

October 20, 2011

To: Students' Council

Re: VPX report to Council

Lobby Meeting Linda Duncan

On Tuesday October 11th we met with MP for Edmonton-Strathcona, Linda Duncan whose riding includes the U of A.

Linda agreed with all of our asks here, and referred us to MP Charlie Angus. She told us that Charlie is the NDP's official critic to Bill C-11 and would help us with the issue. She said that Charlie is currently trying to get Parliament to open consultation again for copyright. She also mentioned that if we wanted to affect any real change, we will need to get our constituents sending the Ministers in charge of C-11 letters regarding C-11. Linda was very receptive of allowing parallel importation. She wants us to help her write a private member's bill regarding this. I also gave her the New Zealand report that shows that Parallel importation does not affect domestic publishers. Her main concern regarding increasing Tri-Council funding for Undergraduate Research was that she does not like Government to interfere with what the Tri Agency. However, she strongly supported increasing funding for SSHRC CIHR undergrad research. She was also very receptive of our ask for the Canada Student Grant Program, especially for removing the cap from PSSSP (Post Secondary Student Support Program, a program that aims to increase participation rates among Aboriginal Students). Linda is the Aboriginal & Northern Development critic for the NDP. She was really interested in the numbers that are included regarding PSSSP in CASA pre-budget Submission. As for international students she agreed that the \$150 fee to work off campus is unreasonable.

Lobby Meeting Peter Goldring

On Friday October 14th we had a meeting with MP for Edmonton-East Peter Goldring. We discussed all of the asks mentioned above, and help Mr. Goldring become more aware regarding student issues on campus. He asked us to discuss our asks regarding copyright with the Ministers involved. He also agreed that the \$150 fee to work off-campus was unreasonable for international students, and suggested the \$50 would be a more reasonable thing for us to ask for.

NDP Federal Candidates for party Leadership

On Saturday October 15th I met with three of the Federal NDP candidates for party leadership: Brian Topp, Nathan Cullen, and Paul Dewar. They were all great meetings; I received great feedback on what the UASU and CASA are asking from the government. I also gave them all a copy of CASA's pre-budget submission. I hope that this will be an important step for UASU to establish strong relationships with the new Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees

The Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) has met again on Monday October 17th, to discuss tuition and Non-Instructional Fees. We are currently in the midst of discussing what an approval process for MNIFs could look like. I will keep council updated once an agreement can be reached. Our stance so far has been that a referendum of the student body is the best method to ensure that students are consulted regarding MNIF.

CAUS Pre-Budget Submission

Since the last Council meeting, the Council of Alberta University Students has published its Pre-Budget Submission. I encourage you all to look at it as it is a great read:

http://www.caus.net/docs/11-09_Budget.pdf

The summary of the report asks are:

- Set more ambitious targets and develop additional measures in the business plan.
- Establish an arms-length agency to develop research on our post-secondary system.
- Increase non-repayable student financial aid through upfront grants.
- Reduce the debt of successful graduates by 50% of the provincial portion of their loan.
- Increase operating funds to institutions over three years.

Canadian Council On Learning

On Wednesday October 19th I attended a great lecture by President and CEO of Canadian Council on Learning (CCL), Paul Cappon, regarding CCL's last report: "What is the Future of Learning in Canada". The report outlines positive developments in PSE: high expenditures; strong participation rates; quality educators; and an educated immigrant population. However, there are trends which CCL calls "troubling": losing ground in innovation and R&D; dilemma in male human capital; immigrant skills not meeting labour-market needs; no national quality-assurance system; fundamental data and information gaps on PSE; and no national PSE strategy. CCL notes Canada is unique among developed countries for not having a national strategy on PSE, one which the council recommends should possess the following elements: clearly stated objectives; measures to assess achievement of objectives; and a systematic goal of cohesion and coherence among all facets. If you are interested in the report, I encourage you all to read it at: <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/CEOCorner/2010-10-11WhatistheFutureofLearninginCanada.pdf>

Senate Chancellor Selection Committee

I attended two meetings for the Chancellor Selection Committee since the last council meeting. The wheels are in motion when it comes to committee progress. Unfortunately I cannot report to you much of what goes on in those meetings, as they are confidential. What I can talk about is the process of Chancellor Selection Committee:

- Developing the 2012 Chancellor Attributes (October->December)
- Advertisement (January->February)

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- Interviews (March)
 - Senate vote on Chancellor (April)

It is important for Council to know that I will be spending significant amounts of time to this committee during the next month (there are so far 4 meeting scheduled each 90 minutes). They also involve a great deal of preparation, however I believe it is time well spent since the new Chancellor will take a major role in deciding the University's next President once President Indira finishes her term.

Augustana Campus Visit

Rory, Andy and I visited the Augustana campus on Thursday October 13th. The visit was very productive. We talked about implementing GOTV on Augustana Campus, as well as the possibility of getting buses to drive Augustana students to main campus during the break the record dodgeball campaign.

"We learn something every day, and lots of times it's that what we learned the day before was wrong" Bill Vaughan