

Date: 06/11/20**To:** Students' Union Council**Re:** Vice President External 2020/21 Report 03/09/21

Dear Council,

First of all, I know most of you were expecting me to take a leave of absence, but the good (?) news is that bylaw does not require us to take a leave if we are running in an uncontested race. So I was still doing my job as VPX for the last two weeks and boy were they eventful ones.

Alberta Budget

The Alberta budget delivered almost the exact cuts to post-secondary and U of A that we had been anticipating, at about a 60 million reduction to U of A. That cut is better than the worst case scenarios we were worried about earlier this year, so I think our advocacy and that of many other groups at least softened the blow, but advanced education was still the hardest hit sector. This is extraordinarily damaging to the university and is a massively disproportionate cut-- U of A has been cut by 11%, compared to 6.5% at U of C, 5.8% at U of L, 0% at MacEwan, 1% at Athabasca, and a little over 6% at Lethbridge College. I responded to the budget on CBC, CTV, and 660 News, The Gateway, the Calgary Herald.

[My comments in the Herald](#)
[CBC](#)

How are we responding?

We and many of our CAUS partners are participating in a provincial advertising campaign to emphasize the negative impact of cuts to post-secondary and encourage people to write to the minister on our letter-writing tool at caus.net. We have had excellent uptake-- our ads targeted to students are currently averaging 30 cents per click, which is near the most efficient end of the range of Instagram and Facebook ad effectiveness. It's important that we make the backlash to this budget as strong as possible to make the government think twice about doing the same thing next year.

Additionally, we are working on organizing an event for student leaders across the province called the Alberta Student Congress. This will be a pilot project which we can scale up if it goes well, but it is meant to bring together student leaders from all levels of governance to talk about how the budget is impacting them and how we can work together to respond. More information will be coming shortly.

Medical student vaccine access

We are working with the MSA and University of Calgary's MSA to advocate for priority vaccination for medical students on rotation, who are often in high COVID-risk environments and are frequently the only member of their team not vaccinated. We are working with CAUS' government relations firm, Alberta Counsel, which has a strong track record on handling vaccine issues, as well as with other student groups from around the province.

Enjoy the spring!



University of Alberta Students' Union Vice President External
Rowan Ley