



YOUNG LIBERALS OF CANADA

JEUNES LIBÉRAUX DU CANADA



Campus Club Handbook

How to organize an effective club at your University

Young Liberals of Canada

2012

Getting Started

▼ CAMPUS CLUB ACCREDITATION

In order to be recognized as an official campus club of the Young Liberals of Canada, you need to be ratified by the YLC National Executive. In order to obtain club accreditation, your campus club must submit the following information to the YLC National Director, Alyx Holland (aholland@liberal.ca):

- The constitution of the club
- The list of names and contact information of executive members
- The membership list of the Club (minimum 25 are needed in order to obtain accreditation)
- The minutes of the meeting, including a list of those in attendance.
- An appointed financial agent of the club for the purposes of the Canada Elections Act
- An appointed auditor of the club for the purposes of the Canada Elections Act

The Party requires that all campus clubs must be accredited no less than once every 2 years. The last accreditation cycle took place in 2010. This means that the above information will need to be provided to the YLC no later than **December 31, 2012**.

For more information about the YLC campus club accreditation process, contact the YLC VP Organization, Leah van Houten at leahvanhouten@gmail.com

▼ BENEFITS OF OBTAINING ACCREDITATION

The benefits of club accreditation include:

- The ability to send delegates to the 2014 Biennial Convention and have your club represented on a national level
- Access to Liberalist - With the integration of the YLC with Liberalist, it is increasingly imperative that all of our campus clubs are accredited.
- Contact information for your club provided on the YLC website to help gain exposure
- Funding from YLC to assist with outreach, events, and other campus activities.

▼ OBTAINING CLUB STATUS ON CAMPUS

Once your club is established, make sure you have filled all the necessary forms and provided all the information to your campus student's association in order to obtain official club status on campus. This will prove incredibly helpful when it comes to booking rooms for events hosted on campus, funding for club activities, and even advertising. As an example, some campuses do not allow "unofficial" clubs on campus to put up posters for events or book a table during club recruitment periods. Make sure to contact your school to find out deadlines and requirements for obtaining club status on campus.

Establishing the Basics

▼ UNDERSTANDING AND MAINTAINING YOUR CLUB CONSTITUTION

The first thing you should look at, especially if you are a new executive member, is your club's constitution. This is an extremely important document that reflects what you do as an organization, and spells out the duties of each member of the executive in general terms.

An effective YLC campus club typically has an executive consisting of a president, an executive vice-president, five functional vice-presidents or directors, a treasurer, and a past president. It also has any number of additional directors and committees.

Often times, new executive members do not get copies of the constitution. This should be handed out at the first executive meeting of each school year. You should also hand out a binder and/or circulate an email to new executive members containing the following:

- The club's constitution
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of executive members
- Minutes of the last executive meeting
- Brief description of each of the working groups and their mandate

By giving them this information, you empower your executive members and allow them to better understand your organization. For more information about the YLC constitution or to get a sample constitution for your campus club, visit the website at www.youngliberals.ca

▼ CLUB COMMITTEES

Establishing a committee structure into your campus club is a great way to engage your members and provide opportunities for new recruits to take on leadership roles. These can be established to work on specific projects, or long-term goals. Committees should be set up by function (membership & recruitment, communications, policy, community outreach), and should be chaired by one of the vice-presidents / directors on your executive board.

Committees must be encouraged to meet regularly in order to work on their goals for the year and are expected to give reports at executive meetings (through the chair) on their activities. This is the accountability that is so important. If they know they are expected to give a report, they will get something done.

The YLC has several committees that allow young liberals at all levels to become more engaged in specific areas. Each committee is committed to helping clubs expand their networks, engage with non-partisans on issues that matter to them, and prepare the YLC for upcoming elections. Consider applying to join one of the following YLC committees and adding a local branch to your club:

Beyond the Numbers (BT#)

BT# seeks to engage, encourage, and educate young women, and to bring more female representation into the Party. Through mentorship, networking and events we will connect with women across Canada to increase our participation in politics. Contact YLC Executive Vice-president, Maddie Webb (madeleine.emma@gmail.com) for more information on how BT# can help you engage more young women on your campus.

