Ongoing / Continuing Work

1. Board of Governors

BOG meets March 24th and this will be reported on orally.

2. UPASS

Much has occurred on this file over the last two weeks. On March 6th, the draft budget for the City of Winnipeg was tabled and the U-Pass was slated to be cut. From that point we organized a #SaveTheUPass camping that consisted of a press conference at city hall, organizing 16,000 signatures on a petition, and having over 80 delegates sign up with us between public works committee and the EPC hearings.

I also conducted a financial analysis of the program and found discrepancies with the City of Winnipeg’s UPASS estimate. One of those discrepancies was a $4.3M miscalculation of lost revenue in their budget submission. This, in conjunction with unprecedented mass mobilization from students put enough pressure on the EPC to revise their budget and include the UPASS program.

Unfortunately, the rate necessitated to include the program and maintain a balanced budget from the city’s prospective is $200.00 per year beginning in the 2020-2021 term. While this rate is higher than we would have hoped it is exciting that the work we all put in at least paid off with an opportunity to continue the program should we choose to. This rate will still be the lowest rate available on any transit product until 2022, and even beginning in 2022 when it will equal the low-income rate, it will be the lowest cost product for most students, and the only transit product that is payable by student grants and loans. It is my strong recommendation we should continue the program at this rate.

As a board we have three main options:
1) Accept this deal and continue the UPASS
2) Reject this deal and discontinue the UPASS
3) Direct this decision to a second referendum on the new rate

I strongly favour option 1 for the reasons contained in the attached motion, but I look forward to a fulsome discussion with you all.
3. Sustainability

Sadly, Sustainability Week Events were all cancelled this week due to the university closure and precautions surrounding COVID-19. I want to personally thank all the people who put such hard work into this including the marketing team, the sustainability working group, the UMCycle team, the Office of Sustainability, and all other involved student groups. I will document all the ideas we came up with in my transition report and I hope to see some of them come to life next year.

We did however continue the social media and advocacy portion of the campaign so please share some of our materials. You can also enter our contest by sharing our digital post-card asking the university to commit to net zero by 2050.

Lastly, we passed a motion at our endowment fund’s board of trustees officially committing to a divestment from fossil fuels and weapons manufacturing industries. This is a major step and will ensure UMSU is organizationally fully divested in a short period of time. Going forward we look forward to working with UMGSA, the Sustainability Committee, and student activists on demanding the university follow suit with full divestment.