

Date: 06/30/2020

To: Students' Union Council

Re: BoG Rep 2020/2021 Report #5 - **Polarization**

Dear Council,

Academic Restructuring

1. The board met Friday after our last Council meeting. We are meeting more frequently to properly handle academic restructuring. Although there was conversation about integrating EDI into the academic restructuring, it was not as heated as in GFC. We also saw David Turpin off, as this was his last board meeting as president.

Polarization

1. Over the last year as a Councillor and now as BoG Rep, I have seen students become emotionally polarized about big societal issues and how they are or are not addressed in the university. I share this concern about university leaders responding to big issues ineffectively.
2. A friend shared a book with me, "The Coddling of the American Mind," written by an American psychologist and an attorney, addressing student responses to university administration in the United States and how responses have increased in intensity, leading to little positive change but definitely fostering a culture of hostility and reduced freedom of expression. I read it two Christmases ago and it encouraged me to approach issues in a less emotionally-charged manner, trying to think carefully about all sides of issues and preserving relationships where possible, to be diplomatic and bring positive change that lasts as long as possible. I want to bring people groups together. I encourage you to read/listen to the book on Overdrive, or buy it at various outlets, including [Amazon](#), [Google Books](#), [Kobo](#) or local bookstores. The ebook is \$14 on all of those platforms.
3. Issues our generation face are complex and nuanced, requiring situational examination, patience and a multi-perspective approach. I'd love to chat about complex issues with any of you! To localize massive problems, we could chat about creative ways to answer university-level problems, as I have already enjoyed doing with some Councillors and Executives!

Current Projects

1. **Social Media:** having finally called Kate Chisholm and talked specifically about what I can and cannot distribute online, we have decided I can share open-session agenda content and meeting outcomes as listed in formal meeting minutes. Deviations from this are to be run past a university administrator. I am content with this outcome because it

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means I can put quick information in a place more accessible to students than UAlberta webpages.

- 2. Governance Content in NSOs:** I also asked Kate to review the content I developed for the eClass module for incoming students and we decided on some straightforward points that explain the board to new students. My WOW liaison will give feedback on these points when he sees them in the greater context of the module. I go to speak for the podcast this Friday and expect some questions within the next few days. Let me know if there's anything you think I should particularly emphasize in my sharing.

Socialization

- 1.** A board member asked me for coffee and we chatted about board things and our journeys growing up; it was an opportunity for reflection.

Thanks for reading!



University of Alberta Undergraduate Board of Governors Representative
Dave Konrad