

To: Students' Council

Re: Report to Students' Council (for July 10th, 2012 Meeting)

Introduction

Hey yo Students' Council! Since last the Council meeting, time has flew by (especially with the July long weekend and us executives having another executive retreat all Tuesday). Despite the limited time to work on things, I've made some serious plays. In addition to playmaking, I've been (and will continue to) be focusing a lot of my efforts on preparing future plays (i.e. work on readings for CASA and my executive goals). Anyways, lets get straight to it – here's my report:

Executive Summary:

1. I've had a couple of excellent lobby meetings, have seen the results of one of my lobby meetings, and have one that is currently being set up.
 - a. Met with MLAs Steve Young (the U of A's MLA) and Matt Jeneroux. Not only did we brief them on CAUS' and the SU' lobby priorities, but, more importantly, we started making some progress in getting the student voice out to government. At both meetings, both the MLAs and ourselves raised the idea of presenting to the various PC caucus meetings (Rural, Edmonton, and Calgary PC caucuses), meaning we will be able to familiarize 61 MLAs with the issues that students are currently facing. If this works out, this will be an amazing and unprecedented play by the UASU and CAUS. Big things!
 - b. Taking the Minister of Justice's advice to heart, CAUS finally met with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO). We had a two hour long meeting with him and his team (Elections Alberta) in regards to the section of the Elections Act that makes it more difficult for students who don't live at home to vote. Conclusion? We truly believe that the CEO will recommend to the Legislator (in October) to amend the section that talks about students, but the question is how much will he change it and how much better will it actually be. Nevertheless, we're extremely happy with how the meeting went despite the pushback we got from the CEO and his staff.
 - c. After our meeting with the federal Liberal Senators from Alberta, Senator Claudette Tardiff made numerous references to her meeting with Colten and I in her speech to the Senate. In her speech, she raises her concern with digital locks in Bill C-11 (Copyright Act) and how the Bill doesn't include the elimination of the book import regulation.
 - d. Colten and I will be arranging a meeting soon with the University's Facilities and Operations to discuss about the elimination of dormitory property taxes. By the end of the summer, my goal is to make sure that the SU and the University are on the same page in regards to the elimination of these dormitory property taxes so that we can start lobbying to city councilors right away.
2. Still working on CAUS' submission to the Albertan government's Social Policy Framework development. Currently we'll be focusing on the following areas: Opportunities to Attend – Access, Opportunities to Succeed – Student poverty and supports, and Opportunities to Contribute – Graduates and their work.

1. Lobby Meetings/Networking

Provincial MLAs

On Wednesday (July 4th), I had excellent lobby meetings with MLA Steve Young (Edmonton-Riverview) and MLA Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton-Southwest). The meeting with Mr. Young was extremely casual (we had burgers in RATT – #7 burger #ftw), but we made a ton of progress. We introduced Mr. Young to a couple of CAUS' lobby priorities (i.e. MNIFs and the CoSSS fee, eliminating dormitory property taxes, and Elections Act) and he was quite receptive to them, especially in regards to proper consultation and the CoSSS fee. However, the highlight of the meeting was when I followed-up with Mr. Young in regards to our previous conversation (at my convocation ceremony) about getting the opportunity to present in front of PC caucus members. We brainstormed about which caucus meetings we could present at (Rural, Edmonton, and Calgary) and how we could go about this. He explained that in his role as Government Whip, he could really pull some strings together so that we can make 61 PC MLAs really aware as to what are the pressing student issues of the day. This is extremely important and is quite the unprecedented play by the UASU and CAUS.

In the afternoon, we had a meeting with the Legislator's youngest MLA, Mr. Jeneroux. We briefed him on CAUS priorities and then followed-suite by raising the idea of presenting at caucus meetings. He really liked the idea and we brainstormed about having a caucus meeting on campus and coinciding it with a "Bring a Politician to School" type of day during Clubs Fair Week. (This idea is still in the works and somewhat under wraps as a result). Furthermore, we ended off the meeting by pointing out to Mr. Jeneroux that by him being the most recent university graduate (U of A, BA Political Science '04) and having a campaign team that was really youth-orientated we are hoping that he will really raise student issues consistently within caucus meetings and the Legislator.

