



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA STUDENTS' UNION

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

June 6th, 2023

Christian Fotang - President

Dear Councilors,

It's hard to believe that one month has passed into this advocacy year. It's been a slow and steady month and we are excited to share with you the highlights and progress from the last two weeks.

We now enter June, which marks the beginning of National Indigenous History Month as well as Pride Month. This period is a time to recognize and celebrate the diversity, history, and talent among members of the Indigenous community and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, while also acknowledging the hardships, discrimination, and resilience of members of these communities.

Student Care

Last weekend, VP Griffiths, VP Almeida and I attended the StudentCare conference in Montreal. In case you were not aware, StudentCare is the company who administers your Health and Dental Plan. This conference provided a mixture of professional development sessions, networking opportunities and opportunities to better understand StudentCare's structure and process. Professional development sessions included an EDI and anti-oppression workshop, a session on how to mitigate burnout, and an effective negotiations presentation. It was great to see familiar faces there such as former VP Ops-Fi, Robyn Patches, and counterparts from other SU/SAs.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors met this week to discuss and approve items such as the amendment to the university consolidated budget to reflect access to operating reserves. The Finance and Properties committee also met to approve referring the newly drafted 2023/24-24/25 Investment Management Agreements (IMAs) which will be introduced at the next meeting of BoG. Access to operating reserves are a result of GoA's 2023 budget announcement which will allow for the University to access up to 15% of the unrestricted amount in the operating reserves. This earmarked funding will go towards faculty initiatives, IT development, and similar streams .

Sincerely,

Christian Fotang

Pedro Almeida - Vice President Academic

Hey Council!

I'm so happy to be back in council chambers with all of you. The following are some key areas of work that I have been up to over the last few weeks, feel free to reach out with any questions!

Embedded Certificate Framework

A revised version of the Embedded Certificate Framework came to the Programs Committee (PC) for recommendation and to the General Faculties' Council (GFC) for approval. There was some contention around the potential for this framework to impact the standing of existing certificates that do not fit within it. I addressed these concerns with the Vice-Provost Programs and got further guarantees at GFC that the Vice-Provost's office would work with faculties to ensure that existing programs do not disappear, whether this means slight modifications to fit within the framework, or recategorization.

GFC

GFC met on Monday May 29th. Michael, Christian and I attended this meeting at which a few items of interest arose, in addition to the aforementioned Embedded Certificate Framework. The University Strategic Plan was approved for recommendation to the Board of Governors and an informational presentation was done on the Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation. An additional notice was given at the potential for a proposal of the Clean Air Strategy to come to GFC in the Fall. Myself and other SU executives will undergo further consultations with students on this proposal, with Michael taking the lead. Finally, as GFC meetings come back in the Fall we are hoping to fill all student vacancies on GFC, so please reach out if any of you or your friends have questions about GFC.

StudentCare Conference

Michael, Christian and I attended this year's StudentCare conference in Montreal. StudentCare is the organization that oversees our Health & Dental plan. At this conference I attended informational seminars about mental health, managing energy, EDI in higher education, and more, as well as a tour of the StudentCare head office. This conference also provided me with the opportunity to meet with other student leaders from across the country, where I got a chance to learn more about different academic initiatives undertaken by different student associations. I have reached out further to some of these student leaders to learn how we may be able to incorporate some of their ideas at the University of Alberta.

Zero Textbook Cost Promotional Plans

I met with a representative of the Office of the Registrar to ensure plans were in place to promote ZTC to instructors this year. They provided me with the latest information from the Winter term on ZTC as well as current promotional plans.

Meeting with UA REB about ARISE ethics approval portal

I met with representatives of UA REB to address inclusivity issues with elements of the ARISE ethics approval portal - which needs a gender binary in ways that exclude non-binary students, in particular in relation to the honorific field's current options. We talked about potential solutions to this and I was informed this will be brought forward further, and I will be further updated in three months.

Faculty Association meetings

Over the last two weeks I have continued efforts to meet regularly with representatives from different student associations. I talked about this at our last Council meeting, but I wanted to reiterate how these meetings have allowed me to better understand the priorities of each association and the role the UASU can play. In addition, scheduling is underway for the Council of Faculty Associations.

Feel free to reach out with any questions!

Best regards,
Pedro Almeida

Chris Beasley - Vice President External

Hello Council,

Happy to give a little recap of my last two weeks. I have been busy with introductory meetings and all the activities that fall within a VPX's portfolio when a provincial election is happening!

