

Date: 21/02/2019
To: Students' Union Council
Re: President 2018/19 Report

Dear Council,

Hope reading week has been awesome! I have been chugging along and getting some reports, meetings, and generally decent working hours in (fingers crossed that it is a quiet week!).

Joint Election Efforts

I am currently working with the non-academic staff association, academic staff association, and some Edmonton stakeholders to put together some joint election efforts! The highlight should hopefully be a forum or debate on campus for the provincial elections. We are in the very primary stages, however, lots of excitement from our partners.

UofA Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity Launch

The University launched its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity strategic plan on the 13th. VP Bhatnagar gave an amazing speech and has worked throughout the year towards this launch. If you have an opportunity, check out the document for [yourself](#).

Academic Planning Committee

Myself and councillor Bilak were in attendance at the last Academic Planning Committee. There were a few items, including the following budget recommendations to the board:

- Continued freeze of domestic tuition (government mandated)
- An increase of 2.77% for international tuition (inflationary increase)
- University Budget including meal plan (CPI), rent rates (5%), budget cuts (-2.5%), and Campus Alberta Grant funding (0%).

Myself and Councillor Bilak were the only members of the committee to oppose the cost increases and budget. I continue to push that students expect a quality education with a cost that is predictable, affordable, and sustainable. I also gave some comments in regards to the future of fees, tuition, and the budget model, all which carried the same tone. To arm folks for when asked why does the UASU continuously oppose these cost increases and what drives our advocacy, a couple of quick facts:

- A fully maxed student loan in Alberta no longer covers the cost of living, fees, and tuition. If you have low financial security, you must work while studying full time to cover your costs. The Government of Alberta needs to fix this issue (CAUS and COPPOA ask).

- The University is moving towards a three-year budget model, something I applaud as a great effort, however, Campus Alberta Grant funding is still not guaranteed over that time. The Government of Alberta needs to find stability in funding for post-secondary institutions which are public organizations with budgets in the billions of dollars. (CAUS ask)
- Alberta has the lowest participation rate in PSE in Canada, will not be able to keep up with inflation, and requires 90,000 new seats by 2024 to just be average. Equitable access to university education in Alberta is going challenged if the province cannot provide greater baseline funding (CAUS and COPPOA ask).

To finish out this topic, it should be noted that for the first time since the decades, in 2020, international students will have regulatory protections for their costs. This is a hard-won first step in ensuring fair and equitable treatment of international students that need to be protected and highlighted in 2019/2020. Further, all of these budget recommendations follow the Universities three-year budget projections from 2017/18.



UASU Meets with MLA Goodridge

To Note:

- VP Brown and I met with MLA Goodridge and candidate David Doward, UCP members.
- I am a member of the CASA EDI working group and will be putting forward a strategic plan by the end of the year for the organization. In that is a commitment to engage much more directly with Indigenous students, something I am very excited about.
- I met with Board Chair Phair to discuss initiatives the University of Alberta could take to protect its community from online hate. I am finding that there a lot of concerns, however, no real action, so hopefully we can see something develop in the near future.
- Alongside VP Ripka we doing a lot of work so communications are going to be a little slow for the next 3 weeks.
- The [draft strategic plan](#) is online and emailed out to council. We are working through our internal feedback loop and I'm looking forward to the committee meeting in March.

Cheers,
UASU President
Reed Larsen

Appendix - Social Media Report

Hi folks! We had some folks ask about metrics from social media and the impact of our recent activity and online push! Check it out for some of our numbers and my breakdown of our growth.

