



Date: 2025-11-20

Reference: 2025 ACUOSU 5

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA STUDENT UNION'S APPEALS COMMITTEE

BETWEEN

LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

The Appellant

AND

UOSU CLUB COMMITTEE

The Respondent

Indexed as

Latin American Heritage Association v UOSU Club Committee

In a matter concerning an appeal of a final Club Committee's decision under the University of Ottawa Student Union's Constitution

Before: a panel of the UOSU Appeals Committee composed of:

Philippe Giguère, Chair of Appeals Committee

Élodie Proulx, Student member at the Faculty of Law

For the Appellant: Barbosa Campos, Appellant's Representative

For the Respondent: Emilia Bah, Student Life Commissioner

REASONS FOR DECISION

I. Overview of the Appeals Committee's decision

1. This appeal concerns the Clubs Committee's decision to deny the Latin American Heritage Association's recognition request. The Latin American Heritage Association is a valued and longstanding cultural organization on campus that supports community, promotes cultural understanding, and plays an important role in student life. Nothing in this decision diminishes the importance of that contribution. However, recognition is conditional on meeting clear mandatory requirements set out in POL-GEN-03 (Policy on Student Groups). Among these are the requirements to submit a bilingual logo and a bilingual constitution.
2. The University of Ottawa is a bilingual institution, and the UOSU is a bilingual student union serving a bilingual membership. Under Article III of the UOSU Constitution, the Union must conduct all business, services, and programs in both English and French, and must actively promote bilingualism and francophone representation within campus life. In this context, the bilingual documentation requirements established under POL-GEN-03 including the obligation for clubs to submit a bilingual logo and a bilingual constitution are not minor technicalities. They are substantive and essential components of the recognition framework, and the burden rests with the appellant to demonstrate that they were satisfied at the time of the application.
3. After reviewing the entire record, including the Committee's Annex A spreadsheet, the appellant's submissions, and its follow-up email, the Appeals Committee concludes that while the Latin American Heritage Association likely submitted a bilingual or multilingual logo, there is no evidence that it submitted a bilingual constitution. This is a mandatory prerequisite under POL-GEN-03 and under the bilingual commitments of the UOSU Constitution. The appellant has not discharged its burden on this essential requirement. Because the Latin American Heritage Association did not meet the threshold requirements, the appeal must be denied. As this omission is fatal, there is no need to address the appellant's other arguments, including those relating to the 300-club cap.

II. Background:

4. The Latin American Heritage Association is a long-standing cultural association at the University of Ottawa with a record of programming, inclusion, and community engagement. The Latin American Heritage Association submitted an application for recognition in the 2025–2026 intake cycle.
5. Clubs at the University of Ottawa operate within the framework of POL-GEN-03 (Policy on Student Groups), which sets out eligibility requirements for recognition. Of relevance: section 4.3.4.2 requirement to provide a bilingual logo, section 4.3.4.3 requirement to

provide a bilingual constitution and sections 3.4.7–3.4.8 requirement that student groups operate in both official languages and that all public documentation be bilingual

6. These requirements reflect the nature and mandate of both the University and UOSU. Article III of the UOSU Constitution states:

“The UOSU shall conduct all business and offer all services and programs in English and French. The UOSU shall work to promote bilingualism and francophone representation at the University of Ottawa.”

7. The Club Committee is the decision-making body responsible for reviewing applications under the Policy. The Club Committee is empowered to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility standards and, when necessary, to allocate limited recognition spaces in accordance with this Policy and the Constitution.
8. In this case, University of Ottawa Cinema Club submitted an application during the authorized registration period which was rejected by the Club Committee on the basis that it did not meet eligibility requirements of having both a bilingual logo and constitution. The Committee’s internal Annex A spreadsheet also indicated that both HLA’s logo and constitution were “not bilingual.” HLA appealed the decision, asserting that it did submit multilingual logos, and that a system limitation prevented submission of its bilingual constitution.

