

Oct. 5, 2012

To: Students' Council

Re: Report to Council

Hello Council,

Welcome to October and welcome to frosty Edmonton weather. Hopefully we will have at least one more bearable week of warm-ish weather before it gets nasty! I have a few things to report on this week but mostly just brief updates for ongoing projects.

One thing that I did want to mention is that your VPA is an incredible runner. Maybe not as incredible as last year's VPA but still quite incredible! Last weekend I ran the 8km Turkey Trot with Dustin and he beat me by 8 whole minutes! Given, I am quite out of shape and had to walk a bit (I could barely walk down the stairs the next day), but this guy is fast!

Celebrate! Teaching and Learning Awards

I had the opportunity to speak at the Celebrate! Teaching and Learning Awards. The University Administration and the RO's Office hosted the awards. It was great to see staff and students recognized for their amazing work. We also celebrated this year's most recent President's Citation scholars. The President's Citation is the most prestigious scholarship awarded to incoming/prospective students.

PAW Update – Good News Edition

We have received the order in council from the government to begin construction on the PAW centre! Construction will begin right away.

Facilities and Operations Orientation

We had an excellent luncheon with the folks from F+O including Vice President Don Hickey and his senior staff. We listened to an orientation presentation where they introduced their staff structure and explained how their unit operates. We also had an opportunity to present on our goals and had plenty of time to ask questions. I am excited to work with F+O on a few big things this year! The biggest achievement from the meeting is that we are going to have the opportunity to get a tour of the underground utility tunnels... a long time item on my bucket list.

Association of Academic Staff University of Alberta (AASUA) Dinner + Lecture

I was invited to watch a panel on Academic Freedom hosted by AASUA. The panel included great speakers including Dr. David Schindler, President Samarasekera, GSA President Ashlyn Bernier, and Dr. Jocelyn Downie. The panel was followed by a dinner where I had the opportunity to converse with a number of AASUA and NASA reps.

Services Joint Training

Saturday morning the VPA, VP OpsFi, and I woke up early to speak to the new group of Infolink, Safewalk, and SUSTAINSU volunteers during their joint training session. I had a lot of fun as I got to imitate Petros and Saadiq while talking about their portfolios. We also got to do an iClicker quiz on the SU. Thanks to the services staff for hosting (at least the part we were there for) a great training session.

Turkey Trot and Relay for Life

I had some fun doing charity related activities this past week. I have already mentioned the Turkey Trot but the VPSL and I also attended the Relay for Life and got pied for charity. The turnout was amazing and we actually raised \$470 by getting pied in the face (and hair, body, etc.). It was a mess, and not the most comfortable experience, but hey, we raised a lot of money for a good cause! I really enjoy the luminary presentation where we remember and honour those who have been lost to/have struggled with cancer. Almost everyone has been affected by cancer at some point in their life.

General Faculties Council (GFC)

The first GFC meeting of the year was mostly an informational update and a GFC orientation session but I had a chance to ask a question about the GFC governance process in relation to the Lister changes. I received an answer to the first part of my question asking why the governance process was overlooked (they told me that it was because of health and safety concerns and that they were forced to use emergency powers) but I did not receive an answer to my question asking what appeal mechanism students have for these changes.

Lister Update

We had another Lister meeting with the university administration and were able to draft up some new material. The meetings (in my opinion) are moving in a positive direction and we are starting to see some serious offers to resolve the issue coming from the administration's side. The meetings are all privileged discussions and are conducted without prejudice so the exact details would have to be discussed in-camera if you have any questions. I can attempt to provide broad answers in the public session if you so choose to ask questions.

Board Finance and Property Committee (BFPC)

Nothing of particular interest was raised in the open session of BFPC. The one thing to note is that we received a presentation on the Tuition outlook for 2012/2013. The administration will be introducing a proposal to increase tuition by Tuition CPI (2.15%) in November. I asked a question asking if the administration believed there was a correlation between the increasing numbers of international students and the government's willingness to provide base-grant increases.

Mandatory Non-Instructional Fee and Tuition Budget Advisory Committee Joint Meeting (MBAC/TBAC)

MBAC/TBAC was quite exciting in a bad way. We received a report on MNIFS that we have deemed to be unsatisfactory in displaying the true costs/expenses/allocations that exist with relation to the COSSS fee. The report lacked the level of detail that we had requested. We also received an update on a possible Graduate Studies tuition market modifier but the discussion is still young. I am sure that you will hear much more about this in the future.

Alumni Council

Alumni Council was held yesterday morning at 7am (yikes!). We received a great update from the Alumni Association full time staff and reviewed the audited financial statements from last year. I am really excited to work with the Alumni Council and Alumni Association this year and have been very impressed with their Alumni Weekend activities and programs. There is a lot of talent and energy within the Alumni Office! I had the chance to speak to a number of the Council members offline after the meeting to get to know them better.

Summary

That is all for now. Good luck on midterms my friends!

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.