAJORITY)

Committee recommendations are not amendable, but a delegate who disagrees with the recommendation, or some aspect of the Resolution or Constitutional Amendment before the delegation, may vote against it, or move to refer the matter back to the Committee for further consideration, usually with instructions.

The instructions can be as simple as asking the committee to add or delete a word or give detailed instructions like “strike the first three words in the second sentence and insert the following ...” or even “change the resolution to say the following ...”

There is no discussion on a motion of referral, and once seconded, it must be put to a vote. If you speak on a motion, you cannot then move referral.

Important

It is not necessary to refer a resolution back for the committee to change its recommendation since the convention delegates can directly vote to adopt or defeat any resolution. It's up to the committee to decide whether to bring a referred resolution or constitutional amendment back to the floor.

Privileged Motions & Procedures

There are several privileged motions and procedures where a delegate may intervene, out of turn, such as: Point of Order, Point of Information and Point of Privilege. Because they offer this opportunity, their use is strictly limited by the Chairperson. If you want to raise any of the points during debate, say "Point of Order" and go to the mic to raise your point.

POINT OF ORDER

A Point of Order draws the attention of the Chairperson to improper procedure or irregularity.

Examples: a speaker straying completely from the motion on the floor, a motion being debated which has not been seconded, a motion accepted by the Chairperson while another motion is on the floor, or any violation of the Rules of Order.

When a delegate notices an irregularity, they can bring forward a Point of Order. The Chairperson will then recognize the delegate and ask the delegate to state their Point.

If the Chairperson is satisfied that the Point of Order is valid, the Chairperson will attempt to rectify the situation.

If the Chairperson determines that the Point of Order is not valid, the Chairperson will explain why. No debate is permissible.

MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION (NON-DEBATABLE, SIMPLE MAJORITY)

"Move the previous question" or "calling the question" is a motion to immediately end debate on a motion (the question) even though there are still delegates wishing to speak. There is no discussion allowed.

You cannot move the previous question if you have spoken on it. (This prevents delegates from sneaking in the "last word.")

This is done by saying "I move the previous question" or "I move the question now be put." This means that there must be an immediate vote to decide whether to close off debate.

If the motion to move the previous question is carried, the question must be voted on without further debate.

If the motion to move the previous question is defeated, debate on the motion continues.

RECONSIDERATION (NOTICE, DEBATABLE, 2/3 MAJORITY)

Any motion, either carried or defeated, can be reconsidered at the next setting. Subject to the following:

1. Both the mover and the seconder of the motion to reconsider must have voted with the **prevailing** side when the original motion was first voted upon. Discussion is allowed.
2. Notice must be given for reconsideration at the next sitting, i.e. after a break or adjournment.
3. A 2/3 majority vote to reconsider is required. If not achieved, the vote is lost and cannot be raised again.

If the motion of reconsideration is carried, the original motion is open for debate and decision.

TABLING MOTION (NON-DEBATABLE, SIMPLE MAJORITY)

If a motion to table is made, it is not amendable and must be put to a vote without further debate.

POSTPONE TO A SPECIFIC TIME

This motion is used to postpone discussion until further information is available about the motion. It is debatable and amendable.

POINT OF INFORMATION

A Point of Information is used to ask a question, not to offer information (a.k.a. making a speech).

When a delegate brings forward a Point of Information, the Chairperson will say “What is your Point?” The delegate may then direct a question through the Chairperson to a speaker or another delegate. There is no obligation to answer.

You must utilize this privilege to **ask** for information, not to enter into debate.

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

Important

A Point of Information is not a motion. It is used to receive information or clarification about the topic under debate. It is not intended for the speaker to provide information.

A Point of Privilege draws the attention of the Chairperson to the rights of a delegate that are being violated, or to something that interferes with full participation in the meeting.

This may be remarks attacking the character of a delegate. Any delegate, not just the target of such remarks, can raise a Point of Privilege. The Chairperson will provide direction on what is or is not permissible conduct.

A Point of Privilege can be used to alert the Chairperson to a problem that should be addressed immediately.



