

February 4th, 2014

To: University of Alberta Students' Council 2013/2014

Re: Council Report of the Student Life Portfolio

Dear Council,

Council Engagement

I'm sure some of you would agree that this is something that is kind of outside my sphere of influence. That being said, I haven't actively encouraged your engagement outside of the standard council meetings and committee meetings since Week of Welcome. Apologies.

Here's a friendly reminder for a few opportunities that are at your will:

- Council Mentorship Program (actively offer your constituents the opportunity to learn from you)
- Funding from CAC (let CAC help you reach out to your constituents)
- Support from Executives (feel free to reach out to us)
- Class talks (templates from Councilor Binczyk)

Campus-Wide Year End Party

An opportunity has been granted to the Students' Union to work in collaboration with the Alumni Association to throw a year-end party, something that is seen at peer institutions (i.e. University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge), but has been absent at the University of Alberta.

The main barrier to a campus-wide year-end party in the past has been the unpredictable weather. This year, we are exploring the potential to throw a year-end party in SUB, and a poll will be released with the upcoming February State of the (Students') Union to ask what activities students would like to see.

International Students' Association

The GSA is in favour of an ISA that advocates only on undergraduate issues. This is because the GSA has adequate international student representation on their council, and having a separate advocacy-related body in their case has more potential risks than benefits.

I am currently working with Discover Governance to follow-through with the creation process to allow myself to wrap up other projects as well.

Follow-up on International Student Tuition -> Services

By the March Board of Governors Meeting, the SU, GSA, and University will hopefully agree on the changes that will be made to increase service to the international student population. To ensure that our asks are data-driven, we are happy to stand side by side University of Alberta International to support their asks in addition to those outlined in our Internationalization Policy.

Health and Dental Plan Updates

From the statistics so far, it looks like the rate of claims is "right on par", meaning that the premiums are not likely to increase. Furthermore, an exciting addition that I am proud of is the inclusion of the University of Alberta Dental Clinic now as a preferred provider under our SU Health and Dental Plan.

U-Pass Replacement Costs

A proposal was submitted to ETS last week with the support of institutions and student associations across the city to minimize the cost of replacement stickers for the U-Pass. Currently, a replacement sticker is the full cost (\$122.92) no matter when you purchase the replacement.

The City will be reviewing the proposal, and it looks like the change will result in a low-cost first replacement, but a full-cost second replacement. I am pushing for the replacement costs to be changed as soon as possible, to maximize the benefit to students before the Smartfare program is implemented, which would remove the issue of replacement costs altogether.

Update on failure to provide proof of payment: a summary of options will be available at Infolink as well as on the UAlberta U-Pass website.

Health Centre Advisory Group

In response to a previous question about the state of the Mental Health Centre and it's staff shortage, they are still working to fill all three Psychiatric Nurse positions. Keep you updated.

I've heard students asking around for flu shots – unfortunately, there are no more in Alberta. Drink water, get enough sleep, and most importantly, *wash your hands* with soap and water.

I have been working with Councilor Lam to request an increased presence of hand sanitizer receptacles across campus, and have been tasked with contacting Buildings and Grounds to consult regarding installation, and Faculty offices to consult on maintenance and upkeep. If this goes through, University Wellness Services would be glad to provide signage to encourage handwashing, which has shown to be more effective than hand sanitizer.

For those of you working on mental health initiatives, applications from #BellLetsTalk are due March 31st through Bell Mobility. Also, don't forget about the monthly Wellness Grants on campus ;)

Residential Tenancies Act x Student Rights in Residence

President Kusmu and I attended an interesting presentation last week from the Centre of Public Legal Education Alberta (CPLA) that talked about tenant rights under the Residential Tenancies Act.

Although the presentation was primarily for students that had landlord-tenant agreements off campus, the presenter was open to having a follow-up conversation about student rights in a residence. I have asked for a presentation to the Residence Halls Association, and have also referred them to my counterparts at U of C and U of L, hopefully leading to a movement next year in collaboration with the External portfolio to review student rights in the environment of a University Residence.

