

November 1, 2012

To: Students' Council 2012-2013

Re: Report of the Vice President Academic

Hello Council,

See below for updates arising from my portfolio over the past two weeks. You'll note that the report is somewhat longer than usual, in response to a recommendation that I include more information in my written reports. Please send me feedback if you prefer this style of a report.

I. Undergraduate Research Symposium

93 students submitted their abstracts for the Undergraduate Research Symposium. It will take place from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM on Thursday November 15 in CCIS. I encourage you to look at the incredible research done by our undergraduate students! A reception and awards ceremony will be held that evening, and will feature Dr. Pamela Brett-MacLean, researcher in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry who studies the relationship between creativity, the arts, and patient healthcare.

II. Faculty Association Support

The Student Governance Advisor and I spent a substantial amount of time providing various types of support to Faculty Associations. This time of year is particularly stressful for FA Executives, and we have been helping them to best solve their issues. Key challenges include faculty relationships, interpersonal issues, executive workloads, financial management concerns, recruitment, and fee collection.

III. Faculty Association Task Force

The FATF continues to meet and make progress on addressing risks and issues faced by Faculty and Campus Associations. To date, we have built a list of supports currently offered to FAs, and developed a list of major concerns that need to be addressed. These include issues surrounding financial management, transition, relationship with the faculty and the SU, inexperience, and member engagement. We're continuing to develop proposed solutions to these challenges.

IV. Appeals Regulation Group

A number of stakeholders from the University, including governance, the Registrar's Office, UAPS, Student OmbudService, Office of Student Judicial Affairs, and the Dean of Students meet

monthly to work on improvements to appeals policies. Our last meeting covered the process of amending appeals policies, and reviewed a list of priority areas for changes. They expect a new student groups policy to begin to take shape in the next semester.

V. AASUA Teaching and Learning Committee

The Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta held the first TLC meeting. This committee consists of academic staff, including Administrative Professional Officers, Faculty Service Officers, Contract Academic Staff: Teaching, and representatives from the SU and Provost's Office as nonvoting members. They discussed issues pertinent to academic staff, including teaching evaluation, teaching intensive tenure-track positions, and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. They also developed a position statement on USRIs, which states that student comments should no longer be anonymous, that the scales of the questions need to be redeveloped, that instructors should have access to more professional development opportunities, and that USRIs should be administered less frequently.

VI. COFA Senior Board

The Senior Board of the Council of Faculty Associations met for the first time this year. Representatives from the SU and 11 FAs/CAs shared their perspectives on FA best practices and important issues to students. We discussed the COFA retreat, FATEF, COFA Working Groups, and saw a presentation from the Education Students Association. COFA also determined their priorities for the year: addressing faculty budget cuts, reducing segregation between faculties, developing expertise around program planning, and increasing engagement in FA activities.

VII. Udacity and Online Learning

The University of Alberta recently signed an agreement to partner with online PSE provider, Udacity, to pursue the creation of online courses and research best online pedagogical practices. The VPX, VPOF, and I attended a private meeting with Google VP and Udacity CEO Dr. Sebastian Thrun. I participated in the Visioning Committee, whose recommendations spurred the MOU with Udacity. The report will be circulated for feedback in the coming months.

VIII. Student Engagement in International Issues

The Standing Advisory Council on International Engagement's Subcommittee on Student Engagement in International Issues, or what I endearingly refer to as SACIESSEII, is proposing a symposium to take place on January 30, 2013 during International Week. Students will be encouraged to submit their ideas and experiences related to international issues, study abroad, global education, internationalization, or for international students, their international perspective. More information will be available online via the UAI website.

IX. Students' Union Awards

Applications for SU Awards recently opened, and are open until November 23. Students with leadership, campus involvement, academic achievement, or community engagement experience should apply for one of the many awards available. More information can be found in the Student Aid Office.

Sincerely,


Dustin Chelen