University of Alberta Students' Union

POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 14 , 2016
4:00 pm
SUB 6-06

ATTENDANCE

NAME	PROXY	PRESENT
Victoria Dejong (Chair)		Y
Michael Sandare		Y
Franchesca El Ghossein		Y
Marina Banister		Y
Sandy Brophy		Y
Frederique Ndatirwa		Y
Delane Howie		Y
Kyle Monda		Y
Reed Larsen		Y

MINUTES (PC 2016-09)

2016-09/1 **INTRODUCTION**

2016-09/1a **Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 4:02 pm.

2016-09/1b **Approval of Agenda**

DEJONG/GHOSSEIN moved to approve the agenda for February 14, 2016 as is.
Vote 8/0/0
CARRIED

2016-09/1c **Approval of Minutes**

DEJONG/BANISTER move to tables minutes to next Policy Committee meeting.
Vote 9/0/0
CARRIED

2016-09/1d **Chair's Business**

2016-09/2 **<u>QUESTION/DISCUSSION PERIOD</u>**

2016-09/2a **Meeting Schedule**

DEJONG: I like having meetings on off-council weeks as that gives us time to bring it to Council. The next Council meeting is Tuesday, February 28th after reading week. I would just propose that move our next meeting to be the next Tuesday following that so March 7th.

SANDARE: How many policies do we have left to go through that expire this term and how many weeks of council?

DEJONG: I believe we have four policies and we have four weeks of council.

BANISTER: There won't be quorum if Policy meets on March 7th due to five members on leave of absence during elections.

BROPHY: I am also unable.

DEJONG: I really do want to have a meeting that week. We are going to call a meeting on Friday, March 10th.

BANISTER: Election party will be at 6PM.

LARSEN: Also, Council Meet and Greet will be that day from 12PM to 3PM.

DEJONG: Are people available at 11AM?

Councillors agree.

DEJONG: We will be calling a Policy Committee meeting from 11AM to 12PM on Friday March 10th, and are next meeting following that will be 4pm on March 21st.

2016-09/3b **Public Transit Policy Review**

DEJONG: This is one of the policies that expire this term. Does anyone have any comments they would like to make?

BROPHY: A problem one of my constituents ran into last summer while they were working at University was that they couldn't get any sort of pass. As they were not taking classes, they couldn't get a upass. And they couldn't get any sort of transit passes like other employees do who aren't students. It would be nice if there was something in there for employees who are also students to have access to transit passes.

DEJONG: That is reasonable.

MONDA: You can get a upass if you add a class, then drop it.

BROPHY: There generally aren't summer classes for law students to do that plus I don't think it's fair for students to have to go through a work around like that.

MONDA: Yeah, I agree with that.

HOWIE: So, employees of the Students' Union have access to getting a upass?

BROPHY: Students who are considered casual employees of the university even though they work full time during that summer don't have access to anything that would normally be duplicated by a member of the SU. So, because they are two classes around the thing, they aren't eligible for the upass but , they also aren't available for the transit passes that other University employees are. I got an email about this last summer.

GHOSSEIN: I'm all for it but it all comes down to the contract that we have with the City of Edmonton. As far as I know, there is no such stipulation in the contract that we have right now so we might have to ask the University to do something about it.

BROPHY: Yeah, the policy is to do with transit so I don't think everything in the policy has to aimed at actors. I am talking about an idea aimed at the University to says this needs to change and would could fit under the policy unless that is another policy concerning student transit where it might fit better under.

GHOSSEIN: So, just to clarify for my own safety because I'm going to be going to upass meetings so we are directing that towards the university, correct?

BROPHY: Correct.

GHOSSEIN: So, in my mind, those students wouldn't receive a upass but receive the transit passes other employees receive.

BROPHY: Yeah, I'm saying the university should give those student employees the same benefit other employees receive.

MONDA: Can we do that?

BROPHY: Yeah, it's about asking the university for these things.

GHOSSEIN: We do get request for example, extending gym memberships when a students' academic year ends in May. We just need to advocate.

DEJONG: That's definitely a gap that the SU should be trying to fill. Does anybody have anything else they'd like to add?

MONDA: I think we need to put more about safety in the this policy because a lot of students feel unsafe using public transit in the Edmonton area. Currently, it kinda addresses that in the first principle/facts we should have more about that students feel unsafe on transit. We also have a lot of data to back that up since the Edmonton Students' Association did a survey, and it's something that our advocacy efforts can be better on.

DEJONG: Yeah, I think we're all in agreement about that. So, students summer casual employees and safety on transit are two gaps we've identified. Let's go through it point by point and see if what we want to be changed. Looking at the policy, it looks good to me but I wanted to open that out to everyone so let me know. This is kinda too much for us to hash out today.

SANDARE: For changes we can make, when we look at this again. The upass have been expanded to regional municipalities. So for resolution point 4, I think we can just use that as all upass users as a whole.

BROPHY: I not sure what that change would be as that seems to be the point anyway.

SANDARE: Yeah, definitely not a huge change but just pointing out the fact that we are under one system now as opposed to before.

BROPHY: The thing is yes, we're all under the upass but each figures out their own routes and such independently. It's not like we're just dealing with one system. They're still independent groups.

GHOSSEIN: In my mind, it also has to be expanded to leduc and others. If you live on a farm,

DEJONG: If there aren't any more comment, so if I heard right we have these three items to add. Is there anyone who is interested in doing a review of the policy for the next committee meeting?

