



University of Alberta Students' Union 2010 - 2011 Annual Report



The 2010/2011 year was a generally productive and stable one for the University of Alberta Students' Union. Most of the work in this report reflects the combined effort of nearly 200 full and part-time staff, over 800 volunteers, a provincial and federal lobby group and its staff, 32 student councilors, and members of the University and broader community. There are very few items in this report that are worked on in isolation and without the consideration of the impact each item has for the 30 000 undergraduate students at the University of Alberta.

I would also like to acknowledge that much of the work in this report is a continuation of the efforts of executives and staff that came before us and it is important to recognize their contributions. Because of the one-year mandate our Executives, and some of our staff face, it is very easy for many to forget that each year is part of a much larger story. Some of the "wins" we see today are because of the efforts of student leaders years earlier and only now coming to fruition. For example, the relatively low tuition increase we saw this year is a result of successful lobbying of past student leaders to create a provincial regulation that mandates CPI limits to tuition increases. With that in mind, this report reflects the 2010/2011 year's contribution to moving the ball forward for students at the University of Alberta.

I wish the best to the 2011-12 Executive and look forward to seeing what the future holds for the University of Alberta Students' Union.

See you out there.

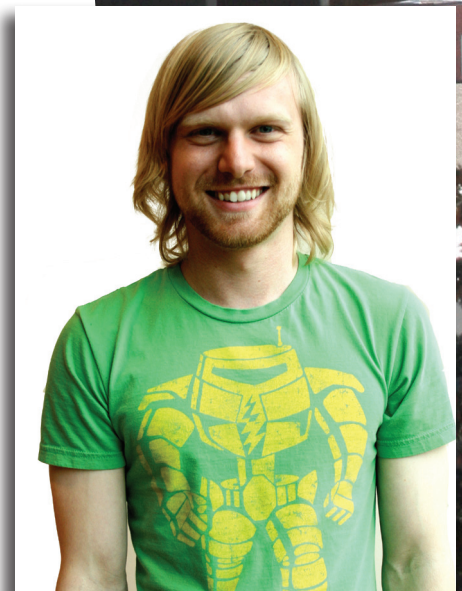
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President 2010/2011

James Eastham
VP Academic
2010/2011

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This annual report — part of the Students' Union's framework for remaining accountable to students — is intended to provide students with an overview of the activities of their Students' Union over the 2010-2011 academic year.

For a relatively small organization, we have an incredible breadth of activity. To help readers we have broken down this report into several major areas: Advocacy and Representation, Services, Business and Lease Operations, Building Operations, Programming and Venues, Communications, Governance and Management, and Finances. Each section stands on its own, so you can skip around the report more easily.

ADVOCACY & REPRESENTATION

The first responsibility of any students' association is to advocate for and represent students to the administration, government, and the community at large. From lobbying on copyright reform and tax credits to fighting the imposition of mandatory fees without student approval, the Students' Union has had its share of success and disappointment.

We held a plebiscite on the introduction of a Fall Reading Week, which passed with majority support. This year, we are working on having the University adopt a Fall Reading Week that does not require an early start to the academic year.

“The Students' Union pushed for greater transparency in how mandatory non-instructional fees are set and allocated”

A renewed U-Pass agreement was implemented following a 2010 referendum approving higher rates in exchange for improved service commitments.

The Students' Union, in collaboration with the Dean of Students, successfully lobbied the university administration to devote more resources to mental health on campus. New programming and additional counselors were provided as a result of these efforts.

We advocated for changes to new residence community standards to ensure clarity, transparency, and fairness for students living in residence.

Working with the LHSA, we lobbied for changes to the meal plan system. Though we did not prevent the removal of the lowest-level (cheapest) meal plan, we were successful in increasing the amount of unspent meal plan money that could be refunded to students.

The Students' Union pushed for greater transparency in how mandatory non-instructional fees are set and allocated, and lobbied government to provide stricter regulation in this area. This fight continues this year.

We worked with the university on its new academic plan to increase the opportunities for and prominence of undergraduate research projects.

The SU approached the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation to help find Muslim students a better space to host Friday prayers. This was successful, and a larger space was found that met their short-term needs.

The VP (External Affairs) served as chair of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, our national student advocacy group. We worked to improve access to student loans, support for aboriginal learners, and the experience of international students. These issues were on the agenda with the hundreds of Members of Parliament, Senators and government officials that CASA met with through regular lobbying meetings and participation in government processes and committees.

