Ongoing Business

1. Board of Governors

On May 21st the BOG approved the University budget which myself and VPA Sarah Bonner-Proulx voted for. I will include our post-budget statement here:

Dear Students,

On May 21st, 2019 the University of Manitoba passed its 2019-20 operating budget through the board of governors. Unlike in 2018, myself and VP Advocacy Sarah Bonner-Proulx voted in support of the budget motion.

Despite our vote, we share students’ concerns over another year of tuition increases, this year at 3.75% (last year’s were 6.6%). That being said, we recognize the affordability of Manitoba tuition when compared to all other western provinces. As well, we understand the extremely difficult position the university faces to ensure there is appropriate funding available to ensure a quality education and address the much-needed maintenance of our campuses, in the midst of continued cuts to its operating budget by the province to the tune of approximately $6 Million over two years. The province’s decision to significantly cut funding for post-secondary education, while placing the burden on students to make up the gap with increased tuition is an attack against students, and short-sighted economic policy – given the correlation between the education level of a society and its economic wellbeing.

However, there were major wins for students in the budget, following a yearlong lobbying effort from UMSU that allowed us to show our support for the university’s direction in these challenging times. An additional $500,000 was allocated towards undergraduate bursaries. We have successfully lobbied for a significant portion of this to be put towards international students in financial hardship given the provinces’ decisions to remove its coverage of health care for international students. We have also ensured that $250,000 of additional funding will be put towards sexual violence reduction initiatives and we expect that a sexual violence resource and support centre will open in the next year, achieving a major advocacy priority for UMSU and all students.

We understand the frustration that students are feeling with another year of tuition increases, and while we will celebrate the major successes we achieved this year, our passion towards fighting back against a provincial government that has demonstrated it does not value post-secondary education has far from subsided. If we are to have success in this fight, we must all unite as students, as a university, and as a province, to show our commitment to prioritizing investment in our future.

2. International Health Care

The proposal for a change in the international health care contract was approved at BOG Finance Committee on June 18th and is set to be approved on June 25th. It includes a significant increase in cost
due to a provincial decision to raise the non-resident rate to a 200% surcharge instead of 75%. We will make reversing this decision a core tenant of our election priorities and will be considering all options to financial support international students in hardship this year, on top of the additional needs-based bursaries we were able to secure from the university.

3. Pharm D. Program Fees

We have now met with the Dean of Pharmacy once again, as well as the Vice-Provost administration and we can ensure there will be some form of financial compensation for the transitioning class of students though at this time we are unable to secure a sure number. We will continue to make this a focus throughout the summer.

New Business

4. Sustainability

The Sustainability Working Group is being struck at this meeting and looks forward to an ambitious year ahead. The Board of Governors is also set to pass the UofM 2019-2023 sustainability strategy at the upcoming meeting which had significant UMSU input from last year’s working group.

5. Presidential Search

I am sitting on the University Presidential Search Committee this year and we have narrowed down to our long list. While that list remains confidential I can report that I am very encouraged by the quality and diversity of longlisted applicants.

6. University Logo

You may have noticed we have a new look on campus! As one of the Brand Advisory Committee Co-chairs I am very pleased to report that our new logo for the UofM has been finalized and released. I hope you are all as encouraged as I am by the bold new direction this represents for us.

7. Provincial Election

The next Manitoba election is confirmed for September 10th. We have worked on a priorities document that will be soon released, are working to incorporate our priorities into party platforms, and will be running an abbreviated get out the vote effort during welcome week.
Events & Meetings Attended

*Executive Meetings typically every Monday and Thursday **Schedule excludes many internal meetings ***

Open Office Hours Thursdays 1:30-2:30pm

May 21: Chancellor Celebration
May 21: BOG
May 22-25: Student Care Stakeholders Meeting (report given by VPFO Mbuli Matshe)
May 27-31: CASA Foundations (report to be given next BOD meeting)
June 2: Pride Festival
June 3: Brand Video Filming
June 3: Chancellor Installation
June 3: CSA Sponsorship Appreciation Night
June 4: Convocation
June 4: Honorary Degree Luncheon
June 5: Sexual Violence Priorities Meeting
June 6: Presentation at CUPW Conference
June 7-12: CFS NGM (report forthcoming)
June 13: Indigenous Educational Gathering
June 14: Career Month Meeting
June 14: Manitoban Interview
June 14: Chamber of Commerce Luncheon
June 17: Meeting re: Pharm D proposal
June 17: Meeting w/ Lt. Governor Janice Filmon
June 17: BOG Finance Committee
June 18: Meeting with Inner City Social Work Council
June 18: Rady JCC Dinner
June 19: Presidential Search Committee
June 20: Sustainability Committee
June 22: Executive Retreat
June 24: BOD