



University
of Manitoba
**STUDENTS'
UNION**

TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: VPA, Emily Kalo
DATE: March 10, 2022
RE: Report to the Board, March 2022

New Updates:

Campus Advocacy Update

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

The first official meeting of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group (EDIWG) took place on Monday, March 7th.

During the meeting, introductory discussions took place surrounding current gaps in accessibility and equity at the University of Manitoba. More specifically, the importance of equity within student leadership and ways to improve intersectionality between UM communities. Working group members have continued discussion via Whatsapp and during the next meeting, specific recommendations and event ideas will be discussed.

Provincial Advocacy Update

Manitoba Alliance of Post-Secondary Students (MAPSS)

#HealthHasNoBorders Campaign

- Refer to BOD Presentation

Shared Perspectives

- Joint report from 10 partners, representing over 570,000 students.
- 2022 Publication topic will be "Financial Aid and Awareness"
- Publication draft completed

Tuition Consultation, Government of Manitoba

- March 9th, 2022
- Verbal report to be given

Federal Advocacy Update

Please refer to continuing business.



Continuing Updates

Super Conference (Advocacy Week) - Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)

Ask 1: Maintain current funding levels to Canada Student Grants past the 2022-23 school year, permanently doubling grant maximums for eligible students from \$3,000 to \$6,000 per academic year.

- All Canadians benefit from an education system where academically qualified students with the desire to pursue post-secondary studies do not face any kind of barrier, financial or otherwise.
- Where systemic barriers exist, focused financial support from government financial aid programming is both necessary and the right thing to do.
- it is well known that up-front needs-based grants are the best way to widely improve access and help students, especially those from marginalized communities, afford a costly post-secondary education
- Canada Student Grants (CSG) are the federal government's primary method to financially assist low- and middle-income students to cover the costs of post-secondary education.
- in 2020-21, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada further expanded the CSG program to increase the maximum up-front, non-repayable grant an eligible student could receive

Ask 2: Initiate a pan-Canadian strategy on mental illness detection, prevention, and intervention for post-secondary students.

- federal interventions are critically necessary, as what was once a mental health crisis on post-secondary campuses has turned into a catastrophe during the pandemic
- There have also been worrying increases in the levels of post-secondary students reporting that they feel isolated (73%), overwhelmed (71%), and in despair (53%).
- There needs to be a clear, concrete framework for bold action to ensure an evidence informed and fully funded approach to address mental illness on Canadian campuses.
- An intentional strategy would create better outcomes for post-secondary students by pairing federal government mental health funding with a national body that can strategically coordinate with other levels of government, conduct research around the effectiveness of mental health interventions, and create awareness campaigns

Ask 3: Increase funding for student scholarship programs by \$120 million on a recurring basis, thus re-establishing the importance of student scholarships within the overall envelope of the Canada Research Granting Agencies

- The primary bodies responsible for distributing funding on behalf of the Government of Canada are called the Canada Research Granting Agencies (CRGA), and they primarily consist of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).



- while students have appreciated the government's ongoing commitment to funding research through various mechanisms inside and outside of the CRGAs, we have also noticed a persistent lack of new funding allocated to the CRGAs student scholarship programs
- CRGA student scholarship programs are one of the main pathways that graduate students in Canada enter the research ecosystem, and its lack of new funding over the last decade has seriously limited the number of interested graduate students able to contribute to Canadian university research.

Ask 4: Establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices per Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 66.

- Indigenous peoples remain underrepresented in Canadian post-secondary education and face multiple financial, cultural, social, geographical, and historical barriers to access.
- While the number of Indigenous students in post-secondary has been growing in recent years, the evidence is clear that Indigenous students continue to attend post-secondary institutions at a much lower rate than non-Indigenous Canadians.
- According to the Assembly of First Nations, 70% of First Nations youth want to participate in post-secondary education, but a survey conducted on the educational attainment of Indigenous Peoples in Canada indicated that only 48.4% had a post-secondary credential, compared with 64.7% of non-Indigenous People
- In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released 94 recommendations for Canadians and Canadian governments to undertake in the spirit of reconciliation. Among those recommendations is Call to Action 66: "[the TRC calls] upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices

Ask 5: Allow international students to participate in co-op programs without requiring them to apply for an additional permit.

- Despite higher tuition fees, international students have continued to seek out Canada as a high-quality study destination, with 60% of these students planning to continue to live and contribute to the Canadian economy after graduation
- Notwithstanding their immense cultural value and economic potential, and in spite of their higher tuition fees, international students are often locked out of some of the most valuable aspects of their Canadian education
- For example, classes that include optional work-integrated learning components -- things such as co-ops or internships -- are often impossible for international students to access due to existing study permit restrictions
- To participate in co-ops or full time internships, international students must first go through the process of obtaining an additional work permit on top of their active study permit.



- the current guidelines for co-op permit eligibility is restricted to include only work that is integral to a student's program of study, which prevents international students from participating in optional co-op routes
- Further, timelines for getting co-op permits approved differ in length, meaning an international student's ability to participate in work-integrated learning may be limited.

Events and Meetings Attended:

*Please note: This excludes all meetings internal to the organization.

February 14th – February 18th – Advocacy Week, Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)

February 18th – Advancing Open Access Subcommittee

February 23rd – UM OER Working Group Monthly Meeting

February 24th – Meeting with student

February 24th – Student Senate Caucus

February 25th – Chancellor Search Committee

March 1st – Meeting with Lisa O'Hara, Vice Provost (Libraries) & University Librarian

March 1st – Shared Perspectives Publication Meeting

March 1st – RFHS Dean Search Discussion

March 2nd – Senate

March 2nd – Meeting with Student Solidarity Collective (formerly Students Supporting UMFA)

March 3rd – David Suzuki Event, Sustainability Month

March 7th – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group

March 7th – Manitoba Alliance of Post-Secondary Students, #HealthHasNoBorders Campaign

March 9th – Tuition Policy Consultation, Government of Manitoba

March 9th – Shaun Loney Mayoral Candidate Meeting

March 10th – Meeting with Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU)