Continuing Updates

1. University Budget 2020/21

As you may have seen in recent press releases and news, the University Budget for the 2020/21 term was approved on Tuesday, May 19, 2020 – with many pros and cons. Kristin, VP Advocacy, and I were in attendance and voted against the first submission (tuition and course fee restructure) and voted in favor of the second submission (the general University budget).

The first submission from the Finance, Administrative, and Human Resources Sub-Committee was in reference to the new tuition and course fee proposal. This motion saw a faculty-varied increase to tuition which averaged out to 3.75%. In addition, many course fees were altered such as the Continuing Education fee and tiered lab costs. Both UMSU and the UMGSA voiced large opposition and a handful of concerns with this hike. This increase was proposed prior to the government proposing an additional 4% cut to the projected 1% operating grant cut for this year’s budget. Therefore, the increase was still not inclusive of the current circumstances and only covers a fraction of the anticipated deficit.

As presented by Todd Mondor, the rationale for this increase was to bring the quality of education and fee structure to a comparable standard with other U15 institutions across the country, to consider the projected decline in enrolment due to COVID-19, and to accommodate for the deduction in the provincial operating grant. Therefore, UMSU directed the dialogue towards the provincial government in all of our media scrums and press releases. Our hope is that this, in addition to the advocacy projects that we spear-headed described below, will influence the Province and bring student leaders to the table when key decisions are being made.

The second submission, after a year-long process with various community stakeholders, was the general 2020/21 budget, which UMSU and the UMGSA voted in favor of. Despite the tuition and course fee increases, we believe that there are still key items within the budget that must be celebrated.

This past year was one of unprecedented collaboration between the previous UMSU Executive team and the President’s Executive Team (PET). Throughout that time, UMSU and PET engaged in consistent dialogue and presentations of recommendations for the budget. All four of UMSU’s recommendations were honored and – upon the beginning of the new UMSU terms in May – it was pleasure to follow up, tie up the loose ends, and cross the finish line with these asks. It goes a long way to know that, despite the cuts and pressures from the Province, these student priorities remained at the forefront. Please see below for UMSU’s asks that were honored in the 2020/21 University Budget:

- $350,000 to Anti-Sexual Violence: This supports the expansion of the Sexual Violence Resource Centre outreach to the Bannatyne and William Norrie campuses, as well as growing educational workshops.
- $300,000 to the Student Counselling Centre: Details on the allocation are still pending. However, Don Stewart will be in contact with UMSU as they become available.
- $100,000 to the Office of Sustainability: This funding will go towards a feasibility study regarding the Net Zero by 2050 trajectory.
- $500,000 to the International Student Hardship Relief Fund: This mirrors the University’s commitment last year in response to the international health care premium increases. This fund was fully utilized, with the help of UMSU, and we hope that it will get put to similar use this year.

Should anyone be interested in news articles or further information, please feel free to e-mail either myself (pres@umsu.ca) or Kristin (vpa@umsu.ca).

2. U-Pass Negotiations

Over the past couple of weeks, Brendan, Leeandra, and myself have been in contact with Winnipeg Transit to discuss the primary concerns that we had with the current contract. We’ll require more time to ensure that the new contract is inclusive of COVID-19 and new reality of Fall 2020. Brendan’s also been putting extensive work into the details of the contract, including the opt-out criteria for those who live far from transit routes. Currently, we are waiting to see the initial draft from Laurie Fisher. Then, we will be consulting the legal department and discussing the matter further. The contract will be presented to the BOD prior to signing.

In the next week or so, we will be putting out a general survey encompassing the COVID-19 changes to find out how we can better serve the student body. This survey will include at least one question about the U-Pass’ utility in the Fall term.

3. Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI)

For the remainder of the President’s Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion’s mandate, I will continue serving as UMSU’s designate. Thus far, we have made incredible progress with EDI consultations and data collection. As a member on both the Environmental Scan and Community Consultation working groups, I am incredibly optimistic and ready to move from data analysis to recommendation drafting. As a reminder, our current trajectory for the final report is Fall 2020. However, there may be a slight delay due to COVID-19.

With the cancellation of all in-person consultation sessions for the University-wide EDI study, date collection will now be focused on the online survey. We’re glad that the UMSU BOD had the opportunity to participate together earlier in the year and are very grateful for the help in promotions from student leaders. We’ll need one last push of the survey link before the end of this month. Once more, here is the link: https://news.umanitoba.ca/your-voice-matters/
4. Provincial Post-Secondary Advocacy Coalition

I have scheduled meetings between UMSU and other student organizations in Manitoba over the next few weeks. We are sincerely looking forward to talking with the RRCSA, UWSA, and UMGSA initially – as well as presenting the concept to UMSU’s Board of Directors.

The process to formalize Manitoba’s version of a PPSAC has been delayed slightly due to recent news. However, we’ve continued working together with the same organizations on other relevant projects as detailed below.

New Updates

1. Provincial COVID-19 Advocacy

COVID-19 has sprung an unprecedented number of challenges upon students and we have compiled a list of recommendations to the Provincial government in light of these changes. These seemed to encompass the majority of student concerns that we’ve received specific to COVID-19. Fully acknowledging that this is not an exhaustive list, we believe that these would be the most realistic and reasonable to ask of the Province.

