



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: UMSU President, Jakob Sanderson
DATE: August 28, 2018
RE: **Report to the Board, August 2018**

New Updates

1. Financial Aid Awareness Week

Financial Aid Awareness Week will be taking place September 17-21 in the Fireside Lounge. We will have UMSU Volunteers assisting students with bursary applications and providing information on financial aid opportunities from 10am - 2pm each day.

In addition, we will have booths and/or sessions being run by the Government of Manitoba Student Aid program, U of M Financial Aid Office, U of M CCR Program and the U of M International Centre.

Please stop by at some point during the week, and I encourage you to let me know if you or anyone from your respective councils can help out at any point at the UMSU table.

2. Indigenous Emphasis in Course Content

I want to thank Jack Theiss for his words at the July 19 UMSU Meeting regarding increasing Indigenous course content.

Since that time, UMSU Executives have met with representatives from the U of M Indigenous Students' Association (UMISA) to hear their priorities. I've also personally met with the Associate Dean of Arts, Heidi Marx-Wolfe, who is heading the Indigenous Course Content project in the Arts Faculty, and intend to pursue this issue further in meetings with the Provost and her team throughout the year.

UMSU proudly stands with UMISA in the shared goal of mandating an Indigenous content requirement, and we will be advocating to the administration to play a significantly more active role in spearheading the project – especially in faculties where little independent action has been taken.

3. Affordable Student Housing

UMSU Executives have met with members of the administration, and leaders from the Fort Richmond-University Heights Neighbourhood Association to pursue options for greater access to affordable student housing.

Many student living spaces off campus are not compliant with safety regulations; and on-campus housing has not been increased despite an increase in international students from 11% to 18% in the last five years.

We are in discussions with the administration and community to look at more affordable student housing options in upcoming land developments (i.e. Southwood Golf Course property) as well as a



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potential new website for student housing listings that provides greater accessibility and more housing options for students.

4. **UCRU Submissions**

The Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU) – a collective of undergraduate student unions from Canada’s top universities, including UMSU – is holding its advocacy week in Ottawa in early December and we finalized our budget submission on August 3. The submission focused on increasing undergraduate research funding as well as converting federal student grants into federal loans.

In addition, I along with four other UCRU members co-wrote an advocacy document regarding the fair dealing provision and the implementation of Open Educational Resources across Canada Institutions.

5. **Cannabis safe consumption workshop**

As part of UMSU’s Orientation activities, and in conjunction with UMSU’s adoption of a safe consumption of cannabis policy, we will be hosting a workshop on safe consumption habits at some point during Orientation week, September 10-14.

Ongoing/Continuing Work

6. **Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors meeting is to be held on the afternoon of August 28, after the release of the August Board package, and will be reported on verbally at the August 30 UMSU Board of Directors meeting.

7. **Peer Tutoring**

We have officially begun recruitment of tutors for the 2018 Fall Term with an email blast sent out and posts across UMSU social media. If you or anyone you know is interested in being a tutor, they can email tutors@umsu.ca to apply or learn more.

Applications require a digital copy of a web transcript proving a grade of ‘A’ or better in the course one wishes to tutor in, as well as a brief 100-word motivational letter as to why they would be a good tutor.

From there tutors will be interviewed briefly to assess their teaching skills, and if they are approved we will provide them with a code of conduct to sign that includes language surrounding academic integrity. Tutors may earn up to \$15/ hour once approved.



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Thus far, the Arts Student Body Council has formally agreed to do their own vetting and recruitment of tutors and we would encourage other faculty associations to do the same, or be willing to advertise and share the UMSU recruitment materials.

We are looking forward to the app going live for students in early September, and we will begin aggressively advertising to tutees once a sufficient number of tutors is established.

