

Political Stakeholder & Advocacy Policy

LONG TITLE	Political Stakeholder and Advocacy Policy	DATE OF ENACTMENT	30 September 2024
		LAST AMENDED	25 August 2025
REFERENCE No.	P-??	NEXT REVIEW	August 2027
CATEGORY	Stances	COMPETENT CHAMBER	Council

PREAMBLE

CUSA seeks to pursue meaningful and long-lasting advocacy initiatives, programs, and partnerships with government, university, and community stakeholders. This policy will outline the process and criteria by which the Association engages and collaborates with these stakeholders and other political organizations in meeting its advocacy aims and objectives throughout the year.

INTERPRETATION

Short Title

- 1 This Policy may be called the *Advocacy Policy*.

Definitions

- 2 In this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

“Non-partisan” means engaging in equitable and objective discussion with all political stakeholders regardless of partisan affiliations, and avoiding any explicit favouritism towards particular political parties, registered lobbying groups, or party-affiliated organizations.

“CUSA Club” refers to any club currently certified or under a certification extension per CUSA’s club framework.

“Executive” in the context of the *Advocacy Policy* refers to the portfolios of the President and the Vice President, Student Issues, whose mandates include advocacy and external relations/partnerships.

“Political Organization” refers to any individual, political party, committee, association, fund, not-for-profit, or other organization that explicitly engages in advocacy, lobbying, or community organizing explicitly for the purpose of indirectly or directly obtaining funds and/or making expenditures.

“Advocacy Briefing” means any document, research paper, or equivalent prepared in advance of a stakeholder meeting.

“Statement” means any news release, advocacy update, or call to action published to the Association’s website or social media pages.

“Joint Statement” refers to any advocacy update or news release published in collaboration with a Political Organization or CUSA Club, or signed onto by a member of the Executive, Council, or a Council Committee, and written by an organization in which the Association has collaborated with.

“Advocacy File” refers to any current or closed advocacy stance or position by which CUSA has engaged in some degree of consultation and/or collaboration with other political or non-political organizations.

PRINCIPLES

- 3** The Association is committed to:
- a) Ensuring advocacy work with political organizations is of an explicitly non-partisan nature, and that these relationships are undertaken in a fair, efficient, ethical, and principled manner
 - b) Ensuring any advocacy work aligns with CUSA's values of Service, Accountability, Development, Diversity, and Community
 - c) Ensuring advocacy work helps to raise awareness of environmental stewardship, sustainability, decolonization, and equitable practices

OVERALL POLICY

Purpose

- 4** Set out the criteria and decision-making process for engaging in non-monetary partnerships of an explicitly political or advocacy-oriented nature.
- 5** Define the Advocacy Roadmap and template for internal advocacy briefings.
- 6** Set out the process by which CUSA publishes statements, whether on the Association’s sole behalf or in collaboration with other stakeholders.

Political Partnerships

- 7** The Association may engage in explicitly political partnerships. These partnerships must be of a non-monetary nature and serve the sole purpose of furthering existing government and university advocacy campaigns.
- 8** These political partnerships must be within the scope of CUSA’s current policies, including those under Reference Letter E (Stances, Equity and Advocacy).

Advocacy Roadmap

9 The formal advocacy aims of the organization must be clearly identified and published in an Advocacy Roadmap document.

10 CUSA's Advocacy Roadmap must involve some form of direct-to-student consultation, whether in-person or virtual, and that consultation should factor into a short-list of specific advocacy priorities for the academic year.

11 CUSA's Advocacy Roadmap should be publicly accessible after review and approval on an annual basis by CUSA Council.

Briefings

12 Prior to any meeting with a Political Organization or stakeholder of significance, an Advocacy Briefing must be prepared internally which includes:

- a) The date and location of the meeting;
- b) A list of attendees;
- c) An executive summary of the purpose of the meeting;
- d) Background information and relevant external research to support CUSA's position; and
- e) Information on previous meetings of a similar nature.

13 Following any meeting with a Political Organization, CUSA must publish a Statement for public consumption on CUSA's website or social media outlining the details of the Advocacy Briefing and the result of the discussion.

14 The Communications Office is responsible for the publishing of Statements and Joint Statements, and requires ample notice and consultation with the Executive before the publication of such stances.

Statements and Positions

15 CUSA Council is responsible for approving the publication of any statements on CUSA's social media pages pursuant to its mandate.

16 Committees of Council, as defined in the Committees Policy, and the CUSA Executive Council, as defined in the Executive Policy, may pass or authorize statements, including joint statements, to be published on CUSA's website and social media pages without the formal approval of Council so long as;

- a) The statement bears the sole branding and signatory of the committee or the "CUSA Executive", and not of "CUSA Council";
- b) The statement's creator has reasonably tried to have open communication with the Executive Team if originating from Committee, or Committee if originating from the Executive;

- c) The statement is in a matter of reasonable urgency whereby its passage at the next regular Council meeting would render the statement redundant, obsolete, or out-of-date;
- d) The statement is in-line with previously published statements or otherwise consistent with CUSA's Policies under Reference Letter E (Stances, Equity and Advocacy); and
- e) Should the statement fail any of the requirements of this section, it may be overturned or amended by Council.

CUSA Think Tank

17 The *CUSA Think Tank Terms of Reference* shall outline the mandate and objectives of the CUSA Think Tank pursuant to the *Advocacy Policy*.