Overview

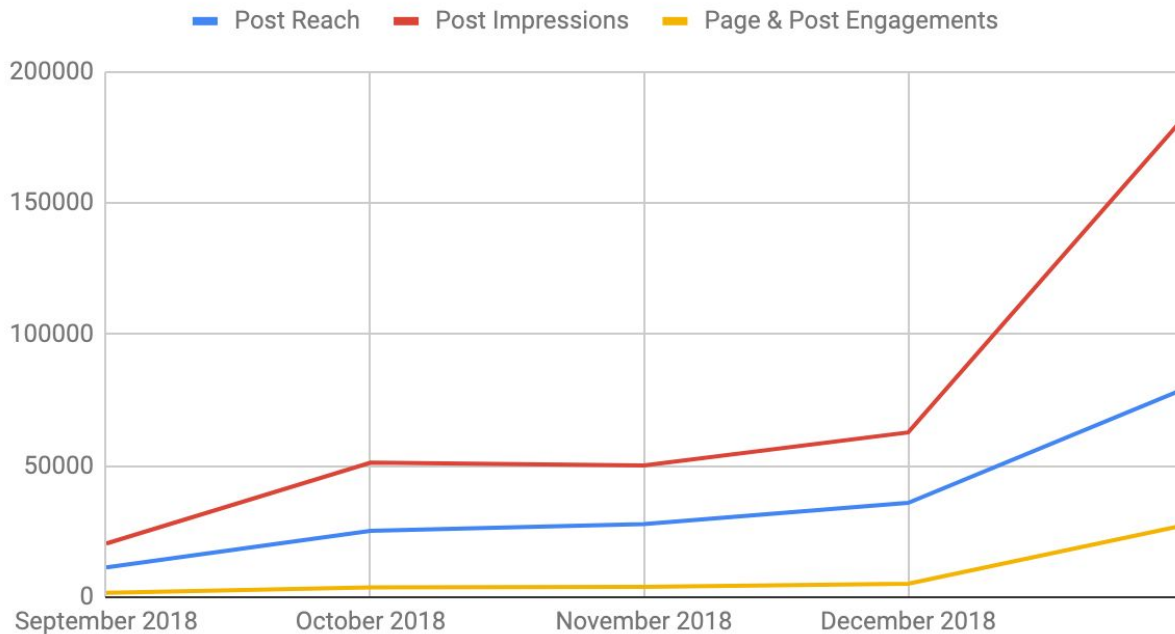
Since hiring social media student staff in late October and investments in our re-branding exercise, we have seen an exceptional rise in online engagement. Further, partnerships like the one with Flair Airlines have had a massive impact on engaging with our community. One amazing statistic is that performance growth in Facebook page likes is up 867%. To note is that all of the percentage numbers are **performance-based** (so growth over last month) to give an impression of the impact of the investments in social media. Further, December and January, besides the summer, are our slowest months of the year in all aspects, so growth is significant.

Facebook

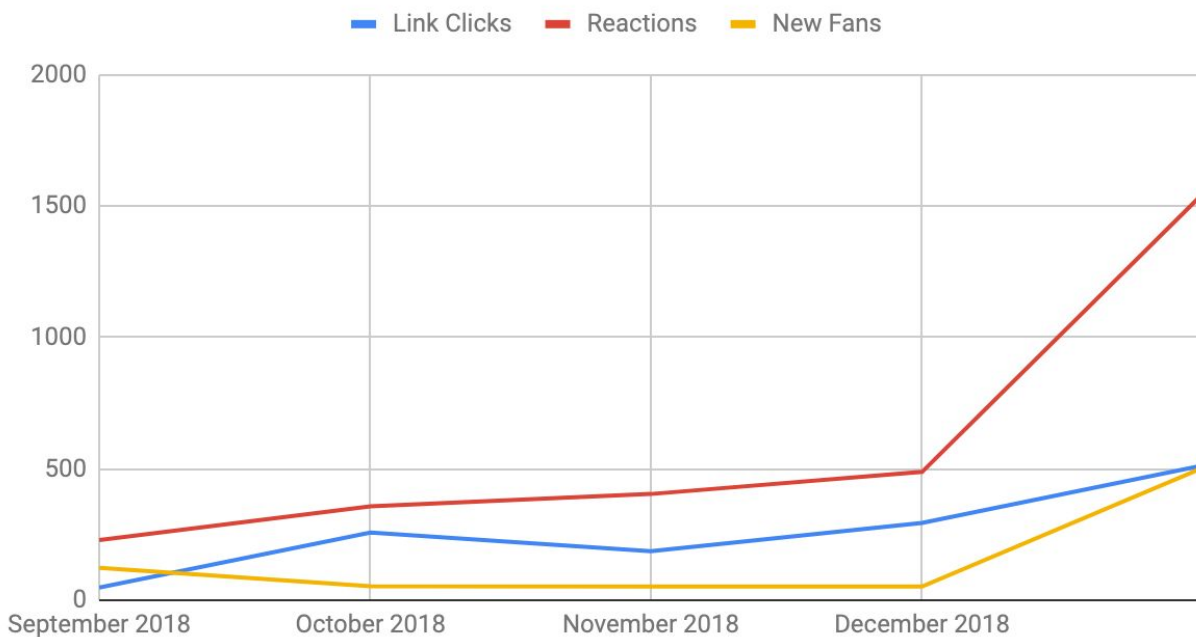
We focused a lot on Facebook and Instagram, as they are the most reportedly frequented platform by students. Growth in both of these areas has been exponential since the social media team has come on board; coinciding with our rebranding and giveaway campaigns. Facebook is our largest account and a focus on its growth should see that media share grow.

