

Date: 06/15/21**To:** Students' Union Council**Re:** President's Report 06/15/21

Dear Council,

I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the new opportunities to socialize with the easing of public health orders (responsibly, of course). The light at the end of the tunnel of this pandemic in Canada feels like it's getting closer and closer, and we've been putting a lot of thought into what the return to campus, for our members and staff, looks like next year. Some things will never be the same again, but there are some that I just want to get back to normal as fast as possible!

President Flanagan Meeting

The Executive met with President Flanagan to discuss opportunities for collaboration this year, and I am pleased that there is a lot we can work on together. It was a very productive meeting, and we had a chance to discuss a number of current issues-- we were also able to discuss the status of the Ring Houses, and received confirmation that there is no immediate plan to demolish them. So while they are not completely safe yet, the Ring Houses are not in immediate danger, which was a relief to many in the campus heritage community.



Progress on an Opt-In Pass/Fail Proposal

I am very pleased that we have made some tangible progress on the development of an optional, limited pass-fail proposal, as per VP Monteiro's platform and mine. After discussions with the Registrar's office, we have established a working group to co-develop a proposal. This collaboration will allow us to create a proposal that integrates smoothly with the University's administrative systems and governance, making it easier to pass through university governance and eventually implement. We hope that a proposal will be ready in time for the fall GFC cycle. This is very

encouraging, and we think this is an opportunity to make a real change that benefits everyone on campus.

University of Alberta Rankings

The QS World University Rankings for 2021-22 came out this year, and placed the U of A at #126 in the world. While this is a respectable showing overall, given that there are thousands of universities out there, it's a significant drop from our ranking last year. Since 2018, the U of A's ranking has fallen by 36 places while most major Canadian universities have risen. No ranking is perfect, and rankings get a lot of justified criticism, but when there is a clear pattern in our performance it can't be ignored. I don't highlight this to be defeatist, but it is important that we acknowledge that disproportionate cuts to the U of A have serious impacts on teaching, learning, and our reputation-- impacts some folks would prefer not to acknowledge.

I've had some conversations with the media about the impact of the cuts, and I would encourage all of you to continue communicating to your constituents how cuts to our provincial grant hurt their education. It's a message we all need to know, and that the government needs to hear.

Sauvons Saint-Jean Campaign Relaunch

VP Fotang and I have been working closely with our colleagues at Campus Saint-Jean to support the relaunch of the Sauvons Saint-Jean campaign. In particular, I've been working to find as many details as possible on the \$121.6M that the federal government made available for official language postsecondary education. Our current understanding is that Alberta could potentially receive up to \$4M/year from this grant between 2021 and 2024, but there is still a lot of uncertainty around where exactly that money could be sent. Our second major concern is that all federal official languages program funding requires at least an equal contribution from the province, so if the province refuses to provide \$4M/year the federal government will not provide their \$4M/year either. This could result in over a million dollars of lost annual revenue for Campus Saint-Jean. We are also working to connect with the Alberta Franco-Canadian Association (ACFA) in the near future to share our knowledge and discuss how we can collaborate further. We remain committed to supporting the Sauvons Saint-Jean campaign in whatever way we can. We are also beginning conversations at our federal advocacy group, CASA, to see how we can support federal advocacy for minority language education this year.

Augustana Students' Association Meeting

VP Monteiro, Kimani, and I met with the Augustana Students' Association Executive and identified a number of interesting opportunities to collaborate. We also have committed to a system of regular check-ins to ensure we stay in touch. Hopefully we can visit Augustana in person soon!



A lot of other things happened this week that I can't cram into this report, so please feel free to ask questions!

As always, get in touch if you have any questions or want to chat.
Cheers,



University of Alberta Students' Union President
Rowan Ley