Over the next month or so, we hope to meet with the Minister and various other MB MLAs to pitch these ideas to them to assist students at this time. Here is the list:

- International student healthcare premiums should be brought in line with domestic student rates
- Reinstating the ACCESS program to assist mature/part-time students
- Funding of Campus Manitoba’s credit transfer database
- High-speed broadband and internet access for rural Manitoban communities

2. Education Makes the Cut Provincial Campaign

Once again, over the next little while we hope to both build up UMSU’s working relationship with the Provincial government and mobilize students in the process. With this objective and to bring attention to the Province’s successive cuts to post-secondary education, UMSU has connected a group of Manitoba’s largest post-secondary student and faculty advocacy groups. With the support of UWSA, RRCSA, CFMSB, UMGSA, and MOFA – we’ve launched a multi-pronged campaign, consisting of the following:

1. A petition to end the provincial cuts to post-secondary education and bring student leaders to the table as discussions surrounding post-secondary progress
2. A letter-writing for students to directly address the Premier, Minister Eichler, and their personal Member of the Legislative Assembly
3. A video and student voice campaign – we will be compiling student submissions to share on social media
Ample information on this can be found on our social media, e-mails, and news stories. Please feel free to contact me (pres@umsu.ca) with any additional inquiries.

1. **UMSU Organizational Fees – Fall 2020**

   As directed by the Board of Directors at the last meeting of the 2019/20 term, UMSU will be putting forward a proposal for approval that will allow the organization to collect student fees in the Fall 2020 term. Without the approval of this motion, we worry that UMSU’s operations would be severely impacted. Therefore, we’ve been offered assistance from various University personnel – including the Registrar’s office, the Finance office, the University Secretary, and the Vice-Provost Students. The outcome will be reported on at the July BOD meeting.

2. **Upcoming Social Media Programming**

   Tino has been working hard on putting together some online programming over the next little while. Activities that you can look out for include a Community Clean Up Challenge and an outdoor photography challenge.

3. **UM Orientation**

   Savannah and Tino have been working together with Brandy Usick and the New Student Orientation Committee to find creative ways to bring an engaging orientation to new students in the Fall despite the remote shift. Stay tuned for developments!

4. **Selections Committee Postings**

   We want YOU on UMSU’s committees!!! Please see below for openings and feel welcome to share these with your friends.

   **Volunteer positions with Co-Curricular Record recognition:**

   **Finance Committee (Up to 3 board members):**
   - Looks after the finances of the union
   - Ensures proper oversight of hardship funding, capital projects and all expenditures
   - Proposes and has the power to revise the annual budget.

   **Governance Committee (Up to 3 board members):**
   - Looks after the governing documents of the union
   - Proposes and reviews any changes to the bylaws, governance and operations manual, position statement book, or elections and referendums manual

   **Member Services Committee (Up to 3 board members):**
   - Looks after all services of the union
- Reviews any and all agreements pertaining to, and the performance of, all UMSU services including peer tutoring, UPass and the health and dental plan.
- Allocates funding towards student groups and student travel grants

Judicial Board (3 board members)
- Oversees conduct of UMSU executives and reports to the board
- Holds hearings on, and rules on, any appeals during the election period

Business Management Committee (1 board member):
- review the performance and direction of all businesses
- review the proposed annual budget

Positions with some remuneration (students-at-large):

Chair of the Board
Director of Bannatyne Operations
Chief Returning Officer

External Events & Meetings Attended
Note: This excludes all meetings internal to the organization.

May 4 to May 8 – Jack.org Digital Mental Health Summit
May 5 – Meeting w/ Vice-Provost Students
May 6 – National Mental Health Workshop Facilitation: Post-Secondary Mental Health Landscape
May 7 – UCRU Board Meeting
May 7 – CJOB Interview
May 7 – Board of Governors Orientation
May 7 – Board of Governors Emergency Meeting
May 9 – Provincial Recommendations w/ Minister Chagger (Jack.org)
May 12 – STRIDE call w/ UASU
May 13 – Senate Meeting
May 13 – Free Press Interview
May 13 – CTV Winnipeg Interview
May 13 – CBC Interview
May 13 – CJOB News Panel
May 14 – CANSTAR Interview
May 14 – Global News Interview
May 14 – Prayers of the People digital event
May 15 – Meeting w/ CSL
May 15 – Meeting w/ International Centre (Gitan & Rebecca)
May 15 – UCRU Board Meeting
May 19 – Board of Governors Meeting
TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: UMSU President, Jelynn Dela Cruz
DATE: Tuesday, May 26, 2020
RE: Report to the Board, May 28, 2020

May 20 – Global News Interview
May 20 – Meeting w/ Vice-Provost Students
May 20 – Free Press Interview
May 21 – Call w/ CFSMB Organizer
May 21 – Education Makes The Cut initial call w/ UWSA & RRCSA
May 25 – Orientation Call
May 25 – Smoke-Less Friendly Environment Meeting w/ Vice President Administration
May 27 – Call w/ CFSMB Organizer
May 27 – Call with SUO President
May 27 – Meeting w/ Vice-Provost Students
May 28 – Meeting w/ Office of Sustainability
May 28 – Introductory Meeting w/ Dr. Bennarroch (incoming University President)

Please note, regular office hours are currently not in operation due to COVID-19. Please e-mail pres@umsu.ca for inquiries, concerns, or to schedule a call. The Executive Committee is currently putting together a structure for digital office hours.