

Date: 11/15/2022

To: Students' Union Council

Re: President 2022/23 Report #15

Dear Council,

Below is an update on what I have been working on over the last two weeks. If you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Council on Student Affairs (CoSA)

Last week, I attended the Council of Student Affairs, a GFC committee dedicated to student engagement and consultation on important items affecting students. We received several important presentations in our last meeting, from online learning, to the campus food bank, to tuition consultation. Below is a breakdown of the different topics:

Online Learning Strategy

New AVP Online and Continuing Education, Jessica Butts Scott, presented the strategy being developed to support online learning. She touched on a few different areas, including utilizing online course offerings for courses that may be over-enrolled. I raised concerns about ensuring an equitable experience between modalities when students perceive that online courses have limitations. This could be problematic if both courses were used as the same pre-requisite for a higher-level course.

Campus Food Bank

The campus food bank Executive Director, Erin O'Neil, came and presented how they have been doing since the start of the semester, provided some data on usage, and answered questions that student leaders had about food bank usage. A few key points raised were the demographics that use the foodbank the most (international students and graduate students). There were also questions surrounding how much money the food bank is currently spending on food, and the executive director shared some of the projects they would like to kickstart with the support of university stakeholders to better support students across campus.

Domestic and International Tuition

Melissa Padfield and Verna Yiu presented the domestic and international tuition increase proposals to the group, and there were a lot of questions from students in CoSA. Students asked questions about why we have an increase of this size after a 21% increase in domestic tuition and a 15% rise in international tuition after three years. We also asked the university for a consultation summary, more information on how it disperses international financial aid, its cost drivers, and where it spends tuition revenue.

Experiential Learning Better Practices

This week, VP Kaur and I joined a working group dedicated to identifying better practices for experiential learning at the University of Alberta. Karsten Mundel, Provost Fellow for Experiential Learning, created a working group following several concerns the Students' Union raised regarding students' experiences on work-integrated learning (WIL) terms. We have identified structural and financial issues, and below is a summary of some of the things we raised:

- Students need more information about what to do if issues occur on a WIL term.
- Students on placements face discrimination and harassment.
- Students aren't comfortable coming forward out of fear of jeopardizing their future careers.
- There needs to be a straightforward mechanism for where a student can go for support.
- There is no requirement for existing partnerships to meet specific standards.
- Students are required to pay for their living expenses if they need to go on an experiential learning term, regardless of whether they choose the location or not.

Committee Chairs Meeting

Tomorrow, I will lead the Standing Committee Chairs to review Committee Standing Orders as we move forward with GRTF and Council restructuring. The goal will be to make significant progress regarding committee composition, possible amalgamations, responsibilities, and workload.

Pints and Post-Secondary Politics

Last week, VP Fotang ran a great teach-in surrounding post-secondary education and our financial aid system provincially and federally. It was a great session with new faces who came to learn more about how grants, loans, and awards work! We also received some feedback about how we can support more visibility of scholarships.

Chillin' for Charity

Annually, Alberta JDC West hosts Chillin' for Charity, a Polar Bear dip to support the United Way. This event is popular all over campus, routinely drawing large crowds of students, faculty, administration, and corporates to watch and take a plunge for a good cause. This year, the executive team participated in the dip to support the cause, and it was a blast!

Updates

- VP Fogue and I met with the new Student Equity Diversity and Inclusivity Coordinator.
- The Registrar's Office is looking into the concerns raised regarding interest on bursaries.

Cheers,



Abner Monteiro (he/him)

President

University of Alberta Students' Union

Abner Monteiro, President

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