

August 25th, 2015

To: Council

Re: VPA Report 8

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Dear Council,

If you listen closely enough, you can hear it on the horizon. The students returning to campus to get re-oriented with their classes and buildings, the student groups hustling to get things in order for Week of Welcome and Clubs Fair, the line-ups for our UPasses growing every day, the piggy banks being broken to pay for residence, food, and tuition fees. It's all there, Google Calendar tells me.

September is nearly upon us.

Here is a report on my duties to date:

1. Students' Union Development Summit (SUDS) 2015

I arrived at SUDS a bit tardy, as I had a final I was unable to defer the first morning of the conference. The sessions were enjoyable, and it was super interesting to see the differences between exec teams at different SUs. In particular, I learned a lot about open educational resources and social media usage, and really enjoyed participating in the conference with the other UASU Execs. If you'd like any notes from the sessions I attended, let me know!

2. Teaching Tenure Stream

I met with Dr. Roger Epp, who was the previous Deputy Provost and was involved in discussions around a teaching tenure stream at our campus. There were two major points of contention for developing this: the stream can not implicitly state that, as these instructors focus less on research, other instructors are off the hook and able to neglect their teaching duties for more focus on research, or if it would disrupt the link between the production and distribution of knowledge. The other point was if professors should be allowed to float from one stream to another during their careers, or if they were locked in long-term one way or another.

I'm really glad to understand some of the concerns from administration and academic staff around this issue, and it will help me shape how I present this to others in the future.

3. University Standing Committees

No University standing committees met over the past two weeks, though I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to speak to incoming instructors at New Professor Orientation earlier this month. I covered aspects like student engagement and fostering student attributes, and found the rest of the day to be very enjoyable as well. I'll be debriefing the day with the Centre for Teaching and Learning tomorrow at our Advisory Committee meeting as well.



#### 4. General Faculties Council

No GFC meetings took place recently, though I'm coordinating a session between the University's Governance office and GFC Student Caucus for members to learn more about how governance works at the U of A and how to be an effective student representative.

#### 5. Council of Faculty Associations (Member Services and Advocacy Working Groups, AFSA)

COFA Member Services Working Group met last week, where we discussed our goals for the upcoming year alongside what's in the works around mental health programming this year. We also had a presentation from Jason Murray, a clinical psychologist with Counselling and Clinical Services, around a Positive U campaign to promote student resiliency and wellness, which I believe FAs can play a role in.

Advocacy Working Group also met shortly prior to our Council meeting today, so I'll provide an oral update on how it went.

Finally, AFSA restructure has been going very well. We're issuing the second survey to Arts students around specific changes to AFSA Bylaws later this week. The more major changes include adding a President, Council and judicial body; abolishing consensus as a requirement for decision making; and clarifying the role of the FADRO alongside elections timelines.

#### 6. Governance Review Task Force

We had the first meeting of the Governance Review Task Force last week, where we discussed what our rough timeline was going to be for the year and where we may need research support in terms of what other University SUs do.

The rough timeline will be reviewing previous reports such as the 2005 review of Students' Council and the 2014 Students' Council Engagement Task Force report, and examining academic literature around student governance. Following that, we'll need to identify both the unique qualities of governance at the U of A, alongside the challenges faced by students at our campuses. Finally, we'll propose recommendations to Council when all is said and done.

#### 7. Discover Governance Surveys

Discover Governance conducted surveys with members new to a Faculty Association and General Faculties Council, and they produced a few recommendations that I agreed with. They're definitely going to help shape how we use GFC Student Caucus and COFA moving forward, and engage with student representatives across campus. The major concerns for GFC representatives were understanding how to be an effective student advocate and understanding University governance. On the FA side, there were concerns about member engagement, though those balanced by how FAs appreciated the ability to make a meaningful impact in their Faculties and for their members.

I am really excited to have some concrete data around how student representatives operate across campus, to see how the SU can best support students in their diverse efforts.



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

All the best,  
Fahim Rahman

(Electronically submitted)