

University of Alberta Students' Union

STUDENTS' COUNCIL LATE ADDITIONS

Tuesday January 20, 2004 – 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers 2-1 University Hall

2003-20/5

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

2003-20/5a

Presentation by Janet Lo, Vice President Academic

2003-20/8

APPROVAL OF THE STUDENTS' UNION BOARDS AND
COMMITTEES REPORTS

2003-20/8a

External Affairs Board Report

Please see document LA 03-20.01

2003-20/10

LEGISLATION

2003-20/10p

SAMUEL/LO MOVED THAT Students' Council, upon the joint recommendation of the External Affairs Board and the Academic Affairs Board, rescind the political policy on "Post-Secondary Education Funding Cutbacks".

Please bring supporting documentation from the January 6, 2004 meeting of Students' Council.

2003-20/10q

SAMUEL/LO MOVED THAT Students' Council, upon the joint recommendation of the External Affairs Board and the Academic Affairs Board, rescind the political policy on "Tuition Deregulation".

Please bring supporting documentation from the January 6, 2004 meeting of Students' Council.

2003-20/10r

SAMUEL/LO MOVED THAT Students' Council, upon the joint recommendation of the External Affairs Board and the Academic Affairs Board, rescind the political policy on "Tuition Authority".

Please bring supporting documentation from the January 6, 2004 meeting of Students' Council.

2003-20/10s

SAMUEL/LO MOVED THAT Students' Council, upon the joint recommendation of the External Affairs Board and the Academic Affairs Board, rescind the political policy on "Alberta's Tuition Policy".

Please bring supporting documentation from the January 6, 2004 meeting of Students' Council.

2003-20/10t

SAMUEL/LO MOVED THAT Students' Council, upon the joint recommendation of the External Affairs Board and the Academic Affairs Board, rescind the political policy on "Post-Secondary Learning Act".

Please bring supporting documentation from the January 6, 2004 meeting of Students' Council.

2003-20/10u

SAMUEL/LO MOVED THAT Students' Council, upon the joint recommendation of the External Affairs Board and the Academic Affairs Board, rescind the political policy on "Tuition Policy".

Please bring supporting documentation from the January 6, 2004 meeting of Students' Council.

2003-20/10v

SAMUEL/LO MOVED THAT Students' Council, upon the joint recommendation of the External Affairs Board and the Academic Affairs Board, pass the following Political Policy on "Tuition Levels and Regulation".

Please bring supporting documentation from the January 6, 2004 meeting of Students' Council.

2003-20/10w

LO MOVED THAT Students' Council, upon the recommendation of the Academic Affairs Board, amend the Political Policy on "Tuition Levels and Regulation," specifically, that the phrase "immediate freeze" be amended to read "immediate fully-funded freeze" and that "portion of the costs of their educations" be amended to read "substantial portion of the costs of their educations".

Please bring supporting documentation from the January 6, 2004 meeting of Students' Council.

2003-20/11

NEW BUSINESS

2003-20/12

REPORTS

2003-20/12c

Mat Brechtel – President

Please see document LA 03-20.02

2003-20/12d

Chris Samuel – Vice President External

Please see document LA 03-20.03

2003-20/12e

Undergraduate Board of Governors Representative

Please see document LA 03-20.04

2003-20/12f

Activities Coordinator Report

Please see document LA 03-20.05

The External Affairs Board Report to Students' Council January 20, 2004

Meeting of the External Affairs Board
Friday, January 9th, 2004

The External Affairs Board has asked IRB to draft a referendum question re: the U-Pass to follow the following principles:

1. The question shall be in the form of a binding referendum, not a plebiscite (6/0/0)
2. The U-Pass fee shall be \$60/semester (3/0/3)
3. That the effect of an affirmative vote shall expire in 2 years (5/0/1)
4. That there be no inclusion of Spring/Summer term fees (5/0/0)
5. That there be no opt-out clause (4/0/1)

MAT BRECHTEL - REPORT TO COUNCIL

Why hello. How are you council? I'm doing just fine. Time to get on with the home stretch.