Events & Meetings Attended

July 23-27 – CASA Policy and Strategy Conference
July 28 – UMSU Board of Directors Retreat
July 30 – Meeting w/ Associate Dean of Arts Heidi Marx-Wolfe re: Indigenous Content
July 31 – Meeting w/ PostEd
August 1 – Meeting w/ ASBC Women’s Rep. Shannon Furness re: Free Feminine Hygiene Products in University Washrooms
August 1 – Meeting w/ UMAC
August 1 – UMSU Judicial Board
August 2 – Meeting w/ UMISA
August 3 – Meeting w/ ASBC
August 3 – Open Office Hours
August 8 – Meeting w/ Financial Aid Office
August 8 – Meeting w/ Nimbus Tutoring
August 10 – Meeting w/ Student Life
August 10 – Open Office Hours
August 14 – Student Experience IT Committee
August 14 – Interview w/ Brett Bailey re: Mental Health and Self-Care Habits
August 15 – Meeting w/ International Centre
August 16 – Social Work Orientation
August 16 – Meeting w/ Barry Stone re: Off-Campus Housing
August 16 – Meeting w/ PostEd
August 17-20 – Student Union Development Summit
August 21-24 – Vacation
August 24 – Meeting w/ Nimbus Tutoring
August 27 – UMSU Part-Time Staff Training
August 28 – Meeting w/ Financial Aid Office
August 28 – Meeting w/ ASBC
August 28 – Residence Skills Week
August 29 – Residence Skills Week
August 29 – Meeting w/ PostEd
August 29 – UMSU Part-Time Staff Training
August 30 – Bannatyne Campus Free Lunches
August 30 – UMSU Part-Time Staff Training



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Travel Report

UMSU Executives are mandated to give reports on any conferences attended. Since the previous UMSU Board meeting I have attended the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Policy and Strategy Conference (alone); and the 2018 Student Union Development Summit {with full executive team}.

CASA – July 23-26

- Delegate Fee: \$0
- Travel: \$542 + tax
- Accommodations: \$160 + tax
- Per Diem: \$135

CASA Background

- CASA is a federally-focused advocacy organization representing 22 institutions nation-wide including the University of Calgary, University of Alberta and Brock University.
- UMSU is not a member of CASA, and I attended as an observer at the conference, along with several fellow observer skills including Carleton University, Douglas College, Kwantlen College, Niagra College and Cape Breton University. Observers could not vote on resolutions but were able to participate in crafting advocacy goals and in all exercises, committee meetings and discussions.
- The Policy and Strategy Conference is one of four annual CASA conferences along with 'Foundations,' 'Lobby Week' and the Annual General Meeting. The goal is to establish the framework for CASA's requests for their budget submission and lobby week. Major priorities this year will be international student affordability, increased research funding, increased financial aid, Indigenous student support and sexual violence prevention.

I found my experience at CASA to be both enjoyable and productive. The organization is focused on deliverable and attainable policy goals at the federal level, while remaining non-partisan. In addition, member schools (and observers) collaborate in all decision-making regarding lobbying asks: from the establishment of priorities, to the crafting of policy papers, to the refinement of lobbying asks in November. Members can sit on key committees and take the lead on policy projects, and receive training in preparation for advocacy week.

Concerns regarding UMSU's potential membership in CASA would be that UMSU already spends over \$300,000 towards their membership in CFS, another federal advocacy organization, as well as being members of UCRU, which has no membership fee. A further concern is that UMSU would immediately become one of the largest schools in CASA and may face a similarly undesirable position to the one we are in with CFS in which our membership fee is significantly larger than most other member schools, while we retain the same voting rights and influence.



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These concerns are somewhat mitigated by CASA's relative affordability. CASA's membership fee is \$4.75 per student to a cap of \$50,000 - allowing UMSU to save over half the base fee per student based on our size. As well, the process for leaving or entering CASA requires only a board vote and does not necessarily require an additional levy or referendum.

My recommendation at this point is to withhold consideration of potential membership until UMSU VPE, Owen Black, and I attend UCRU's advocacy week in December. Afterward we can do a proper cost-benefit analysis of CFS, CASA and UCRU and present a more informed recommendation of where UMSU's federal advocacy priorities should focus towards the end of the Fall Semester.

2018 Student Union Development Summit – August 17-20

The Student Union Development Summit (SUDS) is held annually in Vancouver in order to provide an opportunity for networking, learning and skills-training between student unions across Canada. Student unions from many major Canadian University were in attendance.

- Workshops attended:
 - o Good Governance
 - o Getting your own Student Union Building
 - o Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
 - o Open Educational Resources (OER)
 - o Lobbying
 - o Breakout Session: Presidents

UMSU has attended SUDS for the past several years and I found the experience to be quite positive. The workshops were well-organized and provided me with a number of ideas for the year. Specifically, I took information from the OER workshop and implemented it directly into an advocacy document I co-wrote with four other UCRU members regarding the fair dealing provision. I would recommend that UMSU continues to attend SUDS in the future.