

**January 23rd, 2024
6:00 P.M.
Council Chambers/Zoom**

The University of Alberta and the University of Alberta Students' Union occupy Indigenous land in amiskwaciwâskahikan (Beaver Hills House), on Treaty 6 territory. From time immemorial, the banks along the river valley have been known as the Pehonan, a meeting place for the nêhiyawak (Cree), the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, Dènesųłiné (Dene), Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and others. The University, the Students' Union and much of the city are located on the unlawfully stolen land of the forcibly removed Papaschase Cree.

We acknowledge that sharing this land gives each of us the responsibility to research the historic contexts of Treaty 6, to reflect on our personal relationships to the land, the Nations we've named, and to our roles in upholding justice on this territory. Since they began, the Students' Union and the University have benefited from historic and ongoing dispossession of land and resources from Indigenous Peoples. As a result, it is our responsibility to seek the restitution of this land and its resources. Finally, we seek to do better by working to make our learning, research, and governance align with the histories, languages, teachings, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples in the land presently occupied by the Canadian state.

We encourage critical reflection by asking the following question. In relation to the territory on which you are situated, what role do you play in strengthening the resistance and resurgence of Indigenous students within your communities?

LATE ADDITIONS (SC-2023-20)

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2023-20/1 | <u>SPEAKERS BUSINESS</u> |
| 2023-20/1a | Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85666007012 |
| 2023-20/2 | <u>CONSENT AGENDA</u> |
| 2023-20/3 | <u>PRESENTATIONS</u> |
| 2023-20/4 | <u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOG REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS</u> |
| 2023-20/5 | <u>BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORT</u> |
| 2023-20/6 | <u>OPEN FORUM</u> |
| 2023-20/7 | <u>QUESTION PERIOD</u> |

2023-20/8 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2023-20/9 BOARD AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

2023-20/10 GENERAL ORDERS

2023-20/11 CLOSED SESSIONS

2023-20/12 INFORMATION ITEMS

2023-20/12f Executive Report - VPA

See SC-2023.20.15

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

UASU Students' Council Agenda Submission Form

Council Meeting Date

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

[Meeting Schedule](#)

Submitter

ALMEIDA

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Type of Item Submission

Information Item

Is this a Consent Agenda item?

No

Approval/Discussion Items

[Strategic Plan](#)

Calls for Nominations

[Council Committees and Boards](#)

Written Nominations

Information Items

Agenda Title

Executive Report - VPA

Description of the Information Item

The report of the Vice-President (Academic).

Attachments



Executive Report _15 - VPA.pdf

Presentations

Written Questions

Executive Reports

Council Report #15

Hi friends,

I am hoping to provide a bit of an update on several priorities that have been worked on for the past few weeks and months. There have been some key academic developments that I am super excited to share with all of you!

Indigenizing education

A major priority for UASU VPAs for years has been the introduction of more Indigenous course content. Over the years many strides have been made to furthering this goal and this year has shown amazing progress on this front across several programs at the University of Alberta. This can be done because of all the work that was achieved into the making and implementation of the [Braiding Past, Present and Future: University of Alberta Indigenous Strategic Plan](#), since its launch in [2022](#).

However, just because *Braiding* sets the path forward, does not mean the University and the UASU can just take a seat back, but instead we must actively work together to meaningfully implement the steps outlined in the strategic plan. What this has looked like over the past few months, in relation to the effort to Indigenize curricula across the University, has been actively collaborating with and following the guidance of the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming and Research), Dr. Florence Glanfield, in supporting efforts to introduce more Indigenous course content as well as criticizing plans that lacked this aspect.

One of the things I am most proud to have set up this year are regular meetings, where Dr. Glanfield, Victor Olsen, the VP Consultation and Engagement of the Indigenous Students' Union

(ISU) and I have a chance to come together to share priorities and identify areas of collaboration. We met once in the Summer, [once in the Fall](#) and there is one more meeting planned for later in the Winter. This was the first time these quarterly meetings with Dr. Glanfield, the ISU and the UASU have been organized, and they have allowed for several important topics to be discussed, such as the soon to be released Guidelines for Indigenous Ceremonial Practices at the University of Alberta, as well as ways the University can support the Residential Schools Memorial. In addition, as aforementioned, one of the topics that is consistently discussed is how student leaders can continue to support the move for Indigenizing education. We have talked about the importance of speaking up in support of great changes and in opposition to programs that have not appropriately addressed this question, which is exactly what I have tried to do over the past months.

