



Office of the Undergraduate Board of Governors Representative

October 6, 2014,

Hope all Councilors had a great thanksgiving and are taking time to balance school, work, and their personal lives during midterms. The Students' Union and the University of Alberta offer a number of support services for students through these stressful times of University including: The Peer Support Center, The University Health Center and Counseling and Clinical Services, both of which are located on second floor SUB.

Vice-President Academic Report

The Vice-President Academic's report this week states:

"Governor Hansra brought up something about \$250 000 in pensions, and I didn't really know what he was talking about at the time, and that was pretty concerning to me since he said 'it is my job to know', so I looked into it further, but his comment remains mysterious to me."

I would encourage the Vice-President to review the Undergraduate Board of Governors Representative's Report from October 7th, 2014 which states:

" 3. Areas of Financial Risk

The university operates in a complex environment and must deal with a variety of risks which it manages through its integrated enterprise risk management framework. The major risks that can affect the university from a financial perspective are as follows:

[...]

Pension and Employee Future Benefits: *The university currently carries a liability of approximately \$250 million for employee future benefits, representing probable future payments to be made for benefits earned to date. This balance can change for many reasons outside the university's control, including inflation and investment returns.*

On the whole, the university's cost of benefits is expected to increase by between 5% and 7% per year in the upcoming years and this is not sustainable. Approximately 65% of the university's non-pension benefit costs relate to programs the university and its staff co-operatively manage and which could be changed through negotiation.

The largest of the unfunded liabilities is the university's share of the UAPP, which is approximately \$170 million. Both the UAPP and PSPP deficiencies are expected to be eliminated within 15 years, based on conditions at the time of the last actuarial valuations when the new contribution rates were set. However, without structural reforms to the pension plans, the level of pension plans contributions as a percentage of total benefit costs will not be sustainable."

This can also be found publically on the University of Alberta's website at:

<http://www.financial.ualberta.ca/en/~media/financial/Documents/FS%20Office%20Site/Financial%20Statements/FinancialStatementsNew2014.pdf>

The Report goes on to state the following:

“that was pretty concerning to me since he said ‘it is my job to know’

[...]

University financials, budget, and HR is a Board matter, and no student sits on the Board HR and Compensation committee. Academic Planning Committee (which President Lau sits on) deals with budget principles broadly but doesn’t get into the details of pensions. In any case, reducing pensions is a contract issue, not something that the SU normally gets involved in.”

The Vice-President Academic is correct that at the Board Level that matters of pension are dealt with on the HR and Compensation committee. My statements however were made in context of the Vice-President’s Academic’s statements regarding areas of financial risk to the University during their presentation on the University’s budget which was based on the link provided above.

As student leaders we are often forced to stand up and voice our opinions on a variety of issues that affect students including: tuition, quality of education, amongst others. These issues all come back to the University budget. Therefore it is my opinion that our minimum duty of care requires senior student leaders to understand the University of Alberta’s budget, particularly when we are representing and advocating for student issues that have a monetary value attached to them. Understanding the areas of financial risk that will risk tuition increase, reduce quality of education and related services will allow students to improve our advocacy and will allow us to be more credible stakeholders at the negotiation table. Furthermore advocating for reducing the degree and frequency of risks to the University budget to the Administration will increase the chances of improving the quality of education and additional services provided to students.

If the Vice-President Academic- or other executives, and Council;- have not reviewed publically available finance statements of the University, I would encourage the Vice President Academic to their due diligence and review the budget at the link available above. A summary can also be found within the October 7th. 2014 report.

Board of Governors Report

You will find my report for the October 24, 2014 Board of Governors Meeting below:

“Dear Members of the Board,

It is with great pleasure that I provide you with this report detailing a handful of major highlights that have occurred during the outset of this school year. If you would like more detail on any of these topics I would love to have the opportunity to elaborate and discuss these points further with you in person.

Classes resumed on September 3, 2014 with tremendous momentum after a successful Orientation and Week of Welcome. University of Alberta students are applying the leadership; entrepreneurial skills and social awareness that they have gained during their degrees to address and improve issues on their campus, local, and global communities. The tremendous resources

provided by both the University of Alberta Students' Union and the University of Alberta enable students to improve these essential skills to have a greater impact.

