

Date: 24/08/2021

To: Students' Union Council

Re: Vice President Academic 2021/22 Report #9

Dear Council,

Yet another two weeks have passed. As we get closer to the start of the semester, a lot is happening in the VPA world. Here is a breakdown of what I have been working on!

Zero Textbook Cost Indicator Program

After three years of advocacy and two submissions to GFC, the Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Indicator program launched on Monday, August 16, 2021. This is an essential program to transparently inform students about the costs associated with their educational choices, increase accessibility to education, lower/remove the cost of course material, and recognize instructors' efforts in achieving cost reduction of their teaching materials. Instructors remove the cost of additional course material through open educational resources (OER), Library materials, or free and online content.

A form was sent out to all professors and explained what Zero Textbook Cost means, why they should participate, how to enroll in the program, and where to find resources to start teaching ZTC if they would like to. Since the program launch on Monday, in less than 24 hours, 185 instructors have signed up for the program! As of Wednesday morning, there are 270!!!

After years of VPA advocacy, I cannot stress enough how big of a win this is for students. This program could save students at the University of Alberta potentially millions of dollars this year alone! A University of Toronto ZTC pilot project across only 53 courses saved students almost half a million dollars and saved 1.7 million pages' worth of paper (around 9 tons). This is HUGE!!

While this program is only a pilot for the 2021/22 academic year, we need to continue to encourage professors in our faculties to sign up for the program. I encourage all of you to reach out to instructors you have had that didn't have additional course material costs associated with their courses and encourage them to sign up for the program if they haven't already. Instructors can find the form in their inbox or email Anna Vocione (Assistant Registrar Exams and Timetabling) at anna.vocioni@ualberta.ca if they want to sign up!

Stay tuned for more information on how this indicator works on Bear Tracks and how you can help to expand ZTC on campus!

Finally, I want to give a shoutout to my predecessors Akanksha Bhatnagar (VPA 18/19), Joel Agarwal (VPA 19/20), and David Draper (VPA 20/21) for all the work they put into getting this program to where it is now. <3

Mandatory Support Fee

Many students have reached out to me about a new fee that they see on their fee breakdown in Bear Tracks called the “mandatory support fee.” I reached out to the Registrar’s Office about this fee because of the concern that it was not transparent at all, and students did not know where their money was going. I have cleared this up, and info on where to find the fee information is below.

“The label of Mandatory Support Fee represents a variety of approved non-regulated fees that generally apply at the course level. This is why there are different amounts because it is being driven specifically by student registration. Examples of these fees include field schools, field trips, mandatory supplies, etc. These fees are all approved through our normal governance processes.

A student can see the breakdown of these fees by viewing the ‘charge details’ page or the “tuition receipt” once paid.

In the New Bear Tracks, instead of seeing the account details, we can see **Charges Due**. By Clicking on the tab labelled Detail of Charges Due, the student can see further details offered by the item type description.

Bylaw Committee

First Principles of Bylaw 200 are on the Order Papers for your approval.

Nominating Committee

We currently have applications open to fill a student-at-large vacancy on Sustainability Committee! If you know any undergraduate students who are passionate about sustainability and looking for a volunteer opportunity, please send them this link!

<https://uasu.bamboohr.com/jobs/view.php?id=152>

Policy Committee

Councillors Aamer, Beasley, Dhillon and I are currently doing consultation for the second principles of the Experiential Learning Political Policy.

Cheers,



Abner Monteiro

Vice President Academic

University of Alberta Students' Union