Chief Electoral Officer, and Elections Act

In our last meeting with the Minister of Justice, Jonathan Denis, he essentially said that the changes he'd make to the Elections Act would really be dependent on what the Chief Electoral Officer's (CEO) recommendations in his report that he'd submit to the legislator. After trying to get a meeting with Alberta's CEO, Olaf Brian Fjeldheim, we (CAUS' Executive Director, Chair, and Vice-Chair – Duncan, Raphael, and myself) finally got a returned call and arranged a meeting with him. At the end of our two hour long meeting with Brian, we walked out feeling very confident that the CEO will recommend to change the wording of Section 27.1 of the Elections Act that makes it difficult for students to vote. However, the question is to the degree the CEO and his team (Elections Alberta) will change this. After the CEO gives his report to the Legislator in October, we will continue to lobby the Minister of Justice and the rest of the Legislator to better the Elections Act by reflecting our asks if we find the CEO's recommendations weak. But nevertheless, a serious play has been made here and we should all be proud of it. Many thanks have to go to the past VPXs, DRPAs, and CAUS members.

Federal Senators, Copyright Act, and Book Importation Regulation

Alberta Liberal Senator Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) not only referenced her meeting with Colten and I in the Senate repeatedly, but she also raised the concerns we had in regards to the digital locks section in Bill C-11 (Copyright Act) and eliminating the book importation regulations in her speech to the Senate. Here is an excerpt from her speech:

A number of stakeholders from the education world, for example, the Canadian Association of

*University Teachers, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, are in favour of the new changes regarding teaching, and I agree. However, these groups are concerned about the provisions regarding **digital locks**, as am I.*

*Less than a week ago, I met with the **president and vice-president of the University of Alberta Students' Union**. They shared with me some very serious concerns they had with some aspects of this bill.*

*To begin with, they expressed concern over **book importation regulations**, which raise costs for students without providing any corresponding benefit to the actual holders of the copyright for these works. In fact, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations has recommended that Bill C-11 be amended to remove the exclusive distribution provisions outlined in section 27.1 of Canada's Copyright Act. This particular bill does not address the relevant section, namely, section 27 of the Copyright Act, but I nonetheless took great interest in the case that they made for this issue.*

The students also commented on the aggressive new digital locks about which I and others have already spoken today. They pose a real challenge for academic research.

The students at the University of Alberta are not alone in their concern. No less than the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada are reported to have said, like other education groups, that the digital lock provisions are too restrictive.

University, Eliminating Dormitory Property Taxes

Colten will be discussing the elimination of dormitory property taxes at the upcoming Residence Budget Advisory Committee. He and I will arrange a meeting soon with the University's Facilities and Operations (Don Hickey) so that we can explore areas of collaboration with the University and CAUS prior to us making our case to City Councillors.

2. Social Policy Framework

The Albertan Government and its Ministry of Human Services (Dave Hancock; I'll be meeting with him in July) are in the process of creating a Social Policy Framework (SPF) and they want the input of Albertans via an online. (Here's a link to their survey: <http://socialpolicy.alberta.ca/Survey>) The SPF is going to be the Albertan government's new social policy framework that will "guide the future of Alberta's social policies and programs – things like childcare, employment, housing, and poverty; issues that affect all Albertans." (<http://socialpolicy.alberta.ca/>) Duncan and I spent sometime working on the document that CAUS will submit to this survey and to Minister Hancock when we meet with him in July. So far we're highlighting the difficulties students have in the following areas: Opportunities to Attend – Access, Opportunities to Succeed – Student poverty and supports, and Opportunities to Contribute – Graduates and their work. We're still cracking away at the document though and won't be done until mid-July probably.

Anyways, we **need Councillors to fill out this survey raise student issues!** Expect to hear more about this in the upcoming weeks from me.

3. Outings

Here's a list of some of my past and upcoming outings.

1. CAUS – Member Schools Executive Meet-up and Meet Politicians at Stampede Events – July 7th-9th (Fri-Mon)
2. CASA – Policy and Strategy Conference – July 17th-21st (Tue-Sat) @ Mount Allison University, New Brunswick.

4. Media Interviews

Here's a list of the most recent news pieces that I was featured in:

1. July 5th (Thur) – The Wanderer – Topic: My personal experience and the VPX role
 - a. <http://www.thewandereronline.com/2012/06/27/kusmu-bringing-substance-and-style-to-the-su/>

Signing off,



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