

Date: 25/06/2018
To: Students' Union Council
Re: President 2018/19 Report

Dear Council,

Hi folks! My thanks for your patience and my apologies for having this report on the Late Additions. The last week has been incredibly busy, however, by being late I can give a much more fullsome written update on the Board of Governors activity. Aside from that, my life has been more hectic as ever, as my partner prepares for an election cycle in Calgary, our Executive Committee starts thinking about transition, and ill be thrilled to be observing a UASU election!

University of Alberta Governance Committee

The University of Alberta inaugural Board Governance Committee met this past Thursday! I am thrilled and thankful to be one of the founding members and to continue on my work from the Board Ad-Hoc Group on Governance and Mandates. The inaugural meeting was fairly quiet, simply went over some board working expectations and governance structures. In the future, the Board Governance Committee will be recommending new committee mandates, committee memberships, and board retreats and strategic sessions. Finally, the committee had a brief discussion on new policies coming forward in this budget cycle in regards to tuition, mandatory non-instructional fees, and exceptional tuition increases.

Board of Governors

Following up on the last piece, the Board had a briefing of the Comprehensive Institutional Plan and upcoming budget cycle on Friday. In short, the University is budgeting a 0% increase in revenues, a domestic tuition freeze (mandated by government), a 2.77% increase to International Student Tuition, a 5% increase to rent across all residence, and all other costs increases at the consumer price index. These numbers reflect the 3-year targets set in 2017/18 and likely will continue into the future. The Board also had a brief strategy session following the briefing. I continue to push is that affordability, accessibility, and quality education are the values that students want most in their education. Further, the continued increased cost of education across all of Canada is the most reported reason why students don't attend or apply to post-secondary education. However, it is important to also recognize that the post-secondary system in Alberta is about to hit a capacity crisis (nearly 90,000 new seats will be needed to have Alberta be the average of post-secondary participation in 5 years) and that our grant and loans system is widely inadequate for students requiring financial support. These policy positions are going to be some of the driving key messages put out by the post-secondary sector in the election season and things for students to have at the front of mind when folks discuss post-secondary education.

Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees and Exceptional Tuition Increases

A question that I have received from governors over the past week has been how with the UASU work with the University in regards to these fees? Further, how does voluntary student unionism affect that system? I have been thrilled to report that the UASU is likely the only student association that already has built in mechanisms for students to use when it comes to consulting on fees and for faculty associations to consider exceptional tuition. We have a referendum system in which students have supported new mandatory non-instructional fees in the past, such as the PAW Centre. Further, we have a system already in place for representative associations to do fullsome consultations, including a referendum, in regards to exceptional tuition increases. In short, I think it is very important to communicate to stakeholders and constituents that fees, in all forms, are either deliberated by a democratic representative body or are levied at the express consent of the referendum system. This system would be absolutely and fundamentally changed in any voluntary student union scenario and faculty associations ability to provide programming, advocacy, and services would likely cease, as well as, the entire purpose of the democratic system would be in jeopardy.

To Note:

- I will be taking on the responsibility of a number of executive portfolios following the 14th and if you have any questions regarding those portfolios, I will be the contact.
- Gender Based Violence Prevention Week is here! I enjoyed Anita Sarkeesian's talk immensely, as I know gender-based harassment and violence is something that my peers in student associations have faced to incredible extents.
- The University's new budget model will be slowly phased in over the coming years and the budget cycle will start this week at the Academic Planning Committee.
- I am working with the other representative organizations on campus to arrange a forum on PSE for the elections!
- I and members of the Executive Committee had lunch with our CASA member relations officer last Wednesday and the discussion was dominated largely by VSU.
- I am headed home for the weekend, so likely wont be answering emails or taking requests past Friday, so if you want to chat about anything (hint hint elections), please reach out to me as soon as possible and by email.

Cheers,

UASU President
Reed Larsen