SERVICES

Services are core to what the Students' Union offers its members. From orientation to financial aid to support for individuals and student groups, the SU provides a wide range of services to support student life and student success.

Our services also provide jobs and professional development opportunities to more than 50 staff and 800 volunteers. No other student association in the country offers the range and depth of services we do, and our level of collaboration with University Student Services is unparalleled.

“Students [...] demonstrated extremely strong support for Safewalk, even if they didn't personally use it”

ECOS' mandate was reviewed and updated in a way that reflects its role as a facilitator of student-led sustainability projects, and renamed Sustain SU. ECOS/Sustain SU ran seven programs, including a re-usable dish program, a community garden, and a bike library.

Safewalk saw upgrades to communications gear and another strong year of volunteer recruitment. Students expressed strong support for Safewalk in the annual survey, even if they didn't personally use it, as a key part of a safe campus.

The Peer Support Centre saw a substantial increase in client usage — up 50% — as mental health became a campus issue and the PSC began working more closely with other campus groups such as Residence Services and the Health and Wellness Team. The PSC moved to a new location on the second floor of SUB in summer 2011, closer to related university services.

Infolink went through a minor administrative reorganization, added selected OneCard services, and began planning for a new tutor registry service, which was introduced this term. Infolink booths were visited over 119,000 times during the year.

Over 600 student volunteers helped the Centre for Student Development deliver the 2010 orientation program to thousands of students. We also began the transfer of the Campus Ambassadors tour program to the Registrar's office and trialed a new co-curricular record for students.

Student Group Services introduced a new online registration and community site called BearsDen, and improved its leadership development and group support programs. The student group granting process was also revised to make it simpler, more transparent, and fairer. A record 441 student groups were fully or partially registered through the year.

The Student Financial Aid Information Centre had an active year, with over 8,100 consultations. The overall number of annual consultations is trending down in recent years. Responsibility for the Students' Union Awards program was transferred to SFAIC and, combined with a transfer of reserves from the Access Fund to the Student Involvement Endowment Fund, the available awards were expanded significantly in quantity and value. Policy changes to the management of the Access Fund also allowed for a 20% reduction in the Access Fund dedicated fee.

The second year of the student health and dental plan went well, with a smoother opt-out process leading to fewer complaints. Insurance premiums rose slightly to account for higher-than-expected usage of the plan.

“Responsibility for the Students' Union Awards program was transferred to SFAIC and [...] the available awards were expanded significantly in quantity and value”

As a group, our services units initiated a full review of their mandates and strategies. The results of this review are being rolled into future development plans for the services.

BUSINESS & LEASE OPERATIONS

The Students' Union operates a variety of businesses, both to generate revenue (and thus keep fees low) and to enable students to influence the campus market. This latter point is best illustrated by the story of SUBtitles, as prior to its creation in the early 1990s, the used-book market was next to non-existent. SUBtitles not only provided a used-book option, but also spurred the Bookstore to greatly expand its used-book operation.

Overall, business and lease operations contributed net revenue of over \$1.5 million to the operating budget, greatly helping to offset the cost of advocacy, student services, and building operations. Without this contribution, providing services at the level we do would require SU fees to be approximately \$50 higher than they are currently.

SUBphoto by New Light Photography came to SUB as a new tenant, filling a small retail vacancy. All indications are that it has been quite successful in this location.

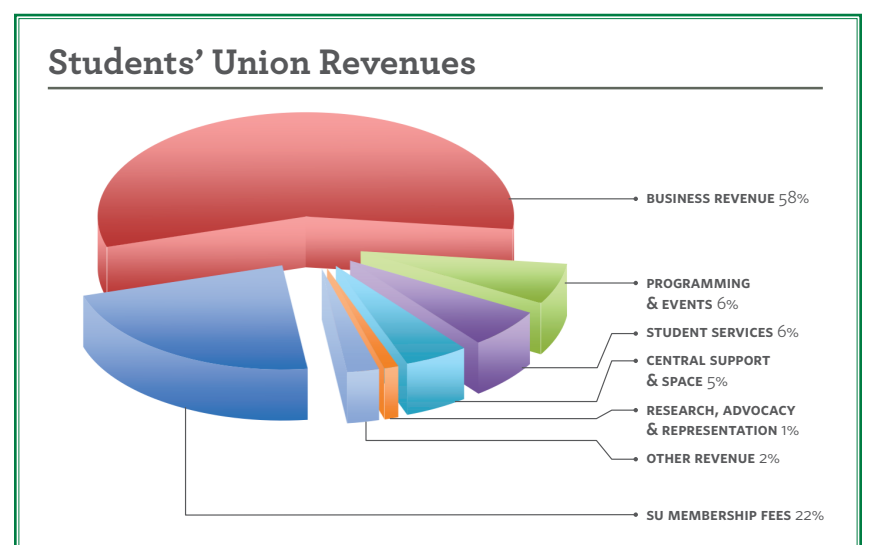
After a small decline in food court revenues of 3% during the recession, revenues recovered 2% to near their 2008-09 peak. Since its inception in 1993, overall food court gross revenue has increased 300%. Our top tenant in 2010-11 grossed 384% more than our top outlet did when the food court was created.

