

## INTRODUCTION

For this VPA report, I will expand only on the initiatives that I have put considerable time into as of late. This report is a condensed version for Students' Council; however, I can also provide more detailed explanations of specific sections for any councillors or other students prior to or following the July 26 meeting. The last two weeks have once again been busy, with a strong focus on graduate attributes, fall reading, transfer credits and undergraduate research. Moreover, I have been replying to councillors' and other students' e-mails and questions in what I believe and hope is a timely manner. If you ever have questions or wish to drop by the office, give me a call/send an e-mail and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

## GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

The CLE subcommittee on attributes and competencies membership is nearly finalized, with most of the co-chairs' proposed faculty representatives accepting their invitations. Moreover, I spoke with the co-chairs about including a student at-large on the committee, and am waiting to hear back. On July 20 2011, I presented to the Interdepartmental Science Students' Society for a second time about graduate attributes, and fielded many thoughtful questions.

At the moment, the consultation plan for faculty associations and councillors is being finalized, and I am preparing to present to Students' Council on July 26 2011.

## FALL READING WEEK TASK FORCE

With President Tighe away for CASA and other conferences in Eastern Canada and the Registrar out of town, I served as chair of the university's July 21 2011 Fall Reading Week Task Force meeting. In preparation for the meeting, I worked on a task force final report template and helped fine-tune some of the materials that were later sent to the committee. The meeting went very well, with input from the various committee members about the structure of the final report template.

## SU UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

After drafting a letter of invitation for the SU Undergraduate Research Symposium Planning Committee, I contacted all members of the committee to approve their membership on this body. In addition to including a wide array of students on the committee, there are also faculty, graduate students and a representative from the Undergraduate Research Initiative and CAPS. The committee will start meeting in late July, and convene bi-weekly until the November event. The committee terms of reference specifies that its members will select a location for the event, a theme, keynote speaker(s) and undertake other similar planning tasks.

On July 20 2011, I telephoned Dr. Lorne Babiuk, the Vice-President Research of the University of Alberta, and had a good talk about the undergraduate research symposium, and some of the university's current research initiatives. Dr. Babiuk has been back and forth in China and Canada, as the university builds partnerships with foreign universities.

## TRANSFER CREDIT TASK FORCE

On July 20 2011, I attended the university's Transfer Credit Task Force, where the VPA serves as the SU representative. At this meeting, the committee members selected future themes of discussion, which for the rest of the summer will be time limits on transfer credits, block transfers, and online management of transfer credits. I have been highly impressed by the work of Professor Emeritus Dr. Marion Allen, who is the chair and lead of this university initiative.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

On July 15 2011, I met with Doug Weir of University of Alberta International to discuss a wide range of topics, including transfer credit in different faculties, internationalization, study abroad and last but not least, the possibility of establishing an international student association. Mr. Weir was in support of this idea, which would provide additional means for international students to advocate to the university about critical issues that affect them.

Following this meeting, I met with Vice-President Student Life Yamagishi and Councillor Zinyemba to create a consultation plan for such a proposal. We were able to draft an initial set of principles pertaining to such an association, and set a schedule for consultation over the next month. Overall, many questions exist for the creation of such an association, but the benefits could be long-lasting and favourable to the international student experience at the University of Alberta.

In early fall, UAI and the Students' Union are organizing a Students' Union executive-international student leader summit, where the possibility of an international student association will be on the agenda.

## FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS IN ORIENTATION 2011

Over the last weeks, I have gradually handed over portions of the planning process to the Assistant Manager of Orientation, Mr. Tim Ira. However, I still remain involved in the project, through attendance at meetings between the CSD and faculty associations, and by editing different FA planning documents for Orientation 2011. If all goes as planned, councillors might see the VPA join in on the VPSL's and VP OF's rap antics.

## FESTIVAL OF TEACHING

Although I was unable to attend the Festival of Teaching Steering Committee meeting on July 18 2011, I provided a written summary of my thoughts to the committee through e-mail. According to the university's Vice-Provost Academic, the ideas were well-received and generated enthusiasm amongst the committee. In particular, I spoke to the need to engage students well in advance of the March festival, through initiatives such as a speakers corner, student videos, student-faculty panels and active dialogue about the strengths and weaknesses of teaching on campus. *If you are interested by the quality of teaching on campus, please speak with me as soon as possible, because with your input and involvement, this event could become something of great value to the university.*

## TWO-YEAR REVIEW TO SU SUBMISSION TO THE 2009 ACADEMIC PLAN

My last project of the year as VPA will be the completion of a two-year review of the SU Submission to the 2009 Academic Plan. Throughout the year, I will do my best to engage councillors and students at-large in the reading and constructive criticism of this plan. In this plan, the SU outlined the need for an undergraduate research office, which the university followed up on through the creation of the University Research Initiative. Other initiatives, however, such a centralized Student Academic Centre, were not implemented, and are waiting to happen.

**In late August, I will host a social event attended by councillors and students at-large, where the SU plan will be discussed over pizza and cold beverages.** I will notify Council as to the location and time of this event. Until then, I hope that you all read the plan – which I can provide to you if you do not have one – and reflect on what is in it.

#### ACADEMIC ADVISING

Advising is going to be a priority of the VPA this year, and I view the Council of Faculty Associations as the body to work with this. If you have concerns about academic advising in your faculty, then please contact me, and we can talk. I have an idea in mind about the approach that can be taken with this issue, but above all else, it is important that students are reasonable and consider the pressures placed on individual faculties – especially during the summer – as they work on advising.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

On July 19 2011, I wrote the first blog post of the month, entitled “What keeps you going?” As students, we will face adversity at different points throughout our degree, which can be difficult to withstand emotionally and physically. For each of us, there is something meaningful that we hold onto and value, that allows us to overcome the valleys in life. The goal of the entry is to see readers reflect on what it is that we truly value.

As I promised, I have been using Twitter to communicate to the university about twice per day over the last two weeks.

#### RUNNING FOR VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC

Think about it!

#### CONCLUSION

For those that would like a more in-depth version of this report, please ask me, and I will expand on whatever it is that you want to learn about. For now, I will continue to write detailed but more concise reports for each Council meeting. If you prefer the older approach to reports, which focus more in depth on my progress as VPA, then I can certainly return to that style. I hope that this report is sufficient, and I look forward to your questions.

In solidarity,

Emerson Csorba  
Vice-President Academic