University of Alberta Students' Union

POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 17th, 2017
4:00 PM
ECHA 1-163

ATTENDANCE

NAME	PROXY	PRESENT
Victoria DeJong (Chair)		Y
Reed Larsen		Y
Delane Howie		Y
Kyle Monda		Y
Alexander Brophy		Y
Fredrique Ndatrirwa		Y
Marina Banister		Y
Mike Sandare		Y
Francesca El Ghossein	Fahim Rahman	N
Fahim Rahman		Y

MINUTES (PC 2016-07)

2016-07/1 INTRODUCTION

2016-07/1a Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 4:06 PM.

2016-07/1b **Approval of Agenda**

DEJONG/SANDARE moved to add MNIF Policy Review above Tuition Policy Review.
7/0/1 (LARSEN ABSTAINED)
CARRIED

2016-07/1c **Approval of Minutes**

FAHIM/NDAATIRA moved to approve the minutes for November 28, 2016.

8/0/0
CARRIED

2016-07/1d **Chair's Business**

2016-07/1d Treaty Recognition

We will have treaty recognitions from all agendas from now on.

2016-07/1d Gendered Language

I will double check on our policies and all standing orders.

2016-07/2 **QUESTION/DISCUSSION PERIOD**

2016-07/2a **MNIF Policy Review**

SANDARE
I made some slight changes. I added a line that they are now committed to transparency and accountability, besides that I think it is a complete policy.

LARSEN
Why was it submitted 12 hours before the meeting?

SANDARE
There are really any big changes when it comes down to this policy. To be honest, a lot of my time has been going towards EMP Fest as

it is coming really soon. It could have been sent out sooner, but the output would have been the same.

MONDA
Even though it was sent out 12 hours ago, we could not look at it as we have no permission on Google Docs.

LARSEN
I'm curious how advocacy is going on these forms after the victory achieved in March and how things have gotten any better?

SANDARE
A lot of the things remain the same: transparency, accountability, affordability, predictability, and accessibility.

The biggest change is university does show us where mandatory non-instructional fees go. We want to make sure the university continues this.

We are still facing the same battle a few years ago with mandatory non-instructional fees --- they are not yet regulated.

BROPHY
It will be nice to have a resolution that we would like to advocate to have a regulation of MNIFs same as regulation for tuition.

SANDARE
That would be Line 4 & 5.

RAHMAN
We don't want to see SU fees increase 10% each year.

LARSEN
Do we want this to be reworded in a way that is more clear and less arbitrary? I don't see evidence that these 9 resolutions are all being accomplished.

For example, the point about international students, do we want to talk about that in MNIFs or in tuition?

SANDARE
Do you have any recommendations?

LARSEN

We should start putting more emphasis on these questions. We should be trying to be more specific.

SANDARE
We don't want to be too prescriptive with our policies because it lacks the flexibility for when executives run in different platforms.

Complete re-working is not necessary I think. If we have too many things that prescribe how then we walk ourselves into a policy position.

I think International tuition is better off in tuition.

MONDA
Are we jumping the gun on passing this before we have the results on the structure of MNIF?

SANDARE
No, it doesn't lock us in the sense that we cannot revisit this policy. If we wait, it might last until after April.

LARSEN
I would prefer more specifics: international students tuition fee, instructional fees, etc.

Has it worked considerably within the last 8 months? I don't have enough evidence.

RAHMAN
For the progress, we are working with university right now about the MNIF policy. It should exist by the end of February.

We do have a clause with MOA with any future MNIF.

For Tuition review, this is coming for renewal one year too early. Next year would be better as we have more information.

SU Political Policy should be what's best for students, and that is independent largely of what the government does.

BROPHY
We would want to be do a more comprehensive rewrite. It would be nice to have more detailed information.

MONDA
Though we could pass it now, I don't see the urgency. The committee needs more time to look at this.

For the Tuition policy, could we have that addition of clarity and add more specific goal?

BANISTER
I'm in favour of a more flexible and vague policy. We should think long -term, and all values of all students.

DEJONG
Overall I am satisfied. I agree with Fahim that we can use some sort of facts of SU fees and put some differentials in there.

In resolution point 8, Robyn commented if we would be a little more specific like adding "add accountability procedure" to be more tangible. This still leaves room for flexibility and how reporting structure exists.

LARSEN
I would want to have some opening the conversation on international students tuition either here or something else.

I'm just really curious as to what work has been done. Are we moving forward?

MONDA
Does the API increase apply only to base tuition or also to MNIF?

RAHMAN
MNIF

MONDA/LARSEN moved to refer this to the next Policy Committee Meeting.
8/0/1 (NDAATIRA ABSTAINED)
CARRIED

Tuition Policy Review

DEJONG
I would like to do a little bit of outreach if possible to get student feedback for the way we advocate for tuition.

BROPHY
I like the idea where we have a tuition policy that simultaneously deals with the realities and the ideals. We know that there's not gonna be free tuition anytime soon, but the policy would give a certain roadmap to that.

HOWIE
Do you want the SU policy to state that our ideal situation is 0 dollar tuition?

BROPHY
We want hierarchy of asks. We want increased fundings, tuition cut and eliminated, but we know that there are various economic factors there so we aren't going to ask just one thing.

HOWIE
So we actually want to put $0 tuition in the policy? I'm fine with a three steps below that, but actually having it in there at all is very contentious.