L'Express café and catering saw 9.3% growth in sales, and topped \$1 million in gross revenue for the first time as catering operations continued to grow.

Offsetting L'Express' gains, both Juicy and Cram Dunk saw lower revenues in 2010-11. Cram Dunk's declines occurred in coffee sales, reflecting a much tougher competitive environment brought on by the introduction of several new coffee outlets in the vicinity.

“...business and lease operations contributed net revenue of over \$1.5 million to the operating budget”

Room at the Top made improvements to its bar equipment, reducing spillage and keeping beer colder. Both Room at the Top and Dewey's had decent results, but continued to face strong off-campus competition, and remain a focus for further development. Gross revenue for the bars was essentially flat from the previous year, partially due to the closure of Room at the Top for over a month in the summer. Gross margin at Room at the Top increased slightly, but this was offset by increased staff costs.



All food operations experienced pressure on input prices, with many food staples seeing double- or even triple-digit percentage price increases.

Overall food and beverage revenues increased 5% and the net profit from these operations increased to \$294,481, an increase of 11% over the prior year. This overall increase is largely attributable to improved catering revenues.

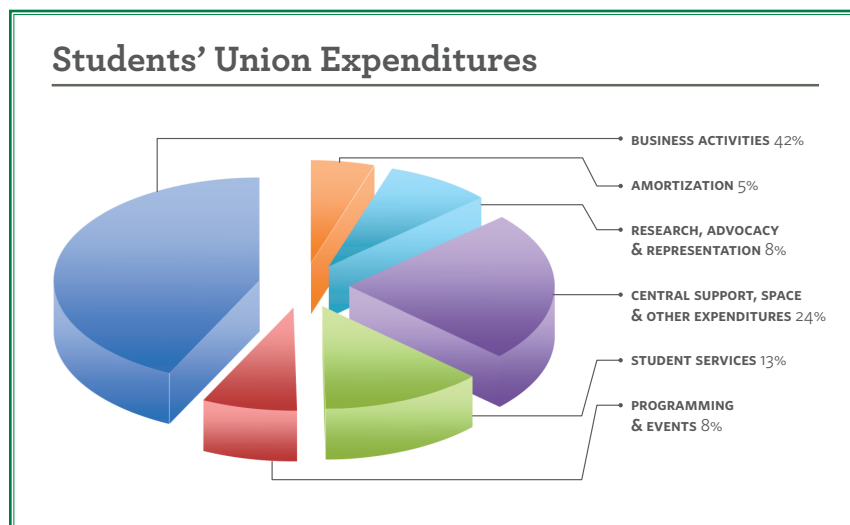
SUBprint faced uncertainty on the copyright front. Changes in the university's policy on Access Copyright hurt course pack revenues somewhat, but SUBprint continued to be a profitable venture as increased counter work compensated. New equipment leases and the

buyout of an old lease were negotiated, reducing costs significantly.

SUBtitles continued to operate at the lower revenue levels established after the 2008 move to the lower level. The addition of sustainability-themed items failed to generate significant new off-peak sales.

Both SUBtitles and SUBprint are bearing the brunt of a fundamental shift in how course materials are provided on campus. Publishers are revising editions or adding ancillary content very frequently. The university is working to minimize copyright expenses and promote a move to cheaper electronic delivery models.

The Students' Union got into the course pack and used-book business to try and alleviate the high costs of academic materials. Cost reduction remains our goal, and our strategy will evolve to meet the changing landscape.



SUBmart saw a significant 13% increase in gross revenue, but margin pressures resulted in negligible changes to gross margin. That, combined with changes to how staff costs are allocated, resulted in net revenue significantly below budget and expectation. SUBmart will strive to improve its performance and value to students in the 2012/13 fiscal year.

