

STUDENTS' COUNCIL

**Tuesday, December 5, 2017
6:00PM
Council Chambers, University Hall**

LATE ADDITIONS (SC 2017-14)

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 2017-14/1 | <u>SPEAKERS BUSINESS</u> |
| 2017-14/2 | <u>PRESENTATIONS</u> |
| 2017-14/3 | <u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT</u> |
| 2017-14/4 | <u>BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORT</u> |
| 2017-14/5 | <u>OPEN FORUM</u> |
| 2017-14/6 | <u>QUESTION PERIOD</u> |
| 2017-14/7 | <u>BOARD AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS</u> |
| 2017-14/8 | <u>GENERAL ORDERS</u> |
| 2017-14/9 | <u>INFORMATION ITEMS</u> |
| 2017-14/9a | Vice President (External) - Report

See SC-2017-14.01 |
| 2017-14/9b | <i>Letter to Council, Regarding the State of ESS Finances</i>

See SC-2017-14.02 |
| 2017-14/9c | Response to Concerns Regarding the ESS (2017-18) FAMF Proposal

See SC-2017-14.03 |

Date: Nov. 16, 2017
To: Students' Council
Re: Students' Council

Hi Council,

Apologies for having this report in the late additions. The past 2 weeks have been a whirlwind and my office has been feilding a lot from Ottawa. I hope to cover most of the big updates in this report but please follow up on any items of interest.

Tuition Announcement



Tuition Announcement - Mount Royal Nov. 30th

The [tuition freeze](#) has been announced for the 2018/19 academic year and will include backfill funding for universities. Backfill funding has been something that myself, past generations of executives, and CAUS have pushed for since the introduction of tuition freezes and the lack of such since 2016/17.

"Students are thrilled to see that the government has heard them and ensured that post-secondary education remains affordable and accessible. The Council of Alberta University Students thanks the government for freezing tuition while ensuring institutions are funded appropriately so that budgeting restraints do not impact students." - Reed Larsen ([Gov. Release](#))

This announcement, although a win for students, means that the tuition review itself will be ongoing and we expect further announcements in the early new year. President Banister and myself have pushed that the tuition freeze is not a solution, especially for International students, and we will continue to push on all fronts for financial accessibility, affordability, and predictability.

"There have been multiple instances of international students being priced out of education because of increases above even 10 and 15 per cent at some institutions," Larsen said." - [Metronews](#)

I have several stakeholder meetings lined up regarding next steps and will update council as we hear more information.

CASA

President Banister and I have spent the last week in Ottawa for the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations advocacy week. It was overall a very productive week, as President Banister and I are considered strong lobbyists, we mostly where placed in high-intensity meetings. Highlights include being the first meeting of the week with MP Eglinski, doing a takeover of the CASA Instagram page for a day, and meeting with my representative MP Duncan.

If anyone has interest, you can review CASA's lobby document [here](#). Highlights for the Ualberta context would be increasing funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program for indigenous learners and streamlining the international student co-op and work experience permits.



MP Eglinski - First Meeting of Advowee17

Items to Note

- President Banister and I met with University administration on phase out of physical cash payments. Was very productive and straightforward conversation on new technologies, including credit payments, coming to tuition payments.
- UASU Executive Town Hall tomorrow at 12:30 pm
- Senate Plenary from Thursday - Friday this week
- Vacation days from Dec. 13 - 16th

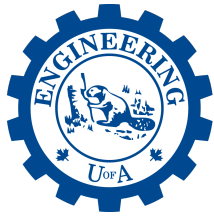
Personal Note

On a final personal note for this weeks report, this has been the single most stressful, yet fulfilling, week of my entire undergraduate education. Backfill funding is something myself, and dozens of amazing people campaigned on, sometimes for years. The announcements of tuition were wonderfully handled form hundreds of miles away, without CAUS home office staff, instead of with an amazing team of Alberta student leaders and dedicated staff. To anyone, from those students who went to the announcements, to the fantastic staff everywhere, thank you so much for your continued patience and hard work. Without you, these victories that ensure a PSE system is student-focused, would not occur. So in close, I really would highlight to council the incredible work done by the staff at the University of Alberta Students Union and across Alberta to ensure that such announcements can happen, continue to happen, and build an accessible, affordable, and predictable future for PSE in Alberta.

Cheers,



Reed Larsen



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Student's Council
Students' Union Building
University of Alberta
8900 - 114 Street NW
Edmonton, AB
T6G 2J7

RE: ESS FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

Dear Councilors,

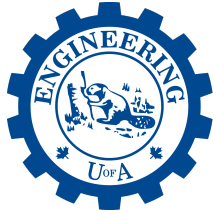
In recognition of concerns brought forward by council during the Engineering Students' Society (ESS) proposal for raising the Faculty Association Membership Fee (FAMF), the ESS has recently uploaded [summary budgets to our website](#).

However, in reviewing previous budgets, we have found that there are some discrepancies between the records currently available versus the actual expenditures of the ESS. For example, Fiscal Year 2014-2015 displays a net loss of \$109,178.97, which, according to our bank records, is a clear misrepresentation.

