

VPA Council Report  
Date: October 7 2011  
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## INTRODUCTION

The last week of September and first week of October have been quite busy. Much of my focus has been on the upcoming symposium, as well as the “Sustainability and Student Attributes” event being hosted for Sustainability Awareness Week (SAW). Please note that I will be away from October 8-13 2011 at a sustainability conference (AASHE) in Pittsburgh.

## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Much of my time over the last weeks has been dedicated to undergraduate research. We got the website up and running, and the call for abstracts, along with the submission form, is up. The SU Marketing Department also finished the sponsorship package, which is now being shared to the URS Team, who will help with the fundraising. The Undergraduate Research Initiative, Alumni Association and Campus Saint-Jean, among others, are partners in the event. I also chaired two URS Team meetings, where we brainstormed how the symposium can effectively share students’ stories about their experiences in undergraduate research.

## STUDENT ATTRIBUTES

I’ve spent most of the last weeks prepping for the next meeting, essentially serving as the committee secretary. We also presented the finalized CLE Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies terms of reference at CLE, which was approved. The next subcommittee meeting will likely take place on October 13/14. I apologize for taking longer than expected to return the typed interview transcripts to students that sat down for a student attributes interview. Transcribing dozens of interviews is definitely time-consuming.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Over the last two weeks, I have been gathering speakers for the October 19 SAW event, entitled “Sustainability and Student Attributes.” Dr. Susan Barker from the Faculty of Education will serve as a speaker, along with a Centre for Teaching and Learning representative and a handful of students. I hope to see you all out to the 4-5pm event, which takes place in the SUB Alumni Room. From October 8-13, I will be in Pittsburgh for the annual Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education conference. You might be wondering why the VPA is attending a sustainability conference. I chose AASHE because sustainability is one of the SU’s values in the recent strategic plan, and it is a goal in my VPA executive goals. I believe that if I am to advocate for something, that I better understand what I am talking about inside and out. I’ll be putting my nose down at this conference, and will have a thorough conference report ready for you following my return to Edmonton.

## COUNCIL OF FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS (CoFA)

I chaired the first fall meeting of CoFA on October 6. The meeting was relatively short, and the Council elected a handful of students to sit on the CoFA Strategic Planning Committee. The ISSS also led a discussion on faculty-based academic advising at the U of A. The FAs in the room agreed that the ISSS should return to the committee with a terms of reference for a CoFA Advising Committee, which would study the advising services offered by different faculties, as well as a set of recommendations.

## HIRING COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS

I've spent the better part of a few days interviewing candidates for the Student Ombudsperson position and the new Bookstore Director. The interviews are now finished, and the successful candidates should be at work within the next month or so.

## UNIVERSITY WRITING COMMITTEE

I attended my first ever University Writing Committee, which stems from a task force with the best acronym ever: the Writing Task Force. We discussed the potential expansion of the current writing centre. I was asked to write a paragraph to be included in the upcoming fall 2011 Writing Centre newsletter, which I did.

## CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

During this meeting, I successfully advocated for the inclusion of the term "research-based" in the mission statement of CTL. I am a strong proponent of evidence-based action; without the inclusion of "research-based" education in the CTL mission, it is possible that future CTL directors provide teaching support based on what works in *their* experiences, versus what works based on research/evidence. That is a crucial distinction, so I am very happy that this term was used in the mission statement.

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

The beginning of a new month marks the start-up of university governance committees, so much of my time has been spent at various GFC standing committees. Academic integrity is the major discussion item in these committees, and I have repeatedly spoken in favour of recommendation #3 (the establishment of an Academic Integrity Council) and against recommendation #9 (reviewing e-resources like turnitin).

## CONCLUSION

If you have any questions, please drop by 2-900, call me at 780.492.4236 or send off an e-mail at [vp.academic@su.ualberta.ca](mailto:vp.academic@su.ualberta.ca). I look forward to your questions!

In solidarity,

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