It is also important to be aware and celebrate the tangible results that have been achieved as a result of *Braiding*, Dr. Glandfield's work, the work of the GFC Programs Committee and faculties, the work of the Provost's Office and the governance team, all of which are further helped by the collaborative efforts of student leaders. On [June 22nd](#), the GFC Programs Committee approved a new Bachelor of Science in Mechatronics and Robotics Engineering Cooperative Program, which had an extensive commitment and strategy for weaving a variety of Indigenous worldviews, histories and perspectives into the program. I was extremely grateful to have the opportunity to speak in favor of this program, highlighting that the degree of thought that was applied to this aspect of the program was phenomenal, and should serve as the standard for future proposals. On [September 14th](#), I was incredibly proud of my own faculty for putting forward an Indigenous course requirement as part of the Bachelor of Science renewal process, which is a great first step for the Faculty of Science to Indigenize curricula. In that same meeting, I had the opportunity to support Dr. Glandfield's call for ensuring that Indigenous course content was a priority of the Alberta School of Business' program revitalization for the Bachelor of Commerce program, particularly, emphasizing the importance of it being an early component of the program, which allows students to ensure they carry the knowledge they learn from this content for a larger proportion of their university experience. Soon after this meeting, Business updated the GFC Programs Committee that Indigenous course content was being incorporated into BUS 101, BUS 222, BUS 303, and BUS 404. On October 10th, I was pleased to see the creation of a new document, the *Quality Assurance Suite of Activities: Guidelines: Indigenization, Decolonization, Responding to the TRC Calls to Action in Academic Programs and Curricula* which guides how these concepts are a component of quality assurance reviews. On November 9th, the new option in Clean Energy and Sustainable Process Systems under the existing BSc in Chemical Engineering was approved. This was another great proposal from the Faculty of Engineering that included a clear plan for courses (CME 200 and CME 481) to have Indigenous components added; a plan to incorporate design projects and case studies that feature the connection to the land, northern climates, and Indigenous communities; a plan to engage with Indigenous-led

businesses/communities as partners in capstone design projects; and a requirement for students in co-op sequences to complete the Indigenous Canada MOOC. On January 11th, the AI Everywhere Embedded Certificate was approved, with a plan that outlined its commitment to incorporate more Indigenous research methodologies and community-based participatory research methods, to build capacity by training more Indigenous epidemiologists, and to support Indigenous self-determination.

Academic Materials Program

The proposed [Academic Materials Program](#) was presented to Council months ago and Council officially endorsed the UASU's position on the Academic Materials Program on [October 10th](#), which opposed AMP. I am pleased to inform Council that the **Academic Materials Program is not being implemented in Fall 2024**. The advocacy done by student leaders undoubtedly played a critical role in highlighting the significant issues with this proposal, and having AMP not be implemented is a huge win for students from across the University. We were informed that more information was required from the RFP process, and we believe that this are based on the concerns that students highlighted that are yet to have clear answers. It will be important in future years for the UASU and student leaders to be aware of these sorts of proposals, as automatic textbook billing models have started to pop up across the USA, meaning the University may want to try to implement something like this in the future. This is why the UASU has been working with [SPARC](#) to ensure that student associations' opposition to automatic textbook billing models is clear and strong, so that if another version of AMP is proposed in the future, student leaders will be well-equipped to oppose it. The plan is to have more details on this over the next few months!

Zero Textbook Cost

Alongside AMP not being implemented in Fall 2024, another huge win for students is the rising levels of Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) courses at the University of Alberta. Over the past few months, this has been a large focus of mine, through consistent discussions with the Library and the Office of the Registrar. We introduced the ZTCup to motivate faculties to adopt more of their courses as ZTC and I had the pleasure of working with the Library in coming up with a direct outreach campaign, where instructors using textbooks the Library had access to were reached out and encouraged to use the Library's version to save students money. I also had the opportunity to review and edit the ZTC promotional material that went out to instructors ahead of the Fall and Winter to encourage making their courses ZTC. Now, I am pleased to let Council know that **the proportion of ZTC class sections for Winter 2024 is 32.7%, the highest of any term since the ZTC indicator was introduced** (second highest term was Fall 2023, at 29.8%), making this academic year the one with the highest ZTC proportion of any year since the ZTC indicator was introduced. The full ZTC report should be coming out in the next few weeks and

the ZTCups are planned to be awarded at the February meeting of GFC. I am super proud of these results and a huge shout out and special thank you goes out to Sarah Shaughnessy and Jesse Luyendyk who I have had the pleasure of collaborating and working with for the past few months, I really can't fully express my gratitude!

Other areas of priorities

There are several other areas that I am hoping to share with all of Council soon. The current plan is for some updates on the work done to improve experiential learning to come to Council on February 6th and for there to be more updates on the Syllabus Management Tool and what it will mean for students on February 13th. In addition, the Academic Integrity Policy, which took up quite a bit of my focus earlier in the Summer, is coming for discussion at GFC on January 29th, as it ends its consultation cycle, before a final draft that should be coming for approval in the next few months.