Furthermore, our standard practice as a registered society is to complete an annual professional audit. I have concluded that due to a lack of proper transitions between 2014 and 2016, the last time this was completed was in Fiscal Year 2013-2014.

Therefore the I believe that it is necessary we take immediate action to amend our financial records. Under my direction, the ESS will:

- mandate that a yearly professional audit of the previous fiscal year be completed no later than November 30 of the current fiscal year;
- complete a professional audit of any unaudited years over the past five (5) fiscal years prior to any referendum regarding FAMF; and,
- increase the current financial team with the addition of a third financial assistant, reporting directly under VP Operations and Finance.



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I would like to emphasize that this is purely to ensure that the ESS is fiscally transparent and accurate in our recordkeeping. In addition, the ESS is taking strategic steps internally to ensure that future teams have a concrete ability to maintain our current degree of organization. For example, this year the ESS has:

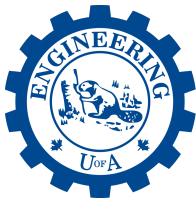
- received approval from the audit committee of the SU for the release of FAMF for 2017-2018;
- implemented a new accounting software, Xero, which tracks our expenses, payables, expense claims, and our budget;
- started working closely with the Associate Dean of Outreach at the Faculty of Engineering, and other on-campus groups to create a rigorous financial training program for all future volunteers in the Department of Operations and Finance; and,
- been in contact with multiple accounting firms in order to secure the right partner for a complete audit of all unaudited years from the past five fiscal years, as well as the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

With demonstrated actions this year and the aforementioned future plans, I have full confidence that the ESS has, and will have, the ability to effectively administer an increased FAMF in order to provide the high-quality services and events which a top-four Canadian engineering student body deserves.

Undersigned,

Yanzhao Yang

Vice-President Operations and Finance (Winter)
Engineering Students' Society of the University of Alberta



Response to Concerns Regarding the FAMF 2017/2018 Proposal

To address concerns regarding comparing ourselves to other schools...

When it comes to faculty association funding, it's important that we compare ourselves to other schools; students care about what a school offers, and for many engineering students this includes projects and other extracurriculars outside of academia which the ESS supports. UofA Engineering has fallen behind when it comes to the funding available for individuals and student groups, and it's important we remain competitive and attractive to prospective students. With the proposed FAMF fee of \$20 per semester, our membership fee is still lower than other societies of similar membership size and will allow us to offer more support to our students.

While \$20 sounds like a large increase from \$7, it may instead be understood as a \$15.25 fee with a new \$4.75 contribution to the engineering project groups. These groups on campus are non-exclusive, open to the entire student body and provide students with opportunities to get hands-on engineering related experience. This applied learning can later be used for other design assignments in class, capstone projects, and other projects beyond one's degree. The student clubs provide many other opportunities in the form of attending or facilitating high school programs, hacking Tuesdays at TEC Edmonton, middle school flight presentations, and the engineering expo which showcases engineering to students outside of the program.

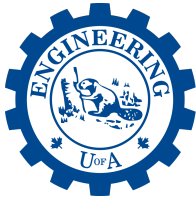
To address concerns regarding general student body consultation...

The ESS provided opportunities for the general student body to provide input on our proposal - including a town hall on October 17th and a survey that was open from October 18th - 30th, and included information from our FAMF town hall presentation. The town hall and survey were advertised. The ESS had hoped to receive more responses from the student survey but considers the low number of responses to be an indicator that many students are indifferent with an increase.

Many of those who express concern with an increased fee, support the fee so long as the opt-out mechanism remains intact and that they can still benefit from the services and events hosted by the ESS. The ESS has no plans to change this policy. Following GEER Week, the ESS will start an awareness campaign to make sure all student members know what FAMF is, how it benefits the faculty and how it could benefit them individually as a member. The referendum in itself is a form of consultation and will be our ultimate tool for consulting the student body.

To address concerns regarding the ESS's ability to manage funds...

The ESS has increasingly demonstrated significant improvements in its finance portfolio over the last few years. In 2015/2016, the ESS underwent a large policy revamp that led to many improvements as to how the ESS is operated and how the executive is held accountable. In



Response to Concerns Regarding the FAMF 2017/2018 Proposal

2016/2017, the finance department grew from a single VP Finance to having its own full team, incorporating a Funding Division led by AVP Funding, a Granting Division led by AVP Granting and two financial assistants to aid the VP Finance.

The 2016/2017 finance team focused on closing books from previous fiscal years, liaising with the SU to receive FAMF monies from those years and distributing the former FAMF monies to clubs that they were owed. The 2017/2018 team started using cloud-based accounting software and is focused on completing professional audits not completed in previous years and to further divide up a number of key goals, including:

- Strengthening the financial portfolio with the addition of one more financial assistant
- Developing clear policy on things we're already doing:
 - Advertising opt-out and setting deadlines
 - Setting deadlines for completing professional audits
- Developing policy on things we're planning to do:
 - Deadlines for budget submissions and posting former budgets online
 - Creating a FAMF committee to oversee disbursements to discipline clubs
 - Creating two new bank accounts to better track the engineering student's group fund and project fund
 - Adding approval requirements for different levels of capital purchases within the ESS