

STUDENTS' COUNCIL LATE ADDITIONS

Tuesday June 27, 2006
Council Chambers 2-1 University Hall

- 2006-05/1 **SPEAKER'S BUSINESS**
- 2006-05/1a (ii) Councillor Chandler resigns from the Council Administration Committee
Please see document LA 06-05.01
- 2006-05/5 **BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**
- 2006-05/5b (i) Grant Allocation Committee – Standing Orders
Please see document LA 06-05.02
- 2006-05/5c (i) University Policy Committee – June 22, 2006 (Votes and Proceedings)
Please see document LA 06-05.03
- 2006-05/5d Budget and Finance Committee
- 2006-05/5d (i) LEWIS/CUNNINGHAM MOVED THAT upon the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee, Students' Council approve a transfer not to exceed \$15,652.00 from the 2005/2006 Special Project Reserve to the Alternative Programming budget to fund the Revolutionary Speakers Series. This will be done in accordance to the budget for the Revolutionary Speakers series that was reviewed and approved by the Budget and Finance Committee and included in the Council Agenda.
Please see document LA 06-05.04
- 2006-05/7 **INFORMATION ITEMS**
- 2006-05/7d Samantha Power, President – Report
Please see document LA 06-05.05
- 2006-05/7e David Cournoyer, Vice President (External) – Report
Please see document LA 06-05.06
- 2006-05/7f Chris Cunningham, Vice President (Operations and Finance) – Report

Please see document LA 06-05.07

2006-05/7g

Amanda Henry, Vice President (Academic) – Report on STHLE Conference

Please see document LA 06-05.08

2006-05/7h

Omer Yusuf, Vice President (Student Life) – Report on COCA Conference

Please see document LA 06-05.09

2006-05/7i

Mike Schwake, Associate VP Student Life – Report on COCA Conference

Please see document LA 06-05.10

Dear Students' Council,

I am writing to inform you that I am resigning from CAC.

Sincerely,

John Chandler.

Mandate

A Committee known as the Grant Allocation Committee (hereafter referred to as “the Committee”) will exist in order to

- “(a) make grants and implement policy regarding the disbursement of funds from the Campus Recreation Enhancement Fund, the Golden Bear and Panda Legacy Fund, the Refugee Student Fund, the Eugene L. Brody Fund, and the portion of the Students’ Union operating budget designated for grants to Student Groups;
 - (b) grant loans to student groups in amounts not exceeding \$1,500 per student group;
 - (c) make grants of not more than \$500 from the Eugene L. Brody Fund; “
- in accordance with Bylaw 100 of the University of Alberta Students’ Union.

Start-Up

1. The first meeting of the Committee shall be coordinated through the Office of the Speaker prior to the first meeting of the Students’ Council of the University of Alberta Students’ Union (hereafter referred to as “Council”).
2. The agenda of the first meeting must include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Election of a chair;
 - b. Approval of standing orders for the Committee;

Chair

3. The Chair of the Committee must be elected from the voting membership of the Committee.
4. The Chair may be dismissed at any meeting of the Committee by a majority vote, whereupon the Committee would immediately elect a new Chair.
5. In the event that a Chair resigns from the Committee, they vacate their position as Chair.
6. The Chair’s responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Providing a location for each meeting of the Committee;
 - b. Moderating debates at each meeting of the Committee;
 - c. Responding to questions from Committee members in a timely fashion;
 - d. Assigning duties to members of the Committee, in order for the Committee to fulfill its mandate.
7. In the event that the Chair is absent at a meeting of the Committee, the Committee will elect a voting member to serve as interim Chair for the duration of the meeting.

Meetings

8. All meetings of the Committee, except for the first meeting, will be
 - a. Co-ordinated by the Chair on an as-needed basis, provided that members are given 72 hours’ notice;
 - b. Five voting members of the Committee may call a meeting, provided that members are given at least 72 hours’ notice.
 - c. The Committee may call a meeting, without notice, provided that there is unanimous consent from all voting members of the Committee
9. Quorum of the Committee shall be four voting members.

Proxies

10. Voting members of the Committee may delegate a proxy to a meeting of the Committee by providing written notice of such to the Chair at least two hours prior to the meeting.
11. In order to be eligible to serve as a proxy, an individual must be a voting member of Council.
12. An individual may only be designated as a proxy once per meeting of the Committee.
13. Elected members of the Committee are unable to be designated as proxies.