One of the most amazing accomplishments include a project organized by the End Malaria Initiative, a student group focused on raising funds for bed nets and medication who successfully raised over \$5000 at a fundraiser at the West Edmonton Mall Waterpark.

Third year engineering student Nicholas Yee recently helped found the student group, Multiplying Equality. The student group has partnered with the Boyle Street Community Services Centre to host a free pop-up shop for the homeless on October 27, 2014. The shop will offer members of the homeless community a dignified shopping experience, while providing them with warm clothing to last through the winter months. The student group will be hosting a clothing drive in the Students' Union Building until October 17, 2014. Additionally, Mr. Yee and his team have designed a clothing line, with 100% of their profits going towards this cause.

September also saw the opening of the Landing, a student space offering support for gender and sexual diversity located in the recently renovated basement of the Students' Union Building. The Landing was founded as a result of the tremendous efforts of University of Alberta students Linh Lu and Vice President Student Life Nicholas Diaz. The center offers a variety of services including peer mentorship, support, resources, and referrals as well as awareness campaigns, advocacy, outreach and events.

Many of the student Faculty Associations are also seeing tremendous success and a high level of student engagement. Faculty Associations are the official representatives of students for each particular faculty. Similar to the Students' Union, Faculty Associations focus on a variety of student issues ranging from advocacy on academic and tuition issues to planning social and wellness events for their membership. Many Faculty Associations also collect mandatory fees from each student through the Students' Union. You will find an update on the events held to date and the annual goals of a number of Faculty Associations below:

Association des universitaires de la Faculté Saint-Jean (AUFJSJ)

The AUFJSJ represents students at Campus Saint-Jean. The President this year is David Jennings. To date, the AUFJSJ has successfully hosted their campus specific Week of Welcome for students. Events included BBQs, musical performances, and the annual Welcome Back Party. The AUFJSJ also held their General Assembly where a number of constitutional changes were passed including the addition of a new voting position to represent international students on the AUFJSJ council.

One of the issues that the AUFJSJ are seeking to address this year is improving security and safety of students and staff at Campus Saint-Jean. There have been a number of recent assaults in the area and the AUFJSJ are seeking to increase the presence of Peace Officers on Campus Saint-Jean and improve the speed to response time of Peace Officers to the campus-which can currently take up to 45 minutes. Another goal of the AUFJSJ is to advocate for a more bilingual University of Alberta and University of Alberta Students' Union.

Interdepartmental Science Students' Society (ISSS)

ISSS represents students within the Faculty of Science; the President this year is Fahim Rahman. ISSS successfully held the Week of Welcome for Science students, including serving over 900 burgers at the Faculty of Science Orientation BBQ for new and returning students. Additionally, 120 first year Science Students have been paired with a Senior Student who share similar interests in studies and extracurricular activities through the ISSS Mentorship service that is offered in collaboration with the Faculty of Science.

Over 450 junior Science students have also enrolled in their successful ISSS Mini Study Groups, a free tutoring service geared at supporting learning and success in introductory courses. ISSS also held their Semi-Annual General Meeting in late September where Science Students voted to direct funds from the ISSS Student Development fund to support other Science student groups and the development of student space. A major goal for ISSS is to work with the Faculty of Science to develop a Science student lounge which will serve as a space where students can relax, socialize with their peers and can also serve as venue for potential wellness events. Additionally, ISSS wants to continue to improve the accessibility of their services, and outreach to Science students.

Law Students' Association (LSA)

The LSA represents students within the Faculty of Law; the President this year is Scott Meyer. The LSA hosted a number of successful icebreaker events to welcome their new cohort, the Class of 2017, and returning students. The LSA is also responsible for providing lockers and access to the student lounge (The Gavel) and maintaining the database of CANs (Condensed Annotated Notes). This year the LSA has taken steps towards establishing a Mental Health & Wellness Committee. Currently this group is planning comedy nights, meditation and healthy eating seminars, yoga sessions in the law center, and a mental health awareness week.

