

November 7th, 2011

To: Students' Council

Re: VPX Report to Council

Meeting with Hon. Greg Weadick, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology

On Thursday November 3rd CAUS (Council of Alberta University Students), ASEC (Alberta Students Executive Council, Lobby Group), and AGC (Alberta Graduate Council, Lobby Group) met with the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology, Greg Weadick. As members of CAUS Rory, and I attended along. We discussed:

- Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs) Regulation
- Increasing upfront non-repayable aid in Student Financial Assistance
- Creating an arms length body for data collection on PSE
- Modernization of the Elections Act
- Open process for Market Modifiers
- 50% debt relief off of Alberta Student Loans upon Graduation

Minister Weadick stated that Premier Redford is committed to finding a solution regarding Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees, and that the solution would occur before April. During the meeting, Minister Weadick stated that there are two types of MNIFs, one that provides services and the other is "tuition by another name".

Minister Weadick did not go into details on what the solution will be, or whether the solution will take the form of Provincial Regulation or not. While this is the third time we have heard that a solution was on its way in the last two years, I am hopeful that this time our voices will be heard.

Meeting with Opposition Parties

We met with the following opposition parties, and discussed the same topics as with the minister.

NDP

Met with Rachel Notley, the NDP PSE critic. Rachel agreed with all the asks we put forward, and was particularly excited about our GOTV campaign.

Wildrose

Met with Guy Boutilier, the Wildrose PSE critic. Guy was impressed with our budget submission, and agreed to ask a question regarding PSE at some point during the Fall Session in Question Period.

Liberal

Met with Kevin Taft, the Liberal PSE critic. Kevin again commended us on our lobby document, and agreed with all the asks. He was wondering why we are not asking for lower tuition and our main response was that until MNIFs are regulated, we cannot start having a conversation regarding tuition

as MNIFs are tuition by another name.

GOTV

CAUS met with the UASU marketing department later on Thursday to discuss the direction of GOTV. Marketing suggested the following plan. In the time left leading up to Christmas Break, we do a teaser campaign. Meaning we poster campus with GOTV logos, and just leave a url on the poster. Some students will check out the url, and pledge to vote, and most won't. In January phase two kicks in. We start to collect signatures. And when the writ is dropped, we have a full-blown campaign where events are happening everyday of the week. We think having a 3 phase campaign with escalating activities will grab us more attention. We will be presenting on our strategy at the next council meeting.

Budget Advisory Committee

Today we had a Budget Advisory Committee meeting regarding tuition and MNIFs. The institution seems to be persistent over the fact that an approval process handed to the students undermines the powers of the BoG.

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Lobby Conference

Next week the President and I will be in Ottawa lobbying Members of Parliament. I will try to submit my council report during CASA LobbyCon, but if not, it will be on the late additions. The following is what we will be lobbying on:

- Copyright/Book Importation Regulation
- Prioritizing Access (Car exemption at CSLP, reduce expected parental contribution by 25% over the next four fiscal years, and more grants for graduate students)
- Access to Aborigines (Removing 2% cap on Post Secondary Student Support Program)
- International Student Visas/Work Permit

Cheers,
Farid