

Date: 08/18/21

To: Students' Union Council

Re: President's Report 08/24/21

Hello Council,

This report will be a little shorter than usual as I spent the week of the 9th-13th on vacation. It was great to disconnect (mostly) and enjoy some time in Quebec with my grandmother and parents!

Amarjeet Sohi Meeting

On Monday, the executive team met with mayoral candidate and former Edmonton Mill Woods MP, Minister of Infrastructure, and Minister of Natural Resources Amarjeet Sohi. We have now met with about half of registered mayoral candidates in Edmonton, and we have had very engaging conversations about key municipal students advocacy issues, including:



- Affordable housing, which is one of Edmonton's main assets. We have emphasized the need to allow dense, student-friendly housing near transit and in the core. Secondary suites, more and denser apartments and mid-or-high rises, and transit-oriented development are all key parts of the solution.
- Safe and respectful law enforcement practices that ensure students feel safer on transit and campus
- Student employment and ways the city can facilitate it, including working through the business community
- How the university community and the city can collaborate to support Edmonton and U of A's interests with the provincial government

Improved COVID safety on campus

This Tuesday, the University [overhauled the COVID safety plan for the Fall semester](#). We are very pleased to see this change-- we feel that it responds to the advocacy of the Students' Union in our [letter to Dr. Deena Hinshaw last week](#). We feel that the changes

Rowan Ley, President

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are reasonable and allow us to return to campus and a more exciting campus life, while ensuring that students who are understandably still concerned about COVID feel safe. While we have received both positive and negative reactions from students, the overall reaction has been relief and support.

It is important to emphasize that the Students' Union does not support the restriction of campus life or preventing students from enjoying their year. If all goes as we hope, the next semester will look mostly normal with the exception of mandatory testing for unvaccinated students (with accommodations) and masking. While masks are inconvenient, I think we can all agree that they are a minor inconvenience and a small price to pay for making people feel safe in their community.

Lastly, I've received a lot of questions about what the University's exit plan from restrictions is. While no decisions have been made about the Winter semester, I see the Fall semester as a gradual transition towards normalcy in the Winter. If there is no outbreak on campus, and no unpleasant surprises in public health, I believe a return to normalcy in the Winter is appropriate. COVID cannot and will not last forever.

Announcement next Wednesday

We will be making an exciting joint announcement about COVID safety on campus with the University next Wednesday. While previous COVID announcements have been grim but necessary work, I hope we will all find this one much more positive.

Lastly, I want to wish you all the best of luck as we return and gather on campus again. I know it has been a miserable year for many of us, and while we still have some way to go I hope we are turning the corner. I can't wait to see you all in person and share the experience that Students' Council should be, and get to know you all as more than a zoom square.

Sincerely,



University of Alberta Students' Union President
Rowan Ley