



November 16, 2017

To: Students' Council

Re: Report to Students' Council

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Hello Council,

I hope you are all enjoying the winter weather – it is becoming evermore clear that the winter holidays are quickly approaching, especially as I sit in a remedy with a hot latte while the snow blows outside. Here is a report on what I have been up to for the last two weeks.

### Learning Outcomes Talk

I was invited to listen to a talk from Dr. Harvey P. Weingarten is President and CEO of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) on the topics of learning outcomes. The Provost's Office invited Dr. Weingarten to come speak as part of a larger initiative to desensitize the academic community on campus into implementing them. Learning outcomes are a series of statements on the skills or objectives that a student is expected to learn by the end of their course, program or degree. Generally these can help a student conceptualize what and how they are learning beyond just the content in a course. I was also invited to a more intimate debrief following the talk to discuss how the university can move forward on learning outcomes in the future. It's also interesting to note that HEQCO is unique in Canada, and is an arm's length agency of the Ontario government that conducts research and provides policy advice to government to improve the accessibility, quality and accountability of colleges and universities.

### Budget Reductions & Townhall

As I am sure many of you are now well aware of, the University of Alberta has announced a forecasted 9% budget reduction over the next 3 years – 4% this year followed by 2.5% in the following 2 years. At a recent town hall on the subject, the President of the university explained the university's plan moving forward.

As mentioned, the 9% number is simply a forecast based on a set of predictions about funding and regulations coming from the government. The government has yet to announce if tuition will continue to be frozen, allowed to increase or decrease.

Likewise, they have yet to make an announcement on whether or not the money the university received through the Campus Alberta Grant will be changed. Thus, the university is forecasting as though both will remain the same moving forward.

The President also spoke to internal pressures that are leading to the budget reduction – the biggest being the growing deficit of the institution. By reducing the expenditure of the university by 9% they hope to combat the deficit and they plan on crafting a new budget planning process that will allow them to foresee their financial situation for up to 3 years in advance. They also plan to roll out a new university wide budget system and a model for all faculties to adopt to see how resources are being allocated.



As it stands now, these *are* just forecasts and nothing has been confirmed nor set in stone. Moving forward it will be important that students and student representatives are talking to their faculties about this and asking how this may affect their own faculties individually. It is also important that all faculties representatives begin to ask to be included in conversations when it comes to budget reductions.

### Governance

#### *Academic Standards Committee*

Academic Standards Committee met with most of the same items that were seen at ASC Subcommittee on Standards. Notably, the changes that were proposed for the elimination of the 8 MLCS programs and creation of the new conglomerated degree were not brought forward to this ASC meeting from ASC SOS. There was also quite a bit of discussion around the proposed changes to existing Academic Standing Requirement for the Faculté Saint-Jean. There was a line removed that said students could not fail any courses when they were on probation or when they had been readmitted following a requirement to withdraw, a welcomed change that provides more flexibility to CSJ students. There were some questions raised about when a student would need to get a letter of recommendation from the associate dean if they would like to apply for readmission or when they would meet to create an individual academic action plan.

### Working Group on Course Outlines

I have been invited to take part in a working group looking at the content of course outlines. At a past Committee on the Learning Environment the chair proposed adding learning outcomes to the course outline (syllabus) which caused a broader discussion about the content on them, including things like the various campus resources and calendar sections.

### Council on Experiential Learning

I have also been invited to sit on a council looking at *what* experiential learning looks like on campus. One of the priorities in the university's strategic plan is to expand the number of experiential learning opportunities for students. However, when we began discussing this it became clear that there is different understandings of experiential learning and a lack of clear direction in expanding them, something this group will work towards.

### Ask Us Anything

The SU exec and I hosted a half hour facebook live “ask us anything” that seemed to be well received. We plan on doing more of these on a monthly basis and we are exploring new venues that will allow us to make it more of a public forum. Stay tuned for those, and if you have any ideas about how to make these better, let me know!



### CAUS Counterparts

On the days before last council the Council of Alberta University Students met along with all of the executive counterparts from across Alberta – basically I got to work with all the VP Academics from across the province! While I did update council about this orally at our last council, I think it's worth a second mention! We are planning a campaign around open educational resources and affordable academic material costs in the winter semester! Stay tuned for that as well!

We are also pulling together a campaign right now that will be aimed at both encouraging more underrepresented groups to run in students politics, but also to create a campus community where these candidates are supported! I'm very excited for this project and what it can potentially do for campus!

As always, feel free to ask me any questions if you do have any questions about any of this and I will see you all at council!

Stay warm friends,



Shane Scott  
Vice President Academic