



June 7, 2012

To: Students' Council 2012-2013

Re: Report of the Vice President Academic

Hello Council,

The past two weeks have been focused mostly on information gathering and relationship building, so that I can continue to be an effective advocate for my term. Below is a brief summary of the projects that I have been working on.

I. Assessment and Grading

The Assessment and Grading policy suite was approved at GFC on May 28th. 49 were in favour, and 12 were opposed. The SU and GSA made a motion on the floor to add wording that required faculties and departments to communicate their distributions and procedures to students and administration.

Reaction to the changes have been mixed and hotly debated around campus. The new policy is confusing, and contradictory at points. It states that grades shall not be mandated on the basis of historical distributions or curves, but that faculties and departments can put forward their own procedures or distributions. Whether or not that will happen before Fall 2012 is currently unclear. I am hopeful that the reaction across campus speaks to the value of consulting with students and the Students' Union before proposing policies. In total, the SU advocated in committees to make 4 essential changes to the policy before it was passed by GFC. I will continue to advocate for a more clearer and transparent grading process through the Academic Policy and Process Review Task Force (APPRTF).

II. Undergraduate Research Symposium Coordinator

The Executive Committee recently approved the job description for a URS Coordinator. This student staff member will report to the Senior Manager (Programming and Venues) and assist in the organization of the November 15, 2012 Undergraduate Research Symposium. If you know of anyone interested in undergraduate research, this is an excellent way to give back to the community, and work with both the SU and the Academic portfolio. The application deadline is June 15, and more information can be found on Jobkin.

III. Success on Alternate Routes

Dr. Frank Robinson, Vice Provost and Dean of Students, presented the SoAR report to APPRTF last week. It provides a number of recommendations to support students who don't do a traditional 4-year degree, and who may need specialized support, time off from their studies, or a transfer of programs. I look forward to supporting Dr. Robinson in finding a way forward for these recommendations, as retaining students must be a priority for our university.

IV. University Cup

The university has selected the winner of the most prestigious prize offered at the UofA level for an academic staff member. They will be announced at the September Celebration of Teaching and Learning.

V. Appeals

I met with Iva Spence, Appeals Coordinator, earlier in my term. At the most recent GFC Executive meeting, she proposed a number of changes to the appeals (both COSB and academic) policies that made it clearer to students how they can appeal the decision of a discipline officer or Faculty Appeals Committee. The new changes demonstrate a university commitment to fairness and transparent communication to students, and Iva should be applauded for her tremendous work. Unfortunately, she'll be leaving her post later this year.

Cheers,


Dustin Chelen