GHOSSEIN: I can do that. I can put it in a google doc so that other can see the changes and also add in stuff.

DEJONG: Great, so that will be for the next meeting.

2016-09/3c **Tuition Policy Review**

HOWIE: So tuition is very challenging since after talking about it constituents, people have a lot of opinions on it but it has to be renewed. I'm trying to figure out if we go for something really strong or if we kinda renew most/all of what's there and leave it until next time. I'm not sure what to do since some want to redo the whole the policy and specify $0 tution with a roadmap to nothing. And then, there are others who want to consider the other side and where I personally stand is not important because when you're looking at the review, it needs to work for everyone. So, I'm very open to anyone's thoughts on how to do this.

BROPHY: So, I found an argument that refutes what I was saying last time we were talking about this. In jurisdictions, where they do have $0 tution, it reduces the number of spots which then creates a huge access issue because when you reduce spots, it all becomes more competitive. Then, students from wealthier backgrounds who can afford something like a tutor to get better grades and get into university. So, I'm definitely on board with saying $0 tuition is probably not the best idea but defiantly controls on tuition. Resolution #3, I think needs the most work because there are times when a tuition increase will be better than cutting service i.e. market modifier fiasco.

HOWIE: Exactly, I added to resolution #3 discussing that. So, I added "except for when students are benefited directly."

SANDARE: On the point of resolution #3, as the Students' Union, we need to be looking at this as a holistic perspective. We did implement things in Bylaw about ways to go against political policy. I think that we should continue to say that we will work towards reduction. I disagree with $0 tuition in there for reasons of accessibility and I echo Councillor Brophy's point earlier that is we have $0 tution then we would have fewer spaces. We are creating a system much less equitable and

excluding from the system groups that are marginalized and already having difficulty accessing the system anyways. So, I think that's one of the biggest groups we should be thinking of. I support saying that we'll work toward reduction, knowing that if there is a reason that one of the faculties believes that it will be better for them to have an increase in tuition than they are able to run a referendum and go through the approved structures.

HOWIE: So, in your opinion, we don't change the policy and leave it as in?

SANDARE: Yes, because there is also the future ready consultation that is happening right now. So, my assumption is that in the next two years the Government of Alberta will be making changes to tuition models. That is something we should be looking for rather than making changes. We should leave it as in now with us working towards reduction then depending on what happens with the future ready program, then we can make changes.

HOWIE: I would be in favor with renewing it just as is since looking it over there isn't anything in the facts that is a blank hole. Everything seems to stand up to what I've learnt about it.

NDATIRWA: I think in terms of point #3, I would feel a bit awkward leaving it as we wouldn't support increase in tuition. If students support the increase and we also agree with it, us putting that we would not support the increase is a bit weird.

SANDARE: We could make a point that we will not support increasing tuition and work towards reduction with a point underneath it saying unless a faculty association were to reun the mechanism.

MONDA: It already says that in bylaw so I don't think it's necessary to put that in the policy unless we want to change the whole resolution of point 3.

BROPHY: Just because we have the mechanism for the faculty associations to deviate from the policy doesn't mean we should have keeping the SU bound by this resolution as written because ideally, it would be nice for the SU to back up any FA's that want to make that move, also if the SU might support a tuition increase. It offers the SU more flexibility as an organization if the policy written here is more flexible. Having a true united front would be ideal.

GHOSSEIN: It's not that I'm tied to the policy as now, it's just as the SU we have to hold a bird's eye view. And I think, we would be hesitate to supporting any kind of tuition increase, at least publicly and to the

Government even if a FA supports it. We're facing different opinions on $0 or less and us coming at that by saying we might ask for more is not what we want.

BROPHY: Right now, we have it as we'll work towards a reduction of tuition increase. There's a difference between saying we'll advocate against higher tuition and binding us to saying we'll actively fight against it. I'd like some flexibility and binding us to saying we'll actively fight against it is a bit of a problem.

LARSEN: I'm of the opinion of VP Ghossein. Also, the way that this is worded ensures that we work towards reductions and also get maximum value for any increase. We'll work towards reduction of any increase doesn't mean we'll oppose any increase but that we'll work towards reductions so that we get the value on that increase. As far as changing it, I would only see a change if it said $0 tuition.

BANISTER: I am fine with it just as it is. I brought this up to faculty associations at COFA and they all thought we should leave it just as it is.

Councillors agree to renew it as is.

DEJONG: How does everyone feel about bringing the first principles to Council?

HOWIE/SANDARE move to bring the Tuition Policy to council.
VOTE 9/0/0
CARRIED

2016-09/3 **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

2016-09/4 **INFORMATION ITEMS**

2016-09/5 **ADJOURNMENT**

HOWIE/BANISTER moved to adjourn the meeting.
Vote 9/0/0
CARRIED

2016-09/5a **Next Meeting: March 10, 2017 at 4PM.**

2016-09/5b Meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS

MOTION	VOTES
DEJONG/GHOSSEIN moved to approve the agenda for February 14, 2016 as is.	***Vote 9/0/0 CARRIED***
DEJONG/BANISTER move to tables minutes to next Policy Committee meeting.	***Vote 9/0/0 CARRIED***
HOWIE/SANDARE move to bring the Tuition Policy to council.	***VOTE 9/0/0 CARRIED***
HOWIE/BANISTER moved to adjourn the meeting.	***Vote 9/0/0 CARRIED***