

**Date:** 06/11/20**To:** Students' Union Council**Re:** Vice President External 2020/21 Report 06/16/20

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Dear Council,

It has been a challenging couple weeks at work, but a beautiful two weeks outside. I have been staying sane by going out cycling, particularly exploring the north side and the Castle Downs area since I don't visit that part of the city much. I also decided to spread the joy by buying Flex, the SU fish, a larger and nicer tank for his swimming pleasure (he seems to be enjoying it). I also love model planes, and was able to add a new and exciting aircraft to my collection-- a 1:200 scale Icelandair 757-300 in the special Vatnajökull livery. On the professional side of things, it was a productive two weeks, but it did not go as expected.

**Delay of Investment Management Agreements**

This week, after months of advocacy by CAUS and others, the government announced that the planned Investment Management Agreements (IMAs) for each Alberta post-secondary institution will be delayed until 2021-22. This is great news for our institutions for numerous reasons. The IMAs were meant to contain performance-based funding (PBF) targets that were impossible to meet in the COVID environment, including a possible target for international enrolment. Had these targets been enforced this year universities would have been punished significantly for factors beyond their control. Next, a few days later, the government announced that they were also cancelling the expenditure caps (another aspect of the IMAs). The expenditure caps forced universities to spend less than a specific amount of money, even if they had more revenue. This would force unnecessary cuts to healthy and efficient parts of institutions. Lastly, the IMA process was a huge distraction for university leadership and a massive burden on administration. We want our institutions to be able to fully focus on the crisis at hand, the pandemic. I do believe that even if COVID had never happened, the IMA process was rushed and more time will help make the outcome better. However, the PBF issue is not over, as all the same problems will be coming back next year. This week's announcement is a win for us, but a temporary one.

**University Government Relations Coordination**

The executive had a meeting with Catherine Swindlehurst, the VP University Relations of the University. We discussed the upcoming academic restructuring project, how the University can communicate the changes with students, and external advocacy. While we do not always agree with the University, there are a number of areas where our

interests overlap, particularly around institutional funding. In order to make sure that we are not undermining each other unnecessarily, I am going to be meeting with Alexis Ksiazkiewicz, the University's Associate Vice-President Community and Government Relations, to discuss our advocacy plans for the year, in two weeks.

### **CAUS Priorities and Internal Management**

Every year the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) produces a priorities document. We have been working with other members to produce a good copy of the document which everybody is comfortable working from, and are keeping the four main points you will remember from my last report. We should be approving it at the next meeting, and will then work to create variations on the document for different audiences.

We have also started rough drafting work for the Board Action Plan, which we hope to finish and approve by the end of June. I am also working on an evaluation plan for the Executive Director in order to ensure compliance with our internal bylaws, and a job description for a summer research assistant to create a report on how the provincial government can better serve Indigenous students.

Myself and the other CAUS executives also joined the Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC), which represents college and polytechnic students, at their annual summit for a panel on Alberta student issues. We discussed the ways our institutions are handling budget cuts, how we want to approach the student-chosen PBF metric, and ways CAUS and ASEC can collaborate.

As always, let me know if you have any questions about our government relations and public advocacy. In the next two weeks I will be doing some planning for some very exciting upcoming campaigns, working on fundraising infrastructure and involvement opportunities, and working on some new opportunities we have identified in our advocacy for Campus Saint-Jean. I have also finally booked an appointment for a haircut-- please forgive me if I look a little scruffy until then.

Cheers,



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