III. Submissions of the parties

9. The Latin American Heritage Association submits that it did in fact provide multilingual logos, noting that the logos it uploaded contained Spanish, English, French, and Portuguese. It argues that the application portal allowed only a single document upload, which prevented the group from submitting its bilingual constitution.
10. The Latin American Heritage Association states that it was not given any opportunity to clarify the issue or correct the file before the decision was made. It further submits that the Committee’s reliance on the bilingual documentation requirements is unfair in the circumstances and that the real barrier to its recognition is the 300-club cap, which it considers outdated. The Latin American Heritage Association therefore asks that it be granted recognition effective the next academic semester.
11. The Clubs Committee submits that the Latin American Heritage Association did not submit a bilingual constitution and that this omission rendered the application administratively incomplete and inadmissible under the Policy.
12. It emphasizes that the bilingual documentation requirements are mandatory under POL-GEN-03 and must be applied consistently. The Committee further notes that the 300-club cap had been reached at the time of the application. It also clarifies that progressive discipline provisions do not apply because this was not a sanction or revocation but a new

recognition application. According to the Committee, the decision was based on objective policy requirements and applied equally to all applicants.

IV. Analysis

13. In an appeal, the appellant bears the burden of demonstrating that the decision-maker erred and that the appellant met all eligibility requirements at the time of application. Latin American Heritage Association has not satisfied this burden.
14. While the appellant's screenshots suggest that a bilingual or multilingual logo was submitted, there is no evidence no PDF, screenshot, email, or contemporaneous documentation showing that a bilingual constitution was provided. This is a mandatory requirement under POL-GEN-03 and consistent with Article III of the UOSU Constitution.
15. The Clubs Committee's internal spreadsheet marks both the constitution and the logo as "not bilingual." While the appellant's screenshots tend to rebut the notation regarding the logo, they do not rebut the notation regarding the constitution.
16. The Latin American Heritage Association has produced no evidence whatsoever showing that a bilingual constitution was included in its submission.
17. The bilingual documentation requirements are not administrative formalities or technical oversight, they reflect the bilingual nature of the University of Ottawa, its students membership and the obligations imposed on UOSU by its own Constitution.
18. Article III: Values of the UOSU Constitution provides that the Union must conduct business and deliver services in English and French, and actively promote bilingualism. Given these obligations, it is reasonable that a recognized student group representing students and interacting with students must have a bilingual constitution accessible to all members.
19. Moreover, the bilingual requirements in POL-GEN-03 are clear, explicit, and publicly available online to all prospective applicants. The UOSU makes its policies accessible expressly so that applicants understand what is required and can prepare their documents accordingly.
20. If the Latin American Heritage Association believed that the portal prevented multiple uploads, it could and should have contacted the Clubs Service before the deadline. Applicants frequently provide documents via email when technical issues arise.
21. The Appeals committee also takes notice that many other clubs appear to have successfully submitted bilingual constitutions through the same process and portal. Allowing an applicant to cure a missing mandatory document *after* the decision would be unfair to those who complied with all requirements on time.

22. Furthermore, an appeal is not a fresh application. The Appeals Committee cannot now accept a bilingual constitution that was not before the Committee at the time of the decision. The relevant question is not whether Latin American Heritage Association can now provide the required document, it is whether it did so at the time the Committee reviewed the application. On that question, the record is clear: it did not.
23. This omission is fatal to its application and to its appeal. Because the appellant failed to provide a bilingual constitution, it did not meet the threshold requirements for eligibility. As such, there is no need to address Latin American Heritage Association's remaining arguments. With that said, The Appeals Committee acknowledges the valuable role the Latin American Heritage Association plays on campus and understands the frustration resulting from this outcome. The organization contributes positively to student life, cultural representation, and inclusion. This decision does not diminish that contribution; it simply reflects the bilingual mandatory requirements that all applicants must meet.

IV. Conclusion & order

24. The appeal is denied
25. The decision of the Club Committee is upheld.

“Philippe Giguère, Chair of Appeals Committee”

“I agree, however, I wish to add the following observation.

While the absence of a bilingual constitution at the time of submission constitutes a clear failure to meet the mandatory requirements under the UOSU Constitution and POL-GEN-03, the technical limitation of the UOSU portal, which only allows the upload of a single document, contributed directly to this outcome. The portal should be designed to permit multiple uploads, particularly where both a bilingual logo and a constitution are required. Moreover, it would have been more consistent with principles of fairness and good faith for the UOSU to provide the applicant with an opportunity to remedy this omission before rendering a final decision. This recommendation is offered to improve the recognition process and to ensure that future applicants are not disadvantaged by technical constraints rather than substantive non-compliance.

Élodie Proulx, Faculty of Law Member of Appeals Committee”