Things that I have been up to

The Tuition decision: this took a little time. Needless to say, it was important. I have a number of people to thank that I would like to put here. First and foremost, I want to thank the groups that showed support. We had a number of groups on campus that took part in tuition awareness and protest: University Athletics, and the UAB; the Chaplains, and the faith communities on campus; the LHSA and HCA; some faculty associations including UASUS, the ASA, the ESA; the Academic Integrity program; the International Center; and NASA. I also need to thank a number of volunteers and participants, including: all of the presenters (too numerous to list); our speakers at the rally including Karen Beaton, Raj Pannu, Malcom Azania, the Raging Grannies, Ian Rowe; the guests at Touchdowns for Tuition, Tom Higgins, Wayne McCutchan and Ricky Walters; and of course our volunteers (and I apologize sincerely if I forget anyone—I was a little preoccupied) Alex Abboud, Ariana Barer, Adam Cook, Julius Dagot, Zita Dube, Allie Ekdahl, Sara Katz, Stephen Kirkham, Emily Krauss, Lisa McLaughlin, Terra Melnyk, Kevin Petterson, Samantha Powers, Steve Smith, Duncan Taylor, Melanee Thomas, Heather Wallace, , and Chris Wudarck. Finally I would like to thank the outspoken and open-minded BoG members who truly support students, Lynda Actem Roman Kotovych.

For those councilors who decided not to even come out, I am severely disappointed. It is impossible to have a show of support without even the support of people within the SU. If you are actually representative of your students, then this is an issue to you and you are charged to do something about it. We had people and representatives from all over the city and province, but we did not have our own. Council has never been merely a room to endlessly debate issues that rarely directly affect your constituents; it is a group that is charged with the representative leadership of our campus.

Beyond that, I have the rest of my weeks mapped out for the rest of the year, based on 4 goals. I will be systematically approaching each, and new issues will inevitably take the sideline, unless absolutely critical.

Cheers!

Mat

Meetings are ill indication of the action I hope to take.

VP External (that's Chris Samuel) Report to Students' Council January 20, 2004

Hello Students' Council. This is your VP External here, delivering you the report on the weeks from January 6, 2004 to January 20, 2004. As far as meetings go, over the course of the two weeks, I've had the joint Academic Affairs Board/External Affairs Board meeting in which we discussed the changes in the political policies regarding tuition. I also had another External Affairs Board meeting. That report is in the Late Additions package regarding the U-Pass.

We also had the tuition campaign last week. We had lots of media out, but obviously the maximum tuition hike wasn't what we had in mind.

The Prime Minister attended the Liberal Convention on Saturday and was able to attend also and to ask the Prime Minister a question and the Prime Minister said, "Well, yes Chris . . ."

Upcoming:

We are going on a road trip! We are going to be visiting a lot of rural high schools and spreading the message about student debt. This will be part of the Debt Campaign we will be running in an attempt to educate all about the horrors of debt.

The Federal Election is supposed to be called at the end of April.

Awaiting the release of the provincial budget. Hoping there is something good in there for students.

Working on upcoming CAUS Meeting.

Why CCRAP Is Wrong

BOG Rep Report to Council – January 20, 2004

A recent CCRAP meeting attended by four people has recommended to Council that the BOG Rep position be scrapped, and that the seat be allocated to the VP (Academic). Unlike IRB, CCRAP did not even endeavour to solicit feedback from those who have sat on the Board. What follows is an excerpt from my July 2003 submission to IRB on the position of BOG Rep (with several additions), and my response to the arguments posed on the webboard by Gregory Harlow on January 19, 2004. The recent BOG meeting has only reaffirmed my belief that an independent Board representative is beneficial, and that we should be pursuing two-year terms for those who sit on the Board.

