

**CUSA Think Tank: Terms of Reference**

**G-XX**

LONG TITLE	Terms of Reference for the CUSA Think Tank Research Team	DATE OF ENACTMENT	TBD
		LAST AMENDED	TBD
REFERENCE No.	G-XX	NEXT REVIEW	August 2027
CATEGORY	Governance	COMPETENT CHAMBER	Board/Council

**PREAMBLE**

This is the mandate letter and terms of reference for the CUSA Think Tank Research Team. The Think Tank is the Carleton University Students’ Association’s primary source for ethical, responsible, student-driven research in alignment with the Association’s existing advocacy efforts. The Think Tank is run with the support of the Carleton Public Interest Research Group (Carleton PIRG).

**MANDATE**

- 1 The CUSA Think Tank shall have the authority to:
  - a) Lead and publish original student-led research projects and reports pursuant to the advocacy aims and objectives of CUSA, and with the full collaboration and support of the Vice President, Student Issues (VPSI);
  - b) Compile and develop secondary research on matters including but not limited to: tuition, housing, transit, environmental policy, food insecurity, mental health, labour rights, and the postsecondary education sector, or any established as advocacy priorities under CUSA policy and stances;
  - c) Conduct survey research and fieldwork on-and-off campus, in compliance with guidelines prescribed by CUREB-A (Carleton’s Research and Ethics Board), and uphold ethical research standards, including consent, transparency, and academic integrity;
  - d) Present its research findings in accessible, plain language suitable for public advocacy and consumption by all students;
  - e) And work collaboratively with other campus organizations, faculty, and researchers in the conduct and publication of research.

**LIMITATIONS**

**Non-Partisanship**

- 2 Research must aim to work with non-partisan groups, pursuant to the guidelines outlined in the *Political Stakeholder and Advocacy Policy*.

### **Advisory Role**

**3** The Think Tank may not exercise any independent external representation of the student union and do not hold any decision-making authority within the student union, with the exception of determining the scope and objectives of the Think Tank's research projects.

### **Resources**

**4** The Think Tank's research output is directly correlated with the existing financial and personnel limitations of CUSA and partners. Timelines and depth of research may vary depending on relative capacity.

### **Exposure to Confidential Information**

**5** Think Tank may not have access to any information otherwise deemed confidential or proprietary, including but not limited to internal records and records of in-camera meetings.

## **COMPOSITION**

### **Structure**

**6** The CUSA Think Tank shall be composed of no less than six (6) researchers who are currently enrolled as full or part time undergraduate students at Carleton University.

**7** The Vice President Student Issues shall serve as the Executive Liaison of the CUSA Think Tank, providing direction, research requests, and ensuring alignment with CUSA Policy, the advocacy aims of the Association, and any communication with Carleton PIRG.

**8** One Think Tank Researcher shall be designated the Team Lead for each research project and be responsible for the conduct and completion of research, the scheduling of meetings, and communication between the Think Tank and the VPSI. A Carleton PIRG representative may attend and provide direction at these meetings upon request.

### **Alignment with Hiring Procedure**

**9** The CUSA Think Tank shall be posted, selected, and appointed in accordance with the provisions outlined in the *Hiring Policy and Procedure*, and pertaining to Class 3 hiring procedures concerning contractual executive or management-adjacent student positions.

- a) The Hiring Panel for the CUSA Think Tank shall be composed of:
  - i) President/CEO;
  - ii) Vice President Student Issues;
  - iii) Vice President Finance;
  - iv) A Councillor, selected by Council;
  - v) Executive Director, if willing;
  - vi) One CUSA Board Member, if willing.
- b) In the event of a tie, the President/CEO will be the tie-breaking vote.

### **Terms of Contract**

**10** A decision concerning the hiring of CUSA Think Tank Researchers shall be made no later than September 1 of the academic year.

**11** The contracts signed by Think Tank researchers shall terminate no later than May 1 of the academic year.

**12** Members of the CUSA Think Tank may not be currently employed as or serve as representatives of CUSA. This includes but is not limited to CUSA Board Members, Councillors, as well as existing full-time or part-time student staff.

### **FUNDING**

#### **Partnership Between CUSA and Carleton PIRG**

**13** The CUSA Think Tank shall be funded through a cost-sharing model between a budget allocated to the Vice President Student Issues, and a contribution to be determined by Carleton PIRG.

**14** The specifics of this cost-sharing agreement (e.g. proportions of funding) are to be deliberated between a designate of CUSA at the discretion of the Board, with preference for the Vice President, Student Issues, in addition to a representative of Carleton PIRG.

#### **Compensation**

**15** The compensation of the CUSA Think Tank is outlined in the *Think Tank Compensation Policy*.

### **COMPLIANCE**

#### **Termination**

**16** Any member of the CUSA Think Tank may be terminated by the majority decision of the President, Director of Human Resources, and Vice President Student Issues for any violation of CUSA Policy, including but not limited to the *Conflict of Interest Policy* and *Community Standards Policy*.

#### **Governance**

**17** Think Tank researchers must follow any applicable rules or laws, including Policies, Bylaws, Letters Patent, and any applicable Law of Ontario or Canada.