“Overall food and beverage revenues increased 5% and the net profit from these operations increased to \$294,481, an increase of 11% over the prior year”

As required by our franchise agreement with Canada Post, the SUB postal outlet was renovated. The postal outlet continued its long but slow decline in gross revenue as more communication is done electronically, but remains a net revenue generator for the Students' Union.

Overall, our retail units (SUBprint, SUBmart, SUBtitles, and the postal outlet) saw a small, \$2,000 decline in net profit on a 3% drop in gross revenue.

All business units and our facilities operations are unionized. We successfully negotiated a new two-year agreement for our staff, providing 2% and 3% cost of living adjustments in 2011 and 2012, respectively.

BUILDING OPERATIONS

The Students' Union Building has traditionally served as the 'living room' of campus, a place for students that is comfortable, accessible, and friendly. 60% of students visit at least once a week, and 25% visit 4 or more times per week. SUB acts as a hub for student services, student groups, and social and study needs of students.

Our excellent facilities staff continued to provide a clean, safe environment for students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As always, when doing cleaning or maintenance, sustainability is a key consideration; we use environment-friendly cleaning products and keep an inventory of recycled and repurposed building materials.

In collaboration with the university, a number of improvements were made to the building in 2010-11. The building's incandescent lighting was replaced with fluorescents and other energy-saving lighting. In addition, a thin film was applied to the south and west faces of the tower to reduce solar loading. These changes save money and reduce our energy footprint.

We began the process of obtaining BoMA Go certification for SUB. The Green Globes are a system for assessing the

sustainability of existing buildings. In 2011, SUB received 2 Green Globes out of 4, so certainly room for improvement exists, but it is good starting point for a 45-year-old building.

“The Students' Union Building has traditionally served as the 'living room' of campus, a place for students that is comfortable, accessible, and friendly”

Accessibility improvements were made to the south entrance and the main west staircase, and an air curtain was installed at the south entrance to improve comfort within the building.

PROGRAMMING & VENUES

The Programming and Venues department was reorganized to improve events for students. The Students' Union increased its net investment in programming activities by over \$100,000, part of our drive to foster greater engagement and social opportunities for students.

Our regular program of Week of Welcome, Antifreeze, movie nights, and Campus Cup has proved successful.

2010/11 Week of Welcome

was hampered by poor weather, but shows such as White Panda made it a memorable kick-off to the year. Antifreeze and Campus Cup both saw strong growth in participation levels, and marked great opportunities for students to connect with others outside their usual circles. We also brought in Frank Warren of PostSecret for a very successful set of shows in the fall, in keeping with the general push towards mental health awareness that the SU promoted.

The programming highlight of the year, of course, was the recapture of the Guinness World Record for the world's largest dodgeball game, with 2012 participants. Since then, that record has been broken and reclaimed again, with our 4979-person dodgeball game earlier this month.

In addition to the major programming events that the Programming and Venues department runs, it also provides support and space to a wide range of student group activities throughout the year.

“Antifreeze and Campus Cup both saw strong growth in participation levels, and marked great opportunities for students to connect with others outside their usual circles”

The SU's main venues of Dinwoodie and Myer Horowitz saw significantly increased activity levels. Event revenues at Dinwoodie increased 66% and Horowitz revenues increased 18% (but on a much larger starting base). During the school year, the theatre was almost completely booked every weekend for both U of A events and those of the larger community. External events helped subsidize campus programming.

Finally, the Programming and Venues department played a central role preparing to host a successful national conference for the support staff of Canadian students' associations.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication with students — our members — is a top priority for the Students' Union. Letting students know what we're doing is critical to our success.

In 2010-11, we embarked on a new initiative to help that cause. SUTV, a digital signage system, was introduced in SUB to promote programs, events, and services in the university community. We plan on expanding the service to other areas of campus, and to innovate new digital media services, such as the Edmonton Transit departures board.

We also overhauled our website and web infrastructure, replacing an aging system with a newer, more flexible back end and a rethought user interface. We're still growing the new system, but are pleased with the increased quality and reliability, and with the feedback we have received.

Even more important than telling students what we're doing is listening to what they want us to do. With that in mind, the SU also conducted a student survey on issues ranging from student debt to student satisfaction with the U of A. Almost 7,000 responses were received, and the survey results were used to help shape everything from advocacy on the fall reading week to business pricing policies.

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Students' Union takes governance issues — transparency, fairness, and responsiveness — very seriously.

Part of ensuring good governance is a shared understanding of purpose and plan. To that end, the Students' Union adopted a Strategic Plan and developed a management process to ensure we kept to our commitments. This report itself is a mandated part of that process.

