New Updates:

**Campus Advocacy Update**
Since taking office on May 1st, almost all of our campus advocacy has been COVID-19 related.

**Fall Fees**: Many students have reached out to UMSU inquiring about which fees, if any, will still need to be paid in the fall remote term (recreation, library...). We are in negotiation with administration about this, and do not feel students should be paying for a service they will be unable to access. Currently, it looks as though the gym will re-open. Also, the library is in the process of further digitizing their collection. It seems unlikely for these fees to be remitted completely, though, we are exploring the price of these fees to ensure they are representative of what students are getting.

**Study Accommodations**: We are currently working with administration to explore the possibility of making bookable, socially distanced study space available on campus to help student success in the Fall 2020 remote term. Our survey demonstrated a concern among students as it relates to their home environments’ conduciveness to learning, which is hindered for different reasons among different students. Some of these include strained family relationships, presence of young siblings, noisy construction, and accessibility needs. Admin sees this ask as a very big challenge to do safely but we are working on it.

**Convocation**: It is virtual, all graduates encouraged to attend. They can also attend a later in person ceremony if they wish.

**Provincial Advocacy Update**

**Letters were sent out to major government players in late May:**
These letters introduced the new executive team, thanked the respective ministers/critics for their hard work during COVID-19, emphasized the number of students represented by UMSU, and extended an offer to meet.

The letters were sent to:
- Hon. Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba (CP)
- Hon. Ralph Eichler, Minister of Economic Development and Training (CP)
- Hon. Scott Fielding, Minister of Finance (CP)
- Hon. Sarah Guillemard, Minister of Conservation and Climate (CP)
- Jamie Moses, official critic of the Minister of Economic Development and Training (NDP)
- Wab Kinew, Honourable Leader of the Opposition (NDP)
- Manitoba Liberal Caucus

**Ministers Eichler and Fielding reached out for a joint meeting:**
Meeting is on June 18th at the MB Legislature, 2:30pm
Sarah Guillemard reached out for meeting:
The meeting is being scheduled and meeting priorities are being selected. Priorities will likely include...
1. Support for OERs (paperless alternative to textbooks)
2. Expansion of campus compost program
3. Ethical purchasing
4. Use of Brady landfill biogas to replace natural gas at the U of M

Priorities for Presentation to Ministers Eichler and Fielding
The VPA, President, and SRA have identified 5 crucial advocacy priorities for 2020-2021 (non-exhaustive). Three (3) of these priorities are being presented on June 18th to Ministers Eichler and Fielding. They address recovery and resilience amid COVID-19. They are:

i. Help Women & Marginalized Students Regain Access to Higher Education

Specific Actions
a. Increase the funding received by recipients of the Manitoba Child Care Subsidy;
b. Add student status to the list of criteria for eligibility for the subsidy;
c. Provide financial incentives/supports to businesses to hire more child care workers to expand access to child care;
d. Boost the funding allotted to the ACCESS program for 2020/2021 by $5 million and reinstate bursary allowances for participants.

ii. Support a robust expansion of online learning

Specific Actions:
a. Make portions of post-secondary operating grants conditional that they to be used for the creation and adoption of free digital textbooks (OER) course content;
b. Provide Campus Manitoba with funding to implement an online credit transfer database;
c. Continue efforts to accelerate the expansion of rural broadband;
d. Cover the cost of USB internet sticks for those without home access to reliable internet.

iii. International Student Healthcare

Specific Actions
a. Allow all international students the ability to buy in to Manitoba’s public health care system at a cost-neutral rate to the Government; OR
b. Cover the one-time $800,000 payment to MB Blue Cross required to keep private health care premiums for international student rates steady in the face of a drop in international student enrolment in 2020/2021.
TO: UMSU Board of Directors  
FROM: VP Advocacy, Kristin Smith  
DATE: June 18th, 2020  
RE: Report to the Board, June 2020

Other Provincial Priorities
The following priorities will not be presented on June 18th, but rather at a later meeting with government officials. This decision was made so as not to flood early meetings with information, which risks making each ask less impactful. **Outstanding priorities include:**

i. Measures to uphold rental affordability and tenant rights

*Specific Actions*
  a. Expand Rent Assist program
  b. Establish a random audit system for housing standards;
  c. Impose stricter penalties for landlords that charge illegal rent increases or demand illegal security deposits; or don’t meet repair or maintenance standards

*We are saving this for a meeting with Fielding only, as it is under his mandate.*

ii. Curtail Bill 41 and Protect Students against Voluntary Unionism

We are still in the process of brainstorming the best policy response.

Federal Advocacy Update
UMSU will be working primarily with UCRU this year for federal advocacy, with plans to contribute to priority selection, brief writing, and lobby week.

- VP Advocacy recently elected as Vice-Chair of UCRU
  - Will help lead a formalization project and direct federal priorities

UMSU is in the last year of observer status with CASA

- VP Advocacy attended CASA Foundations Conference
  - Report to the board at July meeting

Projects
On May 19 the VPA emailed the UMSU Strategy Advisor and Research Assistant requesting further research be done on the specifics involved in UMSU opening a legal aid/student legal assistance program. The report has been received and is under review to help determine the best structure for U of M.

External Events and Meetings Attended:
*This excludes all meetings internal to the organization.*

May 26-28 – CASA Foundations  
May 28 – Childcare Working Group  
May 29 – Meeting with UTSU RE: Information Sharing  
June 2 – Advocacy Training with Heather Morris  
June 2 - Meeting with Financial Services RE: International Students and Fee Collection Process  
June 3 – Meeting UCRU Chair-Elect Mackenzy Metcalfe RE: Priorities  
June 3 – Meeting with USSU Executive RE: Information Sharing
June 4 – Student Disciplinary Hearing
June 4 – Meeting with AMS UBC RE: Information Sharing
June 5 – Meeting with UTSU RE: Information Sharing
June 8 – Meeting with Laurie Schnarr Vice Provost Students
June 9 – Meeting with RRCSA RE: Provincial Advocacy Coalition
June 9 - Meeting with UMGSA RE: Provincial Advocacy Coalition
June 10 – Meeting with McGill Students Union RE: Information Sharing
June 10 – Senate Executive Committee
June 11th – Meeting with Pitblado (Lawyer)
June 12th – UCRU Board Meeting
June 15th – Meeting with Loie Gervais and Brandy Usick RE: Academic Integrity
June 15th – Meeting with Loizza Aquino RE: Count Me in Resource Hub
June 16th – Meeting with Mackenzy Metcalfe RE: UCRU Strategic Planning
June 18th – Meeting with Minister Eichler and Fielding
June 18th – Student Senate Caucus