Hello Council, I won’t have much of a personal note here because there’s a lot to report!

**UPass Replacement Advocacy**
On Wednesday, VP Krahn, VP Agarwal, and I, along with Councillors Fotang, Dixon, and Kaur, spoke at Edmonton City Council to voice our concerns regarding ETS’s proposed alternative to the UPass for this semester. Council voted 11-0 to approve the planned changes despite our request for modifications, but it is not quite as bad as it sounds. Our biggest concern was that 60% of U of A students live with their families and commute to campus, and our understanding based on past conversations with ETS, other municipalities, the ETS website, and the Ride Transit application form was that they could not qualify for the Ride Transit program on the basis of a high household but low personal income. At Council, though, ETS said that students over 18 could apply for Ride Transit even if they live at home. This means the vast majority of students we thought would not qualify will. This leaves three main problems.

- The application process for Ride Transit can be long and confusing
- Students under 18 will not be able to qualify
- Most significantly, international students will not be able to qualify. This is obviously alarming as they are a large group facing disproportionate barriers.

What are we doing about it?

- We are providing information to help students navigate the Ride Transit application process, which is fairly simple if it is clearly explained
- We are continuing to work with City Hall and other groups to try to find a way to get a similarly cheap fare product for international students and students under 18. We have a few ideas in mind.

This has obviously not turned out exactly how we hoped, but is also a significant improvement over what we had feared. I would also note that while they did not vote in our favour, many councillors were very understanding and showed a willingness to keep working on this issue and not leave it here.

We also spoke to a number of media outlets about the decision. Some of our media coverage can be found here:
Campus Sexual Violence Response Progress
Because of the disruption brought on by COVID-19, the timeline for legislation on campus sexual violence may be impacted (among many other legislative items). Because action on CSV is urgent, I am working with the Minister’s office to set up a meeting with some senior staff where CAUS will propose a Ministerial Order to fight campus sexual violence. This will only be one step in our ongoing work on this file and we will continue to support legislation, but has the potential to make an immediate difference on some of the aspects of CSV prevention and response that do not cost money. We are working on the details and I will have more to tell you about this next Council.

Alberta 2030 Progress
I have received invitations to panel discussions with the 17 other members of the Alberta 2030 Challenge Panel and McKinsey representatives. There are six two-hour sessions on the following topics:

● Develop highly-skilled and globally competitive graduates.
● Create a more efficient system, by bringing costs down and removing duplication.
● Strengthen post-secondary participation and accommodate growing enrolment demands.
● Strengthen the commercialization of research.
● Explore the most effective governance model to achieve these aims.
● Strengthen PSIs’ role in the development of a higher performing innovation ecosystem across government, industry, PSIs, and other players.

If you have thoughts about any of these issues you think McKinsey would benefit from hearing, please reach out and I would be happy to hear your advice.

Have an awesome week!

University of Alberta Students’ Union Vice President External
Rowan Ley