

**Tuesday October 9, 2001 – 6:00 p.m.
Alumni Room, Students' Union Building**

MINUTES (SC 2001-11)

NB: Because of the change of location, this meeting will not be recorded on audiotape.

Faculty/Position	Name	Present/absent	Proxy Name
President	Christopher Samuel	Present	
VP Academic	Amy Salyzyn	Present	
VP External	Kory Zwack	Present	
VP Finance	Jamie Speer	Present	
VP Student Life	Jennifer Wanke	Present	
BoG Undergrad Rep.	Chris Burrows	Present	
Agric/Forest/HomeEc	Shawn Harriman	Absent	
Agric/Forest/HomeEc	Brett McNally	Absent	
Arts	Anand Sharma	Present	
Arts	Brendan Darling	Present	
Arts	Colin Agur	Present	
Arts	Jill Tackaberry	Present	
Arts	Joshua Fraese	Proxy	Alex Fraese

Arts	Kara Deringer	Present	
Arts	Kyle Kawanami	Present	
Arts	Maureen Melnyk	Present	
Business	Erika Hoffman	Proxy	Meena Rajulu
Business	John Watkins	Present	
Business	Jon Sharun	Absent	
Education	Charlene Davidson	Proxy	Charlie Beamish
Education	Dan Coles	Present	
Education	Jason Baxter	Present	
Education	Krista Blankley	Present	
Education	Stephanie Mendoza	Present	
Engineering	Chris Jones	Present	
Engineering	Cole Nychka	Present	
Engineering	David Wepler	Present	
Engineering	Jason Tobias	Present	
Engineering	Mark Jess	Present	
Law	Brian Loewen	Present	
Residence Halls Association	Don Welsh	Present	
Medicine/Dentistry	Karen Cheng	Present	

Medicine/Dentistry	Reyhan Chaudhary	Present	
Native Studies (School of			
Nursing	Edmund Ledi	Present	
Pharmacy	Lanette Prediger	Present	
Rehabilitation Medicine	Carla Webb	Present	
Faculté Saint-Jean	Lisa Clyburn	Present	
Science	Chamila Adhihetty	Present	
Science	Chris Samuel	Absent	
Science	Constantina Renzi	Present	
Science	Helen McGraw	Absent	
Science	Mat Brechtel	Present	
Science	Roman Kotovych	Present	
Science	Rupesh Kumar	Present	
Science	Samuel Hillier	Present	
Science	Zaki Taher	Present	
President Athletics	Vacant		
<i>Gateway</i> / Editor in Chief	Dave Alexander	Absent	

Recreation Action Committee			
General Manager	Bill Smith	Absent	
Speaker	Gregory Harlow	Present	
Recording Secretary	Sarah Kelly	Present	

Observers

Dr. Doug Owram, University Vice-President Academic

Joe Brindle

Emily Bratt

Eddie Martinez

Kirsten McCrea

The Chicken

The Ape

2001-11/1

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

2001-11/2

NATIONAL ANTHEM "O Canada."

Samuel led Council in the singing of the national anthem.

2001-11/3

University of Alberta CHEER SONG "Ring Out a Cheer"

Jones led Council in the singing of the University of Alberta Cheer Song.

2001-11/4

ROLL CALL

A roll call was conducted by the Secretary.

2001-11/5

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Melnyk/Baxter moved that the agenda of the SC2001-11 meeting be approved.

Samuel requested that items SC2001-11/7 through SC2001-11/13 be struck from the agenda.

Consensus

Jess/Hillier moved to suspend Standing Order #1.

Carried

2001-11/6

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

2001-11/6a

Tuition Presentation

Samuel introduced Dr. Doug Owram, University Vice-President Academic, who gave a presentation on the University's tuition proposal for the 2002-2003 school year.

Owram began his presentation by explaining that the tuition proposal is the culmination of a long process, which included extensive consultation with the Budget Advisory Committee, the Students' Union, and the Graduate Students' Association. There will be an open forum coming up next week, and the decision will be made by the Board of Governors on November 2.