Student Group Procedure Changes

The key point of contention over the student group procedure changes at February 3rd's GFC meeting was the institution's requirement that all student groups approve all events through the Dean of Students' Office. Although this sounds absolutely unnecessary, absurd, and unrealistic, I hope it puts your mind at ease to know that the Lana Cuthbertson as the Student Event Risk Management Coordinator fully agrees. I have full faith in her to ensure that the process is student friendly.

It is not intended to be a major barrier for student groups, and she has been willing to work with each student group to address their concerns and ensure a quick and simple process. I strongly encourage you to submit each and every event or activity that your group holds to test the system, and forward all feedback directly to Lana at lane.cuthbertson@ualberta.ca.

Athletics and Recreation Fee

So hey, you all know that we've approved the plebiscite question on February 3rd's Emergency Council Meeting, but there's one other quick update: the SU will be working alongside the Augustana Students' Association to ensure that the fee increase will result in an increase in service on their campus as well. It has been tough getting a hold of their Athletics Director, but Councilor Gruhlke can vouch that the SU is in a better spot to get his attention ;)

Students' Union Elections

A lot of my time over the past two weeks has been spent having one-on-one meetings with candidates for the upcoming elections. I highly value the time I spend with each candidate, hoping to share my vision and values to ensure that current efforts will be carried onto the next year's executives as well as the other student leaders that will influence the campus community.

Update on Public Musical Performances on Campus

Last semester, I had worked with Buildings and Grounds to create a booking system for student musicians to use that would allow them to book time/space around campus to share their musical talents openly. Unfortunately, this has not gained much traction. After collecting feedback from students, it was found that the prohibition of collecting donations meant that there was no real incentive for students to move outside of their usual practice space. I have asked again for permission to allow performers to collect donations, and have reached out to peer institutions that allow the same. Awaiting a reply from Buildings and Grounds, but looking hopeful!

East Campus Dodgeball League

Congratulations to the launch of the ECDL, with 105 participants and enthusiasm >9000! This excitement has poured a foundation for future advocacy and fundraising for 1) a gymnasium in East Campus, and 2) a second gymnasium in the Lister community). The relationship between Lister Hall and the other residences will be growing as Lister becomes the primary first year college, fostering student leaders that will spread and share the Lister culture across the community in their senior years.

Campus Musical

Still struggling to find a venue and pick performance dates. The team is strong and pushing hard to motivate each other. The bridge that is currently being built for a successful 2014-15 is the collaboration between the Lister Hall Dinner Theatre, who has the resources and is looking to push their event campus-wide in the future.

Update on Operation Quad Forts

Yes, it's snowing! We need more snow to build better forts :/

On the bright side, still glad to see conversations trickling in on the Facebook page, and students "signing up for shifts" on the google doc.

HUB Megamall Party

The collaboration between myself, Residence Services, RHA and HCA resulted in seven noise complaints that all partners accepted and addressed. More importantly, it resulted in a more ambitious vision for programming in East Campus, and built a solid foundation for upcoming events.

Comedy night with Sterling Scott

The Comedy night last week was a huge success, and shows success in our programming when efforts are put into marketing and communications. Student feedback was highly positive and several students requested invites for future comedy nights!

International Week

It was a great success, with increased student participation through I-House as well as student performances on SUBstage. A student-run event was hosted by the Indian Students' Association on Saturday February 1st, attracting talents from across the world and bringing them together in our Myer Horowitz Theatre. Huge shoutout to our Health and Dental Plan service provider (Studentcare) for providing strong support for the student performers!

K-Pop Thursdays

January 30th marked the launch of K-Pop Thursdays at RATT. This event showcases modern-day Korean pop culture, and also builds an environment that is intercultural (see attached photo). Hope to see you there this Thursday!

*Healthwave*

Started off last year as an interdisciplinary waterpark party within the Health Sciences community. This year, the expansion to invite residences, faculty associations, as well as U of C & U of L will make this an exciting event! Hope to see all of you there!

Break the Record

...is coming...

All the best,

William Lau

[Electronically submitted]