

**Date:** 2022-09-06

**To:** Students' Union Council

**Re:** Vice President External 2022/23 Report #8

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Dear Council,

Below is a summary of recent activities and duties undertaken this past two weeks.

### **Back to School/WoW**

It has been incredible to see campus once again buzzing with life. I have had an amazing time traversing campus during which I witnessed the numerous events and booths around the WoW village. The opportunity to connecting and re-connecting with hundreds of students has been immensely rewarding. I am sure my fellow executives would concur that its weeks like these that remind us for whom and for what we work so hard.

From serving pancakes to talking to students at clubs fair, emceeing Presidents' Address, attending TAWOW and watching the official launch of BTR; it filled my heart to see campus bountiful with so much excitement, high spirits, joy and all around fun.

Of course, none of this could be done without the dedication, organization, passion and hard work of our WoW team, volunteers, co-ordinators and managers. I join my fellow executives in thanking them all for a fantastic job. I also want to thank the Councillors who volunteered their time to encourage, educate and inform students about governance and the many opportunities for involvement within Students' Council.

This was an incredible week and there are still more events to come, so as the week winds down I hope that if you haven't already, please go out there, soak up the good weather and have tons of fun.



### **PSE in the News**

#### **Cost of Living and Recent Angus Reid Survey**

Just over two weeks ago, I was interviewed by CTV National News in regard to a recent survey conducted by Studiocity about students. Some of the interesting data to highlight from this survey include:

- 62% of students (aged 18-21) said they felt stressed from studying/doing daily schoolwork
- Only 48% of students (22 years old) said they felt stressed from academic activities
- 40% of students are seriously considering dropping out (up 5% from 2021)
- Most students likely to consider dropping out:
  - Ontario students

- Ontario students are most likely to consider dropping out (representing 41% of students), up 9% since 2021
- Young students
  - Nearly 1 in 2 students (aged 18-19) consider dropping out, up 29% from 2021
- Full-time students
  - 38% of students considering it, up 7% from 2021
- 64% of students are optimistic about employment prospects post-PSE
- Anticipating more Co-op and internships from their PSIs
- Employed Students More Likely to Feel Optimistic for Future Career Prospects
  - The distinct gap between students working full time/part time and those unemployed
  - 71% of FT students and 65% of PT students are optimistic
  - Unemployed students twice as likely to be pessimistic re: future jobs



In summary, a lot of these results point to the impact the rising cost of living is having on students, but it was interesting but not necessarily surprising to see the optimism that students have about their employment prospects.

For more information on the article and the survey click [HERE](#).

## Meetings

### [Blake Desjarlais, MP](#)

Last week Tuesday, the executive team met with Blake Desjarlais, MP for Edmonton Griesbach. Blake is the Critic for Post-Secondary Education, and Deputy Critic for Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).



The purpose of this meeting was to introduce Blake to the executives and for us to share with him our advocacy priorities for this term. Discussion surrounded topics on the cost of living crisis and its impact on students, the backlog of study permit processing issues as well as the barriers to work faced by International Students.

In regards to affordability, we asked MP Desjarlais to pressure the government to do more to support students as we face a rapid rise in cost of goods from groceries to textbooks and tuition. These supports could come in the shape of maintaining the temporarily doubled and soon expiring \$6000 Canada Student Grant (CSG) or the elimination of interest on federal student loans. In regards to delays

and backlogs of study permits, we raised the concerns and stories we have been hearing from Intl' Students.

Shannon Cornelsen, the VP Consultation and Engagement for the Indigenous Students' Union, led the discussion surrounding the importance of more funding for Indigenous Service Centres such as First People's House (FPH). Recognizing that the enrollment of FLE for Indigenous students will increase here at UAlberta (as laid out in the targetted enrollment plan) MP Desjarlais agreed with the need to bolster resources that could better support Indigenous students once they start their undergraduate studies, and supported our calls for more funding from both the Provincial and Federal governments.

During this meeting we also gave Blake a tour of SUB which was led by VP Viloso. We were excited to share the services and programs we offer.

### **CAUS: Lethbridge Counterparts**

Two weekends ago, the executive team attend CAUS Counterparts in Lethrbridge. This is our annual conference in Lethrbridge where all CAUS members bring along the rest of their executive teams in addition to the delegates (the President and VP External). It is also the 1st of 3 counterparts conferences that take place during the year.

The purpose of these meeting is for all counterparts to meet, connect and share similar advocacy goals, priorities and projects and through these conversations seek out opportunities for collaboration. In addition, these conferences provide focus time for CAUS to evaluate plans for the rest of the year, provide updates on current projects and provide more context for non-delegates on the work that CAUS does.

In this conference, we had presentation about the history of CAUS, updates on our advocacy priorities, early conversations about CAUS' GOTV plan and later a board meeting in which Minister Nicolaides virtually attended to answer questions about from board members.

*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