Dear Council,

Here is a summary of the activities I have been involved in throughout this last week.

Meeting with Councillor Michael Janz

Last Thursday, I had a fruitful virtual discussion with the City Councillor for Ward Papastew–Michael Janz. A former UASU exec himself, Councillor Janz began our meeting sharing our respective UASU experiences. I congratulated Councillor Janz on his recent election and stressed the importance of developing a strong relationship between City Council and Edmonton’s post-secondary student’s unions/associations. I also shared the priority of our ESA membership—transportation, student employment and housing. Understanding that work integrated learning is becoming an increasingly popular form of learning, I expressed to councillor Janz that the City of Edmonton is in a unique position to offer students the degree relevant work experience that can enhance their learning and equip them with the skills to enter and become incredible contributors to Edmonton’s workforce. I further stressed that with brain drain being a real threat to Edmonton’s as well as Alberta’s future, providing more opportunities for student employment is a fantastic incentive for students to remain and live in Edmonton. Councillor Janz shared this ideal and committed to supporting pushing for student employment opportunities during his tenure. Cllr. Janz also shared interest in what the affordable housing situation on Campus was like and what the
plans for the ring houses were. My knowledge on what the specific plans on the ring houses was limited and I directed Cllr Janz to seek further information from President Ley and VP Dixon. However, I did share that more could be done by the City to push for more affordable housing options for students in the City.

Meeting with Shannon Dunfield and ASC President Vaughn Beaulieu-Mercredi

Last week, I met with Fellow Senate member Shannon Dunfield and President of ASC Vaughn Beaulieu-Mercredi to discuss pathways for increasing indigenous student representation in the University of Alberta Senate. For context, this conversation arose when during a senate plenary constituency reports, Senator Dunfield was interested in learning more about activities and priorities for the Aboriginal Student Council and further inquired why there were not any Indigenous student reps on the Senate. During our conversation, I explained to President Vaughn and Senator Dunfield how the current composition of the senate is laid out in the PSLA. Prior to this discussion, I explained what representation would look like, President Vaughn inquired as to what the nature and role of the Senate is, which I also explained. The consensus was that this was a body which ASC could benefit from and President Vaughn and I could have further discussions as to what would be the best approach to providing representation of an Indigenous students rep on the Senate.

Important CAUS Update

I regret to inform Council of the recent decision by the University of Calgary Students' Union (UCSU) to leave the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS). President Ley and I, along with all members of CAUS are sad to see them but nevertheless respect their decision. UCSU has always been a valuable partner and important factor in growing the Alberta student movement. I personally have enjoyed the relationship we have built this year advocating on the issue of ETIs. It is my hope that we can continue to work together on common goals, interests and opportunities.

Upcoming Meetings

- MP Desjarlais
- Minister Issik
- CASA Board retreat

I hope you are all preparing well for your finals and looking forward to the break that will come after. I wish you all the best and as always, never ever hesitate to reach out to me for questions.

Yours Externally,

University of Alberta Students’ Union Vice President External
Christian Fotang