The Students' Union created an office dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness of student representatives at all levels of student governance at the University of Alberta. This office teaches students about good governance practice, provides support to students on University committees and councils, and facilitates the development of good governance practices among student groups, with an emphasis on faculty associations. The overall purpose of the office is to provide impartial advice and support that facilitates students being better representatives.

We worked with the university to develop an appropriate agreement on how the PAW Centre capital fee would be used and how the PAW Centre would be governed when built. This, along with work on refining the PAW Centre design, required considerable staff and executive efforts.

In response to the increasing interest in sustainability issues among students, the SU commissioned a student-produced sustainability audit of its operations. This audit was completed recently and is now available on our website.

The executive reviewed and consolidated the SU's operating policies, which are the rules that govern our daily operations. These are also available on our website.

Management has identified the expansion of student employment opportunities as a priority for the next few years. We seek to integrate more fully into the pedagogical life of the university, and expanded our use of community service learning and internship programs to provide research and support to our operations.

FINANCES

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION APRIL 30, 2011 WITH COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR 2010

	2011	2010
ASSETS (Current)		
Cash	\$5,303,904	\$4,287,193
Accounts receivable	964,907	769,434
Accrued interest receivable	82,684	40,729
Merchandise inventories	365,124	318,733
Prepaid expenses and deposits	87,872	124,099
	<u>6,804,491</u>	<u>5,540,188</u>
ASSETS (Held)		
Investments	3,290,869	4,221,561
Capital assets	6,964,968	7,142,219
	<u>\$17,060,328</u>	<u>\$16,903,968</u>
LIABILITIES (Current)		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$1,019,339	\$1,176,387
Deferred revenue and deposits	208,735	285,348
Current portion of long-term debt	310,539	296,624
	<u>1,538,613</u>	<u>1,758,359</u>
LIABILITIES (Other)		
Long-term debt	299,058	609,597
	<u>\$1,837,671</u>	<u>\$2,367,956</u>
FUND BALANCES		
Invested in capital assets	\$6,355,371	\$6,235,998
Externally restricted funds	2,098,962	4,623,336
Student Involvement Fund	3,058,049	289,645
Internally restricted funds	1,250,986	1,274,273
Unrestricted funds	2,333,400	2,055,625
	<u>15,096,768</u>	<u>14,478,877</u>
Cumulative net unrealized gains on investments		
	<u>125,889</u>	<u>57,135</u>
	<u>\$17,060,328</u>	<u>\$16,903,968</u>

The Students' Union's finances remain in good shape. Our financial statements can be confusing, so here are some key points to keep in mind.

We are audited annually by an external Auditor, and work with our Audit Committee on our financial statements. Management does not sit on the Audit Committee. The Auditor has approved the financial statements as a fair representation of the Students' Union's finances.

“For a student who wants to know, ‘Did the Students’ Union make or lose money last year?’, the best indicator is the increase in our unrestricted funds balance, which represents our accumulated surplus. This balance increased by \$277,775 in 2010-11.”

We have included here the two most important statements, the Statement of Financial Position (a balance sheet) and the Statement of Operations (a version of an income statement). These are very general overviews; the full Financial Statements contain much more detail on operational finances, and can be found on the SU website.

For the non-accountants among our members, it is important to note that the Net Revenue listed on the Statement of Operations does not represent the annual surplus or cash flow available to general operations of the Students' Union. Due to the way amortization, building loans, restricted fund allocations, and capital purchases are accounted for, the actual increase in the accumulated surplus is much smaller than implied by the Statement of Operations.

For a student who wants to know, “Did the Students’ Union make or lose money last year?”, the best indicator is the increase in our unrestricted funds balance, which rep-

resents our accumulated surplus. This balance increased by \$277,775 in 2010-11. Our overall asset value, as indicated in the Statement of Financial Position, increased by less than that (\$156,360), primarily reflecting the impact of aging capital assets.

The unrestricted reserve is the SU's rainy-day fund, and currently sits at about 25% of our annual operating expenses.

THE FUTURE

The new strategic plan has provided a great deal of focus to the Students' Union as it pursues the plan's seven goals. Student engagement and effective representation are the pillars of that strategy. We have begun work on projects (expanding student group services, programming, and student space; improving governance processes and support for student representatives) to strengthen those pillars.

This is a student-directed organization and its future depends on you. Without students willing to step into leadership positions or without a student body willing to voice its concerns, the organization would struggle.

If you're interested in getting involved by running for Council, an executive position, or volunteering for a service, please do! We need you!



