

November 14th, 2014

To: University of Alberta Students' Union Students' Council 2014-2015

From: William Lau, President 2014-2015

Re: Report to Students' Council (for November 18th, Meeting)

Dear Council,

First and foremost, I will not be at the upcoming November 18th Council meeting, as Vice President Khinda and myself will be in Ottawa attending our federal Lobby Week with CASA, our federal lobby group. If you have any questions directed at us, please feel free to send them via email. If you want to chat in person, I hope to see most of you on Monday at our rally.

I hope you all **understand how important this rally is**, not only to the student body, but also to the University of Alberta and even Alberta as a province; education is widely recognized as the single most important factor in the development of a society.

We have heard three clear messages:

1. The government's attitude towards post-secondary education is rather simple: quality first;
2. The government is talking down the University of Alberta's expectations for reinvestment into Post-Secondary Education, and the university should plan for a 0% grant increase for the following year; and
3. The government will explore the removal of "barriers", removing the shackles from institutions, allowing them to "maximize revenue streams".

Together, this messaging is extremely troubling. The University has two primary sources of revenue: government funding and student dollars. A push for higher quality without any increase in funding means that the cost will be put directly on the backs of students.

This is not just a concern for our students though. Our faculty and staff will be negotiating their collective agreements this year to negotiate their compensation for the next two years. With awareness of the government's limited investment, how will we retain our top professors that provide us the quality of

education we value, the quality of education we expect and the quality of education we pay for?

Furthermore, with increased costs to post-secondary education, how does that impact the social fabric of our province?

Stop the broken promises.

Premier Prentice promised reinvestment into post-secondary education in early September during the PC leadership race, and we are already having our expectations talked down.

Previous leadership promised that budget cuts wouldn't fall onto the backs of students, and we have seen massive increases strategically handed to select populations to prevent an uprising; this year, proposed increases in certain programs up to 58%. Simultaneously, we have seen professors, courses and programs get cut, cheapening the quality of our education.

Yes, it will be cold, but *the time is now*.

Monday happens to be the first sitting of the Legislative Assembly for Fall 2014, where all MLAs will be present for the Speech from the Throne.

Moreover, the Government of Alberta is preparing its budget for the upcoming year, and we need to speak out about how important an affordable & accessible education is.

The success of our rally is directly correlated to whether the government will prioritize and reinvest in post-secondary education. The attendance at the rally will be directly correlated to how many people care about post-secondary education. I understand that students have class, but **I beg you to share [this event](#) and make this event as a priority**, for our students, for the U of A, and for Alberta's future.

Come join us: 1:00PM in Quad (beside SUB) on Monday Nov 17th.

William Lau

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