

Date: 2022-12-13

To: Students' Union Council

Re: Vice President External 2022/23 Report #14

Dear Council,

Apologies for the backlog of reports, it has been an extremely busy November and there is a lot to be updated and caught up on.

Canadian Alliance of Student Association

ADVOCACY WEEK

After over two years of not being on the hill, Abner and I traveled to Ottawa three weeks ago to join over 90 student delegates from across the country to share CASA's advocacy priorities with MPs, Ministers, and Senators. The goal was to lobby decision-makers to support measures and make investments identified by students that will support students. These measures include: Eliminating interest on the federal portion of student loans, permanently maintaining the maximum amount of \$6000 that a student can receive under the CSFA program, investing in the PSSSP for Indigenous learners, eliminating the need for international students to apply for a separate work permit on top of a study permit for Co-ops, investing in Mental Health and more.



The week began with an opening plenary to discuss and approve certain items, lobby training, and other expectations for the week. Plenary much like our council meetings simply means a special meeting of members. During the opening plenary, we approved new observers and the joining of Centennial College Students Association Inc (CCSAI) as CASA's new member. After opening the plenary, members were also able to fine-tune or build on their lobbying skills, learning skills such as how to quarterback an advocacy meeting, frame an issue, and make key asks of stakeholders depending on if they are an MP, Minister, or Senator.

The following four days were meetings, meeting, meetings. In total, CASA held over 120+ combined meetings with stakeholders. I was able to meet with MP Kirsty Duncan, Chair of the Science and Research Committee; MP Fonseca, Chair of the Finance Committee; MP Yasir Naqvi former Minister of Justice for Ontario and Parliamentary Secretary to Minister Emergency Preparedness; Minister Marc Miller, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and the Executive Director of U15, Dylan Hanley.

I also had the privilege of meeting the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau. In our meeting with the PM, we stressed the importance of investment in grants, mental health, and support for international students. I shared some of the stories shared with us by UofA students and emphasized the importance and need for

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these supports. We also had the privilege of being hosted by MP Janica Atwin for a parliamentary reception on the hill. This event was a recognition of the hard work and results in student advocates have made and will continue to make in securing investments for students.

The week closed off with our Closing Plenary, where we approved Policy and Operating Procedure updates. As Chair of the board, alongside other board members provided an update to members on the board action plan. The board action plan is a list of goals or objectives the board hopes to accomplish by the end of the term.

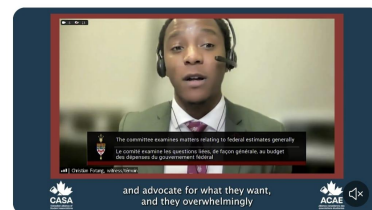
Overall, this was a successful week, with the reputation, strength, and resilience of the student movement once again going on strong.

Senate Hearing

Following our advocacy week, I was invited on behalf of CASA to be a witness on the Senate National Finance Committee reading of Bill C-32: An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 3. As Chair, I spoke on the provisions of the bill which would amend the Canada Student Loan Act to permanently eliminate interest on federal student loans starting April 1st, 2023. In my opening statement, I stressed the positive impact that this legislation would have for future, current, and past students, but still noted that other investments needed to be made to support current students.



This morning, CASA's chair @ChristianFotang and executive director @MackMetcalf appeared at the Senate National Finance Committee to discuss the subject matter of Bill C-32 and how it's going to benefit students across the country. #cdnpoli #nffn #c32



13 views

Edmonton City Council

Last week, I spoke before City Council during the non-statutory budget hearing, in my speech, I relayed the concerns that students have shared with us to the City and called on City Council to fund measures to improve transit safety in the budget. Such as

- Expand funding for the Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT) to improve support for poverty, addiction, mental health, and emergency housing.
- Improve lighting in dimly lit areas; fix/replace broken quarter dome/half dome safety mirrors that are often broken or obscured with graffiti;
- Increase transit service frequency and inter-regional transit options;
- Improve cell reception in the underground LRT stations so you have reception if needed.
- We also supported building more affordable and emergency housing like the 209 new spaces proposed at the Jasper Place Wellness Centre.

Meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education / CAUS

Last week, Abner and I met Minister Nicolaides. During this meeting, we stressed a lot of our concerns regarding the tuition increases, and installment fees and pushed for increased student grants and operational grants for institutions like UofA. We also advocated for more mental health support and called for more support for Indigenous Centres such as First People's House.

Last CAUS meeting, we briefly discussed what the impacts of the sovereignty act would be for PSIs. We will be continuing the conversation next meeting.

Policy Committee

Policy Committee consultations have been going well and are almost wrapped up. Last week I met with ISA to discuss and consult on the Campus Safety and Security Policy. We so far have met with 4 expert witness groups and have one more.

Committee members have been wrapping up their consultation and are in the process of drafting 1st principles, which will be coming to Council next semester. I look forward to bringing those to you.

GOTV Hiring

Last week, Ari and I held interviews for the GOTV coordinator. There were many great candidates and it was a tough choice. Council will be informed of the successful candidate soon and hopefully, they will be able to come present to Council on their plan and goals for the campaign.

As always, thank you for taking the time to go through this report. I look forward to your questions and comments.

Cheers,



Christian Fotang

Vice President External

University of Alberta Students' Union