Tuition discussions, **Owram** explained, are difficult for all parties involved, because there is little popularity to be gained by asking for a tuition increase. There are no specific guidelines in Alberta politics about how the University should be approaching tuition: the European system generally dictates that tuition should be free, while the American system favors much higher user fees; Canada falls between these two guidelines. Legislation is in place prohibiting tuition fees from providing more than 30% of the University's operating revenue, but there is so much room for increase by that stipulation that the cap is meaningless, and student associations have begun lobbying against it.

The question becomes whether the funding for post-secondary education should come from higher-income taxpayers, or from students who have trouble affording it. Neither option is very palatable, and the choice raises the omnipresent conflict between accessibility for students and University debt. The consideration at the moment is maintaining and improving the quality of education, and there are many government concerns that do not involve education. As a result, the University is not optimistic about government funding for the coming year.

The University's proposal is for a 3.65% tuition increase for the 2002-2003 school year. This figure is lower than the maximum allowable increase, but higher than the current CPI. The increase will be principally funneled into some major initiatives in undergraduate learning, as well as graduate studies; the Graduate Students' Association has accepted an application fee beginning next year.

In the planning documents, the University originally wanted to request a 5% increase, because of the considerable budget deficit the University is facing (approximately \$8.5 million). The budget must be increased because over the course of the past five years, the student population has increased by approximately 3,000 students. The other concern is the indirect cost of research, which the federal government has stated it will not subsidize. The research budget has been raised, but with this comes a strain on the system. It is doubtful that the federal government will come through with cost relief this year.

The concern is not simply with the amount of money the University received, but where it is directed. Provincial grants have dropped from 38% to 30% in the past five years, and the biggest growth area is research. Research grants are excellent, but this funding is not flexible, and cannot be routed into the operating budget. Finally, although there have been significant tuition increases, the percentage of the operating budget funded by tuition has remained constant.

Tuition increases are becoming more palatable: the increases in the mid-1990s were far larger, when the University was in a state of crisis. After the provincial cuts came to an end, students began to strongly resist increases. As of three years ago, the University moved off the maximum allowable increase, and is trying to lower the increase figure incrementally each year.

Students are opposed to tuition increases, and the University does not enjoy requesting them. However, there are quality issues that need to be addressed. First-year students find it difficult to orient themselves to such a large campus, and through this and larger lectures, among other concerns, some students are inclined not to finish their degrees. The University must take responsibility for educating students properly at the undergraduate level. This requires more money.

While the University is requesting a tuition increase, it is, at the same time, looking to increase levels of support through scholarships, bursaries and grants. The University is trying to provide accessibility, and trying to give back to the students who need and deserve it most, at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

The University sincerely wishes that it could have met the Students' Union's and Graduate Students' Association's request of a 2% tuition increase. The increase will be given to undergraduate teaching improvement. The economic situation all over the world has deteriorated sharply over the course of the past few months. Compounding this difficulty is the University's current deficit, and not addressing this will result in the deterioration of the University, which will have far more negative long-term results.

At this point, the floor was opened to questions from Council.

Jess: Why could the University not freeze enrolment levels, thus removing the pressure of increasing student population?

Owram: The difficulty is pressure at the provincial level, because there are only four universities in Alberta, and there is a concern with decreasing accessibility. Freezing enrolment would also require increasing the minimum entry average.

Tobias: If there were only a 2% tuition increase, what would be the direct effect on students?

Owram: The reality is that the University is facing the possibility of external cuts, which brings a new series of problems. The result would likely be cutting nonessential programs. Currently, the University has convened a deficit elimination task force, which will examine these kinds of consequences.

At this time, there was a disturbance to Dr. Owram's presentation from a group outside of Council.

Harlow explained to this group that observers of Council must be sponsored to speak, and that they must identify themselves. He also explained that if a member of Council were willing, there could be a motion to include this group's presentation in the agenda.

