

May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**To:** Students' Council 2016 – 17

**From:** Fahim Rahman, Students' Union President 2016 – 17

**Re:** Students' Union Council Report #1

Hi Council,

This is the first of many reports on how the SU businesses, services, programs and advocacy efforts are progressing through the year. You may find it helpful to refer to our Strategic Plan to ensure we move in the right direction! (<https://www.su.ualberta.ca/media/uploads/512/SU-StratPlan-2015.pdf>)

The majority of my first weeks have been settling into my roles as a stakeholder for the government, representative on the Board, and steward for the Students' Union. Here is an update on my duties:

### 1. Fort McMurray Relief Efforts

Our University has been focused on **providing health and hospitality services for evacuees** of the Fort McMurray fires, and the Butterdome has been designated as a central distribution area for relief funding. Grade 12 applicants from the Fort Mac area will not have to write their diplomas in order to apply for post-secondary at the U of A. I have spent a bit of time volunteering in Lister Centre to connect with evacuees, as well as at the fundraiser BBQ that raised over \$16 000 last week.

### 2. Residence Life Task Force

The Students' Union is working on issues pertaining to residences at the University of Alberta and will establish a Task Force with the University. Following a rejection of a new representative organization for Lister Hall, past and current students were upset with residence operations, taking to social media to voice their concerns. Those social media posts led to a [Globe and Mail article](#) where we voiced our proposal for an inquiry into residences.

After the previous executive met with the Provost and his team, we agreed to a [Residence Life Task Force](#) to **review residences and the issues flagged by students and alumni**. I have high expectations for this Task Force based on the sheer volume and severity of concerns brought forward by members of our university that need to be addressed as soon as possible.

VP Ghossein and I worked on **interim Lister representative roles**, which she'll presenting to you.

### 3. Alberta PSE Budget & CAUS

Over the next year the University of Alberta will be receiving **\$1 million from the provincial government for mental health support**, which is excellent. This was a large advocacy priority for both the Students' Union and the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS, our provincial lobby group) this year; receiving funding from a constrained budget was appreciated. The funding is only for one year, meaning the newly elected team will continue to advocate for a sustained funding plan for us to maintain essential initiatives on student support, success and well-being.

**CAUS** also had their **turnover meeting** between outgoing and incoming this weekend. VP Sandare and I will provide an oral update on our discussions and policy priority setting.

VP Paches and I also made a trip to Calgary to support the **U of C SU in their legal battle for MacHall**, their Students' Union Building. We are all paying close attention to this as it can set precedence for other SUs, and we may tread the same path when our lease expires early next decade.

#### 4. Academic Governance

I attended a meeting of the Academic Planning Committee (APC), a standing committee of GFC. There we recommended the **Institutional Strategic Plan to go to GFC for approval**, and also recommended that the Report to the Provincial Government go to the Board for approval.

I participated in a lovely panel on why **we need a teaching tenure stream** at the U of A, and how it ideally would pan out. We thankfully didn't delve into the financial impact of a decision, but rooted it in the impact on the learning experience for students.

#### 5. Board of Governors

Fingers crossed that our motion to include **Residence Association fees under SU fees**, which was recommended by BFPC to the Board, gets approved in time for an oral report to Council.

#### 6. SUB Projects

There are a few areas of the Students' Union that could benefit from **renovations**, one of them being the **Myer Horowitz theatre**. An assessment of what renovations could entail has been created, but we have not started fundraising or deciding where to start with our renovations. Once they begin, it will likely be a multi-phase, multi-year project.

We **wrapped up negotiations with our unionized staff**, with the resulting proposal coming to Council for approval this meeting. Lastly, the VPs and I have been **setting out our goals for the year**, and anticipate coming to Council before the end of June to present them.

#### 7. Media

VP Banister welcomed our **new Chancellor-elect, Mr. Stollery**. I also had an interview on Alberta PrimeTime on whether universities should have a policy on students and faculty relationships.

That's all from me for now, and looking forward to the next report!

Fahim Rahman

President

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