



Date: February 16, 2022

To: University of Victoria Student Union

From: Regan Wilson, President

RE: Faculty Representation within the Student Union

The University of Victoria's Engineering Student Society (ESS) has asked for our input regarding the important advocacy issue being discussed at the February 17, Semi-Annual General Meeting. Any organization that acts to support and better the lives of a group of people, including student unions, must first and foremost be democratic. The Western Engineering Student Societies' Team (WESST) believes that the only way to ensure the voices of all students are heard, is to have a diverse group of individuals be part of any discussion. Having representative democracy is not only essential for ensuring all members of the student body feel like they are represented by the student union, but it ensures the greatest success for the organization. The best decisions are made when many opinions and thought processes come together to discuss the issue at hand. This reality is why I, along with WESST as a whole, believe that ensuring equal opportunity for representation from all the faculties that make up the University of Victoria is a necessary step.

Making a change to the current makeup of the Student Union Board of Directors is important for the representation of students and the overall health of the organization. Additionally, these changes would bring the University of Victoria inline with most other Universities across the country. Of the 11 Universities in western Canada that have engineering programs, 9 of them currently have a student union structure with faculty representation. These schools include the University of British Columbia, the University of Alberta, and the University of Manitoba, just to name a few.

Interestingly, almost exactly a year ago, the Student Union at the University of Manitoba voted on a motion that would change their structure to one without faculty representation. This motion was voted against due to an understanding that removing that structure would hinder the ability of the Student Union to effectively represent all students and ensure the diversity of opinions at their table.

I would like to note that students are in fact "more than their course" and the intersectionality of all students should be taken into account when working to ensure all voices are heard. A faculty representative on the board of directors has the ability to



understand the course load of the students they represent as well as the needs of their particular faculty, the nuance of their culture, and struggles unique to students of their faculty. WESST believes that the best way to ensure students from all corners of a campus are well represented by the Union created to support them is to have faculty representation on the Board of Directors.

If you have any questions or comments about WESST or the opinion of this letter please feel free to contact me directly at president@wesst.ca.

Sincerely,
Regan Wilson

WESST President