Sharma/Jones moved to include the presentation of this group.
Carried

At this point, questions for Dr. Owram resumed.

Agur: If the PeopleSoft system had been carried out according to budget, how would this affect the increase?

Owram: This must be amortized because it was a one-time expenditure (approximately \$30 million). This is not to say that the University entirely defends what happened, because it was a singularly horrible experience.

Speer: How much money does the University have in unspecified reserve?

Owram: Approximately \$2.8 to \$3 million. However, this may yet be used to address the problem of the University's deficit.

Renzi: Is there a specific document that articulates the undergraduate learning initiative to which the increase would be put?

Owram: Administration is currently working with the deans of first-year faculties to assemble a proposal about the changes they wish to implement. Hopefully more information will be available in the next several weeks.

Renzi: Will these changes then be dictated by the deans?

Owram: Their input will be considered, but is subject to approval from Administration.

Clyburn: What criteria governs reserve funds?

Owram: The reserve funds have been shrinking over the course of the last several years, and the unspecified reserves are to cover unforeseen circumstances, in order to ensure a balance. The Universities Act does not allow schools to run a deficit.

Kotovych: What measures are being taken to re-establish declining funding levels for the University's operating budget?

Owram: There has been some progress in lobbying government over the past several years. This has been something of a joint effort with students, particularly on the issue of resources. The University is optimistic about funding in the long-term, though help is doubtful for this year. Lobbying is ongoing.

Sharma: What is being done to bring the government "to the table" on this issue?

Owram: The government does not respond well to protest or rally tactics, or other confrontational practices. President Horowitz led a protest on the High Level Bridge that the University had to atone for for ten years. Every message so far this year has told the University that there is no funding for this year, so it is trying to focus where gains can be made.

Baxter: Has the University considered lobbying government to rededicate some of its dedicated funding?

Owram: This is an excellent idea. It would be advantageous to move some funding to base operating costs, and the University is lobbying for that. The government has improved, in that they no longer insist on the level of micro-management that they used to. There is room for progress in this area.

Beamish: What impact has the hiring of two new Vice-Presidents had on central administration costs? How does this compare to other universities?

Owram: The University of Alberta's number of Vice-Presidents has been extremely low for the size of the university. Furthermore, there is construction ongoing on campus, and without someone able to dedicate full attention to monitoring that process, far more money would ultimately be wasted. The University of Alberta is consistently in the top category when administrative overhead evaluations take place.

Jones: What are the University's plans to increase non-specific operating funding?

Owram: The number-one source of these monies is government grants, and when the federal government has restabilized, matters will improve. The University's relationship with the government has improved; there was a time when this relationship was viscerally hostile, and there has been much progress since then. For the moment, the University must look at non-traditional sources of revenue.

Wanke: As students would be forced to make a considerable sacrifice if this increase proposal were approved, are similar sacrifices taking place in terms of administrative costs?

Owram: This is the purpose for which there is a task force looking at the University's budget and alternate sources of revenue. The University is looking to get a stranglehold on administrative costs, but for the most part, these costs are very necessary. With such a large institution, cost efficiency cannot be entirely guaranteed, but the University is trying to improve.

Brindle (sponsored): It is frustrating that these presentations always include a ten-year retrospective when proposing tuition increases. When can students expect to see a longer-term plan for tuition?

Owram: This is indeed a problem. The University is budgeted on a year-by-year basis, and government funding comes on the same schedule. It would be excellent for the SU, the GSA, and Administration to come together and assemble guidelines for these sorts of negotiations, but the problem remains that both of these organizations have a complete turnover every year. A mechanism must be put in place for longer-term plans, but thus far there has been no consensus.

Salyzyn: There is some concern over the future of this high-tuition/high-student support mechanism. The specter of differential tuition and a growing American outlook towards tuition are frightening. What is the University's response to this?