Reporting

13. The Chair of the Committee shall, within seven days of the conclusion of each meeting of the Committee, submit a report to Council which must include, but is not limited to:
 - a. A list of the voting members in attendance at the meeting;
 - b. A list of any guests present at the meeting, if any;
 - c. A summary of the votes and proceedings of the Committee;
 - d. Changes made to the standing orders of the Committee, if any;

- e. Recommendations from the Committee to Council, if any;

Attendance Requirement

14. Voting members of the Committee who are absent, without proxy, from two meetings will automatically be removed from the Committee

Allocation of Funds

15. Funds from the Campus Recreation Enhancement Fund shall:
 - a. Be distributed to undergraduate students, student groups, and for the purpose of ensuring that programs, equipment, and facilities offered by the University of Alberta's Campus Recreation remain of high quality, diverse, convenient, accessible, and affordable to undergraduate students.
 - b. Not be used for
 - i. Funding projects that are receiving other Students' Union funding;
 - ii. Transportation;
 - iii. Supplementing University of Alberta staff wages;
 - iv. Awards;
 - v. Volunteer appreciation.
 - c. Not be allocated in such a way that more than one quarter of the funds available in the Campus Recreation Enhancement Fund is allocated to any one project or recipient.
 - d. Allocated on an annual basis and shall not be allocated to commitments extending beyond one year from the time of granting.
 - e. Require recipients of funding to provide receipts or other proof that the funds granted were used for the purposes for which they were intended.
16. Funds from the Golden Bears and Pandas Legacy Fund shall:
 - a. shall be distributed to University of Alberta varsity athletic teams and the Athletics Department for the purposes of saving and stabilizing varsity athletic teams and promotion of varsity athletics
 - b. Require recipients of funding to provide receipts or other proof that the funds granted were used for the purposes for which they were intended.
17. Funds from the Refugee Student Fund shall:
 - a. Be used for the support of four undergraduate refugee students at the University of Alberta selected by the World University Service of Canada Refugee Student Sponsorship Committee.
 - b. Not use more than three percent of the available funds for administrative purposes.
 - c. Use the following granting scheme:
 - i. Sixty-six percent of the Fund's annual revenues shall be disbursed to a refugee student in his/her first year of study.
 - ii. Sixteen percent of the Fund's annual revenues shall be disbursed to a refugee student in his/her second year of study.
 - iii. Seven percent of the Fund's annual revenues shall be disbursed to the refugee student in his/her third year of study.
 - iv. Six percent of the Fund's annual revenues shall be disbursed to the refugee student in his/her fourth year of study.
18. Funds from the Eugene L. Brody Fund shall:
 - a. Be distributed to federally-registered charitable organizations
19. Funds from the portion of the Students' Union operating budget designated for grants to Student Groups shall:
 - a. Be distributed to groups registered as Student Groups with the University of Alberta and the Students' Union for the current academic year.
 - b. Not be disbursed to any group having received a student group grant in the current academic year.
 - c. Not be allocated in such a way that a single group receives more than \$1500.00.
 - d. Not be used to fund grants where more the grant itself comprises more than 50% of the total Event or Conference expenses.

Delegation of Granting Authority

20. Currently, no bodies are designated by the Committee as delegates.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

2006-07

University Policy Committee

Thursday June 22nd, 2006

1. CALL TO ORDER: 6:20 pm
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
LE/JANZ moved that the agenda be approved as presented. 6/0/0 CARRIED
3. ADJOURNMENT
SHAMANNA/JANZ – 7:45 pm 6/0/0 CARRIED

	Next Year	
	<u>2005-06</u>	<u>2007</u>
	<u>Actual</u>	
REVENUE		
Registrations		
6029-000 Other Registrations		\$0
Total Registrations Revenue	0	0
Admissions		
<i>Admissions - Other</i>		
6212-000 Admissions-Other	17,032	20,910
Gross Profit on Admissions - Other	17,032	20,910
Gross Profit on Admissions	17,032	20,910
Grants Revenue		
6425-000 Grants	10,000	10,000
Other Revenue & COGS		
6480-000 Donations		0
6600-000 Fund Raising		0
Total Gross Profit	0	0
Total Revenue	27,032	30,910

Total Gross Profit	27,032	30,910
EXPENDITURES		
Staff Costs		
<i>Wages</i>		
8111-000 Salaries		0
8113-200 Vacation-Salary		0
8118-200 Casual Labour-Temp Help		600
Total Wages	0	600
<i>Government Deductions</i>		
8131-200 EI-Salary		0
8132-200 CPP-Salary		0
Total Government Deductions	0	0
<i>Employee Benefits</i>		
8141-200 Great West Life-Salary		0
8142-200 Alberta Health Care-Salary		0
8143-200 WCB-Salary		0
8144-200 Pension-Salary		0
Total Employee Benefits	0	0
<i>Employee Development</i>		
8173-100 Conference-Transportation		0
8173-200 Conference-Accommodation		0
8173-300 Conference-Registration		0
8173-400 Conference-Other		0
Total Employee Development	0	0
Total Staff Costs	0	600

