



June 17, 2014

To: Council

Re: Council Report

Hi Council,

I hope all of you are enjoying your summer! Things have been pretty busy up in 2-900.

One of the projects that I inherited from Dustin was the restructuring of the relationship between the Students' Union and Ombuds Services. Ombuds exists in this somewhat odd place somewhere between SU and Dean of Students. There is a reporting relationship between SU and Student Ombudspersons, but it doesn't seem to be super effective because of the confidentiality requires on the students. Student Ombuds positions will now be treated more as an internship, and will collaborate with programs like co-op and Arts Work Experience Program. We are also planning on drafting an MOU with the Dean of Students' Office about our relationship regarding the Ombuds Service.

I had the privilege to sit on three faculty awards adjudication committees this week, one of which was for the University Cup, the highest honour that the University awards to professors. It was my responsibility to read through all applications and evaluate them based on teaching, research, and service, and then discuss my assessments in committee. These committees also turned out to facilitate a discussion on the dropping rates of professors applying for such awards, and the severe lack of female applicants, which I appreciated. It seems to be a systemic/university culture problem. No solutions were agreed upon, but I appreciated the conversation.

At Academic Standards Committee Subcommittee on Standards we talked about the various effects of the extended withdrawal deadline, which has now been in effect for a year. The statistics showed that more students withdrew from classes overall, and a disproportionate number of international students withdrew. As it turned out, none of the things that were initial concerns came to fruition. There was the concern that students would 'game the system' by taking a course to the withdrawal deadline, dropping it, and then taking again in the next term so they would be guaranteed an A+ because they had all the notes already. This doesn't appear to be the case. There was also worry that too many students would drop required sections and then bump out students trying to take it for the first time in the next semester. This also did not happen. I consider this the extended withdrawal deadline to be a great success for undergraduates since students can now get substantive feedback before they decide whether they must stay in a course or not. It's good for GPAs and mental health.

I have to admit I'm frustrated with the progress of the Leadership College. I'm not really sure how much I'm allowed to say here, unified messaging and all that. I just want to let you all know that I have concerns and I plan to advocate for all undergraduates to have access to the programming.

The annual Be Booksmart annual awareness campaign is now underway. Since I am using a design that's very similar to last year, I was able to get 7000 handbills printed to go out in the envelopes to



all first years this week. One new thing that I am doing with this year's campaign in addition to the things that were done last year is targeting professors especially. It is important the professors are aware of the prices of the textbooks they assign, and that they are aware of simple alternative options. I will also revise www.bebooksmart.ca with updated information and more examples, in an easier to read format.

One of the important supplements for the Be Booksmart project is the revamping of our online textbook exchange. I made sure that this was a priority and outlined a plan of what I wanted to see, but, unfortunately, I do not have the skills to design a webpage such as this, so the actual doing of the thing is somewhat out of my hands. I can say it is underway though, it will be finished in August.

Something that the university is planning on doing, and this has been a long time coming, is Responsibility Centred Management (RCM). Essentially, this means that rather than budget being divided and redistributed by central administration, each faculty will manage its own budget. This means each faculty is responsible for revenue generation within the faculty, and the money they have coming in is equal to the amount of money they have to spend. There are a number of concerns with this, the primary being that faculties are going to have to make decisions related to making profit rather than preserving value for students. I raised this concern in committee, and everyone around the table seemed to be in agreement. Faculty and non-academic staff are opposed for reasons that are similar, but pertain to their own sphere of expertise. However, there seems to be no chance of this process being reversible, the project leaders only seem interested in trying to mitigate the issues with the process. To be fair, universities that use this system have been better off for it (ex: Harvard, University of Toronto), but in the long run, for the time being, things could get very difficult. There is a working group being formed for implementation, there are no undergraduates on this committee, however, it was noted in APC that the Students' Union would be consulted with. I am considering writing a response document, rather than just voicing concerns, but I have to coordinate with President Lau first.

All the best,
Kathryn Orydzuk