

**Date:** 25 Oct 2018

**To:** University of Alberta Students' Union Council

**Re:** VP(A) 2018/19 Report #12

---

Dear Council,

It's been a busy few weeks and the weeks following are also very busy! This will be the longest report I've written, sorry! Read ahead for updates.

### **1. Faculty Associations**

#### **Student Leaders Summit 2018**

With so many Student Leaders being elected during the byelections (congrats!), I think we have a great opportunity for us to all be in the same room have some joint discussions, go through some case studies, and have an interactive and action-oriented summit. One of my platform points was to “**Strengthen Faculty Associations**”, and the Council of Faculty Associations has been working diligently to help support this. This Summit is just another reason we will see stronger FA's as they collaborate with their SU Council Representatives, GFC Student Representatives and other FA Executives and Councillors. All of you have should have received an email from me about this already, and if you haven't, let me know and I can forward our registration to you.

#### **Alberta Pharmacy Student Associations (APSA)**

APSA is having a variety of governance issues all arising at once, and I have been working extremely close with their Executives to help support them. These issues include, but are not limited to:

1. Budgetary Cuts to the APSA Budget as received from their Market Modifier Fund (MMF).
  - a. Transparency regarding the MMF from the Faculty of Pharmacy.
2. APSA getting a student representative seat on their Academic Executive Council.
3. Supporting Pharmacy students transitioning into the PharmD
  - a. Pharmacy is losing their Reading Week due to their PharmD accreditation, which is extremely troublesome for many reasons. There was practically no student consultation about this, despite them stating there was. There was absolutely no proof, and this is not something I will stand for. I will keep everyone updated as this file moves forward.
4. A large pool of Academic Accommodations complaints.

Of course, at every step of the way, APSA knows that I and the SU will always have their back.

#### **COFA Updates**

##### **COFA Senior Board**

- Again related to my Platform Goal of “**Strengthening Faculty Associations**”, this Board has been working on updating the Terms of References for all 4 groups of COFA. These have not been looked at in years quite honestly, so there are a lot of changes. I will be bringing them items to Council for feedback, and approval as way to include Council with relationship building with FA's.

##### **COFA Advocacy Working Group**

- Another item I ran on was “**Improving Academic Advising**”. Over the summer, we worked to develop a short, simple, yet nuanced survey attempting to gauge the landscape of advising on our campus. I am looking forward to launching this project mid-November.

##### **COFA Finance and Administration Working Group**

- This group will directly be consulted regarding the SU Capital Plan fee (as was the Senior Board as well), and has been part of a series of workshops. We are, however, unable to schedule another meeting because the Chair of the SU Audit Committee has been unreachable. We will be now be hosting a meeting without them, and I will provide an update on how Audits are run at the SU.

## **2. General Faculties Council Meetings / University Meetings**

Next week I will be attending the GFC Nominating Committee Meeting and the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment. Here are the committee's I've been to in the past few weeks:

### **GFC Executive Committee**

At GFC Exec, we approved the 2019/2020 Academic Calendar where Pharmacy students lost their Reading Week, and Augustana and Dental Hygiene added the reading week to their schedules.

### **GFC Academic Planning Committee**

I proxied for President Larsen at this Committee as he was busy representing UAlberta Students at University Canada Advocacy days. The most interesting item here was the approval of the creation of a **Digital Scholarship Centre** and the **Annual Report on Undergraduate Student Financial Support**.

### **GFC Academic Standards Committee**

For years, SU Executives run on the idea '**supporting Indigenous course content**' and I am so happy to say that the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry is the first Faculty on our Campus to respond in an extremely positive way to the Truth and Reconciliation, Calls to Action. Medicine and Dentistry is removing the barrier for Indigenous applicants to enter the program by removing quotas. I hope that other faculties will look at how students access their programs and how they can do better to support students.

### **GFC Student Caucus**

GFC SC met to discuss the agenda for GFC and formulate questions. Congrats to the newly elected GFC members who came out!