SANDARE
If we add a roadmap, there is no room for flexibility. As council, we represent all students in University of Alberta. Having zero dollar tuition is something I'm against because it increases barriers to access.

BANISTER
I think it is really tricky to find a balance of saying that this is something we want without undermining it.

I agree with Mike on access points about the zero tuition.

BROPHY
The idea of being too prescriptive is something I have not thought of, and will definitely change what I have previously been thinking.

BANISTER
What we all can agree on is we want university to be accessible to people. That does not mean one specific solution. The solution depends on what circumstance you're in.

LARSEN
I am and always will be a fan of the idea of moving towards

universal access of education. My mind the tuition is the largest single barrier we have to that access.

As far as what our SU policy should be, we need to ask for money to fill in the programs. I really like the idea that we have policy asks ways to have an ultimate goal.

NDAATIRA
When we're moving towards free tuition, it is important to recognize that we're in a competitive realm. If we say we want zero tuition, we want to remember we want to be ranked in the world.

RAHMAN
I think the biggest deterrent of people going to universities is whether your parents attend or not.

Brophy's suggestion is tough coming from an executive perspective. I am for giving people options.

There should be line here that says the Students' Union can vote in favour of increases to the cost of education if it is beneficial to the students. An example is the uPass.

BROPHY
The whole point of having this ask strategy is you weren't bound by a particular "we asked for this thing".

My thoughts on zero tuition is there should be more clear framework, but, yes, with the prescriptiveness, it is probably not the best idea.

LARSEN
I don't see the negative of having the ultimate goal: zero tuition. We have to talk about the biggest cost of it all. I believe this goal is not impossible; it's just hard.

SANDARE
I don't see the reason why we need to say we're advocating for completely free tuition. It doesn't say that we're not advocating for free tuition. It won't help in our strategy if we put it there.

We will be dealing with different parties. Year after year, we're going to have executive and council change over. We want to be able to open it up so when new people come in, their politics and

their political view will still work.

BANISTER
It goes back to the idea of flexibility because one: execs and council change every year. Next year, they may not want free tuition. Two: If we voted at a council on a free tuition, I'm not sure it will pass because I don't think an average student or an average councillor thinks that that's the best thing.

I think we should be more flexible for more wiggle room.

HOWIE
In Resolution 3, I think that's an opportunity for us to put in not an exception but something that addresses the fact that there is some wiggle room for if that increase/situation benefits the students.

As it's worded right now, there is some glaring exceptions that would go into that like if a program is about to be cut, and the only way it is not going to be cut is we raise tuition by $3.

LARSEN
We can write these policies in a way that say we do understand the exceptions. Writing it down is very important that we do see these things as an ultimate barrier/decision.

I would like to see our SU take a committed direction on policy tuition.

MONDA
On resolution 3, I can definitely see a strong argument for leaving that option in the policy. I'm worried that if we put that policy, we're basically saying to the university that they can raise tuition as long as you can market it correctly to students.

LARSEN
This is a Googleable document. If we say we're ok with increase in tuition, people would say SU is okay with increases. If people want to find out what the SU stood in tuition, this is what they're going to find.

HOWIE
I understand. It sucks to watch your program get cut and not being able to do anything about it. Even if it's a threat and if they're actually gonna cut programs, that's a conversation in the Council.

RAHMAN
I agree with Delane. I think there is a good way to reword that.

DEJONG
I don't agree that we should advocate for free tuition or having a 20 year plan. I think this policy should be more robust. I agree with Delane about point 3.

NDAATIRA
In response to Kyle about the university threatening us, I don't think they're dumb enough to do that. If they succeed, I think we're dumb enough to let them do that. If there's no valid excuse to let them do that, then it's our fault.

LARSEN
I am supportive of the idea that it will go to council.

MONDA
I am conflicted on this especially being in a Fine Arts department. I do think that it is worth having discussion around flexibility.

DEJONG
Who is interested in spearheading the review process?

HOWIE
I volunteer.

2016-07/2b **Transparent Consultation Processes**

DEJONG
I think it's weird SU does not consult more with students when we make changes that direct our advocacy.

RAHMAN
It's the council's role to do those consultations.

DEJONG
Has CAC considered creating a job description for councillors?
A paragraph and a website is not binding. This should be part of CAC meetings. I will go to the meetings next week.

MONDA

It might be a good idea to post it on SU facebook and twitter to remind people that we're looking at these policies so they can email councillors.

Adding this to the agenda, do we want all of council to do the all consultations or the policy committee doing their own?

DEJONG
I was thinking of Policy Committee, but there is that bigger issue of responsibility.

BANISTER
I have 5 COFA meetings next week. Do you want to come to the COFA meetings?

DEJONG
We will talk about it later.

2016-07/3 **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

2016-07/4 **INFORMATION ITEMS**

2016-07/5 **ADJOURNMENT**

2016-07/5a **Next Meeting:** January 31, 2017 @ SUB 6-06

2016-07/5b Meeting adjourned at 5:27PM.

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS

MOTION	VOTES
DEJONG/SANDARE moved to add MNIF Policy Review above Tuition Policy Review.	**7/0/1 (LARSEN ABSTAINED) - CARRIED**
FAHIM/NDAATIRA moved to approve the minutes for November 28, 2016.	**8/0/0 - CARRIED**
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