



October 13th, 2015

To: Council

Re: VPA Report 11

Dear Council,

With the end of September and us being nearly halfway through October, we're closing in on the mid-point of the semester. I'm grateful for September's end, since it was jam-packed with events and meetings, and am finding more time to focus on my goals for the year.

Here is a report on my duties to date:

1. Academic Plan

I will share a draft of this document with any members of Councilors that would like to give feedback on the document before our next Council meeting. I'll give everyone at least seven days to review the document as well. So far I have Councilors J. Wang and Patrick on the list of people interested in going over a section, if not the entire document.

2. Quality Instruction

It was an eventful past two weeks on quality instruction! I attended a meeting of the chairs of the Festival of Teaching, and pitched my idea of having mini-festivals within Departments in addition to the current campus-wide one, so that more unsung instructive heroes on campus would have a venue to share their best practices with colleagues.

Most of the chairs were in support of the idea, though we didn't have complete consensus on how to implement this, which was a little frustrating. I'll have a second meeting with the chairs to come up with a clear plan for it, and I suspect the SU can help market and promote the event this year as well.

The Committee on the Learning Environment also met, where we continued to refine our focuses for this year. The emerging themes now are around copyright and access codes for academic material, classroom equipment for instructors, and potentially grading and assessment or a vision for teaching and learning.

I wanted to have a teaching tenure stream be one of the focuses, though I was told this is more of a labor issue than a CLE issue. I disagreed but understood the concern, so I'll be putting together a clearer scope of what CLE can discuss for a teaching tenure stream next meeting.

Lastly, I had a phone call with an educational leadership track instructor from UBC who let me know how the new stream has benefitted UBC and what concerns were ongoing since implementation. It was a really helpful conversation for me to consider the long-term consequences of a teaching stream here.

3. University Standing Committees



In addition to the meeting of the Festival of Teaching Steering Committee Chairs, the Registrar's Office had an open house-like meeting to demo the new online Calendar with undergraduate students. A fair number of students came out, including our own Education Councilor Cheng.

The online Calendar project has been going pretty well and the interface is definitely improving, though we don't have a solution for how to replace Section Numbers that are easily identifiable when students receive a notice about their academic standing.

Finally, I attended the first Students' Library Advisory Committee of the year last week, and the meeting was very productive and enjoyable. I'll be following up with some of our libraries to talk about what can be done for student Access Codes (where a student has to pay a 3rd-party to complete their assignments), as well as integrating Unwind Your Mind beyond finals.

4. General Faculties Council: Exec, CLE

There isn't too much going on from the governance side of the University it seems, as ASC SOS's most recently scheduled meeting was cancelled. GFC Exec and CLE met recently, and I've commented on the latter's work already.

For GFC Exec, there were a few routine parts on the agenda outside of the update from the RO on the online Calendar. The other neat part was seeing President Khinda give a presentation on the SU's goals for the year and getting feedback from some staff about them. The GSA also outlined their goals presentation to be given at GFC next meeting as well.

5. COFA: AUFSJ, LSA, FAUNA, BSA, Senior Board

There were quite a few events and activities with FAs over the past two weeks! Some good, some bad.

AUFSJ hosted a lovely event in collaboration with the SU centered around the Federal Leaders Debate en français. There was a great discussion around the debate and each parties' policies afterwards too.

We recently realized that students enrolled in the Law NCA program pay their SU and other undergraduate fees, but no Law Faculty or LSA specific fees, meaning they are missing access to some services of Law students. I've gotten in touch with the LSA President and I believe we simply need to bring this to the attention of the RO and pass it through governance to be ready for the coming year.

The SU Exec had two FA dinners with FAUnA (ALES' FA) and the BSA. They were really enjoyable, and it was neat to learn about how FAUnA was focusing on issues in year two of their operations. For the BSA, they have great ideas around building a sense of community in their Faculty of ~2000 students.

COFA Senior Board also met, where we checked in to see how September went, discussed big goals for the Academic Plan from their end and finally looked at big events coming up. I'm really glad with the work our FAs have done this year, and that their exec teams seem fully committed to their roles this year!

6. Governance Review Task Force



The Governance Review Task Force also met, and made a lot of headway on topics around how we pass motions, and consult with students on major issues. We're also looking at transition for committee Chairs and how they report to Council. Next up, we'll be looking guidelines for consultation from councilors and on major issues we discuss as a group.

7. Miscellany

I gave a presentation to a group of Chinese instructors on our vision for an ideal classroom with the GSA VP Academic, attended PERCS' FUGG Night and the Turkey Trot run by Rec Services. I also voted in our advance polls, and I hope you considered using them too!

Thanks so much for your time, and looking forward to the next report.

All the best,
Fahim Rahman

(Electronically submitted)