### **GFC**

I was the only Executive at GFC on Oct 22nd as both President Larsen and Vice-President Bourgeois were out of town. We discussed how Cannabis legalization has affected our campus, and it was noted that we will come back to the Cannabis policy in 6 months for a re-evaluation. During question period, Councillor Agarwal, Rizvi, and I pushed GFC to answer to why Pharmacy lost their reading week where we were quickly shut down, as no one from Pharmacy could answer our questions.

## **3. GovWeek Planning Committee**

Remember that GovWeek will be from **January 21st-25th 2019**. The GWPC had a great first meeting, where we discussed our highlight sessions. There will also be re-brand of the marketing - stay tuned!

## **4. Internal SU Meetings**

### **GovWeek/Stride**

I met with the L&R Team Lead and Stride Coordinator to discuss the new version of the #UASUGotThis Campaign which we will launch on January 25th! It will be targeted at the Identity Matters Report findings and will feature members of Stride. This event will also act as a launch into the election season at the UASU (best time of the year, am I right??)!

### **Cultural Group Council**

Because the International Students' Association does not exist, however, it is imperative that we still have those student voices represented in our advocacy. We have decided to use the CGC as a temporary fix, where members of CGC are working together alongside myself and VP Bourgeois on a longer-term model and vision for a future ISA.

## **5. Student Library Advisory Council (SLAC)**

I sit on yet another committee (yay!) - this one called SLAC. The students on this committee are fantastic and of note, we discussed the concept of library spaces and how we interact with them. We worked to help develop a survey that will be open to the public soon, so stay tuned for the link to that!

**6. Open Educational Resources Advocacy Group**

Another one of my goals was advocating for “Affordable Academic Materials”. I’ve been doing that as the Chair of the OER Advocacy Group, and through running the Be Book Smart Fair Campaign. With everything I learnt at the Open Education 18 Conference in Niagra, Buffalo, this group now has a strategic plan developed. Next immediate steps are creating an SU Website, where we will champion OER Advocates and Professors on our campus - they deserve congratulations for all their work. I will also be attending the OER Awards Committee, doing my first presentation from my “Lessons Learned at #OpenEd18”. We will be taking headshots of the 2018/19 OER Project Award Recipients at the OER Project Showcase next week as well, and these will find their way onto our new website. Lastly, I have also been invited by BC Campus to attend “Cascadia 2019” to represent students from PSI’s in Alberta. I am just trying to find funding to attend this conference - wish me luck!

**7. Platform Goal: Including Land Acknowledgement on Syllabus**

Ken Cor from the Faculty of Pharmacy has developed an eClass Syllabus tool - it is actually amazing. Professors can create syllabi on eClass, with many auto-populate sections. I am excited to say that the Faculty of Pharmacy will be piloting allowing Professors to include Land Acknowledgement on Syllabi, one of the platform goals for VPA. Going forward, I want to have a more fulsome discussion about this win at GFC to see if we can update the UAPPOL Policy regarding Course Syllabus.

**8. Executive Shadow Days**

Exec Shadow Days have launched! For anyone wanting to run for SU Executive, I would strongly recommend you shadow a variety of Executives to get a comprehensive understanding of the demands of the job. If you’re just curious or want to spend a few hours with your friendly VPA - also sign up! This is open undergraduate students on campus. Here is the link: <https://goo.gl/forms/rkzSLwlt8lUS9TxB2>.

**9. OpenCon 2018**

I’ve been accepted to attend Open Con 2018 at York University! OpenCon is a platform for advocates to take what we know about Open Access, Open Education, and Open Data to develop critical skills and catalyze action toward a more open system for sharing the world’s information—from scholarly and scientific research to educational materials, to digital research data I cannot wait for everything at this conference. I will also be giving a presentation as the Chair of our Open Educational Resource Advocacy Group. In the name of being open - you can actually attend many of these sessions live! Check it out here: [www.opencon2018.org/opencon\\_2018\\_live](http://www.opencon2018.org/opencon_2018_live).

Apologies for this report being so long, and thanks for reading if you made it this far! As always, please feel free to ask questions! My office hours for the Fall semester are going to be Friday’s from 12PM-1PM (not on Nov 2nd). Let me know if you have any questions regarding my office hours. Thanks for reading my report!

Kind regards,



UASU VP (Academic)

**Akanksha Bhatnagar**