

*University of Alberta Students' Union*

# STUDENTS' COUNCIL LATE ADDITIONS

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Thursday October 7, 2004 – 5:15 p.m.  
Council Chambers 2-1 University Hall

2004-13/3

SPEAKER'S BUSINESS

2004-13/3b

**MOTION BY DEBENHAM, RESOLVED THAT** Students' Council appoint Adam Knisely to Students' Council, effective November 6, 2004.

2004-13/5

PRESENTATIONS

2004-13/5a

Sexual Harassment Complaint, presented to Students' Council by Jordan Blatz, President.

Please see document LA 04-13.01

2004-13/14

INFORMATION ITEMS

2004-13/14a

Article XII – Recall

Please see document LA 04-13.02

To whom it may concern:

This to inform you that I am lodging a formal Human Rights Complaint against Arts Councilor of the Students' Union, Adam Knisely, for gender discrimination and harassment that falls under the Poisoned Environment portion of the University of Alberta Harassment & Discrimination Policy.

On September 28, 2004, Mr. Knisely posted a poem on his internet journal, or weblog. The poem's subject was about sexual assault using chloroform, a well-known chemical that renders people unconscious. The poem explains how this new technique has "made [him] quite successful [at "scoring"]", and how "it lets you make all the girls your willing date." It also references handcuffing unconscious women to lawn chairs before having sex with them, as well as praising the "nice limp bodies" of unconscious women. The posting of this poem was followed several by a post of several semi-pornographic images of topless women in G-strings. The nature of Mr. Knisely's journal indicates that this post was indeed made by him.

This post constitutes discrimination in that it condones the sexual assault of women, and specifically the drugging of women and the experience of having sex with women's unconscious bodies. This removes women's entire sexual agency and portrays them as the literal passive recipients of male sexuality. As the Poisoned Environment clause of the Harassment & Discrimination Policy clearly indicates, "inappropriate displays of offensive material" are methods of harassment, and this harassment can occur over the computer. The policy goes on to explain that "harassing behaviour is marked by ...[behaviour that is] disrespectful of the person's dignity" (<http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/policy/sec44.html>). Mr. Knisely's post marks a clear indication of the disrespect of the dignity of all women by condoning such unmitigated sexual violence.

While this post in and of itself would have been a case of discrimination, it is Mr. Knisely's political position that makes it all the more offensive to the women of this campus. Mr. Knisely's internet journal is linked as his homepage from his profile on the University of Alberta Students' Union's Webboard, which is an online message board for members of the Students' Union. This webboard is most often frequented by Councillors who engage in discussions about Students' Council policies and other issues. On this webboard, Mr. Knisely has consistently identified himself as an Arts Councillor; therefore his posts on the board are made in his political capacity as a representative of the students of the Faculty of Arts. His weblog is clearly linked from his posts; therefore by extension his posts on his weblog are also made in his political capacity as Arts Councillor, because they are made publicly available to all readers of the webboard. Furthermore, there are several other Councillors who have similar weblogs, on which they have engaged in policy discussions; discussions which have also been referred to on the webboard. This further emphasizes that the weblogs are not private material, but public, politically relevant statements made by people who are acting in their capacity as elected representatives of the students of the University of Alberta. It must be stated and made clear that this complaint is in no way an attempt to promote the censoring of private expression by private individuals. The reason for this complaint is because of the link between Mr.

Knisely's journal and his political role as students' representative on Council. This journal is thus not private expression, but in fact public expression.

Not only does this post discriminate against all of the women on the campus of the University of Alberta, but it discriminates against me as an Arts student and an employee of the Students' Union. It discriminates against me as an Arts student because I do not feel that Adam Knisely can adequately represent my interests to the Students' Union when he is condoning the drugging and rape of other members of my gender. Furthermore, it discriminates against me as an employee of the Students' Union because the Students' Council is the group that is legislatively in charge of my job (that is, they approve of my job position, they approve of our budget, and they have the power to shut down the part of the SU that I work for). Council is thus my employer, and thus Mr. Knisely's posts bring up issues of equity on the job. I cannot feel safe in my work environment when one of the people who has power over my position is making public statements that deny me dignity and agency over my own body.

To rectify this, I am demanding the resignation of Adam Knisely from his position as Arts Councillor. Not only has he shown his inability to represent the interests of his female constituents, but he has severely discriminated against the women of this entire campus. His actions have tarnished the ability of the Students' Union to claim to represent its constituents, and I urge the rest of Council as well as the Executive to join me in demanding his resignation. I am further demanding a public apology for Mr. Knisely for his post, to be delivered to me and other interested student representatives at a Students' Council meeting, as well as a written apology published in the Gateway. In this way, Mr. Knisely will be forced to publicly acknowledge the consequences of his shockingly discriminatory actions.

Enclosed is text from the poem copied directly from Mr. Knisely's journal, whose link can be found at: <http://www.theinjuredcoast.com>. I can also provide "screenshots" of the journal where this content can be found if you would like them. Once again, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at [meaganj@ualberta.ca](mailto:meaganj@ualberta.ca)

Thank you for your consideration and swift action on this matter

# Constitution

## ARTICLE XIII - RECALL

1. Any member of the Executive Committee of the Students' Council may be recalled by a valid petition containing the names and identification numbers of fifty-one percent (51%) of the full-time students.
2. Any Council member may be recalled by a valid petition containing the names and identification numbers of fifty-one percent (51%) of the full-time students in their faculty.
3. The Undergraduate Student Member of the Board of Governors, and/or any member of the Students' Council, including any member of the Executive Committee, will be called upon to contest their seat in a by-election if a motion of non-confidence in them is passed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority, at three (3) consecutive Council meetings.
4. It will be recommended by Students' Council to the Minister of Advanced Education that the Undergraduate Student Member of the Board of Governors be recalled upon presentation of a valid petition containing the names and identification numbers of fifty-one percent (51%) of the full-time students.