



Keeping in Step: Why Ontario Council and National Align Their In-Person AGMs

A question that occasionally comes up among our membership is why the CFUW Ontario Council holds its in-person AGM, and its major board elections, in the exact same year that CFUW National holds its in-person AGM. On the surface, spacing them out into alternating years might seem like a way to balance the calendar and spread the costs of attending into two years. However, when you look under the hood of our organizational structure, keeping them synchronized is vital for effective leadership and governance.

The core of this alignment comes down to four major areas: shared leadership roles regarding both RDs and the VP Ontario, national policy consistency, and the invaluable experience of in-person democracy.

The Regional Director (RD) Training and Timeline Gap

Our Regional Directors wear two hats: they are integral members of the Ontario Council, but they are also National positions.

If Ontario Council were to shift its elections to our "off-year" (the virtual AGM year), it would create an immediate structural mismatch. Our newly elected RDs would step into their roles a full year after the RDs from other provinces and regions. This means they would:

- **Miss out on synchronized training:** They wouldn't receive the foundational training alongside their national peers.
- **Be trapped playing catch-up:** Instead of starting on equal footing, they would spend their first year trying to bridge an information gap.
- **Isolate the VP Ontario:** The Vice President Ontario would find herself in the exact same boat, disconnected from the natural onboarding cycle of her national counterparts.

Impact on the VP Ontario Role

A similar, distinct challenge arises for the provincial executive level. If our voting cycles were misaligned, the VP Ontario would find herself in the exact same boat as a mismatched RD. Stepping into the role on an off-year would mean being disconnected from the natural onboarding cycle and peer support network of her national counterparts, making an already demanding leadership role unnecessarily difficult to navigate.

Safeguarding Bylaws and Operations

National's bylaws, policies, and operational structures are built around a unified, country-wide board changeover. If Ontario Council changed its voting cycle to the virtual year just to match National's board changeover, it would create a domino effect of bureaucratic headaches for Ontario Council. We would be forced to heavily modify our own bylaws to accommodate the shift, creating unnecessary administrative complexity without adding any real value to our operations.

The Power of "Live" Democracy

Finally, we cannot overlook the human element of our federation. Holding our major elections during the in-person AGM year gives our members the distinct advantage of meeting, hearing from, and engaging with candidates "live" before casting their votes. This face-to-face interaction fosters deeper connection, transparency, and confidence in our leadership choices—something that is difficult to replicate in a purely virtual voting year.

By keeping our in-person AGMs aligned with National, we ensure our leaders are fully equipped from day one, our governance remains clean, and our democratic process stays vibrant. It's an alignment that keeps Ontario Council strong, unified, and leading change effectively.

Sandra Shaw, President
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