Supplies			
8224-000	Beverage Supplies		0
8225-200	Supplies-Food & Beverage		0
8225-300	Supplies-Operations		0
8225-400	Supplies-Other		120
8230-200	Office Supplies-Other	230	0
Total Office Supplies		230	0
Total Supplies		230	120
Marketing, Advertising and Promotion			
8321-100	Ext. Advertising-Media	1,253	3,500
8321-400	Ext. Advertising-Other		0
8322-100	Int. Advertising-Media		0
8322-200	Int. Advertising-Photocopy		400
8322-300	Int. Advertising-Design Other		1,500
8331-000	External PR		0
8333-000	Volunteer PR		0
Total Marketing, Advertising and Promotion		1,253	5,400
Printing and Duplicating			
8411-000	External Printing	2,376	4,050
8412-000	Internal Printing	613	275
8422-000	Internal Duplication	0	35
Total Printing and Duplicating		2,989	4,360
Operational Expenses			
8510-000	General Rentals	0	2,700
8515-000	Performer's Costs	36,252	26,500
8516-000	Production Costs	616	6,352
8520-000	General Expense Allowance		0
8615-100	Commission Expense-Clubs		0

Total Operational Expenses	36,868	35,552
Communications		
8650-000 Telephone Rentals		0
8652-000 Long Distance	184	240
8653-000 Fax	0	60
8654-000 Courier	11	100
8655-000 Postage	0	40
Total Communications	195	440
Legal and Professional		
8721-000 Professional Fees	0	90
Total Legal and Professional	0	90
Taxes and Licenses		
8741-000 Business Tax/Licences		0
Total Taxes and Licenses	0	0
General Overheads		
8910-000 Travel		0
8921-000 Associations		0
8931-000 Credit Card S/C		0
8980-000 Previous Yrs. Expense		0
Total General Overheads	0	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	41,534	46,562
NET PROFIT (LOSS)	(14,502)	(15,652)

President's Report – June 23, 2006

Media – We wrote an op-ed in the Edmonton Journal on June 14th which was well-received. Portions of it will be reappearing in Kevin Taft's constituency newsletter and hopefully in an Alberta Views article in the next month. I had an interview with the Parkland Post and I will be doing an interview with an online news service called the policychannel.

Goals- After presenting these to council we have begun to work on action plans for each goal, it's going well.

City of Edmonton Next Generation Task Force - was released, we attended the reception, it was lovely. The results can be viewed here: <http://www.edmontonnextgen.ca/>

CAUS – We met on June 22nd in Calgary. Dave has more details as he attended the full two days.

BOG - Met on June 23rd. Brian Heidegger has been appointed as the new chair. We named a number of centers including the Imperial Oil Center for Oil Sands Research, the Agri-Food Discovery Place, and the Canadian Literature Center. I was appointed as the student representative on the Board Educational Affairs Committee and the Board Finance and Property Committee.

MacLean's – As some may have noticed the University of Alberta, along with the UofT, UofC and McMasters have actively decided not to take part in the MacLean's rankings. The universities are still ranked as the magazine used publicly available information to fit their needs. The universities refused access to any private information or interviews with staff. The universities have refused to participate as there are a number of concerns with MacLean's methodology and statistical reliability. The universities, which who could be joined by at least eight more universities, are searching out a more reliable ranking methodology. I've stated my support as a student for this position as I have never seen any statistical relevance in the MacLean's rankings and believe that a methodologically sound rankings system must be found in order for students to properly evaluate the university right for them. If anyone has comments or suggestions on this issue, please let me know.

Coming Up:

June 28 – Meeting with Councillor Gibbons
- APC

June 29 – Meeting with Councillors Leibovici and Sloan

July 6 – Meeting with Councillors Melnychuk and Batty

July 7- Campus Campaigns retreat

I hope everyone is having a nice summer!

CAMPAIGNS PLANNING & ACTION COMMITTEE: CPAC is a volunteer committee which will be deeply involved in planning and implementing successful SU campaigns over the next year – if you'd like to get onboard, or know someone who does – let me know!

CAUS: On June 22, Sam, Don, and I attended CAUS' AGM at the University of Calgary. CAUS passed a budget, renewed and revamped political policies, and planed for the upcoming year.

ADVANCED EDUCATION MEETINGS: On June 23, CAUS, ACTISEC, and AGC spent the day in Calgary meeting with Advanced Education bureaucrats and the Advanced Education Minister.

