TO: UMSU Board of Directors  
FROM: VP Advocacy, Sarah Bonner-Proulx  
DATE: April 9th, 2020  
RE: Report to the Board, April 2020

Updates:

1) **COVID-19 Related Matters:**

   a) **Alternative Grading Options:** New Pass/Fail Option passed through senate last week that will allow students the option to opt for a “pass” instead of a standard letter grade as long as student receives a “D” or higher. This is in addition to the changes made to give students to options to exclude letter grades from GPA calculations and to automatically exclude and “F” grades received from UM GPA Calculation. Depending which option a student chooses, there are different potential implications and it is ESSENTIAL that students have the correct information prior to making this decision. We strongly urge students to contact an academic advisor in their faculty prior to making any decisions on this matter. This week we launched a mini digital campaign explaining the options available to students and have asked all student faculty associations to SHARE this information along with faculty specific rules and regulations. ***IMPORTANT:*** Choosing a PASS in many cases is **not sufficient to meet pre-req, degree progression and/or admissions criteria.** For more information, please refer to email regarding Alternative Grading Communication sent by Carly Frey on my behalf earlier this week and/or visit [http://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus/students#grades](http://umanitoba.ca/coronavirus/students#grades)

   b) **Student Resource Guide:** Within this package is a COVID19 Resource for students that outlines supports related to academic and non-academic matters including mental health, financial aid, resources for students with accessibility needs, international student support, etc.

   **Freeze on Provincial Student Loans:** A couple weeks ago we issued a letter to the Minister of Finance and Minister of Economic Development requesting an immediate six-month moratorium on all provincial student loans keeping with the current zero-interest model. This would allow for both grads and current students to make deferred payments with no penalty for the upcoming six month period. This request is following the decision of the Ontario and Saskatchewan government to do the same, alongside a recent federal provision put in place to move student loans to zero interest during Covid-19 pandemic.  
   
   *Last week I spoke to Jamie Moses, Critic for Economic Development and Training at which point it was confirmed that the government is considering making this provision.*

   *Pending any changes, will give an oral update at BOD Meeting*

   c) **Senate Exec Updates:** Meeting on April 8th – will report orally on any relevant items discussed/passed

   *Please see attached doc for a full list of student resource/supports*
d) **PETITION:** Protection of Disabled Persons and Human Rights in COVID19 triage frameworks in Canada. This petition was brought to our attention by UMSU Student-at-Large and Member Services Member, Phoenix Nakagawa. This petition is to ask the federal and provincial governments to reconsider and respect the Human Rights Code of Canada, Accessibility for Canadian Act, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is below:

http://chn.g.it/VRJwcxtMbW

Here are the requests of the petition:

1) *The addition of a Human Rights clause to be applied nationally to our national pandemic ethics guidelines to protect the rights and freedoms given to Canadians within the Charter of human rights, section 15.*

2) *A statement from the federal government that makes it clear that persons are all valued and will not have to be worried about discrimination in triage, particularly those with disabilities.*

3) *request the ethical framework details to be shared. Health care planners have an obligation to educate the public in terms of decisions taken and the process used to arrive at these decisions.*

*For more information, please visit: http://chn.g.it/VRJwmxzMbW or contact Phoenix Nakagawa: nakagawt@myumanitoba.ca*

**Meetings Attended (Via Web/Phone):**

- Academic Planning Committee (MWF)
- Senate Executive (Wednesday’s)
- Media Inquiries (global, cbc, glob&mail, etc)
- Student Senate Caucus-COVID19 Q&A (March 30th)
- Meeting With Jamie Moses, Education Critic (March 31st)
- Meeting with VP Students, Laurie Schnarr
- Meetings with faculty associations
- Childcare Working Group Meeting (April 6th)