



February 2, 2016

To: Students' Council

Re: Report to Students' Council

Hello Council!

GENDER OPTIONS ON APPLICATIONS

As I reported on in Question Period at the last meeting of Council, the Office of the Registrar will be using a third gender option on application forms for students planning on attending the University of Alberta in the new academic year. While this is only the first step in an expected series of changes to the way the Registrar tracks gender and gender identity with students through applications and BearTracks, it is important nonetheless. Media coverage is below:

The Gateway: <https://goo.gl/sdRo9E>

Metro News: <http://goo.gl/fLZ40h>

CBC News: <http://goo.gl/JFfKEZ>

GENDERED LANGUAGE MEETING

This week also happened to be my meeting with a group of University staff from across the institution around gendered language. Representatives from the Faculty of Arts, Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights, Student Conduct and Accountability, Office of the Provost, and Office of the Registrar were in attendance, and we discussed language in the Code of Student Behaviour, the University Calendar, and a style guide for the University with formal rules around inclusive language. Once the applicable committees decide if these language changes to the Code and Calendar are editorial or substantive, we will be well on the way to getting them approved for use.

HEALTH AND DENTAL PLAN CHANGE-OF-COVERAGE PERIOD

This week, the Health and Dental Plan Committee voted to extend the change-of-coverage period (frequently called the "opt out deadline") for our student health and dental plan. Previously, the deadline lined up with the add/drop deadline for classes (September 15 this year), but we have extended it to be the last Wednesday of September each year, to allow students more time in choosing how to use the plan or opt-out if they have alternative coverage, and make the date closer to when fees are due. Students who begin their studies in January will have until the last Wednesday in January to change their coverage.

**DFU PLEBISCITES IN ELECTIONS**

This year we will have the first Dedicated Fee Unit up for a plebiscite in the General Election, and by random assignment, it is The Gateway. Every five years, all DFUs must go through a renewal process by way of a non-binding plebiscite, to show Council that the service still has the confidence of the students to assess a fee on their behalf. As DFUs can only be amended or abolished by referendum or joint consent of Council and whichever Board oversees a particular DFU, after elections are over a motion will be brought to the floor with the recommendation of Finance Committee (the committee taking into account the results of the plebiscite). Either a motion will be made to continue assessing the fee, or a motion will be made to compel the service to a binding referendum in the next General Election.

VPOF RETREAT

I went down to Calgary last week for a two-day retreat with my fellow Vice Presidents Operations and Finance from MacEwan University and the University of Calgary. We spent time catching up, and also talking about different issues facing our unions this year. I learned some awesome things from touring Calgary's conference centre, and also got some valuable information about staff structures across the organizations.

In solidarity,

Cody Bondarchuk