

Draft Strategic Plan

Prepared for Students' Council

Presented by President Larsen

Date: February 7th, 2019

Working Timeline:

February 12th - Present draft to Students' Council

February 12th to March 1st - Solicit internal & external feedback

March 1st to March 21st - Committee reviews feedback

March 26th - Motion at Students' Council

What We Do

Our mission is to serve, engage, and represent students.

Four pillars support our mission:

- We offer services and businesses that provide for the needs of students.
- We organize events and programs that build community on campus.
- We advocate for student interests to the University, government, and the greater community.
- We provide and create space for students to relax, study, and socialize.

Where We Are Going

We aspire for students to shape every aspect of the University experience.

Our vision of a successful future is one where students:

- Feel safe, accepted, and welcome on campus;
- Thrive in a diverse intellectual community;
- Are empowered and confident in their ability to succeed;
- Contribute to society as active citizens and effective leaders; and
- Know they have a voice and the power to effect change.

What Guides Us

Our values keep students at the core of what we do.

Do what's right, not what's easy.

Acting with integrity and respect is essential to an open, collaborative, and democratic organization.

Inspire change for the world.

Demonstrating students' power to effect change inspires the next generation of citizens and leaders.

Act with unbridled compassion

Providing an inclusive and caring environment empowers students to make the most of any challenges they face.

Always keep moving.

Adapting and innovating fulfills the expectations of our dynamic community.

Learn from the past to improve tomorrow.

Understanding our history is key to building an equitable and sustainable future.

Empowering Our Students

To achieve our vision, the Students' Union must empower students to effect change. This means that we must provide students with the tools they need to shape their University experience and ensure that all students are able to engage with the Students' Union and its services.

- **Reduce barriers towards representative student leadership.** Design a strategy that supports diversity and actively reduces barriers to leadership opportunities, including financial and systemic barriers.
- **Advocate for representative student leadership.** Use research and data to explore the feasibility of and need for expanding programs that help underrepresented demographics get involved in leadership roles within the UASU, particularly in political roles.
- **Invest in professional development opportunities for our student representatives, student groups, volunteers, and student staff.** The more coordinated, invested, and knowledgeable our student advocates are, the more impact they will have. Supporting our student leaders will lead to stronger governance and organizational structures.
- **Improve access to UASU spaces, resources, and expertise.** The Students' Union has a wealth of knowledge, experience, and materials for effective event execution. These assets should be accessible to student groups so that they can host memorable events, develop stronger programming, and create amazing content.
- **Support and advocate for the adoption of more versatile, effective, and fair discipline and dispute mechanisms.** Student concerns sometimes go unresolved due to limited options to pursue needs-based conduct and conflict resolution. The Students' Union will support multifaceted approaches to address situations in which our students are harmed or experience injustice.
- **Support and advocate for the creation of a charter of student rights.** A charter of student rights will ensure the just treatment of students and empower students to advocate for themselves. The fair treatment of students should not depend on the scope of documents that govern student conduct and behaviour.

Building Our Relationships

The strength of our relationships is a key part of what defines our capacity. We need to work with others - our members, alumni, and the University community as a whole - to achieve our mission and vision. Our reputation is a critical asset in developing productive relationships, underpinning our ability to forge the collaborations we need to succeed. Our credibility and communication with our members and stakeholders is fundamental to both our legitimacy and efficacy.

- **Differentiate the responsibilities of UASU and the University.** To do so, the UASU should demonstrate our value to students and university partners in all relationships. Further, we should develop clear directories that differentiate between the UASU and University and who is responsible for the partnerships, where they exist.
- **Foster a deeper understanding of the organization for SU governing bodies.** Creating additional channels to directly connect councillors to SU operations will improve decision making and governance. A better understanding of the Students' Union's operations will ensure greater accountability of SU operations to the students that they serve.
- **Strengthen our credibility by sharing our research, best practices, and program knowledge.** A disconnected student movement puts associations at risk of duplicating research efforts or being detached from established best practices. The SU should widely share with others that which makes us a leader in the student movement.
- **Develop stronger partnerships with cultural groups and the international student community.** Our campus community is increasingly diverse. The SU should recognize that meeting the unique needs of students depends on a robust connection and discourse between the SU and all of our members. We should seek opportunities to increase outreach and collaboration to better serve members.
- **Further the integration of representative associations into the Students' Union.** Representative associations are a unique and invaluable asset that help the SU understand and operate to improve student life. Sustaining a network of student leaders will create opportunities for joint advocacy efforts and program delivery.
- **Support the initiatives of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations and the Council of Alberta University Students.** A unified student voice is key to advancing the student movement. We should provide more opportunities for unaffiliated organizations to connect with and participate in provincial and federal advocacy efforts.
- **Develop a strategy for alumni to engage with the Students' Union.** Students who build a connection with the SU during their time at the university may want to preserve their relationship. The Students' Union can benefit from their knowledge and experience while providing an opportunity for alumni to give back to the community.
- **Work in partnership with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) student representatives and communities.** The SU should build collaborative partnerships and relationships with representative groups to develop strong indigenous policy positions and operational initiatives. Further, the SU should continue to support and implement internal recommendations in regards to reconciliation and relationships with FNMI students.