Facebook	Performance Nov 1-30	Performance December 1-30	Performance January 1-30	% Change between Dec/Jan
Posts	31	21	40	+90.48%
Post Reach	27.8k	35.9k	78.8k	+119.5%
Post Impressions	50.1k	62.7k	181.4k	+189.31%
Link Clicks	186	294	512	+74.15%
Reactions	404	488	1545	+216.6%
Engaged Users	2267	2595	12.8k	+393.26%
Page & Post Engagement	3905	5126	27.1k	+428.68%
New Fans	52	52	503	+867.31%

Post Reach, Post Impressions and Page & Post Engagements



Link Clicks, Reactions and New Fans

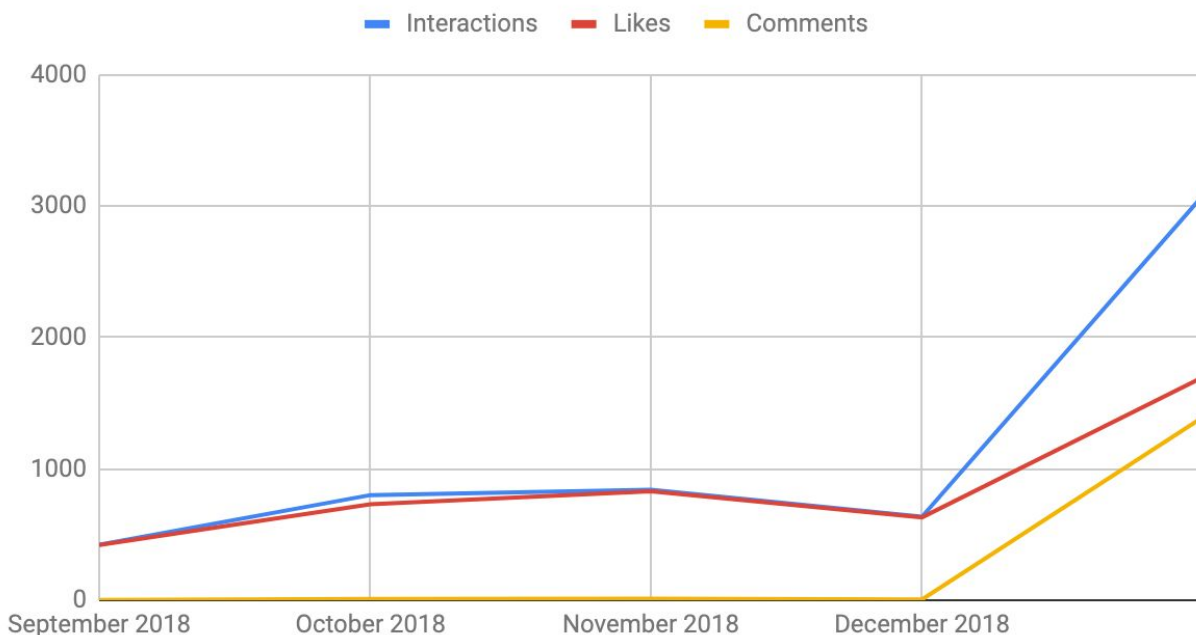


Instagram

Instagram growth has also performed well. This platform was arguably neglected by the organization before the social media team arrival. This means some of our analytics are new and missing things such as stories engagement so it's hard to give a full picture until it runs at full steam for a few months. That said, again the investment in social media has had great returns. To note, our partnership with Flair Airlines had an immense impact and we will be pushing these style of partnerships far more often in the future.