United Red

This committee aims to build partnerships with minority groups and ethnic communities across Canada. This team of diverse and energetic Young Liberals will work together to reach out and connect young people to our

exciting and progressive Party. Contact YLC United Red Chair, Veena Bhullar (unitedredylc@gmail.com) for more information on how United Red can help you connect with cultural groups on campus.

International Working Group (IWG)

The IWG engages Young Liberals with international issues that affect us globally. By hosting policy discussions, events and conferences at home and abroad, we become more educated and connected global citizens. Contact YLC Executive Vice-president, Maddie Webb (madeleine.emma@gmail.com) for more information on how the IWG can help you reach out on international issues on campus.

Legalization Committee

This committee advocates for marijuana reform and assists with the creation of promotional materials, branding, and organizing local events. Contact YLC VP Policy, Sean Sutherland (srsuther@gmail.com) or YLC VP Communications, David Valentin (david.valentin.sp@gmail.com) for more information on how the Legalization Committee can help you spread the message on campus.

National Policy and Platform Committee (NPPC)

This committee is tasked with coordinating the YLC's national policy development process, leading the debate within the Liberal Party of Canada on issues important to young Canadians, and organizing issue-based outreach events. Contact YLC VP Policy, Sean Sutherland (srsuther@gmail.com) for more information on how the NPPC can help you develop and advocate an effective policy process.

National Election Readiness Committee (NERC)

NERC's primary objectives are to offer organizational support for Young Liberals and provide a framework for future YLC election readiness strategies. Contact YLC VP Organization, Leah van Houten (leahvanhouten@gmail.com) for more information on how NERC can help you get organized on campus.

▼ BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR RIDING ASSOCIATION

It's easy to get so caught up on campus activities that we often forget about our local riding association. Riding associations play a crucial role in the Party's ability to connect with communities across the country and spread the Liberal message. They can also play a crucial role for campus clubs.

Establishing a positive working relationship with your riding association will allow your club to engage not only on campus, but in the surrounding community. By understanding the activities happening within the riding association, and having the riding association included on campus activities, you can each maximize your resources more effectively to achieve your goals.

Another advantage to having a close relationship with your riding association is funding for events and other initiatives. Often times, riding associations are happy to support young liberal activities that will provide a benefit to the riding association. If your campus club is actively signing up new members, hosting events, and reaching out to the community, the riding association will benefit as well.

How can you start building this relationship? Consider inviting your riding association president to your campus executive meetings, and advocate to have your campus club president sit as a director on the riding association board. This will help build a positive working relationship and ensure all campus and riding association activities are properly communicated.

Contact information for Liberal Party riding association presidents can be found on the LPC website, available at www.liberal.ca

Running an Effective Organization

▼ GOAL-SETTING AND LONG TERM PLANNING

Long-term Planning

It's tempting not to worry about the next school year but if you wait too long, you risk having too much to do in too little time. In today's political environment, you cannot afford to wait. The real benefits of a long-term plan for your campus club are:

- You will have a yardstick by which to measure your progress
- Everyone on your executive will know what you want to do, how you want to do it, and when you want to do it
- Your entire executive and its activities will revolve around your plan
- IT WORKS!

The plan should be drafted by a small group from your executive in order to be effective, and should include someone who is familiar with your campus, your executive, and the Liberal Party. The team who drafts the plan should ensure some mechanisms for consulting your broader membership. Members need to feel they have a say in what priorities the club is focussing its efforts.

Goal-setting

In deciding on your goals, look at where you want to be when the next election is called. How do we recruit and retain more members? Do we get more Young Liberals trained on Liberalist? How do we engage with other groups on campus? How do we encourage more women to join the Liberal Party? How do we communicate our message more effectively?

Your goals should be achievable, yet make your club stretch itself to attain them. Constant improvement should be in the back of your mind.

