

Date: 02/11/21**To:** Students' Union Council**Re:** President's Report 02/11/21

Hello Council,

I'm looking forward to joining you in person again. The Exec team spent some time on vacation last week, but I made up for a relaxing schedule that week with an action packed one this week. I do want to let you all know that we are working to follow up on Governor Konrad's motion from last Council meeting, and are working to collect the relevant data. Other than that, the Executive team has been focused on several upcoming projects and developments-- advocacy work at CAUS, the SRA Summit which I am working to support VP Monteiro's work on, residence rate consultation, and of course our halloween costumes.

Bill 74

As many of you will remember, last year the Alberta government conducted a review of the Alberta post-secondary education system called the Alberta 2030 review with the support of the consulting firm McKinsey. This week, the Alberta government introduced [Bill 74](#), *An Act to Modernize Post-Secondary Education*. The legislation is intended to implement most of the Alberta 2030 recommendations. Key features of the bill include:

- The elimination of the distinction between research universities, undergraduate universities, polytechnics, colleges, independent institutions, and specialized arts institutions. There are now two categories of post-secondary institution-- colleges and polytechnics, and universities.
- Changes to how apprenticeship fees and tuition are governed, which will not impact students at U of A
- Creates an advisory council for the Minister consisting of post-secondary education experts and student leaders

None of the major changes in the bill are particularly concerning, and some may be mildly positive. Our main criticism is that the bill avoids addressing the key structural problems in the Alberta post-secondary system: critical shortages of seats leading to very high admission averages, unsustainable student debt far higher than that in the rest of Canada, poor accessibility for lower-income students, and the lack of a transparent or fair funding model. While Bill 74 does not make the situation worse, it does very little to address urgent problems, and that is a regrettable missed opportunity.

Exceptional Tuition Increases

Our Research and Advocacy team, VP Monteiro, and I are working together to develop a comprehensive response package to the University's next round of ETI proposals which will be complete in early November. I have also been in contact with staff in the Minister's office, and we are arranging a meeting later in the month to discuss the proposals. We are also continuing to evaluate other options. This has been one of the largest files I have been dealing with this week, and I expect that to continue into next week.

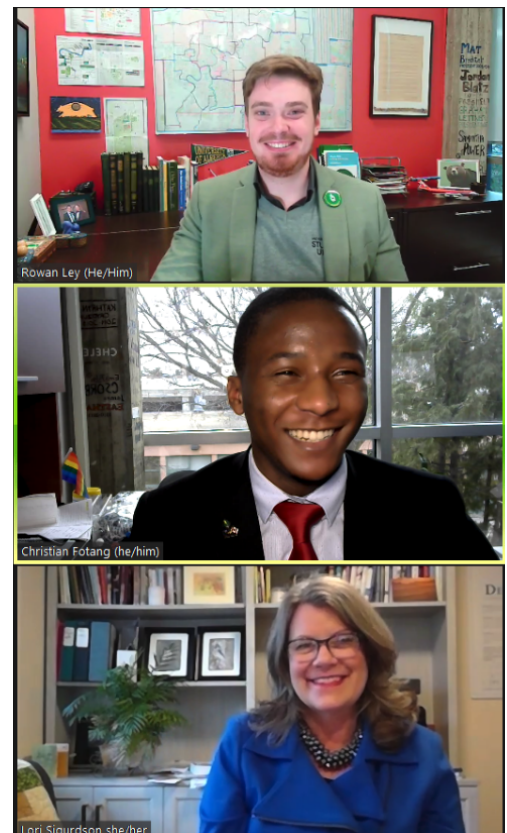


MLA Meetings

Traditionally the President and VPX meet with a variety of Edmonton-area MLAs in the Fall, and Christian and I have met with several already. This week we are meeting MLAs David Shepherd (Edmonton-City Centre), Lori Sigurdsson (Edmonton-Riverview, the University of Alberta's constituency), Sarah Hoffman (Edmonton-Glenora), and Thomas Dang (Edmonton-South). Last week we spoke to MLA Rakhi Pancholi (Edmonton-Whitemud). These meetings are an important opportunity to share the concerns U of A students have-- they are often raised in the Legislature, helping to put pressure on the government to support students in Edmonton, and it is very helpful for us to have opposition MLAs familiar with our issues in case of a change of government.



Among other things, we have had opportunities to discuss the state of childcare on Alberta campuses, mental health funding and the need for it to keep pace with enrollment growth and inflation, institutional funding and the need to avoid a damaging budget cut this year, and enrollment pressure and high entrance averages. I would like to thank Cllrs. Taha, Barazesh,



and Amer for joining us in some of our meetings as well!

As always, get in touch if you have any questions or concerns! My door is open and I am happy to chat.

Sincerely,



University of Alberta Students' Union President
Rowan Ley