Instagram	Performance Nov 1-30	Performance December 1-30	Performance January 1-30	% Change between Dec/Jan
Posts	16	10	22	+120%
Interactions	841	635	3075	+384.25%
Likes	829	630	1695	+168.05%
Comments	12	5	1380	+27500%
New followers	44	-1	219	-

Interactions, Likes and Comments

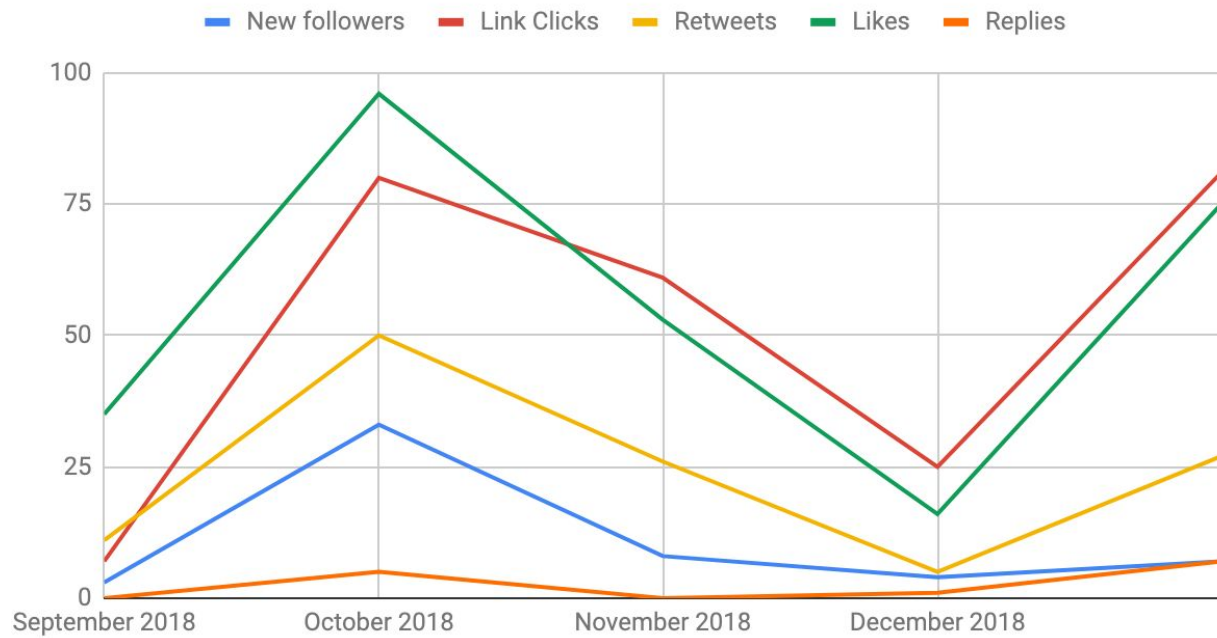


Twitter

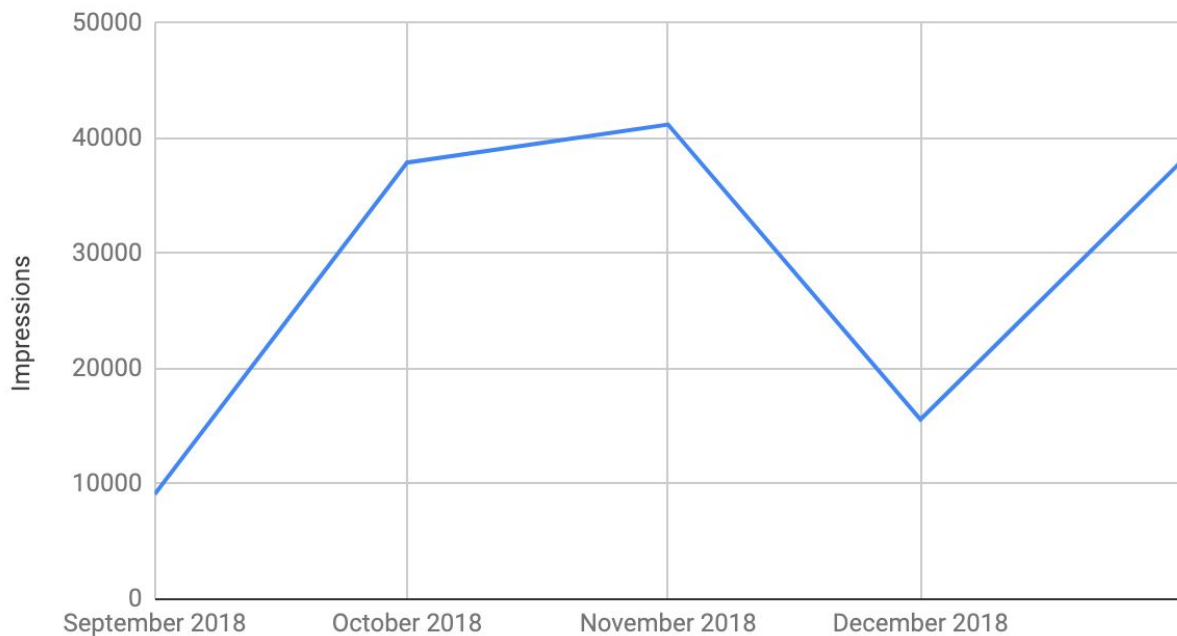
Twitter remains one of our more elusive platforms, however, also saw significant growth. As an organization, twitters utilization is difficult, as we find that we have spikes of activity based on singular events. As examples, our hosting of Anita Sarkeesian and GBVP where our top tweets, however, that was likely because of the profile of the person and the spread of that paticular tweet. We also know that Twitter is declining rapidly in usage amongst our students, so we may push more of our efforts into other emerging platforms like Snapchat or WeChat.

Twitter	Performance Nov 1-30	Performance December 1-30	Performance January 1-30	% Change between Dec/Jan
Tweets	26	20	34	+70%
Impressions	41.2K	15.6k	38.0k	+143.59%
New followers	8	4	7	+75%
Link Clicks	61	25	81	+224%
Retweets	26	5	27	+440%
Likes	53	16	75	+368.75%
Replies	0	1	7	+600%
Engagement Rate	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	+20%

New followers, Link Clicks, Retweets, Likes and Replies



Impressions



To Note

A few things to note in regards to this report and areas to focus on in the future:

- Platforms such as **WeChat and Snapchat are on the horizon** for the UASU, however, are platforms that are much more difficult to track engagement, growth, and returns for investments. Using them strategically in the short term will help us learn to use them, however, I suggest focusing on Facebook and Instagram.