Owram: This is a discussion that needs to take place between the University and students. Administration itself has growing reservations about the advantages of differential tuition, as it could create an increasing "class" disparity from faculty to faculty. However, differentials on practical levels, according to the varying costs of faculty maintenance, could likely avoid this problem. The Budget Advisory Committee will not disappear after tuition negotiations have concluded, and discussions with student representatives on this matter will be ongoing.

At this point, the presentation was concluded, and Dr. Owram was sincerely thanked for taking the time to speak with Council.

**2001-11/6b
STUDENT WORKER
ACTION
ORGANIZATION
PRESENTATION**

At this point, a presentation on tuition was given by the Student Worker Action Organization.

The representatives of the Student Worker Action Organization introduced themselves, with some exceptions, and explained that their focus is to organize students as a working class, as it believes that students are exploited on campus, and that education is a right, rather than a privilege.

This organization is autonomous, and works alongside the general labor movement. Free tuition is their demand, beginning with a comprehensive tuition freeze. Students, they asserted, should not have to bear the cost of the University, which should be a complete democracy. Board and faculty positions, they believe, should be elected by the University population as a whole.

Tuition increases are becoming prohibitive, and student debt is becoming staggering. Other provinces have established tuition freezes and rollbacks at their universities, and there is no reason that Alberta should not do the same.

At this point, the floor was opened to questions from Council.

Jones: Is this organization aware that inflation is increasing?

Student Worker Action: Yes.

Jones: In this case, should taxpayers be entirely responsible for post-secondary education?

Student Worker Action: The private sector consistently benefits from post-secondary graduates, and there is no reason that they should not pay for this.

Beamish: What does this organization expect the Students' Union to contribute to this cause?

Student Worker Action: The Students' Union should advocate a tuition freeze to Administration and all levels of government.

Beamish: The duty of the SU is to work with the University and government to achieve the best possible solution for students, realistically. The stance of a tuition freeze or rollback is unrealistic and unattainable. The SU's efforts would be better spent on working towards attainable goals, rather than wasting its time with unreachable ends.

Kotovych: Does this organization believe that it is more effective for a multitude of voices to speak to government, or for a unified voice to espouse a unified cause?

Student Worker Action: This organization is looking to build relationships with other like-minded groups.

Sharma: A tuition freeze is not a radical proposal. It has already happened in other provinces, and the idea of it should not be surprising. This is a moderate stance.

Wanke: Other provinces and universities have suffered considerably from their decision to adopt tuition freezes, and it is the students who ultimately suffer the most. How does the Student Worker Action Organization justify wanting this in Alberta? Furthermore, why has this group not tried to work with the Students' Union, rather than against it?

Student Worker Action: The Student Worker Action Organization is willing to work with any student organization, but only along certain principles; it approached **Samuel** for support in its goals, and was denied on behalf of the Students' Union. The organization has not researched the statistics regarding the outcome of tuition freezes at other institutions.

Burrows: Have members of this organization spoken with their faculty representatives?

Student Worker Action: No.

Renzi: Alberta is the most conservative province in the country. Why would the government be motivated to cooperate with a stance such as this one?

Student Worker Action: Students should not assume the government's response before an attempt is made to convince them.

Renzi: This attempt has already been made.

Student Worker Action: Some positive results have been gleaned.

Samuel: Might this not be due to well-researched strategy on behalf of students, and negotiating with the government, rather than protesting?

At this point, **Samuel** apologized that his question was out of order, and requested that it not be answered.

Watkins: Why were faculty representatives not approached in this matter? **Sharma** would have been interested in cooperating.

Student Worker Action: What the organization has heard about Students' Council dictated that it would not be responsive.

Watkins: This information was ascertained of previous incarnations of Students' Council. This organization should not make assumptions about the current Council.

Brindle: Does this organization have research to strengthen its claims? This is not a new idea; why should it be more convincing now than it has been in previous years?

Student Worker Action: The research should not be the responsibility of concerned students. Evidence suggests that a tuition freeze is the wish of many students.

Agur: Are there specific examples of successful tuition freezes?

Student Worker Action: An example is the University of Toronto graduate students' agreement.

