

University of Waterloo Engineering Society

Executive Review Committee Report

Presented at Joint General Meeting S15



Preamble

The Executive Review Committee (ERC) was formed at Joint Council 2014 with the mandate to investigate the current Executive structure and prepare a report proposing either a new structure, recommending changes to the current structure, or advising to keep the current structure. A motion in Fall 2014 extended the scope to include commissioners, officers, and directors in the proposed hierarchy. This report is a summary of the findings of the committee to be presented at the Joint Annual General Meeting of 2015 for the review of general members. These changes would be potentially implemented in the 2016 A-Society and B-Society Elections.

Committee Members

- Leila Meema-Coleman (A-Soc President)
- Allyson Francis/Hannah Gautreau (B-Soc Presidents)
- Adelle Vickery (A-Soc at large)
- Ola Suchon (A-Soc at large)
- Cody Bechberger (B-Soc at large)
- Clarisse Schneider (B-Soc at large)

Pre-Work

The committee was tasked with gathering feedback from past Executive Officers, current Executive Officers, external organizations, and at large members. This feedback process lasted 6 months and was conducted on both A- and B-Society. The results of the feedback gathered were then summarized and condensed into guiding principles to help the committee rationalize decisions.

Guiding Principles of the ERC Committee

1. All Executive Officers are volunteers as well as engineering students, so managing workload is important;
2. There should be an equal distribution of work in each tier of the structure (President, VP's, Commissioners);
3. Each tier should be defined and consistent in terms of role and purpose;
4. Events and Service-Event Directors should report to a commissioner where possible;
5. Governing documents shouldn't overprescribe roles and there should remain flexibility for Executive Officer teams to rearrange structure to suit their individual team needs;
6. Each position should have a portfolio that has potential for growth and improvement;
7. The Executive structure should reflect the mission and vision of the Society; and,
8. Each Executive Officer role should have a complete portfolio that requires a specific and distinct skill set.

Another tool used to help guide the decision-making of the committee was the definition of terms used by the Society. The committee created definitions of the roles of the President, Executive Officer, Commissioner, and Director. This should be used when considering new positions for the Society, ensuring that they are in line with the respective role definition outlined below:

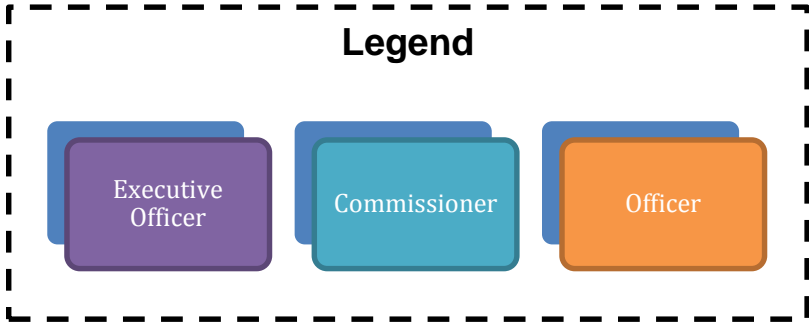
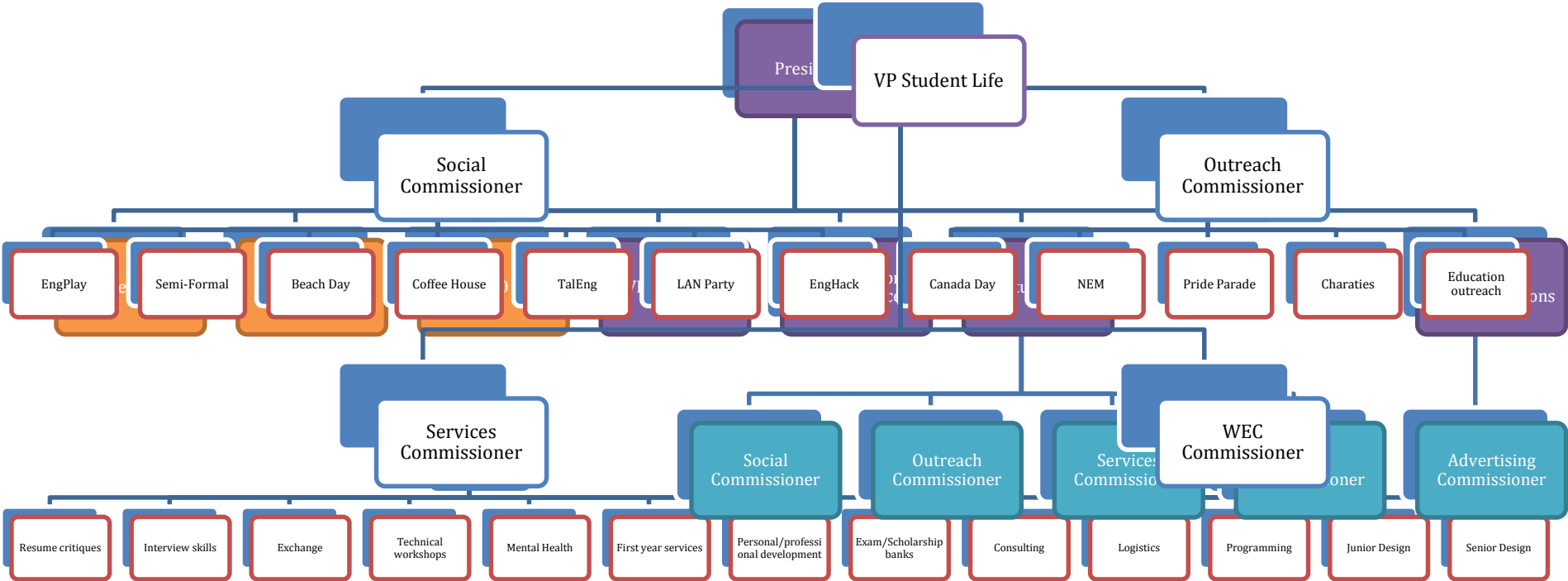
	President	Executive Officer	Commissioner	Director
Manage:	<i>Executive Officers</i>	<i>Commissioners and Directors</i>	<i>Directors</i>	<i>Event or Services</i>
Responsible for:	<i>Societal Vision</i>	<i>Portfolio Vision</i>	<i>Events and services day-to-day</i>	<i>Specific event or service</i>
Accountable for:	<i>All Society activities</i>	<i>All portfolio activities</i>		