Review and Communication

18 This policy shall be submitted to Council for review once per year.

19 Council's External Affairs and University Affairs Committee will receive regular updates by the Vice President, Student Issues each meeting, including the details of any meetings, programs, stances, or campaigns prior to the last meeting.

- a) Any notice of absence from said meeting must be communicated in a timely manner with the chair of the respective committee(s).

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER POLICIES

20 This aligns with other CUSA & Campus policies, including;

- a) Existing Policies under Reference Letter E (Stances, Equity, and Advocacy)
- b) Council Rules of Order
- c) CUSA Council Committees Policy

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE ADVOCACY BRIEF

Meeting Brief: [TITLE]

Prepared by: [NAME], [POSITION]

Date: [DATE]

PURPOSE:

Write a one or two sentence summary of the reason for the brief here.

ATTENDEES:

[NAME OF ATTENDEES FROM OUTSIDE ORG.]

CUSA Staff:

- Executive 1*
- Executive 2
- Executive 3

Denote primary contact with “*”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Provide a summary of the stance CUSA wishes to take / has taken on the given issue, as well as key “asks” and strategic priorities. Cite any outside material required using a footnote¹. Appropriately link findings to the Advocacy Roadmap priorities.

¹ Author (if applicable). Name of Material (Year, if applicable)

AGENDA:

1. Item 1
2. Item 2

BACKGROUND:

Include details regarding previous CUSA Advocacy on matter (if any) and cite the material referenced in a footnote.

MEETING RESOURCES:

Here you can add a Smart Chip for any files or resources which tie to the existing brief.
(e.g. Presentations, notes from previous meetings, etc.)

APPENDIX II: MEETING TEMPLATE

[NAME OF MEETING]: Meeting Agenda

Date: [DATE]

Time: [TIME]

Attendees: Smart chip any attendees and include (host) beside the host of the meeting.

Agenda:

- Item 1
- Item 2

Action Items:

- Action Item 1
- Action Item 2

Action items are discrete and specific events, tasks, or activities that will be completed as a result of this meeting.

Notes:

Notes about the meeting go here for reference

APPENDIX III: INFORMATION ON STATEMENT-WRITING

Writing Statements:

- Official Statements are a meaningful way to address some of the issues CUSA advocates for and individual events for which CUSA must post a particular stance.
- Statements must not be templated and must always be tailored to the wide range of issues they may discuss. However, there are some general guidelines and strategies that can implement to write more effective and impactful statements:
 1. Start with the ending by informing and stating to your reader what you are going to talk about: "This day, this happened"
 2. Tie that to CUSA's position: "In light of these events, the Carleton University Students' Association (CUSA) would like to condemn/support/express our concern with..."
 3. Express how CUSA collectively feels about this event
 4. Tie that to our mandate and policies
 5. Add resources at the bottom
 6. Avoid, if possible, descriptive information, use direct language, and include action items
- Example:

Imagine you are the President of the Brazilian Students Association at Carleton, and last week, a disaster has occurred in Brazil in which a dam has collapsed in the city of Mariana, releasing toxic mining waste into a river, causing severe environmental and social impacts, including the deaths of 19 people. How can you address this with a short statement?

"In light of the tragic events that took place last week in Mariana, Minas Gerais, the Brazilian Students Association would like to express its full support and solidarity with all Brazilians affected by these dreadful events. The Brazilian Students Association urges for investigation of the causes of this tragedy and commits itself to support all Carleton students impacted by it."

- Example Breakdown:

"In light of the tragic events that took place last week in Mariana, Minas Gerais, the Brazilian Students Association would like to express its full support and solidarity with all Brazilians affected by these dreadful events. The Brazilian Students Association urges for investigation of the causes of this tragedy and commits itself to support all Carleton students impacted by it."

- RED: Informing
- BLUE: Organization's position
- GREEN: Call for action
- ORANGE: Tie to the organization's mandate

APPENDIX IV: ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Advocacy Strategy Template

Name: First & Last Name

Position Title: Title Goes Here

Department: Executive, Executive Adjacent, Service Centre or Board

STEP	DESCRIPTION
Background	What is the issue? Brief context and situational analysis. Is this being addressed already?
Targets	Who has resource control? Who controls policy in this area? Who influences those people?
Allies/Partners	Who should you work with for support?
Objectives	What do we want? (one big ask, a series of smaller asks). Ensure these follow SMART principles.
Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do we influence those who control policy, resources, and other influencers?• Have a subject matter expert in the area• Support the subject matter expert in a best practices analysis of institutions similar to Carleton• Have a meeting with someone at Carleton to try to figure out what the status of the initiative currently is, if anything.• Have one key and clear ask that you hope to accomplish, based on research• Attempt to arrange a meeting with the individual or committee most responsible for accomplishing your one ask.• If a meeting cannot be arranged, attempt to schedule meetings with those who can influence the individual or committee.• Take detailed notes of who individuals think are the ones with resource and policy control, and what their suggestions are• Evaluate your one key ask and see if it is still workable
Time Frame	How long will it take to accomplish this advocacy initiative? How long from research to presentation/proposal to the University?
Meeting Notes & Commitments	Who have you met with, what was discussed, and what did they commit to? Did they have any ideas of their own? Will they connect you to anyone else?

