

**Date:** 01/12/21

**To:** Students' Union Council

**Re:** Vice President External 2020/21 Report 01/12/21

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Hello Council!

I hope you are all doing well and enjoying your new classes. I am taking the History of China-Western Relations, which so far is a pretty fascinating course and I am looking forward to the rest of the semester. Of course, online delivery does suck-- I hope you are holding up well and suffering from less zoom fatigue than me.

### **Superboards? Megaboards?**

Part of the Alberta 2030 review is looking at how governance works in universities. Right now, we have three governing bodies-- GFC (for academic decisions), the Senate (for community relations), and the Board of Governors (for business decisions). The 2030 review is considering making changes to that model and creating Alberta-wide "superboards". These boards could take a few forms. One is a pretty basic coordinating function where they help work out transfers across institutions and organize back-end services like IT and finance so that universities can share them, saving money. This already exists in a lot of US states and would be no problem.

If they go for a more dramatic change where a lot of power gets taken away from our Boards and put in a superboard, U of A could lose control of decisions around tuition, buildings, program offerings, that kind of thing. I call this option a "megaboard". I know we don't always get along with our Board, but there's no situation so bad you can't make it worse. I have trouble seeing how student feedback would be meaningfully included on a board that had to represent 140,000 students across 4-6 institutions. It could also give the government a much more direct line to impose their vision on universities-- sometimes that might be a good thing, but often it would not be. CBC ran an article about this recently and I had some quotes. [Check it out here!](#)

### **Modest Progress on Campus Sexual Violence**

Government can be incredibly slow at the best of times, and this is not the best of times. Still, things are grinding along slowly-- I have been badgering them and the department has promised us an update in early February. Stay tuned.

### **Alberta Budget**

We are pretty sure the Alberta budget is going to drop on February 25th. This could really be a disaster for U of A-- we expect a cut, but this year is obviously not going as planned for the government. That could either mean they choose to give supports to

universities to help them get through COVID, like most other provinces have, or they could make a huge cut because of the larger deficit. I would like to see the first option and I think it would be the economically wiser option as well as just being good for students, but unfortunately there is a good chance we get option 2. So brace yourselves, things could be about to get crazy (as if they weren't already).

### **Penguins and Protests**

I always try to solve problems in a collaborative and friendly way, and I have really tried to use that philosophy working with government. Unfortunately, we just have not been getting the results we need. Our traditional lobbying methods have been getting limited results, and we can't run normal protests, so we need to think outside the box to fulfil our mandate. Me and the CAUS team, along with UASU marketing, are working on a series of ideas which I hope to be able to announce pretty soon-- I just want to make sure we get them planned properly first. However, we are starting small and doing one "protest" this week, a snowman protest Thursday at the Legislature!



This was VP Draper's idea and frankly is pretty cool. We can get a bunch of snow penguin molds for about 3 dollars each at Dollarama, and we are going to be using teams to make a giant snowman protest at the Legislature. There are going to be tiny protest signs for the snowmen to hold. They are biodegradable, but we will come clean them up after a couple days just to be safe. Let me know if you want any more details. VP Draper made some sample snow penguins-- imagine this but with little protest signs! As always feel free to message me anytime,



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**Rowan Ley**