Council Report #9: Oh, hello. How I’ve missed you (UofA)!

Hello Council,

Welcome back to university! I hope all of you have been enjoying your first week back. I am sure it has been a hectic week volunteering for things such as Orientation and WOW, meeting with friends you haven’t seen for months, checking out the fairs and events on campus, drinking in the beer gardens, and (of course) studying for the impending tests in your new classes! But of course another year older just means another year wiser, and a fresh new semester means a fresh new council report! (Courtesy of your Vice-President (External))

Provincial
CAUS Alumni Event

CAUS is planning an alumni event this October to celebrate our 30th year of student advocacy! I am proud to say that I will be providing support to the committee as they move forward. We are fortunate to have such strong alumni such as Don Iveson, Naheed Nenshi and Randy Boissonault come out of CAUS and we look forward to celebrating the successes of the organization.

Municipal
Century Park Parking Lots

As I am sure many of you know by now, there is greatly reduced free parking at the Century Park Park n’ Ride lot. The number of paid stalls has increased to 75%, and the cost of the stalls has gone up from $40 to $50. The decision for this was made and passed by City Council in spring of this year, after city wide consultation with multiple stakeholders. Due to this change having been made months ago, after city wide consultation, the membership of the Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA) has decided that it is best for Students’ Unions to focus its efforts on ensuring that students are aware of the changes being made to transit and parking, especially at the Century Park transit station.

UASU

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Much of the past couple weeks has been focused on inter-university relations and Orientation/Week of Welcome. I would like to start this section off by offering a HUGE thank you to the students, staff and student staff who have worked their butts off to pull this together. I am absolutely astounded at the level of commitment those both working and volunteering have put into creating this event from the ground up. In all honesty, I sincerely thank you for all of the effort you have put in. This has been an amazing start to an incredible year, and it would not have happened without you. Y’all the real MVPs!

Meetings With Faculty Associations

Over the past couple of weeks myself, along with my fellow execs have had the incredible opportunity to sit down and discuss plans, goals, and life with the executive members of the Augustana Students Association, as well as l’Association des universitaires de la Faculté Saint-Jean! I absolutely enjoyed meeting with the passionate, caring and hard-working students who make sure the students at our Augustana and Campus Saint-Jean campuses are well taken care of and are enjoying their year. I am excited to be working alongside them to ensure the best for University of Alberta students throughout the year!

Lister Move-In

On August 26th I was lucky enough to get the chance to help acclimatize our new Lister residents as they moved onto our campus. I had some wonderful conversations with some very excited (but also nervous) first year students as they lugged their suitcases, boxes, fridges, and a few TV’s into their new homes. I sincerely wish all of them the best throughout their first year. As we all know, the first year of university for many students is incredible, however it is not the easiest time in our lives. It is full of ups and downs, and massive metaphorical hills to climb. Because of that, I believe it is our duty as Student Representatives to make sure any first year we meet feels welcome into our community, as this is their new home (for some in more ways than one). I urge all of us to take the time out of our day to meet a first year during these next few weeks and make them feel at home. Welcome to University all of you!

Presidents’ Address and Orientation

I am so happy to say that August 31st has been one of the best days of my exec term thus far! I am absolutely floored at the amount of effort put in to making sure that Orientation and Presidents’ Address was up and running. I really enjoyed running around campus testing groups of first years and handing out prizes with the incredible hype team! In addition, I feel so incredibly blessed to have been on stage, alongside my fellow Executives, introducing honored guests and welcoming 3000 first year students to our campus. Despite having mentioned this before, I just want to give a HUUUUGGGEEEE shoutout to our staff and volunteers who helped put this together. I am happy to say that I had many moments of nostalgia throughout the day, and hope that our newest students take away just as much from their introduction to this new world that I did.
Whelp, that’s all for this week’s episode of “Bi-Weekly Updates and Other Short Stories from the Vice-President (External)”. I just want to end this off with a quick little message for our first year students:

During my Presidents’ Address there was one moment that stuck out to me most. Our then President, Petros Kusmu, came onto stage and in his speech told us a small story about two friends that he had on Facebook, each having graduated that past year. One posted a short rant about how they were happy that university was finally over, and how they had wasted four years of their life in the backrooms of campus chasing after a worthless piece of paper. The other however, posted about how they couldn’t believe how fast time flew by. This person told the world of the stories they had, the friends they had made and the moments that they will cherish forever. They wrote about how they had been scared when they first entered their first year, but with encouragement decided to get involved, and how involvement had changed their life. The point being that, as in life, this university experience will be what you make of it. Even though it might be terrifying at first, please remember that it is up to you to make this university experience your own. You have entered into a land of opportunity, surrounded by driven peers who share your interests, who want to be your friend. There is no time like the present to make the most of your year, and making the most of it now will guarantee you incredible years after that. Don’t just chase your dreams, take them. If you ever need help, please don’t be afraid to ask. I truly believe in you, you can do it.

For the times they are-a changin’,
Mike Sandare

(P.S. Councillors, please do all you can to ensure the best for our new friends on campus. You are the leaders of today, and I trust you will also help them become the leaders of tomorrow!)