Excerpt from “The Position of ‘U of A Board of Governors Undergraduate Representative’”

5. Length of Term

The student representatives on the Board of Governors are appointed for one year terms. In many respects, this is too short. With a steep learning curve, by the time a Board representative learns the system and many of the issues and establishes a credible presence, her term is over. This cycle repeats every year, preventing any sort of continuity, growth in expertise, or institutional memory. This is especially evident in contrast to other Board members, who are appointed for three-year terms with possibility of a renewal. Although stagnation should be avoided and fresh ideas are highly beneficial (and one of the greatest strengths of student representation), high turnover can ultimately weaken the students’ position. Should the Board decide to strike an ad-hoc committee mid-way through the year (as seen at the last Board meeting, with the proposal brought forward by the Chancellor), having effective student representation becomes very problematic. A two-year term for our Board Rep would be preferable to the status quo.

7. Procedure for Selecting the BOG Rep

Students’ Council nominates two undergraduate students for appointment to the Board of Governors. As it stands, those reps are the SU President and a student-at-large selected during the SU general elections. Our Board members should continue to be selected in this manner (although the Students’ Union representative doesn’t necessarily have to be the President), or both reps should be selected independently in overlapping two-year terms.

Some would advocate electing both representatives in the manner of the BOG Rep. This would be similar to the elected academic representatives on the Board, and would balance the inequality between the two students. This idea is preferable to giving both seats to the exec. However, there is something to be said for the weight of the SU name and the Presidential position, and maintaining one SU seat on the Board.

Granting the second Board seat to another SU Executive would provide the benefit of having two Board members who spend their days being paid, full-time representatives. The belief is that this rep would have more time to devote to his duties as part of his job than a volunteer BOG representative. Nevertheless, such a change would be a very bad idea. Fully consolidating student representation on the Board within the Students' Union executive is little different from consolidating Council seats within Faculty Association executives. This is something that has been acknowledged as being a bad idea and should not be replicated at the Board level.

The time issue is a double-edged sword. True, SU Executives are paid to be full-time representatives of student issues. On the other hand, they are very busy with other duties and responsibilities and often have to balance their priorities. There is a very real possibility that Board representation could suffer if added to an executive's already-loaded agenda.

Representatives of the Students' Union theoretically should always act in the best interests of students, but it's not that simple. They have two priorities: 1) the interests of students; and 2) organizational concerns relating to the Students Union. These two priorities can sometimes come in conflict. A prime example is the potential threat under Bill 43 to the SU's ability to levy mandatory fees. Mandatory fees are clearly in the best interest of the organization, and without this power the organization would suffer. But are mandatory fees necessarily in the best interests of students? Maybe not. We like to think that the SU brings benefit to students whether they know it or not, but the same debate over mandatory fees has taken place in the context of Faculty Associations and their relevance to students. This is just an example. Without entering a debate on the merits of mandatory fees and the usefulness of the SU and Faculty Associations, the BOG Rep can focus solely on University and student concerns (which are rightfully paramount) without the baggage of SU organizational concerns.

Students' Union political policy creates predictability on the Board and limits the flexibility of student representation. This problem would only be compounded by giving the second seat to an executive. Political policy leaves little room for compromise. According to the GSA President, GSA bylaws allow for committee reps to bend on policies if they believe that they can ultimately achieve a better result for students in doing so. The Students' Union does not have the same provision. If one were to bind both representatives to SU political policy, one may as well just effectively scrap the second seat and give two votes to the President.

As the BOG Rep currently has a seat on GFC, granting the seat to the VP (Academic), who already sits on GFC, would potentially remove a student voice from General Faculties Council.

Changing the election process would limit the talent pool for Board of Governors selection. Currently, the Board representative is able to remain a full-time student. Giving the seat to another executive would limit our potential Board talent to those students who are able and willing to give up a year to work for the Students' Union. Furthermore, the current process allows for better vetting of candidates. A candidate for the BOG position is judged solely on his competence to represent students on the Board

of Governors. This is much more transparent and focused than simply giving the seat to an executive who is selected based on much-broader criteria and whose strength on the Board may not be as closely examined during the election. The talents required for the BOG and those required for the executive are not the same.

