

**Date:** 24/07/20

**To:** Students' Union Council

**Re:** Vice President External 2020/21 Report 28/07/20

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Hello Council,

First of all, I apologize for my report being on the late additions-- I had a scary experience of nearly losing my laptop on Thursday night. I guess my brain is so full of student governance things and fun facts about planes it no longer has room to remember where I put things down. Fortunately, it was still a productive and interesting last two weeks other than that one incident. I have worked on a number of other things that wouldn't fit in this report, so feel free to ask questions!

I must also regretfully report that my office ferns have died despite my best efforts to save them. To everyone who reached out to offer plant care advice, thank you.

### **Department of Advanced Education Student Leaders' Orientation**

President Agarwal and I participated in a Student Leaders' Orientation to Government hosted by the Department of Advanced Education. We were joined over Zoom by our colleagues from institutions across the province. Spending time discussing our work with our counterparts allows us all to find new best practices and fresh ideas that help us run our own organizations better-- and it is also nice to socialize with new people in the isolating world of COVID-19.

We discussed topics ranging from what student priorities for the coming year are, and what methods of consultation students support the most, compiling suggestions to pass on to facilitators from Alberta Advanced Education. Curtis Clarke, Deputy Minister of Advanced Education, spoke about his department's goals for the year and the role of student leaders in Alberta's PSE decision-making process. Deputy Minister Clarke also provided an update on the Alberta 2030 stakeholder engagement process.

### **UASU and CAUS Response to Alberta 2030**

The Alberta 2030 Post-Secondary System Review will be proceeding seemingly slightly behind schedule. We anticipate consultation will begin next month through a series of regional town hall meetings, individual sessions with representatives from student associations like UASU and umbrella groups like CAUS, and the formation of an expert advisory panel. We have considerable concerns about the adequacy of student input into the process, but we hope they will be addressed by the government soon.

UASU and CAUS are both responding to the 2030 review by creating detailed submissions that will be sent to McKinsey and released to the public. Possible priorities we have identified so far for inclusion in our review include:

- A budget model that rewards student demand rather than current labour market outcomes
- Improved and rationalized provincial coordination of sexual violence and mental health response
- A more efficient transfer system allowing students to take University courses in rural institutions
- Improved efficiency of the student financial aid system by a movement towards grants as a share of the student aid budget
- The importance of each institution's autonomy from the government and other institutions
- Student representation in governance, and the positive role and potential of student associations
- The importance of a detailed investment plan to show how savings from the review will be used
- The value of a differentiated sector model that distinguishes research/academic universities and undergraduate universities from other sectors and each other

At our next Council meeting, I will be giving a presentation on Alberta 2030. You will have an opportunity to ask questions, and we will have a discussion on what U of A students want to see from the review. I strongly encourage you to think about these questions before that meeting:

- What about the Alberta post-secondary system (not U of A specifically) fails students? How could it be fixed?
- What things about the Alberta PSE system are good and should be protected?
- What role is appropriate for students in the process and how should we respond if we are not adequately listened to?

Thanks for your engagement and I look forward to our conversation!



University of Alberta Students' Union Vice President External  
**Rowan Ley**