

**Letter of Understanding
Between the
Lister Hall Students' Association (LHSA), the Students' Union (SU)
and the University of Alberta (University)**

(STUDENT CONCERNS ADDED, IN BOLD AND BLUE)

Background

On Monday, July 23, 2012, in response to health and safety concerns associated with the students and staff of Lister, the University announced the following changes:

1. Mackenzie, Henday and Kelsey towers will see first-year only residents in September 2013
2. Revised alcohol rules would be implemented immediately
3. Current student-staff positions would be restructured to be consistent with other student residences
4. A community resource team would be established
5. A first-year residence life program would be introduced

The Students' Union and the LHSA expressed concerns regarding the announcement and the implementation of these changes. In the spirit of cooperation the University has held several meetings with the SU and LHSA to discuss their concerns. At the discussions with the LHSA topics included the organization of fall events, what constituted violation of alcohol rules, the role of orientation volunteers, the importance of both parties building a positive culture within Lister, and the accommodation of LHSA staff positions to enhance its success. The University will be proceeding with these changes. However, the University has agreed to discuss with the SU and LHSA how the first three changes listed above would be implemented.

The Students' Union has not offered to engage the University administration in discussions on the implementation of this proposal; its concern remains the nature of and justification for the changes, in addition to the University administration's failure to adhere to defined processes.

Areas of Commitment

Mackenzie, Henday and Kelsey towers as a first-year only residents [sic]

This change will take effect September 2013. Between today and November 30, 2012 the University will consult with representatives of the SU and LHSA to discuss how the three Lister towers will transition to a first-year residence. Lister will move to a first-year residence with the exception of the student leadership positions. Topics of discussion will include such things as the organization of academic cohort and theme floors and the delivery of the residence life first-year programming.

The Students' Union does not agree with the University administration's rationale on this aspect of the suite of changes. As the changes are not to take place until September 2013, the move to a first-year residence cannot be due to an emergency health and safety concern that requires immediate response. Thus, the University administration acknowledges that this change is not urgent, yet it denies the LHSA and SU the opportunity to engage in a

collaborative process to debate the merits of a first-year residence based on research and evidence.

The consultation framework that students presented to the administration on July 27 allowed for a timely resolution to this issue – by December 2012 – that would permit Residence Services to implement changes to Lister by September 2013. This eminently reasonable position was denied by the administration, and they remain committed to moving forward with a proposal for 2013 that lacks urgency or an evidence-based solution that considers student perspective.

Revised alcohol rules

The University will continue to apply the revised alcohol rules based on the evidence already collected and assessed. However, the University is committed to working with representatives of the SU and LHSA between today and August 30, 2012, to assess the new rules to further enhance the health and safety of the students and staff. The review of alternatives to the rules will be based upon agreed to evidence that clearly demonstrates what rules associated with alcohol use in residences provides the safest environment for students and staff.

The Students' Union and the University administration were in agreement on this point. However, the SU must assert that the University's position is in no way a compromise, as any change to Lister's Residence-specific Community Standards requires approval by the Lister Hall Students' Association. The Board of Governors passed a motion in February 2011 enshrining the LHSA's rights to jointly approve their Community Standards, and the University administration proposed these changes without LHSA approval.

Restructuring of student- staff positions

The implementation of the new resident assistant (RA) positions will continue whereby the RAs will be hired by the University and will have a single and direct reporting relationship to Residence Services. However, in the first year of implementation (2012) those students who were previously elected by the LHSA, hired as floor coordinators and who have now accepted the new position of RA, for the 2012-13 academic year, can continue to hold their elected positions within the LHSA. The holding of these two positions (RA and elected LHSA member) is subject to the RA acknowledging their primary responsibilities to their RA duties. If an RA demonstrates, in the opinion of the Director of Residence Services, a conflict of interest or commitment between the RA duties and their elected LHSA member duties, the RA employment relationship may be terminated. Examples of conflict of interest and conflict of commitment include but are not limited to expectations of in-nights even during LHSA events, and expectations that alcohol, noise and cleanliness rules will be adhered to. Between today and November 30, 2012, the University is committed to consulting with representatives of the SU and LHSA to discuss the roles, responsibilities and scope of the LHSA elected representative position and its relationship to the RA position as hired by Residence Services. The LHSA and Residence Services have an obligation to foster an environment of trust and respect between residents and staff

First, the SU would like to state that adherence to alcohol, noise and cleanliness rules is an expectation for all Lister residents, and the LHSA does not sanction events that defy these

expectations. The insinuation that LHSA events sanction behaviour that disobeys these regulations is detrimental to productive discussion between students and the administration.

More importantly, this offer did not respond to the Students' Union's framework to engage in discussions about future staff arrangements. Residence Services used a model in the past that had more than two student leaders on each floor; this was cancelled due to the personality conflicts and power dynamics that arose in the residence community. For an optimal solution that is committed to the health and safety, both parties must be committed to open discussions on an ideal staffing model for Lister. As in the previous point, the University administration indicates an interest in merely consulting about implementation, but not discussing the merits of the proposal. Alternatives with supporting evidence should be discussed and, if the proposal at hand is proven to be the best plan, then implementation discussions could begin well before the 2013 Fall Term.

Joint Communication

The parties commit to developing a joint communication outlining the agreed to points as listed above.