

October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013**To:** Students' Council**Re:** Report to Council

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Hey Council,

Before I proceed with my report, I would like to acknowledge that our university and our Students' Union are on Indigenous land. Specifically: Cree, Saulteaux, Metis, Blackfoot, and Nakota Sioux.

They are faculty, staff, students, family, and friends, and they are still here. I acknowledge that we meet on treaty 6 territory. That treaty governs the relationship between first-nations and non-first nations citizens. I am thankful for this opportunity for us to meet on this land today. This statement will be included at the front of my report to council until either the time that my term ends, or Council moves to make a similar statement available for public viewing.

It has been relatively busy for me on the BoG front. Since Council last met I've attended a pre-BoG meeting with the President Kusmu and President Epperson of the GSA, a four-hour Board Orientation session, and a 5-hour Board meeting followed by lunch at RATT with the other Members and the SU and GSA executives. I'll touch briefly on the main points of each meeting.

**Pre-BoG Meeting with Epperson and Kusmu**

President Kusmu, GSA President Epperson, and myself met last Tuesday in preparation for the BoG meeting last Friday. This meeting is part of a series of meetings which should better institutionalize the role of the BoG Representative within the workings of the SU and the wider University student advocacy community. In the meeting we discussed strategy and shared concerns regarding material the upcoming Board meeting. Two items we focused on were the Letter of Expectation from Deputy Premier Lukaszuk and the Dare to Discover Report Card – Dare to

Discover being the overall academic strategic plan of the University, as formulated by the President and approved by the Board. The meeting helped us get on the same page and left us better-prepared for the upcoming meeting

### **Board Orientation**

On Thursday evening I attended the Board Orientation – primarily for new members of the Board, but I attended anyway to meet new members and get refreshed on U of A governance. The Board Orientation was more comprehensive than previous session I have attended, which I was glad to see as U of A governance is very complex and takes much getting used to. Members old and new were (re)introduced to the overall governance framework of the University – the bicameral system, governing legislation, historical precedence, et cetera. Emphasis was also given to the direction that came out of the recent Strategic Retreat. Overall, the orientation served as a good refresher and opportunity to mix and mingle with Members old and new.

### **October 18<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting**

The Board of Governors met the following morning. Much was discussed at the meeting, but I'll focus on the highlights here: the Letter of Expectation, Dare to Discover Report Card, and approval of the various committee Terms of Reference.

#### ***Dare to Discover Report Card***

President Samarasekera presented to the Board performance updates on the institution's academic strategic plan. I had concerns about the ever-increasing student-to-faculty ratio – currently at 21 to 1. But, as Indira explained, at the beginning of her term she had hoped to get the ratio to 16 to 1. She further explained that this ratio is heavily dependent on the number of faculty – which in turn is dependent on provincial funding. Hopefully this upward trend in the ratio can be reversed without placing additional financial burden on the backs of students. The Board approved Indira's Dare to Discover Report Card without much controversy.

*Letter of Expectation*

The Board also approved our end of the Letter of Expectation (LoE) as necessitated by Deputy Premier Lukaszuk. It was noted that what we were voting upon was significantly “toned down” relative to what had been initially demanded by Lukaszuk. Nevertheless, some Board members expressed apprehension regarding aspects of the document – specifically regarding a section about student attributes that President Kusmu had added in an earlier Board Learning and Discovery Committee (BLDC) meeting. After some discussion and explanation, the LoE was ultimately approved and will be sent off to Lukaszuk for final approval.

*Terms of Reference*

A regular (but nevertheless important) responsibility of the Board is the approval of committee Terms of Reference. Only some of the committees had significantly altered their ToR's therefore requiring Board approval. The Board Health Safety and Environment Committee, chaired by newly-appointed member Stephen LaPoole, altered its Terms to better reflect the ongoing nature of reporting requirements to the committee. The Board University Relations Committee (BURC) had done likewise. The new committee Terms were all approved without controversy.

In summary, these past two weeks have been busy but very exciting. I'm glad things are starting to pick up and am eager to see how the rest of this year will shape the future of the U of A. As always, I'm looking forward to seeing you all on Tuesday.

In Solidarity,

**Brent Kelly**

Undergraduate Board of Governors Representative 2013-2014 | [University of Alberta Students' Union](#)

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