The SU President carries not only the baggage of Students' Union organizational concerns, but also the reputation and credibility of the SU. He needs to be concerned about the effects of actions on the Students' Union for the future. The BOG Rep is only around for a year and can thus afford to be more vocal on issues.

A certain inequality exists between the two student Board reps. The administration will more likely speak to the SU President and include him in formal discussions than the BOG Rep. This, however, is not a product of sitting on the Board, but rather a normal function of the President's position within the Students' Union. This same situation would exist with two execs on the Board.

In the last few years, the BOG position hasn't been as highly contested as some of the other positions. This is largely a factor of the low profile that the position has had in the past. Throwing the position into another executive's portfolio would do nothing to improve the situation. The solution to the problem is to RAISE the profile of the position, NOT to scrap it entirely. Students' Council and councilor elections have been nearly invisible in years past. Was the solution to this problem to simply give up, see it all as an inconvenience, and let Faculty Associations appoint all seats, or to continue letting the exec run the show? No. Discussions have taken place on how to improve the profile of Council, ideas ranging from councilor election budgets to providing support from an Office of the Speaker to creating a Councilor office to granting councilor budgets. Why would we move in the opposite direction for the BOG Rep? The profile for the BOG will not be improved by scrapping the office, scrapping office hours, having no budget allowance, removing the Council seat, and so on. Convenience is not an acceptable answer.

The current system, in addition to avoiding the numerous problems seen in the alternative plans, allows for student input and perspective both from within and outside the Students' Union organization. The BOG Rep is ultimately still accountable to students and the Students' Council that nominates him. Having an independent BOG Rep increases the likelihood of having at least one rep for whom the Board is top priority. And when reps disagree, different perspectives will be presented and students are able to properly evaluate the effectiveness of alternative approaches in dealing with the Board. Although the instinct may be to consolidate student representation within the Students' Union, the example of academic representatives on the Board (who are elected independently and are not drawn from the Academic Staff Association of the University of Alberta) shows that this need not be the case.

Ultimately, it would be completely unacceptable to alter the selection process for our BOG Rep, our President, or any other representatives, based on a desire to see the prominence of a particular political ideology.

Response to Gregory Harlow on the SU Webboard (<http://webboard.su.ualberta.ca/viewtopic.php?t=1820>)

I don't have time to go into great detail here. Here's hoping Mr. Speaker will be fair and impartial in tomorrow's debate. ☺

Gregory Harlow wrote:

1. The biggest reason is that the BoG rep tends to see themselves first and foremost as a member of the board and therefore having the duty to do what is best for the university.

What, exactly, are you basing this on? Yes, BOTH student reps (and the NASA rep, and the Academic reps) are LEGALLY OBLIGATED to act in the best interests of the University while representing the interests of their constituencies. The fact that the "President on the other hand seems more inclined to do what is best for students" assumes:

- a) That the President knows what's best for students.
- b) That there is only one perspective on what is best for students.
- c) The President won't put the interests of the SU above those of students.

Besides, coming in with the label "representing the SU" isn't always beneficial. It lends and aura of inflexibility to our representation.

Quote:

Undergraduate students are not well served by having their two representatives espousing different points of view on the board.

Different points of view are a good thing, Gregory. Besides, you still haven't given a single example of why the status quo is bad.

Quote:

2. The VP Academic is the natural person to give the position to because they are already tied into the university governance structure and generally have the opportunity to deal with all the issues that eventually reach the Board of Governors at a lower committee level. Indeed, often the VP had a better chance of changing things before they get too high up in the process after which the rubber stamps come out and little change is possible.

The VPA will still be able to effect change at a lower level, and if nothing can be changed at a higher level, then having the VPA there is irrelevant. If we're going to grant a representational monopoly to the SU, we might as well scrap our SALs on GFC Exec, FDC, APC, and every other committee.