The majority of the discussion with the Minister had to do with our complete disappointment in the A Learning Alberta Final Recommendations. At the meeting we learned that regardless of the upcoming Tuition Fee Consultations, the Minister has already accepted CPI as an annual increase and that the status quo levels of tuition will be kept – breaking the Premier's promise that Alberta will have the most affordable tuition policy in the country. The Minister's actions leave me questioning the entire point of a consultation process in the first place.

HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE: SU AVPX Pam Aranas is looking for **volunteers** to help out with the SU's High School Leadership Conference in November – if you're interested, feel free to contact Pam at avpex@su.ualberta.ca.

STUDENT SENATE CAUCUS: I met with the Students' Union's Representatives on the U of A Senate (Duncan Taylor, Shawna Pandya, and Chris Skappak) to discuss what we'd like to see come from our year on the Senate.

U-PASS: Negotiations continue with the City of Edmonton, City of St. Alberta, Strathcona County and their transit services, as well as the University Administration for a Universal Transit Pass for U of A Students. President Power and I will be meeting with City Councillors over the next couple weeks to discuss the U-Pass. A policy has been approved in External Policy Committee and will be brought forward to Council on Tuesday.

Upcoming:

June 28	Meeting with Councillor Ed Gibbons
June 29	Meeting with Councillors Karen Leibovici & Linda Sloan
July 29	Public Interest Alberta PSE Taskforce Meeting
July 6	Meeting with Councillors Janice Melnychuk & Jane Batty
July 7	SU Campus Campaigns Retreat
July 10	Meeting with Councillor Terry Cavanaugh
July 11	Edmonton Transport & Public Works Meeting (U-Pass)
End of Nov	High School Leadership Conference

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this report or any other issue, feel free to let me know in person, by phone (492.4236), or by email (vp.external@su.ualberta.ca).

Chris Cunningham, Vice President – Operations & Finance
Report to Students' Council
June 27, 2006

Good evening Council,

Powerplant

Implementation plans are progressing well. Estimates and quotes from contractors are trickling in and timelines are becoming refined. Very detailed oriented at this stage... not much has changed in terms of the big picture.

Web Site

Whitematter will be working feverishly to have our new and improved web site up and running for the fall term. This new web site will not only be more user friendly but it will increase our ability to disseminate information to all students.

Aramark

VP Student Life, Councilor Janz, Bill Smith and myself sat down with Don Hickey (VP Facilities and Operations) and David Bruch (Executive Director Ancillary Services) to discuss the contract awarded to Aramark regarding its food services on campus.

Some fun facts:

- Original contract was signed in 1994 (two, five year contracts)
- Recently renewed without student consultation
- Current contract won't be up until 2010
- Contract has not gone to tender since 1994 (That's 12 Years without competitive bidding!)
- Aramark has loaned the University lump-sum payments amortized over several years to renovate its food services

It sounds a little fishy to me that Aramark would loan the University upwards of a million dollars amortized over a period longer than their contract. Essentially what this means is any competitor to Aramark that wanted to acquire the University contract would also have to assume what's left of that loan to the University. David Bruch assures us that this is standard within the industry. I wouldn't know.

The University did agree however, to allow us to see the contract in its entirety... their just waiting for final conformation from Aramark.

The University also (informally) agreed to work with us to create a Food Service Task Force not unlike the Health Services Advisory Group which was instrumental in guiding the UHC.

The Society on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE)
2006 Conference

June 14th to 17th, 2006

Unlike FCSL, I regret that I did not attend the pre-conference workshops offered at STLHE ("Stelly," or "The Society," for short). It sounds like they incorporated relevant dialogue about current issues (such as research in the classroom) with general networking. Next year, I hope we take these in, especially considering we may have the opportunity to help plan them. But more on that later.

Pre-Conference Expectations and Such

- 1) Learn from the Conference – This conference offered 8 blocks of concurrent sessions with about 15 sessions running in any given block on academic issues, plus roundtable discussions and poster presentations throughout. I wanted to make the most of those opportunities.
- 2) Network with other student associations – See who's there and share notes and thoughts.
- 3) Network with educational developers concerned with issues relevant to the issues facing the U of A- For instance, U of A staff working in or with University Teaching Services as well as developers from other institutions with programs we'd like to see done well at this university.

Post-Conference: Success or Failure?

- 1) Learn from the Conference – **SUCCESS**

Wow. And I mean wow. I'm still sifting through my notes, but in terms of relevance, level of detail and interest, this conference was worth every minute I spent in the airport to get there. And if you know me, that's saying something. Everything from equipping teaching assistants with advanced communications strategies in North American classrooms to media perceptions of teaching to scholarship of teaching to managing community service learning for classes of 100-1000. It was fascinating.

