

Report to Students' Council

May 11, 2011

Farid Iskandar, Vice-President (External)



Hello Council,

First off, I would like to apologize for not attending Students' Council last Thursday, however I had to go to Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS, provincial lobby group) retreat in Canmore from May 5-8.

Executive Retreat:

April 30th through May 5th was reserved for executive retreat this year. Most of the time was spent on learning about each executive portfolio, but we also spent sometime discussing our goals for the year.

Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) Transition:

As I mentioned in my introduction we had transition for our Provincial Lobby Group CAUS last week. The transition was structured in the form of a number of information sessions, each about an hour long, covering everything from how the provincial government works, to the intricate details of the ever-complicated Student Loans Program (SLP).

I had the pleasure to meet the Presidents and Vice President Externals from the University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge Students' Unions. We have a great team this year. We also held our elections for Chair and Vice-Chair of CAUS. Zack Moline the President of University of Lethbridge Students' Union has been elected Chair, and I had the honor to have been elected the Vice-Chair of CAUS for the 2011-2012 term.

On the last day of retreat, the incomings spent the day to focus on our priorities for the next year. We separated our priorities into two categories: One for civil servants, and the other for political leaders running for party leadership or the election:

Priorities for civil servants:

- Regulating Non-Instructional Fees
 - Increasing Non-Repayable grants
 - Improving the Elections Act
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Priorities for party leaders:

- Making Alberta post-secondary participation rate the highest in the country
 - Legislating the tuition cap
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More information about these priorities will be provided in the coming months. But as you can see two of my main platform point that I ran on have successfully made it to the list.

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Western Transition:

The CASA retreat starts Friday May 13, and it goes until Sunday May 15. This transition is

different from CAUS as there will be no goal setting. There are three CASA conferences in a year. The first one is Policy and Strategy, usually the last week of July, and this is where we set our priorities for the year. The next conference is a Lobby conference where we get to Lobby MPs on the priorities we set.

First three days of work:

For the last three days I have been working for the first time around the office of SUB 2-900. I'm still in the process of learning the portfolio. On Monday, we provided a press release about the 46% increase in borrowing of student loans since 2006/2007. You can see the article at: <http://www.metronews.ca/edmonton/local/article/855063> and here: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/story/2011/05/10/edmonton-univeristy-student-loans.html>. On Tuesday I spent some time organizing Senate interviews.

The Director of Research and Political Affairs (DRPA), Justin Williams, and myself started talking about introducing a program to Undergraduate students that would provide them with lobby training. The program would also try to set up meetings between students and their respective MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) to lobby on Post-Secondary issues. If implemented correctly, this would be a great way to outreach to students with political inclination. The program would hopefully ensure a contested race for the best position on the Students' Union Executive (a.k.a. Vice President (External)).

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Essay Competition:

Need Extra Cash? Here's a competition organized by CASA for all students:

Competition Details

1st Prize: \$1000

2nd Prize: \$500

The SUBMISSION DEADLINE is May 31, 2011

Is There A Higher Education Bubble?

Costs rising above inflation, enrolments rising above population growth, diminishing job prospects and intense nation-wide belief in higher education have led many politicians, activists and media to declare that there's a bubble in higher education.

The 2008 collapse has driven more and more Canadians to take out ever-growing loans to go back to school promised a better life through better access to the labour market. Many of these students are graduating without access to the jobs they trained for. Unemployment among young Canadians is at an all time high.

Is there a higher education bubble? What can be done by government, universities and citizens to address the issue, while maintaining accessibility? If no action is taken, what will happen? Is there a different model, old or new, which will allow our schools to keep their end of the higher education promise?

Your essay should use empirical evidence, historical reference and moral persuasion to analyze these questions, or other questions regarding the idea of a higher education bubble.

Please read the application competition rules before submitting your essay:

The contest is open to Canadian and international students. A student is defined as someone who attends school in the 2010/2011 school year or is enrolled to attend in 2011/2012.

Submissions will be considered from secondary and post-secondary (undergraduate and graduate) students in all disciplines.

Entry must include a typed essay of 1,000-1,500 words, and a cover sheet including the student's name, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address, school, major, and expected year of graduation.

Entries will be accepted in English and French.

Entries must include references cited from academic sources. Any academically acceptable referencing style may be used.

Please note that if you are planning to include a graph in your essay, you must send it to us in an Excel file with the underlying data in order that we can recreate it in house. If you want to include a previously published graph for which you do not have the underlying data, you must cite its source appropriately to prove that you have permission to reuse it.

Entries must be submitted online or by mail.

Entries may only be submitted once. Further submissions will not be accepted.

Failure to follow these rules may lead to disqualification from the contest.

Entries will be judged on originality, clear expression of ideas, and understanding.

All entries become of the property of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. In addition to receiving cash prizes, winners may have their essays published in Canadian Alliance of Student Associations periodicals.

The deadline is 5pm (Pacific) on May 31, 201

If you have any question about anything Council or Students' Union related, please feel welcome to come to 2-900 (on the second floor of SUB right by the top of the main stairs) and visit the executive. I may not always be in my office when you stop by, but I am more than happy to set up a meeting with you if you like. I can be reached at 780-492-4236 or vp.external@su.ualberta.ca.

Cheers!

Farid