Quote:

3. A paid executive officer has a better opportunity to make the most of the position as opposed to a volunteer who generally must manage the position on top of full time studies and job. If we think the position is important, then we should treat it like it is and actually give the person performing it some resources to work with. While this could be accomplished simply by paying the BoG rep, it makes fiscal sense to incorporate it into the existing structure and there by avoid having to provided another salary from the already stretched treasury.

So, on the one hand, you're saying the BOG is at a position where they can't affect change, and on the other hand you're saying it's important enough to get paid for? Which is it? All you're going to do is bury it in an overloaded portfolio (and no matter how much you redistribute the responsibilities, the exec will always be overloaded), giving it to someone who may not necessarily want it or be best suited for the position. And the "they don't get paid, so they don't have time to devote" argument is thin at best: if that's the case, then all our councillors (who are unpaid) must by definition be incompetent, and as such aren't really good representatives for the general will of students.

Question: how much have you heard about any BOG subcommittees that Brechtel has worked on?

Quote:

5. The Election for BoG rep is unsatisfactory at best. I've never seen more than two people run for the position at one time and sometimes we don't even have that.

Gregory, two years does not make a pattern. When Curran ran for President, four people ran for BOG Rep. Should we scrap the position of President because we had two years where it was Church/McNulty and Samuel/Harlow? Or scrap the VPA and VPOF positions because Amy and Jamie ran unopposed?

Quote:

Moreover, even when we do have two people run, generally one of the candidates is consider to be unelectable (and that is putting it kindly).

That is a matter of perspective.

Quote:

6. Elections simplicity. The more people you have to elect, the less interested people tend to be.

You think the difference between five and six will drive people away?

Quote:

This both helps to refocus attention on the main race which consists of the five executives and eliminates the expense of running of BoG rep position each year.

BOG Rep is the most thoroughly vetted of all the positions. It is decided purely on the basis of who is most competent for the Board, rather than dealing with dozens of related portfolio issues. If anything, mixing it in with the VPA will reduce the profile of the Board representation.

Roman

"We need a series of coordinated jerks." - Roman Kotovych (Team Social Engineering),
at the Engg Week Tug-of-War

Respectfully submitted,

Roman Kotovych
Undergraduate Board of Governors Representative

Student Activities Coordinator – sac@su.ualberta.ca

COUNCIL REPORT - Anna Grimsrud*

January 20th, 2004

Activities since DECEMBER 2003:

What has happened

- Students' Union Christmas Party for Kids
 - Fun-filled day with the usual ups and down
 - Huge thanks to every volunteer, I hope you all had a great time
- Christmas
- Antifreeze
 - Special thanks to Geneva and ECOS for Junkyard Wars, Jim Bohum from the Dean of Students Office, and the U of A Cheer team
 - Spirit awards rewarded to Teem Fale (Avalanche division) and TCT (Iceberg division)
 - Avalanche final standings: 1st Sugar Shack, 2nd Pike All-Stars, 3rd Teem Fale, 4th Fat Bastards
 - Iceberg division: 1st Frosty's Carrot, 2nd TCT, 3rd The Institute, 4th Mall Ratz
 - Also, thanks to all the volunteers and the participants for a very fun and entertaining week
- Tuition Week
 - Helped the ACPC's with Touchdown's for Tuition and with the early Friday morning pancake breakfast
 - Special thanks to all the varsity athletes who played flag football and to the many volunteers for the Pancake Breakfast

What is happenin'

- Programming for the 2nd semester
 - Stay tuned...
- SUCPK and Antifreeze Debrief
 - Thank you's, clean-up, reports, etc.
- Volunteer Fair!
 - This Wednesday, January 21st in SUB

Programming Committee: Date and time...TBA

REALITY TV UPDATE: CATCH DAY 2 OF 3 OF AMERICAN IDOL 3 THIS EVENING, AND TOMORROW IS EPISODE 2 OF THE BACHELORETTE WITH THE LOVELY MEREDITH. ALSO STAY TUNED AFTER THE SUPER BOWL ON FEB 1ST FOR THE PREMIERE OF SURVIVOR: ALL-STAR.S.