Much of the discussion this year has centered on the Faculty's market modifier proposal. These discussions are part of an ongoing 4-year consultative effort. The LSA wrote a Letter of Support of the Faculty of Law's Market modifier proposal in August of this year. Since August, the consultative process has been ongoing. In addition to the Dean hosting a town hall on September 10th, and the LSA hosting a town hall on September 17th, the LSA conducted a survey between Oct 7th, and Oct 9th, to collect students' opinions on the Faculty's market modifier proposal. Students were given the opportunity to comment on the Faculty's market modifier proposal directly, and how the Faculty funds should be allocated. The Results showed that 58% of students within the Faculty of Law supported the tuition increase, 26% were opposed while 16% abstained.

Alberta Pharmacy Students' Association (APSA)

APSA represents pharmacy students; the President this year is Brad Snodgrass. APSA held a successful orientation for their new cohort, the class of 2018 by providing them with helpful information about the pharmacy program and hosted several icebreaker activities to make students feel more comfortable. A welcome reception was held at the Faculty Club for all students and faculty to network and increase the sense of community within the Faculty. In late September, 72 students within the faculty participated in the CIBC's Run for the Cure. The APSA team raised over \$17,500 for the charity and won an award for being the best fundraiser among post-secondary institutions.

A Town Hall will be hosted the week after Thanksgiving by Mr. Snodgrass and Dean Kehrner to discuss the recent proposed changes to the market modifier fund. APSA wrote a letter of support for the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science market modifier proposal in August of this year. This support is contingent on the establishment of an entry-level Doctor of Pharmacy program.

In the coming weeks APSA will also be organizing educational competitions, providing students with a chance to practice their skills. The Winners will be able to attend, and compete at a national pharmacy student conference in Quebec City.

Education Students' Association (ESA)

The ESA represents students within the Faculty of Education; the President this year is Katie Horvat. The ESA has had tremendous momentum this year; approximately 400 burgers were served to Education students at the ESA Week of Welcome BBQ. The ESA has also launched a Mentorship Program to ease the transition of first year students into university and to create a more cohesive community among students. So far, the popularity of this program exceeded initial expectations. Since September, the ESA has hosted five Professional Development (PD) sessions for education students. These PD sessions have been offered through either the Alberta Teacher's Association or Castle Rock and all sessions are intended to help ready education students for their professional life as a teacher.

Some of the issues that the ESA are seeking to address this year include building more effective avenues of communication with the Faculty and working with the Faculty to address concerns with recent program changes. The ESA is also focused on lobbying the Faculty to build more reliable grading practices by lecturers and improving practicum placements.

Medical Students' Association (MSA)

The Medical Students Association represents students within the Faculty of Medicine, this year the President is Samantha Lam. The MSA hosted a number of successful events to welcome the Class of 2018. Much of the discussion this year has centered on a potential market modifier proposal. The MSA requested student consultation, which did not take place. As such, the MSA cannot support a proposal, should one be submitted.

Augustana Students' Association (ASA)

The ASA represents students at Augustana Campus; the President this year is Hans Asfeldt. Augustana commenced an early Week of Welcome this year in which the ASA played a major role in hosting events with nearly 100% student participation and leading efforts to help prepare new students for their university careers.

A new student led initiative called Skolē of Thought is well on its way to fostering timely discussion among students and faculty about the future of post-secondary education and will culminate in a deliberative process toward the implementation of exciting ideas and changes. One issue Skolē of Thought hopes to address is concerning the increase in the ratio of faculty to students and several other strains resulting from enrolment growth at Augustana.

Over the coming year, the Association will join the Camrose community in an effort to launch a public transit system, which is but one example of a strong relationship with the community. Issues that the ASA is seeking to address this year include making efforts to direct the revenue from the Athletics and Recreation fee toward the underfunded campus recreation program at Augustana. The ASA is also advocating for Augustana students to be included in the Peter Lougheed Leadership Initiative. Currently Augustana students are essentially excluded from fully participating in this initiative.

As mentioned, I would love to have the opportunity to discuss any of these updates with you further in person. Please feel free to contact me anytime with questions, concerns or if you would just like to chat.”

For further inquiries please feel free to ask during Question Period, or contact me at: hansra@ualberta.ca.

Regards,

Sangram Hansra, BSc

J.D Candidate, 2015

Undergraduate Board of Governors Representative | University of Alberta Students' Union

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