

Date: 09/08/2020

To: Students' Union Council

Re: Vice President Operations & Finance 2020/21 Report #10

Dear Council,

Hello again! I hope the Fall semester has been starting well for you all. I can't believe that September is already here, and that classes have started. I am very excited to be taking Native Studies 201: Aboriginal Canada: Looking Forward/Looking Back. It is a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) that is online and asynchronous. Hopefully I can share some particularly interesting pieces of information from that course in these reports now that my garden is gone for the summer (imagine a single tear in my eye).

Fall Transit Update

Updates to Ride Transit

You may recall from my last report that there were three concerns we had with the outcome from City Council: International student qualification, students under 18 qualification, and the nature of the application itself. We have three corresponding updates that are all at least a little bit positive.

First, we met with ETS to ensure that International students are now able to qualify for the Ride Transit Program, if they live in Edmonton and are able to present one of CERB or EI documents. We are continuing to look into the possibility of other documentation for means testing (such as qualifying for certain needs-based University bursaries that would prove that the student earns less than \$33,033/year).

Second, we were concerned that students under 18 years of age would not qualify for the program because of their status as dependents. Now, there is a form that these students can fill out to demonstrate financial independence, to be submitted with their Leisure Access Program application (which, you will recall, then allows someone to purchase a Ride Transit Pass).

The third problem is that the program is cumbersome. The applications do still take several weeks to be processed by ETS, and do need to be mailed in because their service desks are closed due to COVID. It's a very frustrating process. The glimmer of good news is that we are in the process of setting up a service at through Infolink to take students' applications (in an envelope, along with all necessary forms) where we courier the Leisure Access Program applications directly to ETS. This will take an estimated one week off of the time it takes for the applications to be processed because of Canada Post delays (which are greater now than ever due to COVID).

Progress with Other Municipalities

As mentioned, we have been in touch with the transit authorities of Leduc, Strathcona County, Spruce Grove, Fort Saskatchewan, and Saint Albert, to see what students living in these municipalities can access for transit fares. We will keep you (and all students) updated in our guide on how to apply, which we are currently making. We want to help students navigate the transit authorities' systems and websites (which, frankly, are mostly very annoying), so that they purchase the correct and most affordable passes.

I am happy to announce that Leduc has already agreed to give students who live there *free* access to transit passes for travel into Edmonton for the Fall semester!

Noteworthy Happenings**RATT On the Patio!**

Cold drinks, hot food, and sunshine; COVID tracing, health protocols, and sanitization. What more could you ask for to kick off this very strange Fall semester? If you're on campus, I highly encourage you to come to the South side of the Students' Union Building for a nice place to relax with friends. Remember to bring your OneCard and Government-issued photo I.D.!

Dewey's is Open

I promise that bar venues opening up are not the only great things happening these days - but in lieu of the WOW Beer Gardens, I do believe this is worthy of your attention. Dewey's, the Students' Union-owned bar in the power plant building, is a nice place to both study and relax. I highly recommend the guac toast.

GovCamp Module 3

Last (only in this list) but not least, GovCamp Module 3 has spanned the course of the last month, between opening circles, book clubs, closing circles, and lots of learning in between. I am very appreciative of Kelsi and the whole LEAD Centre team for putting together such an informative module. I learned a lot, and have been inspired to continue learning about my place in the Indigenous/settler relationship in this place we call Canada, and about how to be an active participant in decolonization.

As always, if you have any questions about the contents of this report, or simply want to talk, please feel free to reach out! Stay safe and healthy.

All the best,

Alana Krahn

University of Alberta Students' Union Vice President (Operations & Finance)