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CONVENTION 2026

How it works

A guide to rules and procedures

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What is Convention

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 to receive the report.

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

Convention is a time to celebrate what we have achieved together and look ahead to the work still to come. It brings members together to debate important issues, make decisions and set the direction for our union. It's also a chance to build solidarity and inspire members, officers and staff to keep up the fight.

Outside speakers are an important part of convention. Their speeches can inspire new ideas and activism, help us understand the broader labour movement and show how political decisions affect our work and our communities. They remind us that HEU is part of a larger movement of people working together for a better world.

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 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.
- **TRUSTEES:** At every convention, delegates normally elect two of the three trustees. A senior trustee-elect is elected to a four-year term and a trustee is elected to a two-year term. If the third trustee position is vacant, delegates also elect someone to fill that position.

At this convention, 26 positions will be elected or ratified.

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. For diversity vice-president positions, you must self-identify as a member of the group represented by that position to run or vote for it.

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, working with locals, 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 where each candidate may address the delegates.

Voting

Voting for the Provincial Executive happens throughout the week of the convention. The election results for Regional Vice-Presidents and Diversity Vice-Presidents are announced at the session following those elections.

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

Delegates break into five regional caucuses. 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.

Once a delegate is elected to a Provincial Executive position or as an alternate, they cannot run for another position.

DIVERSITY VICE-PRESIDENTS

Delegates will break into equity caucuses for elections. 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.

Diversity Vice-President positions and alternates will be elected in their caucuses.

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.

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 year)
7. Trustee (2 year)

ALTERNATES

Finally, after the elections for Provincial Executive are completed, delegates elect eight (8) alternates to the Provincial Executive. These alternates are called in to fill vacancies that may arise between conventions.

Convention Committees and Teams

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

There are five (5) convention committees and teams that help convention run smoothly and keep proceedings moving. The two 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. During convention, the Credentials Committee, Delegate Verification Team and Tabulations Team support the convention process and help ensure proceedings run efficiently.

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

Before convention, members of the Resolutions Committee review every Resolution that has been submitted. They consider what each Resolution would mean for HEU, including possible costs and impacts, and prepare a recommendation for delegates..

When two or more Resolutions deal with the same or similar issues, the committee may combine them into a Composite Resolution. A composite cannot include new ideas that were not part of the original Resolutions.

At convention, the committee makes a recommendation to delegates on each Resolution. Delegates then have an opportunity to discuss and debate the Resolution before voting on it.

A simple majority is required for a Resolution to pass.

Constitutional Amendments Committee

Changes to HEU's Constitution go through the Constitutional Amendments Committee before they reach the convention floor. Committee members carefully review each proposed amendment and consider its possible costs and impacts on the union.

The committee can also combine amendments that deal with the same or similar issues. These Composite Constitutional Amendments must be based on the amendments originally submitted and cannot introduce new ideas.

The committee brings the amendments to convention with its recommendations and explains the reasons for those recommendations. Delegates then debate and vote on the amendments themselves.

Because Constitutional Amendments change the rules that govern our union, a two-thirds majority is required for an amendment to pass.

Delegate Verification Team

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

Tabulations Team

Members of this team provide all delegates with the Resolutions and Constitutional Amendments daily agenda, composites and other required materials.

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 recommends support for this resolution."

"The committee moves to adopt this resolution and on behalf of the committee, I second the motion."

At this stage, the committee spokesperson will give the reasons why the committee is making the recommendation. The information they provide will inform the delegates of key issues that need consideration. The convention chair will say, "there is a motion to adopt composite resolution 171. 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 resolution or amendment) and "Con" (against the committee's resolution or amendment.)

Speakers are recognized in the order they come to the microphones, alternating between pro and con mics. If you want to speak, make sure you are visible at the microphone so the chair knows you are waiting. Delegates are allowed up to three 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 end the 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?"

This is your absolute last chance to speak.

Once debate concludes, the convention chair will say something like: "Delegates, we will now vote on composite 171. A vote in favour will adopt the proposed resolution, a vote opposed will defeat the resolution."

Important

When you vote in favour of a resolution or amendment, you are voting to accept it. If you vote against the resolution or amendment, you are voting to not accept it.

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)

Resolutions and Constitutional Amendments cannot be amended from the convention floor. If a delegate wants to change a Resolution or Constitutional Amendment, they can make a motion to refer it 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 they can be more detailed, such as "strike the first three words in the second sentence and insert the following…" or "change the Resolution to say the following…"

There is no discussion on a motion to refer. Once the motion is seconded, delegates vote on it. If you speak on a motion, you cannot then move to refer it.

If the motion to refer passes, the committee will consider the instructions but may or may not

make the requested changes. The committee is also not required to bring the Resolution or Constitutional Amendment back to the convention floor.

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.

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 call the question." This means that the delegate is calling to go to the vote on the resolution without further debate. It must be seconded.

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 sitting. 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 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.

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.

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.

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

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.

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Conclusion

There are other rules and procedures that govern the convention.

You should read the *Constitution and By-Laws* (revised 2024), especially Article 21, Section J, also included on pages 89 to 92 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.

Rules of Order

Quoted from HEU *Constitution and By-Laws* (Revised 2024)

1. The President, or in the President's absence or request, the Vice-President shall take the Chair 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 Chair, 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. An additional one (1) minute is available for the delegate to include a territorial acknowledgement of Indigenous lands.

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 Chair, 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 Chair. The Chairperson shall then put the question thus: "Shall the decision of the Chair 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. The Committees will make a recommendation to the delegates of concurrence or non-concurrence on the Amendment or Resolution. However, the delegates will vote on the amendment or resolution itself.

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.