Eligibility

All members holding positions must maintain a specific eligibility as per the following in order to run and remain in their role:

1. Have attained at least the 2A term for the first term in office for the Executive positions VP Student Life, VP Finance and Operations and VP Communications;
2. Have attained at least the 2B term for the first term in office for the positions of President and VP Academic;
3. Have attained at least the 2A term for their term to be a commissioner; and,
4. Have attained at least 1A to be a director.

General Overview



President

The Executive Officer role of the President is largely unchanged from what typically would constitute their portfolio. However, the committee was diligent in more firmly defining this role. The committee also worked to ensure that this portfolio constitutes a realistic workload in accordance with the guiding principles, as this position has been growing exponentially over recent terms and has become unmanageable in some cases. More accurately defining each of the VP positions also aids in this regard.

One notable change is that the Communications Commissioner role was removed from the President's direct responsibilities. It was the opinion of the committee that the President should be directly responsible for managing and supporting the Executive Officers, but should not have Commissioners or Directors reporting to them whenever possible. Moving the Communications Commissioner will also allow for a different Executive Officer to focus more on improving communication with members, which is seen as a priority for the Society. This gives the President time to focus principally on organizational development and streamlining activities to align with the societal vision, rather than the logistics of day-to-day tasks.

Another notable change to this portfolio is that of management of the internal documents. With the current structure, the VP Internal is responsible for documents including governing documents, the Policy Manual, minutes and mandates, and transition documents. With the proposed new structure, this responsibility would lie within the responsibilities the President. The committee discussed the principle of the President being responsible for Council, overseeing the Executive Officers' work, and guiding the Society down a distinct path, and as such being additionally responsible for the documents that outline the requirements and mandates in these areas would be logical. The documents also serve to hold the Society together so that it might operate smoothly and justly, and so the job of managing their safekeeping and execution should belong to the President.

Additional items that lie within the responsibilities of the President's portfolio include: the culture of the Society and Waterloo Engineering, the guardianship of the Tool, Engineering Society Council (Council), the Board of Directors, Contracts/Memorandums and their administration, defining the Society's stance with regards to external councils (ESSCO, CFES, etc.), speaking on behalf of the Society in public situations, and managing full time employees of the Engineering Society including the Business Manager.

Commissioners

No commissioners will report directly to the President.

Directors

No directors will report directly to the President.

Officers

- The Speaker
- Chief Returning Officer (when applicable)
- Chief Feedback Officer (when applicable)

Committees

- Engineering Faculty Council
- Leadership Excellence Award Committee
- Engineering Society Board of Directors
- Sanford Fleming Board of Directors
- E&P Committee
- Committee of Presidents
- Feds Council
- Ideas Clinic

Vice President Academic

The position of VP Academic is being proposed to replace the current VP Education position. The VP Academic is responsible for academic, educational, professional developmental, and co-operative representation of engineering students. They sit on many committees in order to voice the position of students to faculty, and are responsible for enforcing stances that have been voted on by Council. They are furthermore responsible for issuing and collecting critiques for Waterloo Engineering courses and seeking to promote changes that will positively affect the quality of education for Waterloo Engineering students.

