

Date: 2021/06/29**To:** Students' Union Council**Re:** Vice President External 2021/22 Report #5

Hiya Council!

I would first like to begin with a personal announcement. I am pleased to announce that I have returned back to Edmonton!!! (Woot! Woot!) While the process was long, tough and at times tiring, I am over the moon to be finally united with the rest of the Exec team, staff and the campus I so love and missed dearly. As for professional announcements, I had a couple important advocacy meetings which I shall summarize below; I did planning for the Get-Out-The-Vote Campaign for this fall municipal election; And I attended the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations board retreat.

Advocacy Updates

Municipal Advocacy

Last Thursday, mayoral candidate Cheryll Watson and I had a fulsome discussion about our perspective on the issues that matter most to UAlberta students and what a path forward looks like. I informed candidate Watson of the rising threat of brain drain and food insecurity amongst students, especially amongst low-income, gender minority and international students. I stressed that if the City of Edmonton is to retain recent graduates, city hall must be a leader in providing students with the opportunity and incentives to remain in Edmonton via more employment opportunities, relevant work integrated learning opportunities such as internships and tackle food insecurity in our city at large. Watson shared similar concerns and cited her experience and time as the founder of Innovate Edmonton as a history of her commitment to improving Edmonton's economic outlook for all. She also highlighted her "Basic Needs" platform point which aims to also tackle issues of food insecurity, housing and access to water. In our conversations surrounding transit, Watson recognized and supported the development of an intermunicipal transit network. When it came to transit safety, she also shared concerns over the lack of cell reception in some transit stations and was receptive to other solutions such as increasing transit safety through environmental design.

Federal Advocacy

This past monday, I met with Member of Parliament Heather McPherson, MP for Edmonton-Strathcona (the constituency on which the University is situated). In this meeting, I had the chance to ask MP McPherson questions surrounding her recently tabled Private Members' Bill C-312, the Canada Post-Secondary Education Act. This Bill would seek to:

- Separate funding for post secondary education to provinces from other social transfer payments and
- Create a framework for how the federal government funds post secondary education

The criteria that provinces will have to meet to receive funds include:

- Public Administration
- Academic Independence
- Limiting short-term, casual, and contract academic labour; and
- Ensuring reasonable access to academically capable applicants regardless of ability to pay;

We also discussed childcare and the government's universal child care plan announced in the recent budget. I urged MP McPherson to be vocal to her colleagues in parliament and in government about the importance of keeping such a program universal to post-secondary education students who parent, not just the 9-5 working parent. MP McPherson and I concluded our discussion with an update on the work she has currently done on the Campus Saint-Jean file. She mentioned that she has continued to bring up the issue in QP and has reached out to Minister Joly several times to ask about the progress of the \$121.3M funding. MP McPherson expressed that she had low faith in our current provincial government to match any funds and believed that continued pressure on the Federal government to provide these funds without matching is what is necessary at this moment in time for CSJ students to complete their programs in French. She told me to be on the lookout for an announcement from Minister Joly in the coming months.

Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) Planning updates

Planning for the municipal election Get-Out-The-Vote campaign has been going well! I have touched base with multiple core managers to get perspective on the feasibility of possible GOTV events. Currently we are planning on hosting a Ward Papastew candidates forum as well as a watch party. We are also contacting Edmonton Elections to get more details on requirements needed to set up voting booths in SUB. If you have any suggestions or creative ideas on how to engage students in this upcoming fall election, please do not hesitate to reach out to me!

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)

Last Friday and this past Tuesday, I attended the CASA Board of Directors retreat. I was able to bond with board members and get an in-depth presentation on everyone's role. During this retreat, we covered topics such as the history of CASA, how to improve membership experience, and the importance of creating SMART goals. We also began the process of creating a board action plan and discussed our strategy for developing this year's themes and priorities. We will be meeting next Friday to continue and finalize some of these discussions. I look forward to consulting with Council on the possible CASA priorities and themes for this advocacy year.

Upcoming Meetings

This coming Tuesday July 29th, I will be meeting mayoral candidate Kim Krushell. Similar to my meetings with other mayoral candidates, I will continue to push for sound municipal policies that improve students' lives and University experience.

The Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA) will be having its change over meeting that same Tuesday. We will be electing a Chair and Vice-Chair and beginning preliminary discussion for priorities and goals for the year. I look forward to updating you on the outcomes of that meeting.

As always, thank you for taking the time to read through my report, I look forward to your questions and I am always virtually there to address any concerns you may have. Furthermore, the first five folks to email me with a picture of their favourite rock (e.g. Igneous, Metamorphic, Dwayne "the Rock" Johnson, Sedimentary Rock) shall receive a prize.

Have a Blessed day!

Yours Externally,



University of Alberta Students' Union Vice President External
Christian Fotang