Conclusion

There are other rules and procedures that govern the Convention.

You should read the *Constitution and By-Laws* (revised 2018), especially Article 21, Section J, also included on pages 15 and 16 of the booklet.

However, convention is not all about rules, procedures, or bylaws. It is a forum where we all work together to ensure that HEU remains a union we are all proud to represent.

We can put in place policies and procedures that we can look back on with pride and satisfaction when we meet again at convention.

Important

As a new delegate, you need not be intimidated by the experience and knowledge you see around you. Remember, every experienced delegate remembers being a new delegate. They would be pleased to help, advise and encourage you to participate.



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Rules of Order

From HEU Constitution and By-Laws (Revised 2018)

1. The President, or in the President's absence or request, the Vice-President shall take the Chairperson at the time specified at all regular sessions of the Convention/Conference. In the absence of both the President, or designated Representative, a Chairperson shall be chosen by the Provincial Executive.
2. No question of a sectarian character shall be discussed.
3. When a Delegate wishes to speak, the Delegate shall rise to a Pro or Con microphone and, when recognized by the Chairperson, shall give their name and the name of the Local represented, and shall confine remarks as being for or against the question at issue based on the microphone at which they are speaking.
4. Speeches shall be limited to three (3) minutes.
5. A Delegate shall not speak more than once upon a subject, until all those who wish to speak have had the opportunity to do so.
6. A Delegate shall not interrupt another, except to call a Point of Order.
7. If a Delegate while speaking be called to order, that Delegate shall, at the request of the Chairperson, be seated until the question of order has been decided.
8. Should a Delegate persist in unparliamentary conduct, the Chairperson shall be compelled to name the Delegate's conduct to the judgement of the Convention/Conference. In such case the Delegate whose conduct is in question should explain and then withdraw, and the Convention/Conference shall determine what course to pursue in this matter.
9. When a question is put, the Chairperson, after announcing the question, shall ask: "Are you ready for the question?" If no Delegate wishes to speak, the question shall be put.
10. Two (2) Delegates may appeal the decision of the Chairperson. The Chairperson shall then put the question thus: "Shall the decision of the Chairperson be sustained?" The question shall not be debatable except that the Chairperson may make an explanation of this decision. The party challenging shall then briefly state the reasons for the challenge.
11. The Chairperson shall have the same rights as other Delegates to vote on any question. In case of a tie vote the Chairperson shall cast the deciding vote.
12. Should more than one (1) Delegate rise to speak at the same time, the Chairperson shall decide who is entitled to the Floor.
13. When the previous question is moved, no discussion or amendment of either motion is permitted. If the majority vote that "the question be now put," the original motion has

to be put without debate. If the motion to put the question is defeated, discussion shall continue on the original motion.

14. A motion may be reconsidered provided the mover and seconder of the motion to reconsider voted with the majority, and notice of motion is given for reconsideration at the next sitting, and said motion is supported by two-thirds (2/3) of the Delegates qualified to vote. After a motion to reconsider has once been lost, it may not be renewed.
15. A motion to refer back is not debatable and when properly seconded, the question shall be immediately put to Convention/Conference.
16. Committees may combine Resolutions or prepare a composite to cover the question at issue. Reports of Committees are not subject to amendments, except such as are acceptable to the Committee, but a motion to refer back to the Committee for reconsideration shall be in order.
17. Resolutions shall require a simple majority to be adopted. Constitutional Amendments shall require a 2/3 majority to be adopted.
18. A motion for Concurrence which is carried means that the Resolution or Constitutional Amendment itself has been carried. A motion for Concurrence which is defeated means that the Resolution or Constitutional Amendment itself has been defeated. A motion for Non-Concurrence which is carried means that the Resolution for Constitutional Amendment itself has been defeated. A motion for Non-Concurrence which is defeated means that the Resolution or Constitutional Amendment itself has been carried.
19. The Provincial Executive is empowered to establish the hours of the Convention/Conference.
20. In all matters not regulated by these Rules of Order, Bourinot's Rules of Order shall govern.