Provincial Election

In case you didn't know, there was one! The provincial election has been a focus of mine for a while now. The provincial election brought to a close the Get Out The Vote campaign we had been running, with very successful results. As the UASU we were able to spend Thursday (May 25th), Friday (May 26th), and Monday (May 29th) engaging with campus community members and trying to get as many people out to vote as possible. Over the course of the three days we talked to almost three thousand people on campus. The response to this was really good, by Monday we were finding people that had voted on Thursday or Friday because of our contact. It felt very impactful to talk to first time voters about what the voting process would be like, something that meant a lot to me personally. This would not have been possible without the hard work of our team, our GOTV coordinator, and the wonderful volunteers that helped out in this final push.

The on-campus voting station that was open in SUB on May 25th and 26th registered over 1800 votes cast with advance votes being sent to 76 ridings across the province. This impact reinforces that students and the university community are engaged in provincial politics and care about making their voice heard. This also reinforced that while we are located in Edmonton, we are a university for the entire province with students, faculty, and staff from across Alberta.

The provincial election also marked a close to the CAUS/UASU pledge campaign for GOTV. CAUS contacted thousands of students across the province with information on where and how to vote, undoubtedly equipping many first time voters with the knowledge they needed to feel good casting their first ballots.

The results of the provincial election were as anticipated, my own prediction being off by only two seats, but the next questions for students will be who takes over key ministries in the government of Alberta. I am watching with anticipation to see who will be in the Finance, Advanced Education, and Status of Women ministries.

Strategic Planning

Beyond the provincial election (although that admittedly dominated the last few weeks) I have also been working on planning for the year, especially in my role with CAUS. Myself, the Vice-Chair, and the Executive Director have been focused on internal development within CAUS to deliver the best work we can for students across the province. This work has been involved and time consuming but has already been highly rewarding. The work has been fairly high level given how early in our terms this is but is work that I expect to pay high dividends for U of A students within the year.

Thank you all for reading my report! If you made it this far and shoot me a text, I will give you a GOTV sticker.

Cheers,

Chris Beasley



Michael Griffiths - Vice President Student Life

Hi Council!

It's great to be back in the council chambers with everyone and I am excited to share what I have been up to the past two weeks. As always, feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions!

StudentCare Conference

Christian, Pedro and I had the privilege of attending this year's StudentCare conference in Montreal, put together by the folks who administer our health and dental plan. The conference offered a mix of professional development and health and dental plan specific sessions. It was excellent to take a deeper dive into the foundation of our health and dental plan. I learned about the trends in health and dental insurance coverage and how our plan can and has evolved to meet students' needs. I was also able to tour the StudentCare facilities and get a sense of how they administer health and dental plans across the country.

GFC

General Faculties Council is another project that Christian, Pedro and I collaborate on, Pedro taking the lead. I worked alongside his efforts to ensure all of our GFC student representatives have the support they need. We still have a considerable number of student vacancies on GFC that must be filled. If you or anyone you know may be interested in sitting on GFC please pass on the details to them or direct them to Pedro. GFC passed a new undergraduate embedded certificate framework that is intended to help establish certificate standards across the colleges. Additionally, it was announced that a new clean air proposal, which is essentially a plan to ban recreational smoking on campus, will be coming forward to GFC in the fall. This is a complicated framework that has been contentious in the past and should require extensive consultation. I will be consulting with different student stakeholders on campus and working to help develop the UASU's position. We will be prepared in the fall with messaging and a strategy that backs students' interests. If you have any information or input on the topic please do not hesitate to reach out.

Relationship Building

This is a key component of the work I have been doing, especially early into the year. I have been in contact with my SL counterpart at the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), as well as counterparts from other student unions across the province. Touching base with these folks early on is great for establishing allies and networks where common concerns can be shared and addressed. Pedro and I also met with Kate and a few folks from the GFC team for introductions and to get the year off to a good start. I have also been setting up chats with SRA delegates and other student leaders that overlap with my portfolio to see how I can support their goals for the year and make sure they know that I can be a resource for them going forward. Additionally, I have also been checking in with important stakeholders in our community - like Erin, the executive director of the food bank to see how we can collaborate this year, and Kevin, the assistant dean of students, health and wellness, to ensure best practice in the hiring of new clinicians at counseling and clinical services.

Thanks,

