



March 23rd, 2016

To: Council

Re: VPA Report 20

Dear Council,

Best of luck to everyone running in a Faculty Association or Students' Council election at the time the order papers go out. As well, thank you to everyone who helped shape our policies, bylaws and other business this year. This is our second last Council meeting for the year!

Here is a report on my duties to date:

1. University Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP)

The Provost will be at our Council meeting to introduce the first draft of the University's Institutional Strategic Plan, for the public good, available here: <https://uofa.ualberta.ca/strategic-plan/-/media/isp/institutional-strategic-plan-first-draft-march-11-2016.pdf>.

The ISP Advisory committee also met, and the committee was quite content with the first draft. There were some minor edits we suggested, but in particular I wanted to see an evaluative method that included campus stakeholders, which hadn't been included in past strategic plans. The focus for the committee now will be to continue refining the first draft, but afterwards we will look into how we evaluate progress on the document from year to year.

Lastly, I had an interview with the Gateway and Metro about our thoughts on the first draft of the ISP.

2. Teaching Tenure Stream, Open Educational Resources, PLLC

Open Education Week went really well, and I enjoyed being a panelist on the topic of "Opening up Course Textbooks". We had a good turnout of faculty members here, and many of them were familiar with the concept of an OER but not necessarily on their introduction into classes.

Committee composition for the Teaching Tenure Stream has been confirmed, and I'll be scheduling our first meeting soon. I'll be continuing to serve on this committee next year for the SU, though the incoming VPA will hold a rest on CLE and all other committees the VPA regularly sits on.

Lastly, I met with the Associate Dean in Business regarding the proposed courses hosted by the School of Business for students in PLLC. The course content looks fine, though I'm hoping there will be an evaluative process from year to year to sort out any kinks in content delivery.

3. Council Standing Committees/Governance Review Task Force

I'll be introducing one amendment to Bylaw 100 over this and the next Council meeting, which was a direct recommendation from the Governance Review Task Force. The majority of the other changes GRTF suggested were operational in nature, so I will do a presentation to both this Council and next



year's Council before proposing them during the regular summer review of all committee standing orders.

In particular, I'm looking at adding SU Staff like the Director of Research and Political Affairs or the GM onto our committees as resource members. The one major item that GRTF suggested that I wasn't able to get to was a councilor removal policy.

CAC has also done a great job on initiating some tools for transitioning the incoming Councilors, which I'll let the CAC Chair report on during our meeting.

4. General Faculties Council: Exec, Student Caucus, ASC

GFC Exec had a very lengthy discussion on reviewing academic governance at the U of A. Exec has already done a preliminary review of GFC delegations, access to old meeting materials and meeting frequency, but still has some content to review. Exec does not want to do all of the review though, as there are important voices outside our table needed to complete a review.

I know this is technical and bureaucratic, but the biggest change I see is getting GFC to a point where anyone, including GFC Councilors, can do research on past issues and figure out how to push GFC to get interdisciplinary options opened up for undergraduates or decrease UAPS response times at CSJ.

Right now GFC is set up like Students' Council with any member bringing forward presentations and questions, but only the SU Exec can move motions like new policies or bylaw changes. That's what I'm working on with the review of academic governance.

Student Caucus was mainly spent going over the content at our upcoming GFC meeting: the ISP, the Peter Lougheed Leadership College and reforms to academic governance.

Lastly, ASC was a short meeting focused on seeing if students were eligible for Dean's Honor rolls under a mandated reduced course load by our provincial Duty to Accommodate legislation. Augustana's proposed change to a 3/11 course schedule was well-received by members of ASC, and lastly there was some commentary on the first draft of the ISP.

5. COFA: FAWG

There hasn't been much activity with FAs over the past few weeks, but Finance and Administration Working Group had a meeting. There we discussed how to best transition incoming FA executives to take office on May 1st, as well as how to improve the relationship between Faculty Associations and Students' Council.

COFA Advocacy Working Group and Senior Board will be meeting over the next two weeks.

6. Transition



VPA-Elect Banister attended a few more meetings with me. In particular, we meet with the two Vice-Provosts the VPA has worked closely over the past few years. Both Vice-Provosts were interested in her goals, and I'm sure they'll be able to make a lot of progress on important issues next year.

7. Miscellany

The incoming exec slept outside Business for a night to participate in 5 Days for the Homeless. VPOF-elect Paches coordinated everything, which went really smoothly and was quite a first bonding experience! We also all attended The Landing's Ambassador's breakfast.

I also gave a keynote address at the Jack.org Mental Health summit, and spoke briefly on the importance of undergraduate research at the Festival of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities, both of which were excellent events.

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

Fahim Rahman
(Electronically submitted)