



Memo

From the office of the...

SRA Bylaws & Procedures Commissioner

TO: Members of the Student Representative Assembly
FROM: David Lee; Bylaws and Procedures Commissioner
SUBJECT: Bylaw 10 Election
DATE: March 16, 2017

Dear Members of the Student Representative Assembly,

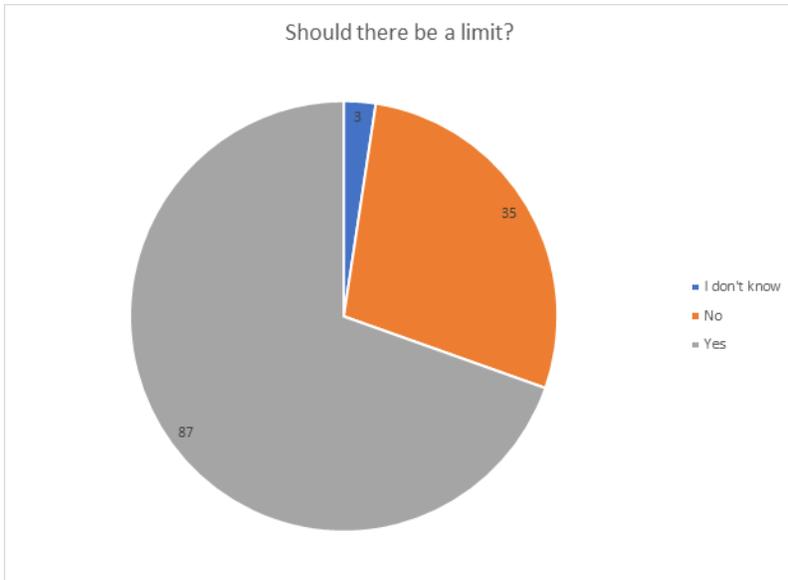
Today I am presenting to you proposed changes to Bylaw 10 - Elections, specifically section 3, Referenda. Under the proposed changes, referenda pertaining to the same or similar question can only be called once a full academic year has passed. An academic year will be defined as first day of classes on September to April 30 as per Bylaw 1. The following clause can be overridden by $\frac{2}{3}$ affirmative vote by the SRA. The same three processes (GA, SRA resolution and petition) still remain in terms of calling a referendum.

Who will be responsible for judging whether it is the same or similar question?

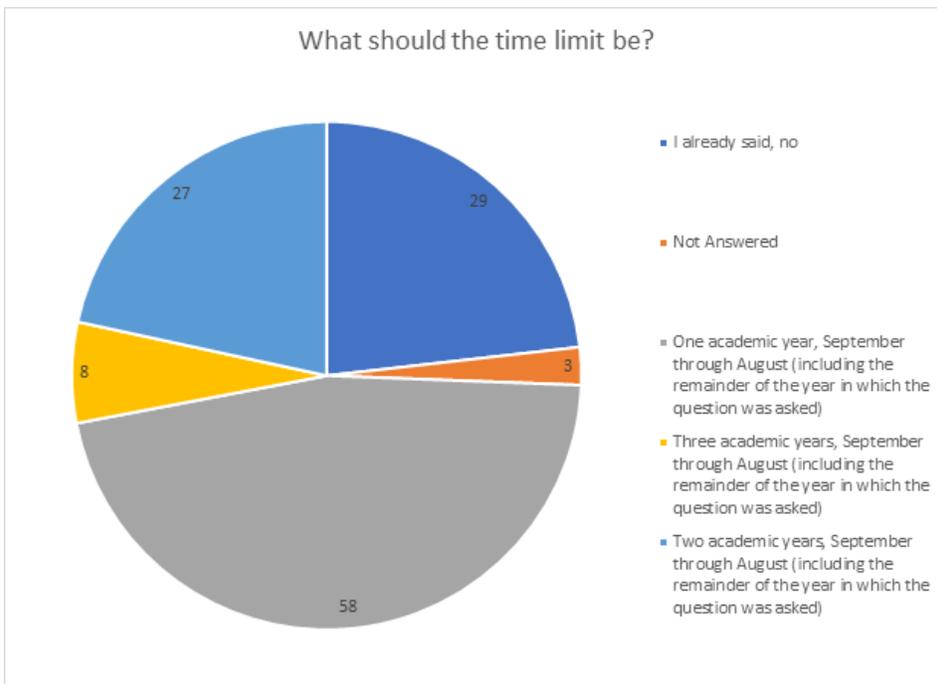
Since referenda are within jurisdiction of Elections Committee, this committee would have to make a ruling of whether the referendum question proposed is the same or similar.

Why?

The Bylaws Committee has conducted a survey over the past month in order to receive student feedback regarding this bylaw change. The following are results from the survey, pertaining to this bylaw change, based on 103 responses:



85 responses had responded that they believe that there should be a time limit on the number of times a referendum with the same or similar question be called.



Just under half of respondents believed that there should be one full academic year between the same or similar referenda question. Moreover, 35 respondents believed that there should be more than a full academic year.

The Bylaws and Procedures Committee believes that SRA should be ensuring that we are upholding the integrity of our referendum process. The Committee believes that referenda shall be called for contentious issues and integral decisions for students to participate in a direct vote. To call for a referendum on the same or similar question repeatedly would appear to be disregard the previous decision of the student body.

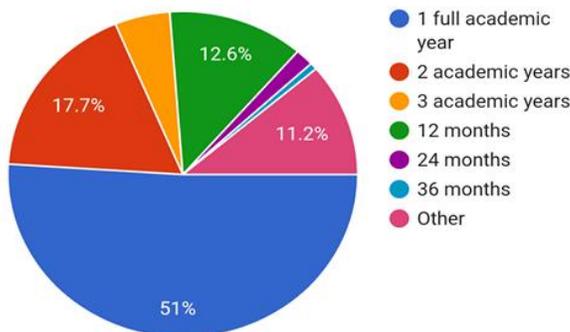
Moreover, the committee believes that the SRA should be ensuring that referenda take place when necessary.

Academic Year vs Calendar Year

The survey outlines the definition of an academic year and clearly outlines that one full academic year would also involve the remainder of the year that the question was asked. (ie. If a question was proposed in 2016-2017 academic year, under this bylaw, the question proposed would not be asked until 2018-2019).

If there were to be a limit, how long should it be?

(294 responses)



Moreover, preliminary results, from the survey that Max Lightstone had created and which was circulated to SRA members beforehand had shown that students believe that there should be one academic year instead of a calendar year before the question may be asked again.

What safeguards are in place?

The Committee believes that it cannot foresee special circumstances in the future regarding referenda especially if there is a change in student opinion. As such, the clause regarding the $\frac{2}{3}$ affirmative vote from the SRA would act as a safeguard for student representatives to voice the concerns of their constituents.

If you have any further questions, feel free to ask.

Best,

David Lee
SRA Bylaws & Procedures Commissioner
McMaster Students Union
srabylaws@msu.mcmaster.ca