

Date: 02/21/2023**To:** Students' Union Council**Re:** President 2022/23 Report #21

Dear Council,

I hope everyone is doing well! It has been an extremely busy and productive time since my last report. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out or ask during Council.

Direct Action at the Board of Governors

As referenced in our last Council Meeting, the Students' Union and Graduate Students' Association will collaborate to protest tuition increases at the Board of Governors on March 24, 2023. In preparation for the meeting on March 24, the SU and GSA will hold a joint information session in February, and an Art Build in March. All of you can expect more information that can be disseminated to the student body once it is prepared, and we hope you can all work with the SU and GSA executive teams to ensure we get as much student involvement as possible leading up to the Board of Governors meeting.

GoA Student Affordability Announcement

As many of you probably know, last week, the Minister of Advanced Education was at the University of Alberta to make an announcement surrounding student affordability measures leading up to the release of the provincial budget. In the announcement, three were five (5) announced measures:

1. Capping domestic tuition at 2% starting in the 24/25 academic year.
2. Reducing student loan interest rates to the prime rate, from the prime rate + 1%;
3. Doubling the student loan interest-free grace period to 12 months;
4. Increasing the income threshold for Alberta's Repayment Assistance Plan from \$25,000 to \$40,000; and
5. Increasing Alberta Student Grant monthly payments from \$250 to \$475.

While we welcome these improvements that will help current students and recent graduates, the most significant measure, the 2% cap, comes into effect too late, among other concerns. Firstly, students shouldn't have to spend another 1.5-2 years waiting for GoA support when student leaders have clearly demonstrated the need exists. We urge the Minister and government to respond to this and commit to investing in more needs-based grants that all low-income students are eligible for, not just students in high-demand

programs. Additionally, even with a cap on tuition at 2%, we are concerned about what that means for the quality of our programs since the government has yet to commit any additional backfill funding to make up for any shortfall that institutions have as a result.

Trip to Augustana

A couple of weeks ago, our executive team had an opportunity to travel to Augustana and spend some time on their campus! It was great chatting with the Augustana Students' Association executive team about what projects and initiatives they are currently working on and sharing with them some of the projects the UASU executive is working on.

Board of Governors Strategy Session

Last week, the board of governors had a strategy session surrounding the next steps for the University Strategic Plan (USP). It was an excellent opportunity to ask questions and discuss what we heard from the community in the first phase of consultations. We will enter the second phase when we share what we heard back with the community in the coming weeks.

Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) Counterparts

This week, the executive team attended CAUS Counterparts at MacEwan University. It was an excellent opportunity to discuss how we can leverage the advocacy that our counterparts have done to support our advocacy in our home institutions, brainstorm policy positions that we would like CAUS to take, and strategize about where CAUS needs to go to be as effective as possible for its members.

Cheers,



Abner Monteiro (he/him)

President

University of Alberta Students' Union