Strengthening Our Organization

The stronger the Students' Union as an organization is, the better it can both serve students and advocate fearlessly on their behalf. We need to ensure a strong, stable, and growing revenue base, continuously review and improve our program to be both more efficient and more effective, and ensure that the fundamental sources of our strength - our physical assets and our people - are secure and focused.

- **Develop and adhere to an improved student consultation framework.** Student feedback and participation is key when developing student-centric bylaws, policies, and operations. A stronger consultation framework will help us to make decisions that align with student priorities.
- **Develop mandatory review cycles for operations and support long-term strategic planning with departments.** The Students' Union must respond to emerging challenges and opportunities to remain relevant to its members. Reviewing and assessing existing programming, services, and operations helps us create more value for students.
- **Encourage collaborative efforts between departments.** The Students' Union must promote and sustain interdepartmental communication and collaboration to maximize efficiency and prevent the duplication of resources. Linking areas of expertise help us to build capacity.
- **Promote an inclusive and engaged culture in the workplace.** The backbone of the SU is its staff and volunteers. The SU must improve and modernize its human resources technologies, including, its communications, feedback, and access to information procedures and policies. Further, staff and volunteers should have the skills and resources they need to exceed the expectations of students.
- **Explore and pursue more revenue-generating opportunities.** The Students' Union should always seek to lower our reliance on student fees. Strengthening our businesses boosts our ability to give back to students and new opportunities should be pursued at given opportunities. Further, the SU should consistently look for grants, partnerships, and sponsorship to lower the investment by students.
- **Support the creation and maintenance of accessible online spaces.** Students increasingly use online platforms and social media to connect with the Students' Union. A modernized online presence helps the Students' Union meet students where they are and adapt to the ever-changing best practices of the digital world.
- **Continue to refine and develop the brand identity of the Students' Union.** Effective communications are integral in order to showcase the value of Students' Union membership. Producing creative, engaging, and thoughtful content promotes meaningful connections with our members.

Serving All Students

We exist to improve the lives of our members, and to be successful we must do this diligently and fully. We need to keep our finger on the pulse of student life and provide students with the supports they need to succeed. By working with community members to address issues of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion, we will better recognize and dismantle the systemic barriers to participation in student life for our members.

- **Grow the physical presence of the Students' Union.** In order to provide the most value for members, the Students' Union should continue to integrate and expand its spaces across our campuses. Advocating for and investing in student-oriented spaces improves the accessibility and relevance of the Students' Union to all its members.

- **Support and encourage diverse programming across campuses.** A range of programming opportunities contributes to a rich, meaningful, and inclusive student experience. Drawing on the unique expertise and talents of students from different backgrounds is important for the Students' Union to provide for the social and cultural needs of our members.
- **Actively explore ways to remove barriers to community involvement and participation in Students' Union programming.** Co-curricular activities are essential in creating a flourishing campus community. The Students' Union recognizes that students may be limited in their ability to participate due to accessibility challenges and financial barriers, and is committed to supporting students in addressing these barriers.
- **Engaging students in SU's advocacy strengthens our voice.** The Students' Union will place an emphasis on ensuring that the necessary resources for public engagement, external advocacy, and internal governance supports are developed to engage students in advocacy work.
- **Connecting students to support services is crucial to their academic success and personal wellbeing.** The SU will continue to support initiatives that connect students to their resources in a barrier-free manner. Further, the SU will work with partners to ensure that there is a minimal burden of proof placed upon students when accessing such resources.
- **Specialized on-campus health services are necessary for the well-being of students.** The Students' Union will continue to support services, such as health and wellness programming and mental health services. Further, the Students' Union will continue to resource the destigmatization of all health-related illness.