Recently, the VP Education has been working toward running a career fair for students in order to help them network effectively and gain potential employment for co-op. This event would be a large undertaking, and may take more than a single term to plan and run.

Due to the changes made to the position, the committee felt that a name change was warranted to disassociate the new position and responsibilities from the current position and responsibilities. VP Academic was chosen to reflect the academic advocacy that is involved in the position, and encompasses the entirety of academic student life at the University.

Commissioners

No commissioners will report directly to the VP Academic.

Directors

- Course Critique Directors
- Career Fair Directors

Committees

- Teaching Award Committee
- Cooperative Education Council
- Senate
- Education Advisory Committee
- Faculty Undergraduate Studies
- Co-op Working Group
- WatPD Committee

Vice President Operations and Finance

In the current Executive structure, the VP Operations and Finance is responsible for managing the Engineering Society's finances. This includes preparing budgets for Council and Board of Directors, maintaining all accounting records for the Engineering Society, managing all the assets and liabilities of the Society, and keeping the financial records in order. They are also responsible for overseeing Novelties and Ridgidware.

The committee recommends that the VP Operations and Finance keep all of these responsibilities, and additionally take on the responsibility of managing the day-to-day operations of the Engineering Society. This addition to the portfolio is reflected in the name change to VP Operations and Finance.

The Operations component of the VP Operations and Finance portfolio aligns with the guiding principles of the committee since many operations decisions are heavily based around costs and finances. Thus, it would not add a significant amount of work to the portfolio, and would further leverage the organizational skills and financial knowledge of the VP Operations and Finance.

The operations of the Engineering Society include the management of Novelties and Ridgidware, POETS, the Coffee and Donut shop (CnD), and the Orifice. They will be responsible for ensuring that these facilities are being appropriately managed, maintained, and are accessible by all Engineering Society members. The VP Operations and Finance is responsible for managing all inventory in Novelties and RidgidWare and ensuring that the CnD is being properly managed.

In addition to these responsibilities, the VP Operations and Finance will be responsible for all external sponsorship to support Engineering Society activities, as well as managing Student Deals.

Commissioners

No commissioners will report directly to the VP Operations and Finance.

Directors

- Novelties directors
- RidgidWare directors
- POETS managers
- Food director

Committees

- WEEF Board of Directors
- Iron Warrior Advisory Committee
- Sponsorship Committee
- ECIF Allocation Committee

Vice President Student Life

VP Student Life is a new position proposed to replace VP Internal and absorb some aspects of the VP External position. In the current structure, the VP Internal is responsible for the social events and the service-events run by the Engineering Society. Social event directors are managed by the Student Life Commissioner, while the service-events are either managed directly by the VP Internal or by a Student Services Commissioner, depending on the Executive team. The VP External position involves managing the Waterloo Engineering Competition and the outreach and charities events, along with their external responsibilities.

The current structure conflicts with multiple guiding principles developed by the committee. Firstly, a common opinion gathered in interviews is that the VP Internal portfolio is smaller compared to other VP positions, and that a more equal distribution is required. Similarly, for the Executive teams that utilized a Student Services Commissioner, it was evident that the position was significantly smaller than the Student Life Commissioner. For the Executive teams that did not use a Student Services Commissioner, the directors typically did not receive the same support, and this led to the creation of the guiding principle stating that directors should report to a commissioner when possible. The Executive Review Committee also believes that the VP External portfolio is disjointed and does not require a specific skill set, since it has two very distinct sides - external communications and external events.

To align these two positions with the guiding principles, it is proposed to break up the VP External portfolio and combine the external and internal events to create the more general position of VP Student Life. This position will be responsible for all events including social events, service-events, outreach, charity, and the Waterloo Engineering Competition. The VP Student Life will also be responsible for director appreciation events. Combining all events under the same Executive Officer creates a more uniform position that requires a distinct skill set, eliminating the disjointed property of VP External, and increasing the workload of the VP Internal position to the level of other Executive Officers.

Commissioners

It is proposed to have four commissioners under VP Student Life to manage the events directors: Social, Services, Outreach, and WEC.

Social Commissioner:

This position essentially encompasses the current Student Life Commissioner's responsibilities. They would be responsible for managing the social events directors and liaising with them to ensure they have the resources they need to successfully run their events.

