

**Date:** 04/05/21

**To:** Students' Union Council

**Re:** President Report 04/05/21

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Dear Council,

I'm very excited to be joining you for the first official meeting of our 2021-22 team! We have a huge challenge ahead of us as we work to rebuild from the combination of a global pandemic and devastating cuts to our university. Undoing the damage of COVID to our campus community and finances, while fighting the decline in the quality of our academics due to cuts, is going to be the defining task of our year. But we don't just have a responsibility to bring back the campus and UASU of 2019-- we need to take this opportunity to change and grow to prepare for the demands of 2030 and beyond. I'm looking forward to hearing your perspectives on how we can do that.

This week's Executive Committee reports were on the late additions due to our retreat taking all of last week. Generally speaking, they are on the main order paper.

### **Alberta 2030 Recommendations**

After a year of work, the Alberta 2030: Skills for Jobs strategic plan for advanced education was released by Minister Nicolaidis. Alberta 2030 is meant to act as a strategic plan for the whole post-secondary system, and could impact Alberta students for the next decade plus. The strategy was developed with input from American consulting firm McKinsey for \$3.7M. As VP External and CAUS Chair, I was very closely involved in the development of the strategy, serving on the strategy's guiding coalition and overseeing the development of detailed submission documents from the UASU, CAUS, and the other CAUS members.

So what was the result? Our assessment of the 2030 review is that it is a mixed bag. Many of the things we were really worried about-- like the possibility of tuition deregulation, making important mandatory fees optional like in Ontario, and creating province-wide board to run institutions, did not happen. I credit the amazing work of student advocates and our staff from across Alberta for making sure those worst-case outcomes did not happen.

A fair number of our asks were in the final strategy in one form or another. For a couple brief highlights, the strategy promises to move towards needs-based grants for student financial aid-- but only over eight years. It promises to address sexual assault on campus, but details around funding are still fairly slim. It also promises to close the skills gap between graduate outcomes and labour market demands, but it isn't totally clear

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yet what data sources they will be using or what exact tools will be used to reduce the gap. There is an encouraging focus on work-integrated learning, but we need to make sure that doesn't end up being mostly about unpaid internships. So all things considered, it could have been a lot worse and does include some interesting opportunities-- that's a real testament to the great work of last year's student advocates.

Here are some interesting sources to learn more about the Alberta 2030 strategy:

- [The issues analysis presentation from McKinsey \(It is 217 pages\)](#)
- [Higher ed consultant Alex Usher's review of the strategy](#)
- [Summary of the government's stakeholder engagement](#)
- [UASU's submission to the review](#)
- [CAUS' submission to the review](#)

### **Executive Goals Process**

Today the Exec started work on our Executive Goals document, which will be finished in June. The Goals Document synthesizes all of our platforms around common themes, providing a unified work plan for the executive team.

### **Building Relationships with Counterparts**

Our external advocacy work depends a lot on having good relationships with our partners at the other post-secondary institutions in Alberta. To help build those connections, VP Fotang and I have already met with the incoming VPs External and Presidents from the Students' Association of MacEwan University, University of Lethbridge SU, and Students' Association of Mount Royal University. I'll be setting up intro meetings shortly with the U of C, NAIT, and Athabasca teams as well.

In other news, I hope my dog Tilda will be able to make a special guest appearance at Council today! If any of you have pets, you are **STRONGLY** encouraged to introduce them to us at Council. Last, the execs keep an open-door policy-- if you ever want to talk about anything, you can email me anytime at [president@uasu.ca](mailto:president@uasu.ca).

Cheers,



University of Alberta Students' Union President  
**Rowan Ley**