

Date: 03/22/22**To:** Students' Union Council**Re:** President Report 03/22/22

Dear Council,

This is my third-last report to you all, and I have to admit I am a little surprised to be here! Four years on Council has come and gone so fast. There have been many successes, and definitely many mistakes (those have taught me much more). I am privileged every day to work with you and our amazing UASU staff. I would take some more time to reflect, but this will be a busy couple of weeks— so I will jump into the content of my report and save the sentimentality for later.

Successful Conclusion of Exploration Credits Project

I am happy to start with a success. As of the writing of this report, the Exploration Credits proposal will have come to GFC for a final vote. Provided nothing dramatic happens between now and Monday, I believe the vote will have passed by the time we meet as all indications are of a positive response. That means Exploration Credits will be university policy for the next academic year. If by Council GFC has surprised us and defeated the motion, well, this will be a very different conversation.

I want to take a moment to stress the significance of this win and the exceptional speed at which it was achieved. This will allow students in a wide variety of programs to take a pass-fail elective, and I am pleased that this is one of the most progressive and open-ended policies of this kind in Canada. Some relevant details:

- Students will be able to wait until the add-drop deadline before deciding whether to take their course as an Exploration Credit or for a grade
- Faculties will be able to make closed-list electives, like possibly Complementary Studies and Impact of Technology in Engineering, eligible for exploration credits. This is a step up over most universities where only open electives are eligible.
 - If Exploration Credits passes at GFC, the Registrar's Office will be contacting faculties to ensure they are aware of this option
- Students will be allowed to take up to 12 Exploration Credits, which is tied for the most to be available at any major Canadian university

The fact that Exploration Credits will likely go from an election promise of VP Monteiro and I to University policy in a single year is also cause for celebration. Most major academic advocacy projects, like Fall Reading Week, take years. This is a testament to the power of student advocacy and the ability of the UASU to get big things done.

U-Pass Rebate Concluded

We successfully worked with ETS to get the UPass rebate for Winter 2021 approved, and final paperwork is currently being done. All students will be rebated \$45. This is a substantial success for us, representing \$2 million in savings at the U of A alone. I am grateful to ETS for their willingness to collaborate on this file, as I know this makes a big difference to some students who are struggling right now.

Mask Mandate Removal and COVID Safety


We are extremely disappointed by the interference of the provincial government in the University's COVID policies. The cancellation of the mask mandate is premature, and we believe this should have been left to the end of the semester at the earliest in keeping with previous promises to students.

Because this is a directive from the provincial government, having it reversed would be very challenging. For the moment, our approach is to dramatically step up our distribution of N-95 masks, which we know are substantially more effective at preventing infection of the wearer. Distribution is expanding to more InfoLink locations, the Geer Store, a variety of faculty associations, and the Food Bank. We obviously recognize the mask mandate can't and shouldn't last forever, but it should have been withdrawn at a more responsible and fair time.

Transition Planning

Over the next month, I will be transitioning VP Monteiro into his new role as President. This will take an increasing amount of time as we get closer to May 1st. Myself and all of this year's outgoing Executives will be ensuring a smooth handoff of our projects to the new team and I have full confidence that they will execute on them well.

While we are busy with transition, we are never too busy to chat with Council. Don't hesitate to get in touch if there is anything I can do to help for the remainder of this term. Sincerely,



University of Alberta Students' Union President
Rowan Ley