- **Giveaways, sponsorships, and partnerships are vital** to the growth of our social media presence. One giveaway campaign arguably leads to an 867% rise in new likes, which will translate into new reach in the coming months. Investment and growth in these areas have exponential returns.
- This report does not go into our other touchpoints, such as email, surveys, or infolink. It should be noted that we are the **industry leader in email communications**, in particular, in click-throughs, open rates, and engagement. Further, our surveys routinely oversample, basically meaning we have almost too large of an engagement to process quickly.
- This has already been a focus, however, a continued **shift away from relying on Executives personal networks** for social media outreach is vital. The organization needs a strong enough brand identity online independently, as well as, Executive should strive to have some semblance of personal identity in their positions.
- **Investment in a new website is already ongoing**, and once completed, should really help to complement our social media strategies.

Conclusion

In my time with the UASU it was always a piece of feedback that we should do better in online engagement and social media and I'm thrilled that we have made significant headway this year. The investment in social media personnel, rebranding, and partnerships has had strong returns that should lead to sustained growth in engagement in both the immediate future and long term. That headway started because of investments made in this 2018/19 budget, staff structure changes and significant campaign investments early in our Executive's terms. There is still a lot of opportunity for growth and with continued budget support our social media and online engagement will be much more reliable, engaging, and awesome. Finally, none of this progress would occur without the amazing staff support and the social media folks are doing a wonderful job.