

Date: 25/08/2020

To: Students' Union Council

Re: Vice President Academic 2020/21 Report #9

Dear Council,

My apologies for not being able to attend this council meeting in person as I am out of office last week of August. I've made this report slightly more in depth in order to hopefully answer any questions you may have. If you still have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me and we can chat once I am back in the office!

It has been a very productive two weeks since we last met, here are some of the highlights;

Alex Usher Session

- CASA hosted a "Wisdom Wednesday" session with Alex Usher. Alex Usher is the president of the Higher Education Strategy Association as well as the first National Director of CASA. This was quite an interesting session. Usher talked in depth about his predictions for the fall and what major issues he can foresee. Usher also talked about what he thinks student associations should be doing proactively now to prepare for the advocacy they will need to do in order to fix issues with online courses as they arise.

Meetings with UASU director of Research and Advocacy

- Brimming with ideas from the Alex Usher session, Jon and I sat down to discuss our plans for the fall semester. In this meeting we decided that the UASU will be putting out a large scale survey to collect grass roots experiences from students for the fall semester. We will be partnering with Faculty Associations and hopefully they will partner with their Department Associations to be able to get feedback from as many students in as many classes as possible so that we can highlight what strategies are working, what strategies are not working, and what needs to change. This data will be immensely valuable to the university and will hopefully be enough to curtail issues popping up in problem classes.

CoFA Member Services

- We had the CoFA Member's Services board where CRO Muneeb Ahsan presented about the benefits of Faculty Associations using the UASU voting system. We also talked about the various project FAs have been working on and how we can better support each other as organizations. The Survey mentioned in the previous section was also brought up and seemed to receive a lot of support.

Committee on the Learning Environment ad hoc Task Force on the Implementation of the Code of Practice for Student Learning Analytics (CLETFICPSLA)

- The first meeting of CLETFICPSLA happened on Monday and was quite interesting! The meeting was predominantly focused on how to ensure that Student Learning Analytics are only accessible with the expressed informed consent of students and that the data can only be used for things the student explicitly agrees to. We also had a lot of discussion about when

the data is anonymized, where it is stored, and who has access to it at any point in time. I raised the concern about professors creating a biased opinion of a student's performance based on learning analytics and marking them based on this biased opinion. The committee echoed this concern and agreed that certain types of data should not be available to professors prior to marking. Overall I'm quite pleased that the committee supports an opt-in model built based exclusively in the informed consent of students for this project.

Be Book Smart Campaign Planning

- In preparation for the Fall Semester I have been working with the marketing team to organize the BeBookSmart Campaign. As the typical fair can not happen due to Covid-19 restrictions we have decided to launch an online campaign to educate students and faculty about alternatives to expensive textbooks as well as ways to reduce costs when buying a textbook. I have also been in contact with leaders in the field of Open Education and have organized lunchtime talks about the importance of OpenEd. Stay tuned for more exciting news and check out BeBookSmart.ca to see the updated website!

Meeting with University Libraries

- I had my first monthly meeting with Michelle Brailey, the University of Alberta Digital Resource Librarian. These meetings act as a way for us to keep each other in the loop on our own advocacy surrounding OERs and Open Ed. Michelle is a fantastic ally to have in the university and i'm looking forward to working alongside her more in the future!

Work with 4th year Performance Students

- I have been working with two students in the 4th year performance program over the past month. These students approached me to voice concerns about their department's decision to have 1st through 3rd year performance classes in person while migrating 4th year students exclusively online. I helped these students craft a proposal for an alternative and put them in contact with facilities managers for a variety of buildings in order to help them find alternative spaces to facilitate their classes. My role in this was primarily a supportive one in order to ensure that the university took concerns seriously and treated these students fairly. The final decision was made on Tuesday that although it may not be feasible for them to host classes in person, the previously canceled Shakespeare performance will happen again.
- I wanted to publicly congratulate the students who took on this project, as working with dedicated student advocates (both in and outside of elected positions) is the highlight of my role. Thank you for your hard work Lauren and Hannah, it is wonderful to see the passion you have for advocating for your fellow students.

Meeting with the Augustana Students Association

- The UASU executive team met with the Augustana Students Association team to help foster communication and friendship between our teams. We talked about major priorities for the year, issues which have arrived, how we can support Augustana students and the ASA, as well as concerns regarding academic restructuring and the Alberta 2030 review from the provincial

government. I'm looking forward to our work in the future and am glad to see we are building strong, proactive communication channels.

VP-A counterparts meeting

- The Vice President Academics from SAMU, UCSU, ULSU, SAMRU, and myself met for a counterparts discussion on wednesday. We talked about a variety of things such as OERs, Online education, Academic Integrity, university governance structures, and EDI. It was quite interesting to hear what is similar and different between are institutions and to hear about projects these VP-As are working on within their own institutions. We are planning on doing more of these in the future in order to support each other and brainstorm solutions to problems felt by students across the province.

Personal Life Update

- The past two weeks were quite busy in my personal life. It was my Mom's birthday, as well as my anniversary with my partner. It was quite pleasant to look back to see how much my family has grown as people over the last year, it was also quite nice celebrating the past year with my partner. To celebrate our anniversary, we decided to DIY recreate our favourite dates from the last year using only things we have at home. Alongside these celebrations, I was finally able to get my first tattoo! It had been delayed due to covid, however I was finally able to get it done last Thursday.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, concerns, ideas, dog photos, or anything else, don't hesitate to reach out! I hope you all are having a fantastic summer and I wish you all the best with the start up of your classes. Remember, UASU Got this!

David Draper*David Draper*

University of Alberta Students' Union Vice President Academic