SU BY THE NUMBERS

Number of Volunteers at Orientation:	605
Total number of visits to InfoLink locations:	119,000
Total number of visits to SFAIC:	8,116
Total hours students volunteered at the Peer Support Centre:	2,647
Number of adverts in the Housing Registry:	4090
Number of searches of those ads:	210,000
Number of times Sustain SU's reusable dishes were reused:	14,000
Number of jobs posted to Jobkin:	490
Number of different course packs printed at SUBprint:	644
Total course packs printed:	27,902
Total revenue at SUBtitles from used textbook sales:	\$540,800
Amount by which Access Fund fee dropped:	\$3.62
Value of grants distributed by Access Fund:	\$810,809
Average size of each grant:	\$2,277.55
Number of student groups registered or pending:	441
Number of unique visits to SU Website:	365,796

THE STUDENTS' UNION, THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 2011 WITH COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR 2010

	2011					2010				
	CAPITAL ASSET FUND	EXTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS	STUDENT INVOLVEMENT FUND	UNRESTRICTED AND INTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS	TOTAL OPERATIONS	CAPITAL ASSET FUND	EXTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS	STUDENT INVOLVEMENT FUND	UNRESTRICTED AND INTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS	TOTAL OPERATIONS
GENERAL REVENUE										
Student Fees (includes Health and Dental Plan)	\$-	\$5,752,910	\$-	\$2,249,047	\$8,001,957	\$-	\$5,983,545	\$-	\$2,110,731	\$8,094,276
Interest and dividends	-	16,817	7,655	160,968	185,440	-	-	10,103	116,164	126,267
SUBTOTAL: General Revenue	-	5,769,727	7,655	2,410,015	8,187,397	-	5,983,545	10,103	2,226,895	8,220,543
DEPARTMENTAL REVENUE										
Business Activities	-	-	-	5,737,979	5,737,979	-	-	-	5,662,161	5,662,161
Programming and Event Activities	-	-	-	652,212	652,212	-	-	-	522,856	522,856
Student Service Activities	-	-	-	609,443	609,443	-	-	-	553,260	553,260
Central Support and Space Activities (including SUB)	-	-	-	521,404	521,404	-	-	-	507,664	507,664
Representation Activities	-	-	-	121,635	121,635	-	-	-	110,000	110,000
Reserve Activities	-	450	-	167,242	167,692	-	-	-	314,510	314,510
SUBTOTAL: Departmental Revenue	-	450	-	7,809,915	7,810,365	-	-	-	7,670,451	7,670,451
TOTAL GENERAL AND DEPARTMENTAL REVENUE	-	5,770,177	7,655	10,219,930	15,997,762	-	5,983,545	10,103	9,897,346	15,890,994
DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES										
Business Activities	-	-	-	4,208,245	4,208,245	-	-	-	4,163,039	4,163,039
Programming and Event Activities	-	-	-	752,592	752,592	-	-	-	521,328	521,328
Student Service Activities	-	-	-	1,243,328	1,243,328	-	-	-	1,205,142	1,205,142
Central Support and Space Activities (including SUB)	-	-	-	2,209,195	2,209,195	-	-	-	2,044,471	2,044,471
Representation Activities	-	-	-	588,490	588,490	-	-	-	621,528	621,528
Reserve Activities	-	5,494,551	27,295	305,470	5,827,316	-	4,300,994	27,708	276,054	4,604,756
SUBTOTAL: Departmental Expenses	-	5,494,551	27,295	9,307,320	14,829,166	-	4,300,994	27,708	8,831,562	13,160,264
GENERAL EXPENSES										
General Amortization	500,666	-	-	-	500,666	475,458	-	-	-	475,458
Interest on Long-term debt	-	-	-	46,883	46,883	-	-	-	80,463	80,463
Amortization of premiums and discounts on investments	-	-	-	8,018	8,018	-	-	-	8,396	8,396
Realized loss (gain) on disposal of investments	-	-	11,956	(16,818)	(4,862)	-	-	-	49,521	49,521
SUBTOTAL: General Expenses	500,666	-	11,956	38,083	550,705	475,458	-	-	138,380	613,838
TOTAL GENERAL AND DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES	500,666	5,494,551	39,251	9,345,403	15,379,871	475,458	4,300,994	27,708	8,969,942	13,774,102
NET REVENUE (EXPENSES)	\$(500,666)	\$275,626	\$(31,596)	\$874,527	\$617,891	\$(475,458)	\$1,682,551	\$(17,605)	\$927,404	\$2,116,892