Continuing Updates

1. Office Re-opening Strategy

Working closely with UMSU’s operational team (consisting of the General Manager and Vice-President Finance & Operations) and Human Resources, we have been diligently researching and constructing a plan for our internal office operations to resume. Within this plan, includes the strong consideration of public health recommendations (both national and provincial) and guidelines set by the University of Manitoba.

A timeline for a hard opening are still to come. In the meantime, we hope that our internal strategy will place a pro-active limit on the number of staff present at one given time and improve communication as well as productivity within each department. However, this soft-opening strategy will allow staff to safely work and operate in the offices when needed at scheduled times.

To provide examples of instances in the past week when UMSU Executives have been in and out of the offices, activities included: hardship meetings, cheque signing, transition purposes, and in-person meetings with University personnel amidst commute time.

As of current, the UMSU businesses will remain closed until further updates become available.

2. Manitoban Alliance of Post-Secondary Students (MAPSS)

This report item was previously titled “Provincial post-secondary advocacy coalition”

As previously reported, UMSU’s advocacy team (consisting of the President, Vice-President Advocacy, and Strategy & Research Advisor) has successfully rallied together a handful of post-secondary student organizations to collaborate on provincial advocacy issues, including the following: the University of Manitoba Graduate Students’ Association, the University of Winnipeg Students’ Association*, Red River College Students’ Association, and the Assiniboine Community College Students’ Association.

Currently, membership remains informal, thus there is no fee for this organization. This coalition is still undergoing the formalization process, including the bylaw structure and executive elections. At the moment, meetings and communications are maintained through e-mail threads and meetings, as reflected at the end of the President and VP Advocacy reports to the UMSU Board of Directors.

Beginning in August, there will be monthly board meetings and separate meetings of committees. Over the next few weeks, UMSU’s team will be spearheading the planning of a lobby week to coincide with the provincial budget timeline. This will consist of a briefing package containing the research and proposals under a few actionable provincial projects concerning the livelihood of Manitoban post-secondary students.
Resulting from a previous meeting with the UMSU advocacy team and the provincial offices for Economic Development & Training and Finance, a budget meeting is already being scheduled.

*With the University of Winnipeg Students’ Association executive at a standstill due to internal investigations, we have not been in contact with the organization with regards to advocacy matters since the beginning of their paid leave.

New Updates
More details to come next month!

1. Mental Health Month & Indigenous Students’ Month

Both Mental Health Month and Indigenous Students’ Month will be a shared responsibility among a handful of executives and community stakeholders. Meetings have now been scheduled and we are currently open to suggestions for online versions of these campaigns. Please feel welcome to send ideas to the Vice-President Student Life at vpsl@umsu.ca and myself at pres@umsu.ca!

2. International Student Healthcare

Over the past couple of months, the UMSU Executive has attended a series of meetings with the International Centre, Student Care, and MB Blue Cross. In addition to these broker/insurer meetings, UMSU has been in correspondence with the Red River College Students’ Association and the University of Winnipeg Students’ Association to compare costs and services of the plans facilitated through our respective institutions.

While the International Centre has yet to make a formal announcement, it is the expectation that international student primary health care will be increasing once again this year. As members of the UMSU BOD are aware, we are doing everything in our power to advocate and continue working to lower costs for international students. If healthcare is truly universal across the board, the costs should absolutely follow suit.

A couple of things to clarify as announcements from the University roll out and as UMSU members keep their eyes peeled to developments on the advocacy front include:

- The primary health plan facilitated through the UM International Centre is completely separate from UMSU and the UMSU secondary health plan. However, we remain present at meetings with stakeholders to continue advocating for our members.
- The IC primary health plan for international students claims to be universal. This allows international students to access the same primary health plan available to domestic students, as regulated by MB Blue Cross.
- In this scenario, the IC does not have an insurance broker. This means that they do not have a body being paid to negotiate costs.
- All international students, regardless of whether or not they are in the country, are mandated to pay the cost of primary health care upon registration, due to its universal nature. This means that students who are not physically or even digitally able to access their health benefits would still need to pay into this program.
- As enrolment decreases, there is still potential for the paid premium to increase as well.

Once again, the UMSU secondary health plan that is paid by both domestic and international students is completely remote from the UM International Centre’s primary health plan solely for international students. However, UMSU will continue our efforts to strategically lower this cost.

Should you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, please feel welcome to email either myself at pres@umsu.ca or VP Advocacy at vpa@umsu.ca.

3. **Green Projects**

To list off a couple of projects that will be elaborated on in future meetings:

- Sustainability working group (VPCE)
- Campus composting system provincial grant application
- Brady landfill biogas pipeline recommendation
- And more!

4. **Upcoming Working Groups**

The following working groups and their respective terms of reference motions are being prepared for the next UMSU Board of Directors meeting:

- Indigenous Students’ Working Group
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group
- Sustainability Working Group

There are one or two still in the works. However, all working groups for Fall 2020 will be accessible to apply for come the beginning of September. This includes the already-struck Participatory Budgeting working group and Campaigns working group. Thank you to everyone for your patience!
External Events & Meetings Attended
Note: This excludes all meetings internal to the organization.

June 22 – Meeting with Vice Provost Students
June 23 – Meeting with Canadian Federation of Students MB
June 23 – Board of Governors
June 24 – Senate
June 25 – Meeting with Acting Director of International Students’ Centre
June 25 – Meeting with StudentCare
June 26 – Grads Giving Back
June 29 – Meeting with Career Services re: Partnership & UM Café
June 30 – Grads Giving Back
June 30 – DBO Transition Meeting
July 2 – Meeting with ASBC UMSU Director / BISOCC representative
July 2 – Call with Justice for Black Lives organizer
July 6 – Meeting with Nimbus Peer Tutoring
July 6 – Meeting with Vice Provost Students
July 6 – Meeting with Vice Provost Students & KinRec
July 6 – First round of CRO interviews
July 7 – Grads Giving Back p2
July 7 – UMSU Governance Committee
July 8 – Meeting with StudentCare, Blue Cross, International Centre, and UM Student Wellness
July 8 – Remaining CRO interviews & Selections Committee
July 9 – Meeting with Red River College re: International Health Care
July 9 – Meeting with Councillor Klein’s office
July 13 – Meeting with StudentCare
July 13 – Call with Councillor Klein’s office
July 14 – NCTR Dialogues: Sharing Survivor Perspectives
July 14 – Call with UTSU & CUSA
July 15 – UMSU Finance Committee
July 16 – Meeting with Deputy Mayor Markus Chambers
July 17 – Meeting with Vice Provost Students
July 20 – Townhall with Premier Pallister & Ministers
July 20 – UMSU Governance Committee
July 21 – University Disciplinary Committee Appeal Hearing

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.