Some Examples of Goals:

- To have a monthly newsletter sent to the general membership, updating them on upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.
- To increase membership by 25% by the end of the school year
- To train and effectively use Liberalist
- To have policy meetings with caucus members annually
- To increase diversity within the club by engaging cultural groups on campus

These are just some examples. Each club will have its own strengths to build on or weaknesses to improve and will set its goals accordingly.

Once you have decided what your goals are, you have to decide how you will reach them. Setting up job descriptions each year for each member of the executive is the most useful. The job description will contain the goals you have set in the executive member's area of responsibility.

Check out the YLC "SMART FOR ME Goal Setting" guide on the YLC website for more information about setting smart, tangible goals for your club!

Executing your goals

Once you have decided on your long-term goals, your annual goals and the job descriptions to carry them out, you should put them on paper. Your executive should be given the plan in advance of their meeting to allow them time to review it. Make sure you speak to some or all of them in advance of the meeting to ensure there are no serious problems. Be prepared to accept some logical suggestions for amendments to the plan.

It is the responsibility of the president to follow up with the plan. Speak to each executive member to ensure they understand their roles and deadlines. If the president doesn't follow up, things will not get done. Don't make a plan and then forget about it! At the end of the year, the plan should be reviewed and evaluated for (a) things that worked well, (b) areas that could be improved, and (c) recommendations on goals moving forward.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is just as important as your long-term plans and goal setting. Often times when a new executive takes over a club, institutional memory and best practices are lost. Make sure to have a plan in place to train newcomers, and provide a debrief to new executive members on the previous year's activities. Again, you should hand out a binder and/or circulate an email to the new executive members containing the following:

- Update from each Vice-president and/or director on your executive on their activities over the past year
- Update from each committee on the status of their activities over the past year
- Updated membership list and contact lists
- Bank account and financial information for the incoming treasurer

▼ RUNNING A MEETING

One reason for poor attendance at meetings is often that they go on too long and become ineffective. It is up to the President to keep discussion brief and relevant to the topics being discussed. A normal meeting should take no longer than one hour. The key is to stay in control and keep things moving. Have your meetings in a spacious and pleasant room where there is a minimum of distractions.

Each club has different needs, but the executive should meet at least once a month. Whenever possible, try to accommodate your riding association president and/ or your MP/ candidate so that they can be kept updated on your campus activities and provide insight on what is happening in the riding.

The dates and times for the meetings should be set at the beginning of each semester. Try to find a day of the week (such as the fourth Wednesday of the month) when most people are available. That way, they can set aside time on their calendars for the rest of the year and there will be no complaints that they didn't know about the meeting.

Setting an agenda

It is crucial to get the agenda of a meeting ready well in advance and send it out as a reminder of the meeting. It can be very simple:

- Approval of agenda
- Approval of Minutes from previous meeting
- Treasurer's Report
- President's Report
- Riding Association President's report
- Reports of Vice-Presidents/ Committee Chairs
- New Business
- Adjournment

Meeting Minutes

Taking minutes of each executive meeting is a good way to keep track and keep records of activities of the club. Minutes from the last meeting should be sent out in advance, along with the agenda of the upcoming meeting. If committees meet separately from the executive, the executive should receive copies of the committees as well as the executive minutes in order to keep everyone fully informed.

The minutes should be brief. They should not be a complete description of who said what. In the case of motions, one need only to set out the wording of the motion, the mover, seconder and whether or not it was passed. For reports to the meeting, a brief summary is all that is needed. Be careful not to allow any inappropriate or personal remarks to be in the minutes.

Attracting New Members to your Club

The first rule is that if you want students to join your club, you have to impress them with your organization. Look like you know what you are doing and where you are going. People want to join a winner and winners are organized.

Get to know everyone on your executive on a personal level. Invite them out for a drink or bite to eat after each meeting. You might consider hosting a BBQ at your house just for the executive and general members. Pay attention to these things and you will develop a sense of friendship and a team.

If people join your executive, they join because they want to contribute. If they don't have that opportunity, they will soon lose interest.

▼ RECOGNITION AND THANK YOU'S

Recognition is crucial in a volunteer organization. We don't get paid, so the pride we take in our contribution is what we take home with us. Having that contribution recognized is what binds people to the club. They know that they are valued and appreciated.