The typical directors to report to this commissioner are: EngPlay, Semi-Formal, Beach Day, Coffee House, Tal-Eng, LAN Party, EngHack, and Genius Bowl.

Services Commissioner:

This position is mostly unchanged from its current state, but a few directors have been added to create an equal distribution of work across the commissioners. The Services Commissioner would be responsible for managing the directors of the service-events, as well as other services offered by the Engineering Society. This includes: resumes critiques, interview skills, exchange, technical workshops, mental health awareness, first year services, personal/professional development services, and the banks managed by the Engineering Society such as the exam and scholarship banks.

Based on the expected workload of the Services Commissioner and the new initiatives proposed by the VP Student Life, the Executive team can decide to implement a First Year Commissioner to manage all directorships pertaining specifically to first year students.

Outreach Commissioner:

This position would remain unchanged from the current structure. The Outreach Commissioner is in charge of working to increase the amount of community outreach opportunities offered through the Waterloo Engineering Society. They would work closely with relevant directors by providing support and direction whenever needed, with the intent of developing Society outreach programs and increasing the impact of charity efforts. The Outreach Commissioner would also sit on the Outreach Committee with the VP Student Life. The directors managed by the Outreach Commissioner would include: Canada Day, NEM, Pride Parade, Charities, and Education Outreach.

WEC Commissioner:

This position would remain unchanged from the current structure. The Waterloo Engineering Competition (WEC) Commissioner is responsible for organizing and running the Waterloo Engineering Competition, which is held every other on-stream term. The WEC Commissioner is charged with overseeing every aspect of the competition, including the details of the competitions for each group, organizing logistics, judges, and signup for interested teams. The directors reporting to this commissioner are: Consulting, Logistics, Programming, Junior Design, and Senior Design.

Directors

No directors will report directly to the VP Student Life.

Committees

- Women in Engineering (WiE) Committee (along with the WiE directors)
- Outreach Committee (along with the Outreach Commissioner)

Vice President Communications

The VP Communications is a new position in the proposed structure based on a combination of the portfolios of the VP External and the Communications Commissioner. The Committee found that the VP External portfolio is particularly disjointed, due to a mixture of external communications and external events. The external communications aspect would be reassigned under the VP Communications and combined with the current Communications Commissioner portfolio. Being a growing role, the committee feels that elevating this commissioner position to an Executive Officer role would result in more effective communications and advertising.

The main portfolio that the VP Communications would be responsible for involves external marketing/branding of the Society, internal advertising, and online presence. The goal of combining these portfolios is to create a position that requires a specific skill set in external communication and branding/advertising. The purpose of this is to move the Society forward as a whole.

The current conference logistical responsibilities of the VP External, which includes delegate selection, travel plans, and conference attendance, will now lie within the responsibilities of the responsibilities VP Communications. The President will now be more involved in the stance of the Society at meetings of the Engineering Student Societies' Council of Ontario (ESSCO) and the Canadian Federation of Engineering Students (CFES).

Commissioners

It is proposed to have one commissioner under VP Communications: Advertising Commissioner.

Advertising Commissioner

An Advertising Commissioner would lie within the responsibilities of the VP Communications in the proposed structure. This commissioner would be the head of the Advertising Team, consisting of a group of directors. Their main responsibility would be leading the team in all advertising of internal Engineering Society activities through mediums including social media, the website, mailing list, and posters.

Directors

- "Carebear"

Committees

On both of the following councils, the VP Communications would hold a proxy vote on behalf of the President. The President can take the seat on each Council at any given time as stated by the ESSCO and CFES governing documents.

- ESSCO Council
- CFES Council

Future Considerations

This section outlines several possibilities within the new structure that may be implemented in the future providing the current Executive Officer see the benefit and need.

1. **Implementation of Career Fair Commissioner**

Once the career fair is more established and continues to grow, it may become too overwhelming to have all of the directors report to the VP Academic. The commissioner would be a joint position and oversee both the Fall and Winter career fairs working under both VP Academic and managing both sets of directors.

2. **Exam Bank under VP Academic**

If the exam bank evolves to involve coordination with the Faculty, switching the responsibility from VP Student Life to VP Academic may make more sense due to the number of contacts VP Academic has in the Faculty.

3. **Examinations and Petition (E&P) under VP Academic**

The role of the E&P committee may eventually transition to VP Academic from President. The committee felt the role should currently remain with the President, but as the VP Academic's advocacy responsibilities increase and the role of President grows, the switch may be necessary.

4. **“Carebear” under VP Student Life**

If the role of Carebear shifts to more event-based director appreciation instead of online-based appreciation as it is used now, the Executive should shift this position under VP Student Life. This would be in line with keeping no event-based directors reporting to VP Communications.