

January 8, 2013

To: Students' Council

Re: Report to Council

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Hello Council,

I hope that you all had a great holiday. I know that mine was certainly much needed and much enjoyed. This should be a pretty action packed semester for Council so I hope you are ready for lots of excitement. If today's agenda is any sign of things to come it looks like we have a lot of work cut out for us but I know that we will all do a fantastic job.

Coming into a new semester remember to keep your eye on the prize. We have a tremendous opportunity to accomplish a number of big wins for our students. Focus on balancing your workload so that you can stay true to your commitments and operate effectively in everything that you do. Also, try your best to keep your head above the water with the politics that often arise with the oncoming election season. Those who keep strong to their values will always win in the long run. Remember that we are all a team and are all in this for the same reason – to serve in the best interest of our students.

Anyhow, welcome back and happy New Year.  
Here is a brief update on the past bit.

I am excited to see you guys tonight!

### **Board of Governors Dec. 14**

Dec. 14 saw one of the most important BoG meetings of the year as we passed both the tuition and rent increases for 2013/2014. Tuition will be increasing by CPI (2.15%) and rent will be increasing by an aggregate (2.36%). Both the BoG rep and I voted against both motions and I attempted to amend the rent motion to be capped at CPI (2.15%) but the amendment failed. The meeting also had a conflict-laden discussion surrounding the approval of the creation of the Department of Gender and Women's studies. The discussion was focused on determining the appropriate requirements of a program to become a department. I was quite frustrated by the discussion as the proposal had passed unanimously through a number of GFC and Board committees with little discussion but saw a considerable amount of opposition come from the President at the last step of approval at the Board. I was also very frustrated that I was unable to ask a series of four written questions regarding mandatory non-instructional fees that I had submitted the night before the meeting. I will be following up in the appropriate manner to ensure that the questions are brought back to the table.

### **China Institute Board of Directors Meeting**

We received a presentation updating us on the most recent work being done by the China Institute. From my perspective the China Institute has done well expanding and strengthening our international relations but they seem to be constrained by a lack of resources and vision for the University as a whole. The Institute has set some lofty goals for the next few years and I believe that the University should continue to provide them with support. I also learned how to use a Keurig machine the hard way.

## **Fall Reading Week Meeting with PhysEd&Rec**

Kyle Marshall (UGAA) and I met with Dean Mummery and Dr. Montgomery from the FPERS to discuss the implications that the Fall Reading Week would have on Butterdome event bookings with specific focus on the annual Butterdome Craft Sale.

## **SERC**

At the last SERC meeting we discussed the definition of social sustainability, the impact of colonization on the UofA campus/community and examined ways to improve the representative diversity of Students' Council and the SU executive. Next meeting we will be creating a work plan to layout a schedule of projects that we want to be working on.

## **U-School**

The VPX and I met with the U-School team from the Senate to discuss how we can get involved and support the program. U-School is a Senate initiative that brings underprivileged youth to campus for a week to explore the university and to see what post-secondary education has to offer.

## **Property Tax Meeting with Doug Dawson**

The VPX, VPSL, and I met with Doug Dawson from Ancillary Services to continue working towards a joint proposal asking the government to remove municipal property taxes on student residences. The proposal is coming together slowly as we have to work in coordination with other institutions but overall we are making considerable ground. We are currently discussing how the funds saved from not having to pay property taxes could be redistributed to areas such as reducing deferred maintenance and improving residence association programs.

## **Party for Dima**

The GSA hosted a wonderful surprise party to celebrate Dima Utgoff's retirement. Dima was the long-serving Director of Residence Services and has made a name for himself for being especially student friendly and being extremely supportive and responsive to student concerns. We are sad to see Dima go but are very thankful for the wonderful work that he has done for us in the past number of years.

## **Management Retreat**

Last Thursday the General Manager hosted a management retreat in SUB with all of our managers/directors. I found the retreat to be extremely useful as it helped us refocus our thoughts and energies and develop a collective vision of what we aim to achieve this semester. It was very useful for me to hear the goals and projects that each unit is working on, as well as any impediments that they are facing. I was very pleased with the amount of effort that the GM put into this event. I believe that positive staff culture and teamwork is fundamental for any effective organization.

## **International Student Orientation**

On Friday I helped welcome over 100 new international students who have just arrived on our campus for the winter semester. I gave a quick presentation on the SU and tabled for a few hours to help answer the students' questions.

## **Summary**

January should be a pretty busy month for the executive. We will be meeting with the Augustana Student Executive on Tuesday, travelling to Calgary for an extended CAUS meeting on Saturday, and will be prepping for our final projects of the year (Fall Reading Week, SUB Reno, Ignite Conference, Campus Musical, supporting FA's etc.) Be sure to check out the awesome Antifreeze events happening all week.

## **Ways to get involved:**

- Prepare for your executive elections if you are running! Also, please help us recruit last minute candidates. Sometimes the best people for the job need a bit of encouragement to get them going.
- I was thinking about hosting a job-shadow day for people interested in running for executive portfolios so let me know what you think of this idea.
- Attend Golden Bears and Pandas games (the VPSL usually has a list of upcoming games in his report)
- Come check out the Antifreeze events happening this week! [www.su.ualberta.ca/events](http://www.su.ualberta.ca/events)

Cheers,

**If you have any further questions, suggestions, or concerns**, please do not hesitate to follow-up with me, either in person at SUB 2-900, by phone at 780-492-4236, or by email at [president@su.ualberta.ca](mailto:president@su.ualberta.ca).