Point of Information: The agreement reached for University of Toronto graduate students was not a freeze or rollback, but a one-time bursary to students. This ensures that tuition will remain high.

Student Worker Action: Regardless, this is progress.

Weppler: Reasons for wanting a tuition rollback are valid, but this organization does not have the resources to effect change. Why did its members not join other like-minded groups? Why does it expect to make a difference, when other groups with superior resources have failed? Improvement is possible, but this stance is too militant to be effective.

Student Worker Action: The purpose of this organization is to organize all students against the forces behind tuition increases.

Jess/Nychka moved that debate be limited to no more than two more questions.

Carried

Kawanami: If the organization believes that the Students' Union is capable of making a difference, why did it not approach the SU initially?

Student Worker Action: Members of the organization believed that they would not be listened to by the SU.

Zwack: British Columbia schools established a tuition freeze, which will likely now result in deregulated tuition increases. Manitoba also had a tuition freeze, without reserves, which means that their university is now suffering a considerable deficit. The University of Saskatchewan recently underwent a 15% tuition increase due to previous freezes. How does this organization think that the SU can be effective in bringing about a tuition freeze when its demands for a 2% increase are not being heeded?

Student Worker Action: It is difficult to have a unified voice when the SU refuses to participate. If student representatives will not cooperate, results should not be expected.

Zwack: Is this group solely focused on tuition, or is it willing to acknowledge what SU work has done to relieve student debt?

Student Worker Action: Tuition is an important issue, but other areas do need to be explored. The group's purpose is to be a liaison between student advocates, and if the SU is not willing to rally on behalf of students, this group will.

At this point, **Samuel** requested Council's attention to make a brief statement.

Samuel thanked the SU marketing department for assembling the boards and banners with tuition information for Council – and particular thanks were offered to Juliana du Pree, who worked very hard.

The rationale behind the request for a 2% tuition increase was to reflect an honest understanding of the real cost of living, as the current CPI is approximately the same figure. The SU also has a responsibility to addressing the quality of education, and this increase is a sort of tuition freeze, in line with the current economy, and which would not cause the University to deteriorate, along with the education students receive, and the value of University of Alberta degrees. The University is undergoing genuine hardship at the moment.

As for other schools having adopted a tuition freeze policy, it is an ongoing problem not only for their administrations, but for student representatives as well, because there are no new funds coming in, and the quality of universities is declining. As a result, some schools have had to begin levying private fees for certain aspects of education. This is a situation that the University of Alberta is trying to avoid. Ultimately, the best results for students and the University will be achieved through moderation.

A militant stance demanding a tuition freeze will result in the SU losing its current invitation to University and government negotiating tables, and eventually, the student voice will be lost. A more moderate approach has yielded considerable success. Currently, the SU is the only external body on the Board of Governors allowed to present to the Board on issues.

The SU could take whatever stance is demanded of them, but the Executive Committee feels strongly that this is not the reason that they were elected. There are times when the right decision is not the popular one, and the Executive's role is to provide stewardship to students, leading them in their best interests.

At this point, the presentation was concluded, and the Student Worker Action Organization was thanked for its time.

2001-11/6b

Dedicated Referendum Fee Presentation

Jess/Nychka moved to postpone this presentation to the next Council meeting.

Carried

2001-11/14

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Zwack:** The forum for mayoral candidates will be held from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in the Myer Horowitz Theater.
- **Sharma:** The Student Worker Action Organization is willing to answer any other questions after the meeting.
- **Speer** asked Council members to take the Referendum Fees package in preparation for the upcoming presentation.
- **Clyburn:** There will be a French party this coming Friday at Bonnie Doon Hall. Tickets are \$5.00.
- **Salyzyn:** Volunteers are still needed for the SU Survey. **Salyzyn** asked interested Council members to contact Dan Costigan at 492-4236.

2001-11/15

ADJOURNMENT

Agur/Hillier moved that the meeting be adjourned at 8:03 p.m.