

November 12th, 2015

To: University of Alberta Students' Union Students' Council 2015-2016

From: Navneet Khinda, POTSU 2015-2016

Re: Report to Students' Council (for November 17th, 2015)

Hello Council!

I hope you had a restful Reading Week! This was the very first Fall Reading Week at U of A – if you have suggestions for future programming or any feedback, please let us know.

Here's what's been going on the last two+ weeks

- 1. Alumni Council Edmonton Engagement Committee**
- 2. Media Interviews on mental health and international tuition**
- 3. Meetings with Chiefs of Staff re: mental health grant**
- 4. Trick or TrEAT with CFB**
- 5. MNIF meeting updates**
- 6. STEP announcement**
- 7. Conference Board of Canada's Skills Summit**
- 8. State of the Province lunch**
- 9. CAUS working day on tuition**
- 10. TBAC: international tuition increase**
- 11. Coffee meeting with Board member + ASSC Bannock and Stew Day**
- 12. Remembrance Day ceremony**
- 13. Lister Strategic Planning Committee**
- 14. WRP policy convention**
- 15. ECMA interviews all day**
- 16. Coming up:**
 - a. CAUS all-exec roundtable**
 - b. Residence consultations + Augustana trip!**

1. At this meeting we gave feedback on this year's Alumni Weekend activities and brainstormed ideas for the coming year. It's a pretty fun group to spend 1-2 hours with!

2. There have been a few interviews regarding mental health in general at U of A, and the provincial grant in specific. I also got at least one media request to talk about international tuition.

3. With other members of CAUS, we met with members of the government. They asked us our opinions on mental health support for students as well as what a grant could look like. It was very general and we didn't receive any specifics as to the existing grant. It was more of a consultative meeting for them.

4. Us execs had a fabulous time volunteering with the Campus Food Bank collecting food donations! Consider doing it next year ☺

5. Colin More (GSA President) and I continue on with our meetings regarding the MNIF project. Right now we're still making changes to the draft Terms of Reference and there is some back-and-forth regarding a proposed formula from the U of A administration. We hope to have these disagreements ironed out in the coming months.

6. Some *very* exciting news – Premier Notley and Minister Sigurdson are bringing back the Student Temporary Employment Program!!! STEP was cut a few years ago and it left Alberta as the only province in Canada without an employment program for students. This was a major priority for me last year as well as for CAUS for the last few years and this year! It'll be funded with \$10mn and we look forward to seeing the program details. Applications will be open in January for summer jobs this June!

7. The Conference Board had their Skills Summit in Edmonton! There was a lot of interesting discussion and I had a lovely time talking about how students contribute to the campus community. Specifically, I talked about the importance of student involvement in gaining “soft skills”, especially those that employers are looking for. Really interesting stuff.

8. VP Hanwell and I, along with our friends from MacEwan, attended Premier Notley's State of the Province address. It was a great opportunity to hear from her about her priorities for the province and a chance for us to meet some other stakeholders in the Edmonton community.

9. CAUS delegates joined us at the U of A last Friday and we spent the entire day talking about our vision for the future of tuition and fees in this province. There are some very confounding questions that we confronted and while it was draining, it's a very fulfilling thing to talk about. Part of the purpose of this was to come up with our definition of “accessibility”, “affordability”, and “quality” to submit to the government.

10. VP Hanwell and I attended a TBAC meeting earlier this week. It was announced to us that the international differential fee will increase by 1.6% for the 2016-2017 academic year. 1.6% is the Alberta CPI at the moment. While international tuition increases are not tied to CPI, the administration is choosing to stick with this amount. I asked if it was possible to hold back on increases to the 5 programs that had market modifier increases applied to them last year. The response, in short, was “no” since they feel this is still an appropriate increase. This will go through BFPC and then finally the Board in December.

11. Two really quick relationship-building pieces -- I had an informal meeting with a Board member, which was really great, and I joined the Aboriginal Student Services Center for their Bannock and Stew Day! It was a wonderful time and I even got to participate in a round dance.

12. VP Rahman and I attended the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Butterdome. It is always a lovely ceremony and I'm proud to have our little SU wreath represented there.

13. The Lister student association restructure process is going well. I stopped by the Strategic Planning committee and I was very impressed with the quality of conversation in that room! With the guidance of our GM and the support of Discover Governance, I am really hopeful that there will be a solid strategic plan coming out of this. This will help guide the other committees as well.

14. Something interesting is happening within the Wildrose Party membership. They are having their AGM this weekend in Calgary and there is a policy proposal on the books that would make membership in SUs/SAs voluntary. The proposal went on to explain why and I found it incredibly misguided and ill-

informed. I drafted a letter for CAUS to send to the WRP caucus in advance of their AGM. We really do hope they take our comments and concerns into account.

15. Today, we interviewed 5 candidates for the position of External Communications and Media Advisor. We hope to have someone join us in about 2 weeks!

16. Tomorrow, the entire executive will be driving to Calgary to join our CAUS All Executive Roundtable. This happens once or twice every year – all 5 executives from all 5 schools get together to discuss ideas and build relationships. The VP Externals and Presidents will have a CAUS meeting to discuss business while the other VPs have their own conversations. In the afternoon, we will all get together and we will be joined by someone from the Ministry of Advanced Education to give further comments regarding tuition. It'll be a long but exciting day!

On Saturday evening we're all travelling to Camrose to check out the Augustana's Got Talent event! Earlier that day, I am having an informal chat with some Residence Assistants (RAs) from various residences across campus. This will help me balance out the perspectives I am hearing regarding issues in residences. Interestingly, there is common ground between students, (formerly) elected student leaders, and RAs. This signals that there is potential for a lot of bridge building and collaborating with various stakeholders. On Sunday, VP Kwan and I will be having an RHA meeting. I like to think of it as RHA+ since we are opening it up to people in residence who don't have a seat on RHA. This will kick-start our residence related consultations in the coming months.

Thanks for reading! As always, send me your questions if you have any. Also, and I know it's very early still, but if you are thinking about running for an Executive position and want to set up a meeting to talk about it, let me know! Elections are in February ;)

Ciao,



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