Date: 2021/11/02
To: Students' Union Council
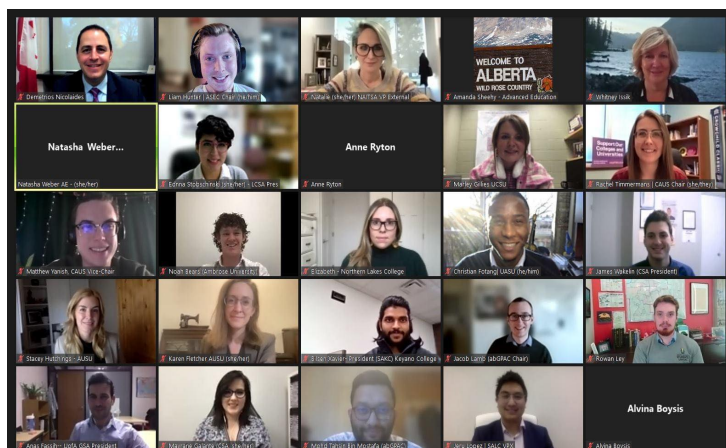**Re**: Vice President External 2021/22 Report #14

Dear Council,

Like President Ley, VP Monteiro, VP Dixon, and VP Kimanu, I was away on vacation alongside the rest of the exec team. From sightseeing to sushi eating, museum bouncing to sea wall walking, I had a lovely and relaxing time in hopefully what is my first of many more trips to Vancouver.

Have you been to Vancouver ? If so, what is your favourite spot in the city? If you are yet to visit, is there anywhere in particular you have always wanted to go?

Government of Alberta Student Leader's Orientation

Last monday, President Ley and I attended the Government of Alberta's Student leaders's

Orientation (GoA SLO). This event is a 4hr and 30 minute long meeting between the Ministry of Advanced Education and student leaders from all of Alberta's 26 Post Secondary Institutions Student Unions/Associations. The purpose of these meetings is for the Ministry to check in with elected student leaders and provide us with the resources to navigate the system, especially in regards to advocacy. This is also a chance for the minister to provide updates on matters arising or any upcoming government action on post-secondary education. GoA SLO meetings usually take place in person at Government House and occur thrice a year: Once in summer, another in fall and last meeting in the winter.

The meeting began with a discussion on COVID health measures on campus. Student leaders shared how their respective institutions have been addressing safety on campus, what the student experience has been like and what are more needed supports or services. There was a general agreement amongst my counterparts that while we credit our respective institutions for implementing necessary measures, more funding was needed to undertake the testing, and implementation of these safety measures. Data collection of the status of covid cases on campus was an effective means of showing students that campus was safe and student leaders asked for continuation of collection of said data. There was also consensus amongst student leaders that clarity was still needed in regards to events such as sports and graduation as well as spaces like cafeterias.

We were also provided with updates of other happenings in the system, this included: Apprenticeship/Skilled Trades and Education Act, Micro-credentials, Work Integrated Learning, International Education Strategy and the Alberta Student Grant. The Ministry said there would be coming out with more announcements on partnership with industry for more WIl opportunities. My colleagues and I continued to stress the importance of promoting diverse opportunities that are accessible not only for STEM programs for other programs.

Lastly, we were joined by Minister Nicolaides as well as the Associate Minister of Status of Women, Whitney Issik. In addition to discussions pn the progress of addressing campus sexual violence, Minister Nicolaides discussed the upcoming amendments to the PSLA (Bill 74) which President Ley has discussed in his report.

GoA SLO was a productive event with plentiful insights into the current activity of the ministry. There is certainly lots to unpack, so if you have any further questions do not hesitate to ask :)

MLA Meetings

A huge thank you to Councillors Taha, Aamer, Barazesh, Beasley and Korfeh for joining President Ley and I in our introductory meetings with Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (MLAs).

As President Ley has highlighted, these meetings are conventions that often occur prior to when the legislature is in session. They are an opportunity for us to voice student priorities here at the University of Alberta but also shared priorities from our provincial advocacy body- CAUS.

The last two weeks, we have been able to meet with- MLAs David Shepherd (Edmonton-City Centre), Lori Sigurdsson (Edmonton-Riverview, the University ofAlberta's constituency), Janis Irwin (Edmonton-Highlands Norwood) and Thomas Dang (Edmonton-South) and MLA RakhiPancholi (Edmonton-Whitemud).

Mental health funding, addressing sexual violence on campus, the increasing inaccesibility and expensiveness of education and dearly needed funding for Campus Saint-Jean were among the topics discussed throughout these meetings. We hope to see the MLAsraise these topics in the chamber and work to implement the solutions that are needed to improve the lives of students on and off campus.

Edmonton Student Alliance

The Edmonton Student Alliance met this recent friday. During this meeting, we discussed how the Mayoral forum went and asked the board to provide feedback. I asked the board to provide feedback and vice-chair Jerilyn and I have committed to creating a document to be handed off that will provide the next team insights on things to do and things to avoid based on our experience planning this event.

The board also approved amendments to the charter. Among other things, the recent changes to our charter allow online institutions such as Athabasca University Students' Union to become members, it provides more clarity on the scope and roles of the Chair and Vice-Chair and lays out a smoother process for transitions and elections.

Lastly, the board also finalized its priority themes for the year, which will be the same as last year: Transportation, Student Employment and Housing. While the topics have remained, the board agreed or document could be updated to reflect the changing situation that students are facing in regards to this issue and also address these issues from the lens of student groups such as international students who have historically not been well represented on these topics at the municipal level.

THANK YOU ALL and my sincerest apologies for my report being on the late ads. Unfortunately, bad study habits and exam gambits thwarted my attempts to punctually submit my report like a hyped Lenny Kravitz.

Yours Externally,

University of Alberta Students' Union Vice President External
Christian Fotang