Dear Council,

Happy to be seeing you all again! I hope you are all healthy and well. We’re about 4.5 months into the pandemic closures, and I have to say I’m getting pretty tired of it. I read a news article this week that described it as ‘lockdown fatigue’, and that is very much how it feels to me. I honestly hope you are finding healthy rhythms and habits for your day to day life. Let me know if you ever want to talk about how you are feeling.

Plant update: my bean plants hate the rain, but my pea plants are holding on. Maybe the hot weather next week will inspire them to grow more!

**UPass Update**

**Fall Semester Alternative**

As I had discussed last week, we submitted another proposal to ETS in an attempt to find a solution for the Fall semester, in which we presented two options. We suggested either a student-focused discount on existing fare products, or allowing all registered students to qualify for the upper tier of the Ride Transit Program (regardless of household income). Both options of this proposal were rejected. We have written a letter to City Councillors asking them to help the Students’ Associations reach a solution with ETS. We have already received responses and meeting requests, which we see as a hopeful sign. Realistically, we do not expect a September 1st roll-out of whatever solution is found, as time is running short. However, we are looking to implement a solution as soon as we know what it will be. We have been working tirelessly and doing all that we can on our end to find a solution, and we thank students again for their patience.

**Contract Negotiation**

Negotiations between the Students’ Associations and the Municipalities are set to begin on August 18th. Both sides have now exchanged positions (starting asks), and I have been and continue to be putting in a lot of work to ensure that I am equipped for negotiating. Unfortunately both sides have agreed not to publicly share information on positions, so I cannot disclose what has been said.
Health & Wellness Update

Health & Dental Plan
Vice President Kidd and I have been working on creating a second tier to the Health & Dental insurance plan, and it has just been finalized! This Fall, students will have the option of choosing between the Comprehensive Plan and the Basic Plan (besides opting out entirely). The Comprehensive Plan will cost $315 per year, and the Basic Plan will cost $240. Our intention is to provide students with another option for their health coverage that is more affordable while remaining competitive and high-quality.

Empower Me
As part of the Health Plan, we have added Empower Me this year. We recognize an increasing need for students to access mental health services, especially remote services during COVID. Empower Me is a mental health service that connects students to counselling in-person, and by telephone, video-counselling, or e-counselling. Students can call their phone number to set up initial appointments with operators who are also trained counsellors to help in crisis situations. It is available 24 hours per day, and is confidential, multilingual, culturally sensitive, and inclusive.

Noteworthy Meetings
Vice-President, Finance & Administration Search Committee
At last week’s meeting, the Search Committee received an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion educational session. I am so encouraged to see this committee’s own diversity, and its commitment to making positive choices regarding EDI.

If you have any questions about the contents of this report, or simply want to talk, please feel free to reach out! Stay safe and healthy.

Best,

Alana Krahn
University of Alberta Students’ Union Vice President (Operations & Finance)