- 2) Network with students- **Limited success**

I only managed to catch up with the University of Calgary. However, meeting up with the U of C was a complete success. We'll be sharing notes in the near future and probably putting our heads together to come up with a way to encourage more of our colleagues to come out next year.

- 3) Network with everyone else- **SUCCESS**

I had a number of really great opportunities to chat with professionals for whom teaching and education are the focus of their careers. In particular, I'm looking forward to continuing work with U of A's UTS as well as some members of the University of Calgary's equivalent unit. I may also be looking to get in touch with some language teachers from across the country as well as any of the presenters I happened to meet.

Random facts and highlights

Food

The food was delicious. At the banquet, they served salad with edible flowers. Very fancy.

3M

The University of Alberta had two faculty members recognized for 3M Teaching Awards. Very cool.

The Christopher Knapper Lifetime Achievement Award

This also went to a staff member of the University of Alberta who was subsequently featured in Express News. Again, very cool.

Optimism

Educational developers and people concerned with educational development are, on the whole, really psyched to be involved in higher education. Their passion and earnest dedication were refreshing as well as a nice change from the cynicism that many other stakeholders seem to carry with them about their ability to effect change. It was both wonderful and strange to spend a few days surrounded by so many people who are still so genuine about making a difference in higher education. Just thought I'd throw that out there.

Other thoughts and take home impressions

The only complaint I have about STLHE is that not enough student associations sent delegates. That's something I intend to work on for next year.

Actually, I lied. The one other complaint I have is that I had to give a speech. I'm told it was a good speech though, so life goes on.

Conclusion

Send more people to this conference! Even after I exchange notes with Calgary, we'll be lucky if we managed to cover a 6th of the value of the conference. I highly recommend sending at least two people (probably the VPA and the UAO) to this conference, especially next year. This is where I come back to the possibility of having a hand in planning some things to do with this conference: next year it will be in Edmonton and the conference organizers on campus have already expressed an interest in encouraging more undergraduate involvement.

On that note, I also recommend doing what we can to encourage other student associations to send delegates. They'd be more than welcome at STLHE. I'm sure the conference would be relevant to most of them somehow. And getting more student associations involved would solve my regrets about the lack of students at the conference.

Omer Yusuf, Vice President (Student Life)

Canadian Organization of Campus Activities (COCA)

Report to Council

June 26th, 2006

What is COCA

COCA's Mission Statement describes the organization as a body "committed to developing quality campus programming through education, information sharing and resources ...[and] further dedicated to enhancing skill development by providing educational and business opportunities, resources, and services for professional staff, college and university students and associate members of COCA". The COCA Conference brings together over 65 post-secondary institutions from across Canada. It fulfills its mandate by offering a number of educational sessions, and by showcasing a large number of artists to allow schools to "shop around" for programming opportunities for their schools. This national conference brings together programmers from across the country, which may be hired staff or elected representatives.

Who was at COCA

Key programmers at the U of A include Steve Derpack, Mike Schwake and myself. Steve Derpack is our Senior Manager of Programming and Licensed Activities and works closely with agencies to book artists for all our events, as well as being responsible for campus bars. Michael Schwake, the Associate VPSL, and myself divide up programming aspects of the Student Life portfolio, where Mike will be working more closely with event implementation.

From other schools, you would expect to find three types of delegates (well, there are more, but these are the ones that are pertinent to my report).

- The first are the associate delegates, like Steve, that have been to COCA before, and are likely to teach at some of the sessions. They are most concerned with connecting to other school, artists/agencies and transitioning with reps from their school.
- The second are school delegates like Mike and I, that come from larger schools. We have people like Steve that handle all the band bookings and programming, and aren't looking at COCA as an opportunity to learn how to put on an event (because we have full time programmer to help us)
- The third are rep from smaller schools that, either elected or hired, don't have a programmer on campus and handle event planning on their own. Their biggest reason to come to COCA to learn how to do their job.

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

The education sessions were, from what I gathered, much better than the ed sessions from last year because session were more focused to the types of people attending COCA. For example, they ran sessions so you had the option of going to one of three offered at the same time. One of those three would be catered to people who needed to learn how to plan an event. The other two sessions would balance between a personal/skill development session and programming/communications.

For the most part, the session offered in a particular time block were different enough that it provided an opportunity for delegates to attend session that they were interested in. For example, Mike and I did not attend any of the preliminary event planning sessions, but attended sessions related to training volunteers, marketing, public speaking, etc. We "divide and conquer" the sessions, and report back to each other on useful bits of info presented at each session.

These sessions were very well targeted to my position compared to the other conference. I believe that I learned a few things that will certainly help me out in the year. While I can't say that all the sessions were useful, if I'm able to walk away with some measure of insight, I believe the sessions passed my already low standards (FCSL!).

ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

Similar to the ed sessions, except there were 8 roundtables that you could walk to and from over the course of the 2.5 hours. This was mostly useless. There were a few tables that were very busy and had great attendance (The Best and the Bombs: programs), but most were empty (Movie Nights, Ethical Decision Making). This was because delegates didn't choose the topics presented, and only went to the tables that they were interested in. As one could believe, some delegates weren't interested in anything, or in only one things, leaving everything else bare. They could remedy this by having delegates choose and lead discussions.

SHOWCASES

I'm not gonna lie, this was the most entertaining part of the conference for me. At COCA, I got to see over 45 artists. What were some of my favorites? Well, the list would be too long to narrow down. I'll just let you know that there were a few bands that are small/independent that I would not have ever thought of booking for the SU activities, and COCA has shown me the light. There were a few particularly interesting variety shows that caught my eye, and were likely the most successful events of the conference. Hopefully this will translate to a year with a few more interesting choices in terms of live entertainment.

Overall, I thought this wasn't the most useful part of the conference for Mike and me. It took a lot of time, and serves its greatest purpose for

programmers interested in booking acts. However, it also wasn't the most useless part of the conference, as it allowed us to experience some great shows and variety acts that explicitly state an interest in doing campus tours. It was what it was.

EVENING PROGRAMMING

Some of the sponsors had nights to showcase potential school programming for the year. While we already do things like Movie Nights, Karaoke, it was neat seeing a Poker Tournament in action. For those that are interested, I was bumped off JUST before the final table. I had no idea what I was doing.

FINAL THOUGHTS

COCA is a neat conference to go on, and makes way more sense than any other national conference for the VPSL. After going to both FCSL and COCA, I would recommend that future VPSLs choose COCA over anything else.

Because COCA was in town this year, it was easier to justify going (greatly reduced cost because no airfare or accommodations). But should the SU keep going, year after year? Here is a list of pros and cons to COCA.

Reasons to GO!	Reasons to STAY HOME!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the ed sessions are useful - It will allow the Student Life Team to bond - You can share/steal ideas from other institutions - Get to see a large variety of artists interested in doing shows on your campus - Hear about some of the struggles other institutions are facing, and how that can hit home (or, networking!) - Skill/personal development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of the content in the ed sessions does not apply to the VPSL - Networking with other schools is nice, but not necessary to get your job done - Saves money for the SU, and (arguably more important) saves you time. - The Senior Manager and the AVPSL can go instead of the VPSL, and report back. This conference is more useful for them.

There's also a bunch of not so important arguments for going, such as the fun factor, and getting free stuff (I honestly think the amount of free stuff that I pulled from the conference almost completely offsets the registration fee). In the end, it's the choice of every VPSL to choose to go or to not go. I was lucky this year because it was in Edmonton, and the biggest problems of time and cost weren't an issue (I lost Friday and Monday).

I would hope that future VPSL's seriously consider the points I have made for not attending the conference. It's very important to understand what you will not get out of the conference before signing up.

COCA 2006 National Conference Report

COCA Beef's it up – Edmonton, Alberta

June 14th to 20th

Michael Schwake – Associate VP Student Life

What is COCA?

COCA stands for “Canadian Organization of Campus Activities”. It consists of over 65 member schools from across Canada & more than 80 associate member groups that represent various artists, agencies, & companies. The organization puts on a national conference as well as 3-regional meetings. COCA has been around for over 24 years, next year will mark its 25th anniversary & the national conference will take place in Niagara Falls. Traditionally we send the “Senior Manager of Programming and Licensed Activities”, the “VP Student Life” & the “Associate VP Student Life” to the national conference for the purpose of learning and networking to prepare us for the year ahead.

First Impressions

I had been told about the nature of COCA being fairly relaxed, it being a good fun learning experience. However, when I came to the conference I found it very hard to settle into that attitude. Maybe it was because we weren't in the hotel or maybe it was because it was in Edmonton, but I couldn't shake that restless feeling at first. Another barrier to getting into the COCA groove was the some of the “encouraged attitudes” of drinking and what I like to call “networking via hookup” didn't fully appeal to either myself or Omer. Once we started going to sessions I started to see more value in the conference. However I still couldn't shake that odd feeling, I think it was because I could literally go back to the office between breaks & catch up on my office work. This may have not been the best start for us, but it just challenged our abilities to best adapt to the situation.

