



June 23rd, 2016

To: Students' Council

Re: Report to Students' Council

**Council Report #4: Dare I say: Networking is love, networking is life**

Hello Council,

Welcome back to Office of the Vice-President (External) bi-weekly variety show, here with this year's host, Mike Sandare. This week's report has much to do with networks, and not the NBC, FOX or CBS kind, but relationship building and idea generation. Much of my last couple weeks has been focused on conferences, summits and events. Luckily there was much to be learned from these, so please stay tuned for the highlights to be shared!

**UASU****Health & Wellness Conference**

The Health & Wellness Conference (informally known as the day the VP X proved that Externals show up just in the nick of time) was a conference centered around alcoholism and substance abuse at the University of Calgary. Last Tuesday I had the chance to travel down with VP Al-Ghoessein as well as councillor Kwan to learn more on the subject. For the first part of the conference we found ourselves at a round table with representatives from various organizations, and had the chance to talk about the effects of substance abuse on our campuses. I found myself next to a counsellor from SAIT and was able to learn more about the effect alcohol abuse and binge drinking had on her campus. After the first session I was fortunate enough to find myself audience to a panel of students, each speaking about how alcoholism and drug abuse had affected the lives of their fellow students. This panel brought up the intersectional issues related to drug abuse, things such as gendered issues around preception/shaming of drinkers (everything from casual drinking to binge drinking), as well as target demographics. One of the most interesting takeaways I had from that session was on preventative strategies to substance abuse and mental health decline. An audience member brought up the point that preventative strategies should be tailored to include all members of the student population. The example that she brought forward was that puppy rooms and face painting can only go so far, when it comes to someone who is more interested in football and fishing, for that individual a better way to help prevent a decline in mental health would be to hold something they're interested in such as a small football game. The point being, that when considering preventative measures we must consider the target populations point of view. The best way to ensure our services are being accessed by those who need it is to make sure we are speaking the same language they do.

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### Chancellor Installation

A couple weeks ago we had the opportunity to sit in on two incredibly important events, the Arts Student Convocation (congrats y'all I wish you the best of luck post-bachelors!!) and the installation of the new Chancellor presiding over the U of A Senate. I am proud to announce that Chancellor Douglas Stollery will be at the helm of the Senate for the next four years. It was exciting listening to the new Chancellors inspiring words as he gave the address to the newly graduated class of 2016. I am excited to be working alongside him this year in Senate and am positive he will do great things for the students on our campus!

### CAUS

#### Orientation to Government

This past week I took part in an exciting summit held by the Ministry of Advanced Education. The summit, called Orientation to Government, was a two day long affair that brought together the Vice-President Externals and Presidents of every Students' Association in Alberta, as well as officials from the ministry and the Minister himself. The summit held a dual purpose, it allowed us the opportunity learn more indepth knowledge about the role and day to day activities of the Ministry, as well as to meet and share ideas with other student leaders from across the province. The summit covered a wide range of topics (note\*\* slides are available if you are interested) such as student demographics, financial aid and the six sector model, to name a few. In addition, there were a few optional breakout rooms that we could take part in. The two I chose were International Education and Global Mobility, as well as Entrepreneurship and Innovation. In each of them I was able to take part in meaningful discussions and gain perspective from other student leaders, as well as the bueraucrats at the table. One of the best sessions in the summit was the Student Financial Aid breakout session. During this session, we were broken into small groups of student leaders and placed in a room to discuss ideal changes that could be made to our SFA system. I found myself in the middle of a robust conversation and debate with the VP Externals from the UofC and Portage College, the Presidents of MRU and SAIT, as well as a few senior officials in the Ministry of Advanced Education. It was an incredible combination of people that led to amazing ideation.

However, the best part of the summit was an announcement made by Minister Schmidt. We were told that the Ministry is planning on moving forward with the Adult Learning Review in the next year. We have been told that the Ministry plans on doing robust stakeholder consultation centering around Student Financial Aid and Tuition, the PSLA, as well as Agencies, Boards and Commitees. I am looking forward to future developments form the Ministry as we continue to push them to make good on their commitments to change an aging system.

Welp! I hope you had a good time during this weeks episode of "Council Report #4". If you've got any questions or concerns please feel free to let me know!



*OFFICE OF THE  
VICE PRESIDENT (EXTERNAL)*

See you on the flip-side,  
Mike Sandare