Recognition need only be a small, even corny, thing. Simply asking someone to stand and ask the audience to give them a hand is one way. Other possibilities are:

- Having a "club member of the year" award
- A short, hand-written note from the President of the club
- A simple "good job" after a well-organized and successful event
- A phone call

You would be surprised at the response you get!

▼ SEEK OUT NEW EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Another key role (for Presidents and executive members) is to find new directors. This is usually done just prior to an AGM. It wouldn't hurt to start collecting potential names even earlier. There are a number of places to look:

- Outstanding club members who have actively recruited more members and supporters into the club
- Outstanding club members who have been reliable and dedicated to achieving club goals
- People recommended by others on your executive
- "Keeners" at your school (Ex: students involved in the Political Science Society, debate team, Student Government, etc.)

The trick is to pin-point people who are already inclined to get involved and have an interest in the political process. This will also allow your club to extend its influence to other places in the university and have consistent places to recruit new members!

Understand the Resources Available

You are not alone. Members of the YLC Executive are here to assist in your goals and to help you build an effective, engaging club on your campus. Many resources are available, and it's important to know that we are here to help you reach out to different groups, expand your network, and have a strong presence on campus. Here are a few areas the YLC can help:

▼ YLC FUNDING FOR CAMPUS CLUBS

The YLC has allocated nearly 25% of its 2012 annual budget for campus club support. This means that if you have an idea that you think can help bring more young people into the party, we're here to help. Some things that you can think about requesting are:

- Food and non-alcoholic beverages for socials /events
- Room and table rentals for recruitment drives
- Printing and posters
- Website servers
- Extra recruitment swag.

All you need to do is fill out the YLC Funding Request form, available at www.youngliberals.ca, or contact YLC VP Finance, Eric Pegolo (pegolo15@gmail.com) for more information.

▼ ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING GUEST SPEAKERS

Often times, campus clubs have difficulty attracting guest speakers for events. It can be difficult if you do not have a contact in an office or it can be hard getting through to the right person. The YLC can assist your club with guest speakers and facilitate in communicating with MP and Senate offices, past MPs and candidates, or other notable speakers that you may be interested in having speak on a particular issue. If you would like assistance with getting a guest speaker at your campus, contact the YLC National Director, Alyx Holland (aholland@liberal.ca).

▼ ADVERTISING ON CAMPUS

If you have a great idea that you think will help gain exposure for the Party, sign up new members, or communicate a strong message on campus, the YLC VP Communications can work with you on advertising opportunities, media exposure, and other communications projects on campus and in your local papers. For more information, contact David Valentin (david.valentin.sp@gmail.com).

▼ GETTING ORGANIZED

It's absolutely crucial for your club to be running effectively. Data management, keeping your records up to date, using Liberalist, and getting your membership prepared for the next election are all essential for running an effective club. For assistance and guidance how your club can be run more effectively, contact the YLC VP Organization (leahvanhouten@gmail.com).

▼ POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Policy advocating and development is one of the key, vital roles that Young Liberals play within our Party, so it's important to understand the policy process and how to effectively advance your policies within the Party. The YLC VP Policy can assist your club in policy development and work with you to see your policies brought forward to provincial and national conferences. Contact Sean Sutherland (srsuther@gmail.com) for information on how to get involved in young liberal policy development.

Creating an Open and Welcoming Environment

When it comes to creating an open and welcoming environment for new club members, it really comes down to whether a person feels they are contributing. If there are too many closed doors, people will feel that their input is not wanted, and they will drift away. Keep things open and you will also find less conflict. That means:

- Information is readily available
- Decision-making is in the open and not by a few people behind closed doors
- Consultation with executive and club members
- Opportunities to get more involved are broadly communicated

If you and your executive can do most of the things that have been recommended, you will find a group of dedicated people who have a sense of pride in their accomplishments. If they are proud of their accomplishments, your club will have a group of dedicated, loyal and hardworking Young Liberals who will be there in the years to come.

This is the kind of campus club that will ultimately get Liberals elected!
