

Vice-President Academic Report

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last two weeks, I have made steady progress on a number of different academic initiatives. The marathon is also over, which provides more energy and inspiration as VPA over the next months. Phew! With September fast approaching, maintaining a high level of energy and activity is going to be crucial to a great month.

FALL READING WEEK

On Thursday August 18, the Fall Reading Task Force met over what was a stellar meeting. I am pleased (or perhaps ecstatic is a better word) that the task force is close to finished a final report, which will include recommendations regarding what logistical options are the best for a potential fall reading week. The Advocacy Department has done a tremendous job since late May, producing clear and well-written briefs for task force members. Additionally, President Tighe has done well to keep the task force moving in a positive direction. Every meeting thus far has been an effective use of time.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

The team organizing the undergraduate research symposium met once again. First off, the team is rapidly growing as it now approaches thirty members. Working with the students and professors on the committee is a lot of fun. We managed to select a handful of potential themes for the event and are close to finalizing an event logo. Additionally, the team is now breaking off into various sub-groups that will organize various aspects of the event.

Moreover, I met with Jodi Richter of the Faculty of Science to discuss the possible utilization of space in CCIS for the undergraduate research symposium. I will be drafting a short proposal that will be sent to the faculty later this week, regarding the use of CCIS for the symposium.

Keep in mind that the symposium will take place on November 17 and 18. It is gonna be sick!

(GRADUATE) STUDENT ATTRIBUTES

Over the last two weeks, I have finalized a short list of questions that will be used for consultation about (graduate) student attributes. Later today and during the rest of the week, I'll be contacting councillors individually to set up consultation meetings. I cannot wait for our meetings. I anticipate that the interviews will be some of the most interesting things done in the VPA portfolio this year, as each person has a unique and valuable perspective.

EDUCATION STUDENT ASSOCIATION

I've been meeting over the last weeks with ESA President Brit Luimes as well as other members of the ESA executive. We also recently signed the conditions of probation for the ESA. Overall, I'm highly impressed by the work done by the ESA over the last three weeks, and in particular the leadership of the new executive.

WISEST CONFERENCE

On Tuesday August 16, I attended the annual Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology conference, held in CCIS. The conference was outstanding, with around 60 student presenters (all in grade 11) and some wonderful speeches. The conference gave me a better idea of what should be included in a student research symposium.

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE PREPARATION

President Tighe and I met with Cindy Watt of the university in order to discuss the upcoming year of Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) meetings. We received the committee terms of reference and membership, as well as a list of meeting dates. This weekend will involve me reading many difference provincial and university documents. I have already read most of the Campus Alberta Planning Framework, and some of the university's recent Comprehensive Institutional Plan; however, I have some brushing up to do.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT PLAN BRAINSTORMING

The executive and members of the Advocacy Department met to brainstorm the student engagement plan. This was one of the best meetings that I have been in this year, and there is no doubt in my mind that the final product will be quite impressive.

ACADREAM TEAM

With the AcaDream Team terms of reference finished, I will be posting an announcement on the Students' Union website that students can apply for AcaDream Team. Formerly known as the Academic Relations Group, the AcaDream Team will be a relatively small (ten person) and intensive advisory and planning team that meets twice per month with the VPA. The goal is to challenge the VPA to make the best possible decisions on a range of issues.

CORPORATE TEAM

Devonne Brandys of SFAIC and I are planning the second SU corporate team event, which will be another soccer game followed by a social event. The game is slated for mid-September, with a date still to be finalized. I'll be sending off a Doodle Poll to

councillors so that they can choose the best possible event date. The first game brought out 15 people, and I hope to see more this time out!

LOBBY TRAINING

Vice-President (External) Iskandar and I met with the Director of Research and Political Affairs, Justin Williams to discuss the structure of Students' Union lobby training in the fall semester. This initiative is in the early planning stages.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to relax and take the last two weeks as slow as possible. I feel like last weekend was my first real relaxation/rest weekend, though a marathon was part of that. With only a week or so remaining in August, the key is to create a solid foundation for success in the fall semester, while also setting aside time for rest. If you have any questions about anything VPA-related, please do not hesitate to contact me at vp.academic@su.ualberta.ca, drop by the office or call at 780.492.4236.

In solidarity,

Emerson