Information Sessions

This year they apparently changed the format of the educational sessions. I have been to a lot of conferences in my day and I wouldn't say the sessions were anything special, however they were very pertinent to the various needs of delegates from member schools. To get the most out of it, you just needed to be wise and choose your sessions wisely. The feeling I got was that COCA was moving in the right direction to better meet the needs of schools and their programmers from across Canada.

After Omer and I overcame the challenge of safely attending our first session (we both managed to sequentially trip over the same piece of carpet), we began our day with orientation. The session's primary purpose was to disarm our concerns about the conference and assure us that COCA was a valuable meeting of peers. After a quick run through of events we broke into separate groups, our group was fortunate to get Steve Derpack as our mentor programmer. While I could just walk across the office to talk to Steve about programming issues, it was actually a very productive setting for everyone to take something out of the mentor group. Funnily enough Omer got another Edmonton city programmer as a mentor, Mike Anderson from NAIT.

I then attended 2 sessions by the same presenter, Darel Baker, on Leadership and Conflict Management. The first was good as it highlighted relevant leadership skills I already

have, however it focused more on which ones I should develop more for the job. The next session on conflict resolution wasn't my first choice, but Omer and I decided to split up so we could cover more sessions. What was really great was that several of the models applied to practical work related situations, on technique was actually able to actively apply immediately after the conference. What I liked was that they really tailored it to the jobs we have, versus having some generic seminar. It also made the difference in holding my attention while listening to the same presenter for over 3 hours. The next day both Omer and myself missed the first sessions because the timing of our commute there didn't work out. This was ok because there weren't really any pertinent sessions for us to attend. The next session I decided to attend was the event planning 101 on non bar/low budget programming. This was actually very valuable as I would like to see the programming committee put on some low budget frugal events this year, similar to last years Easter egg hunt. I got quite a few ideas from the seminar & some books that I won after the session for answering some question. The final session I attended was on brainpower and was hosted by Mike Mandel, one of the showcasing hypnotists. It was a valuable seminar on how to better motivate others to be productive with suggestive positive remarks. I was happy I got to go to the seminar, as Omer wanted to as well. I actually beat Omer in a best of 3 rock, paper, scissors match, which marked the first game I have been able to beat Omer at since we began working together. It actually worked out yet again for us, this was because Omer went to the frosh week seminar and learned about some valuable ideas he could use for training volunteers.

Overall the sessions were really good in my own opinion. I was kind of sad there weren't more, however this appears to be the focus of COCA now and we will probably see even better conference programming in the years to come. When it came to absorbing a lot of the ideas and issues it became evident that we are really at an advantage at the U of A and we should be thankful for the various directors we have to run some of our bigger and smaller events. Some campuses don't have the luxury of a Steve, Christine, or Norma & have to balance it all. The great thing is that if you keep it in perspective you can realize those smaller campuses big problems are very similar to our own sometime, we just have some extra resources to call on. After meeting minds with everyone you get a better appreciation for what we have and can derive some extra value from the creative problem solving other campuses have to rely on.

Roundtable Discussions

These discussions were kind of a funny, Omer and I decided to attend these together, and ended up with a funny result. Each table had a topic and presenters, at the first table we sat at Omer slowly took over the conversation and began to lead the discussion instead of the presenters. At this point I exited and began securing us free stuff from the school swap. I also progressed eventually to other tables and ended up following Omer's lead and leading my own discussions. What you realize through this is the wealth of experience you have and have a committee of persons to scrutinize to experiences with their own situations, allowing you to revisit and fine tune ideas that you already use.

Regional & Annual General Meetings

I thought there could be a lot more done with these sessions. I found our regional meeting was valuable as far as block booking, however that more applied to Steve. I

thought there could have been some better ideas for regional development passed on, however productivity was capped by the horrible attitude the chair had. No worries though, the newly elected western chair from UBC was far more energetic and is backed up by our own Steve Derpack as his alternate for the next year.

Keynotes & Awards

I rather enjoyed our keynote speakers, well at least 2 of the 3. Our first was Chris Taylor, music industry lawyer. His speech was inspirational tale of how to succeed in the music industry and he made sure to credit the college crowd with much of that success. It was a good opening keynote with a funny name “Work Hard, Work Harder, F--- the Haters!”. The next was Andy Thiboeau, if I didn’t know any better I would say he is the cross generational product of our greatest orientation staff and volunteers. His speech should have been the opening one, as it really reminded everyone about the value of being there and present to best serve your students. This was something that a lot of the delegates needed to hear because some students just rode the free ride their schools gave them. I am proud that Omer and myself were able to adjust into the COCA experience and be able to get something from the whole experience.

