

Date: 13/04/2021

To: Students' Union Council

Re: Vice President Academic 2020/21 Report #23

This is looking to be the final report of my term as Vice President Academic. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of the students who trusted me to serve them in this position. I can truly attest that I will be leaving this role in good hands. In light of this being my final report I have outlined my successes in regards to my platform points below.

Making University More Affordable

Reducing reliance on High Cost Textbooks Through Open Educational Resources

- Ensured discussions around open education were at the forefront when talking about academic materials during the planning for Fall 2020
- Co-authored an Op-Ed about the importance of OER for students in the Edmonton Journal, the article received strong uptake.
- Filmed a series of lunch and learn videos for students interested in getting involved in OER advocacy
- Co-Authored the first ever UASU Open Education Policy
- Successfully advocated for the creation of a Zero Textbook Cost Signifier Program, which is set to launch in August 2021.

Advocating for more Needs-Based Awards and Scholarships

- Worked with the Registrar's Office around financial aid during the SET initiative. Discussed moving awards applications centrally to increase the accessibility of applications for students. This change saves students time and may award them scholarship money they were unaware they were eligible for.
- Discussed with the Registrar's Office the importance of the Access fund as a needs based system.

Push for Open, Accessible, and Equitable Experiential learning Opportunities

- Worked with VPSL Katie Kidd to develop a presentation on the policy gaps existing in WIL at the University of Alberta. We then presented on these policy gaps to the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment, The Council on Student Affairs, and the Programs Committee.
- After the presentations individuals on the various committees had a broader understanding of the policy gaps as well as the need for more protections for students on practica.
- We are now working with the Provost's Portfolio Initiatives manager as well as the GFC Secretary to begin the drafting process of a new UAPPOL policy with explicit protections for students on practica.

Advocating for Student Needs

Weekend Midterms

- Within the UASU Assessment and Grading Policy there is now a fact regarding the inequities of weekend assessments and a resolution binding future UASU members to advocate for alternatives to the use of weekend midterms.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the other discussions around exam equity took the forefront, most directly Online Proctoring and Asynchronous Assessments.
- I have raised issues of Online Proctoring and Asynchronous assessments to every committee of the General Faculties Council of which I am a member, as well as to any member of the University leadership whom I have met.
- I have been in print media, live radio, television news and other forms of media multiple times talking about the issues of online proctoring, at local, national and international scales.
- Currently I am serving on the Provost's Task Force for Remote Learning Online Proctoring Working Group where I have worked on the development of a policy surrounding the use of online proctoring which is currently undergoing consultation prior to its implementation.

Increasing Access to Accommodations and Course Descriptions

- Advocated for additional functionalities within the enrollment software to allow students to gather more information about their courses. This function was later added to the new version of Beartracks and currently some work is underway around categorizing courses via theme to add additional search functionality.
- Advocated tirelessly for the university to respect accommodations of students during the online terms as many remote teaching strategies unfairly disadvantaged students with accommodations.

Reducing Barriers to Representation

- Worked on the Governance Restructuring Task Force to look at various barriers to success within governance for Students' Council and for Student Representative Associations and proposed solutions.
- Added Micro-Credentialing to Student Leaders Week / Alberta Student Leader Summit in order to provide attendees with tangible credentials to verify their skills.
- Working on the GFC Ad Hoc Procedural Review Committee to formalize the ability to virtually attend meetings in order to remove the need to be physically on North Campus to participate.
- Worked with the Registrar's Office to change the use of the term "other" for gender declaration during applications.
- Fought Transphobia at the General Faculties Council
- Actively worked to normalize queer expression within governance spaces across campus.

Revitalize the Student Movement on The General Faculties Council

Reframe Student Perception of GFC

- Highlighted the importance of involvement in GFC as well as the impact of the decisions made there.
- Encouraged students to take charge and actively engage during their time on GFC
- Emphasized that students have very real and tangible authority / power while serving on GFC
- Worked to ensure that people understand the importance of and the role of student involvement on GFC.
- Success in this work can be seen through the dramatic increases in student engagement with GFC over my tenure. Looking at the election results for the Students Council / GFC elections over the past 3 years students seeking election to GFC has dramatically increased.

Work with Faculty Associations to fill all vacant positions

- For the first time in University of Alberta history all of the undergraduate student seats on GFC have been filled.
- This unprecedented achievement showcases that students are willing to engage and take charge of their academic success
- I firmly believe that this record sets a new standard for future Vice Presidents Academic to follow.

Lead an Organized Student Caucus.

- Drafted a GFC handbook which outlines important information such as committee mandates, meeting procedures, individuals who serve on GFC as well as constructive materials such as worksheets for drafting effective questions, guides for effective participation.
- Worked with the GFC governance team to organize an early orientation for new members of GFC to fulsomely explain the committee structures, mandates, and time commitments so that they can form educated applications for committee positions.
- Held frank and open conversations prior to GFC meetings where students were able to ask questions and provide context on the various items on GFC agendas. I actively ensured that these meetings were not prescriptive of opinion but rather only a place to provide context and discuss / workshop any questions in order to build confidence in participation.

Once again, to all the students who put their trust in me for this year, thank you. I truly did everything within my power to make all of our lives easier where I could.

All the best,

David Draper

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University of Alberta Students' Union Vice President Academic