However if there was one speech I think I took the most out of, that was Ben Mulrone’s. I got inspiration, I got passion and on top of all that I got rage. Inspiration to not be an absolute tool, passion to keep myself on track and never fall on that path and rage to have yet another Mulrone to hate with a fury of a thousand suns. Who rants on about wanting to be treated like a better star so they can be paid more to a bunch of students who are counting their blessings to afford their education? Who talks about cutting the CBC or changing it into a PBS model? Who talks about Canada needing less hockey programming between the first and second period of game 7 in the hockey town of Canada? An Idiot. Apparently this was his “first” speech, and probably his last to any campus crowd.

The awards were kind of pointless, however they did make the show entertaining with Mr. Lahey and Randy from the Trailer Park Boys, they were real nice guys who hung around with everyone before and after their show. I probably would have enjoyed it more if Steve had won his award for the great job he does, oh well there is always next year.

Showcases

I honestly could go on and on about wonderful showcases, who was good and who was good. What blew me away were all the top quality performers we were privileged to see. I don’t think there was a showcase where I liked less than 75% of the performers. Kudos to Buffy & Kendra, our programming assistants, for working hard with Steve on the showcases.

The only showcase that didn’t go well was the movie night showcase on Sub-Stage. It fell the unfortunate victim of game 6 of the playoffs. However what was impressive was how people stayed at the powerplant for that entire showcase. Even though the Oilers had won and most of the delegates were itching to go to Whyte ave., we kept people there with the acts and the venue. When people would find out it was our venue, they couldn’t believe it, when we told them the money we were losing, they couldn’t believe it. Smaller schools would say that they have venues with similar capacities that they can

pack, but none as nice as our powerplant. While it was nice to hear, it just raised more questions about what direction we need to take with the plant in the future.

The overall quality of the artists and venues at the showcases just reflected the variety of programming possibilities we have on a both local and national scale. I feel that through this all, Omer and I are better equipped to work with Steve on programming issues.

Biz Hall

This was a free stuff festival. I honestly must have collected well over a thousand dollars in free stuff. The great benefit was, we're in our home city, we can grab whatever we want without fear of being unable to fit it in our luggage. On top of all the free stuff we got for ourselves I also found that I got quite a bit of information to share with the other AVPs and the new sponsorship coordinator. This part just reflects the other side of COCA, making the contacts you need so that you can make programming affordable and effective.

Networking & After Hour Events

While much of the conference content is tied up with formal programming, the other side is the informal socializing that you do to make contacts. Now I know I mentioned earlier that this was kind of set up in an odd fashion "Networking via Hookup" but that was just because of how the guy from "Playfair" set things up at the Molson House reception. He was a combination of the really good keynote speaker we had in Andy, mixed with a dirty old man. This idea didn't work for me because I am in a committed relationship and the other side of it didn't work for Omer because of his personal drinking preferences. However we adapted and ignored that whole horrible set up they started us off with and made the best of it. If you don't have a good head on your shoulders you could easily get lost in the party at COCA. However we overcame, hung out at the parties, and took the best we could out of the experience. Overall I feel honored by the friends and contacts I have made and I am confident that I will stay in touch, share ideas and work towards the betterment of all our campus communities.

Closing Thoughts

COCA itself needs more accountability, while not a problem for our delegates, other schools need some way of ensuring people attend sessions. Take for instance our own city, the delegates from NAIT and Grant MacEwan were both staying in the hotel. The Nait delegate took the conference very seriously the Grant Mac delegates were nowhere to be found. Omer and I would have loved to stay in the hotel, we probably would have had a much easier time taking in the conference. While the situation does not directly affect our school, it could in the future. We as an organization should have some assurance that our delegates are attending if the trip is at the cost of the Students' Union. The value I derived from the sessions was great, the new direction they have taken with them seems to have made them more pertinent to our respective duties. I believe I am better equipped to deal with the upcoming year. I not only made friends and bonds there, I feel we built a stronger bond with the student life team between Omer, Steve and Myself. Since there are a wide variety of sessions for member delegates like Omer and myself, as well as sessions for senior programmers like Steve. We all derived value from the experience. With the position of VP Student Life shifting more towards advocacy,

Omer could have easily taken away less. However, I found that if Omer wasn't learning something pertinent to his duties, he was being kept on the same page as me when it came to setting the tone for programming initiatives. The VPSL's attendance may not be fully utilizing the conference, but it does ensure we avoid being counter productive.

One of the things I realized was the benefit of having the resources we do when compared to other schools. I could have easily taken less away from this, however by being mindful of the value of everyone's experiences brought I can add more to our own programming initiatives. I think at the size of school we are we may even find value in sending more delegates. Or even if we were to establish some programming education program to act as a service to our student groups, services and residences, we could empower our students to build an even greater student experience on campus. That was COCA, thanks for reading.

~Mike Schwake