



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

Final Board report (The long one., don't worry, I won't read it all tonight.)

Jaron Rykiss, UMSU President

New Updates

- Transitioning the incoming UMSU Executive:
 - o We have been continuing our executive transitions. In addition, to meeting with Tracy a handful of times to ensure she is prepared to take over as president, I have met with each incoming executive member as well to go over some things that I have learned between their new portfolio and the president.
 - o I wish the incoming team the best of luck with their tenure, and hope that they know how proud of them I am. Being an UMSU executive is a lot of work, but it is truly a one-of-a-kind experience. I am always here to help and support!
 - o Transition meeting with Laurie Schnarr:
 - We had a transition meeting including myself and Victoria, as well as Tracy and Liam (incoming VPA).
 - We touched on all issues related to the relationship between Laurie's department and UMSU and gave some general introductions for the new advocacy team for UMSU.
 - Furthermore, we touched on Aurora and how the admin is not necessarily sure as to why UMSU is the unit which disperses fees to services on campus.
 - Hopefully the next team can create more transparency on Aurora, ensuring that students see exactly how much they pay to ancillary student services, like the Manitoban, UMFM, etc. And that these fees can be separated from UMSU.
 - We also touched on the Period Product Pilot and talked with the incoming team about continuing the project!
- Meeting with Laurie Schnarr and President Benarroch
 - o Discussed:
 - MHWG recommendations and survey
 - While the survey did not have extremely high turnout, it does provide a small glimpse into student mental health at the current moment.
 - We had submitted the following recommendations to the university from the MHWG:

Peer listening group

The goal of our partnership with the student counseling center (SCC) is to establish a program that offers regular "listening ear" events for students to engage in peer listening and gain emotional support. Our aim is to create a safe and non-judgmental environment where students can come and chat with one another, fostering a sense of community and understanding. This program would be like the HealthyU (<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness/healthy-u>) program! By providing this program, we hope to offer an outlet for students to express themselves and receive the support they need, without the potential liability issues that may arise from peer support. Our ultimate goal is to help students feel heard and supported, contributing to their overall well-being and success.



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

Create a diagnostic clinic on campus

To establish a partnership with an external party that specializes in diagnosing students to ensure that they receive the proper treatment. By inviting this party tour campus, we aim to provide our students with access to comprehensive diagnostic services that are not typically available on campus. Our objective is to identify any underlying mental health issues that may be affecting our students' academic and personal success and connect them with the appropriate resources for treatment. This initiative would hopefully occur several times throughout the year, like the CRA Clinic that UMSU has hosted throughout the year. Ultimately, our goal is to improve the overall health and wellbeing of our student body, ensuring that they have the support and care they need to thrive both in and outside of the classroom.

Prep sessions for incoming first year students

To provide additional sessions for students on how to balance their mental health and academic work while at university. We recognize that university life can be challenging and stressful, and we want to ensure that our students have the resources and support they need to maintain their mental health and wellbeing. By offering these sessions, we aim to equip our students with practical strategies and tools for managing their workload and prioritizing self-care. To host these sessions, we would recommend inviting a professional in the community, or potentially if the next year's UMSU team strikes another Mental Health Working Group (MHWG), they could participate in the creation of such events. Another option is to partner with the UManitoba student affairs team and the Student Counselling Center to create events that can be hosted during the "Welcome to the Herd" events. Our objective is to help our students develop a healthy and sustainable approach to their academic work, which will not only benefit their mental health but also contribute to their overall success and achievement. Ultimately, our goal is to create a campus environment that supports and promotes the mental health and well-being of all our students.

UM Mental Health Text hotline

To implement a text hotline for mental health, building upon the foundation that has been set with the administration. We have contacted the counselling services to ensure that the hotline will be staffed by student peers who can provide immediate support and assistance to those who need it. To facilitate the implementation of this hotline, we are looking to partner with Laurie Schnarr's office to leverage their expertise and resources in mental health and wellbeing. Our objective is to provide a safe, accessible, and confidential way for students to seek help and support for their mental health needs, particularly during times of stress and crisis. By establishing this hotline, we hope to enhance our campus mental health services and promote a culture of care and support for all members of our community. We aim to ensure that our students feel empowered to take care of their mental health and well-being, knowing that they have access to the resources and support they need.

Mental Health Module for UM Learn

To create a module for UMLearn that focuses on mental health and well-being. We recognize that mental health is a crucial aspect of student success and well-being, and we want to ensure that our students have access to resources and support that can help them maintain good mental health. To achieve this goal, we have contacted IST to initiate the process of creating the module. We have been referred to the department for the advancement



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

of teaching and learning, thecentrecontactus@umanitoba.ca, to develop the module. We would work with the experts in the department to create a module that is engaging, informative, and accessible to all students. The module will cover topics such as stress management, coping strategies, and mental health resources available on campus. This, we believe, is a high-priority project and one that would greatly benefit all members of our community. It would be great to see this implemented as a project for UMSU's incoming VPSL. Ultimately, our goal is to promote a culture of mental health awareness and well-being among our students and equip them with the tools they need to thrive academically and personally.

Work to create a culture of acceptance within UM surrounding mental health

To remove barriers or policies that contribute to the formation and maintenance of stigma around mental health on our campus. We recognize that stigma can be a significant barrier to accessing mental health services and can prevent individuals from seeking help when they need it most. To achieve this goal, we aim to identify and address any policies or practices on our campus that perpetuate mental health stigma. We will work with stakeholders across the university to educate and raise awareness about the impact of stigma and how it can be addressed. Our objective is to create a campus environment that promotes mental health awareness, acceptance, and understanding, and where all students feel supported and empowered to take care of their mental health needs. We would like to see the creation of a UM Strategic Plan, like the general strategic plan, which is currently being created, but one that explores student mental health specifically. UM ought to focus on removing any barriers or obstacles that prevent our students from accessing the mental health services they need and to foster a culture of care and support for mental health on our campus.

Mental Health exemptions and do overs

To advocate for a new policy at UM that allows for exemptions or do-overs for students who experience significant mental health challenges that impact their academic performance. We recognize that mental health can significantly impact a student's ability to complete assignments and excel academically. We would like to work with the university administration to develop a policy that takes into account the impact of mental health on academic performance and provides a fair and equitable system for students who require exemptions or do-overs. We believe that not every assignment is critical and that students should have the opportunity to redo assignments if there is sufficient mental health need. This policy is different than the "Self-Assessment form" which the university implemented last year; however, it provides similar supports in the way of removing additional stress on students. By implementing this policy, we aim to reduce the stress and anxiety that can arise from academic performance pressure and provide students with the support they need to succeed academically while managing their mental health needs. Our goal is to create a culture of care and understanding about mental health on our campus and to ensure that all students can thrive academically and personally.

- Admin noted that they are currently working on a "UM Wellbeing Strategy" which is a holistic view on how to support students through academics, mental health, and other needs. This is a great step forward; however, we would love to see more come from them on the topic!
- International Student Healthcare
 - We thanked the Administration for their support on healthcare this year and had a discussion about what we had learned from Minister Guillemard in our



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

meeting. We hope to see the same level of support from the admin team this coming year.

- President Benarroch noted that he was displeased to see that this topic “disappeared from the Manitoba Immigration committee report”.
- OER and Bursary finances
 - We thanked the admin team for their contribution to both lines in the budget. And we were delighted to hear from President Benarroch that the OER implementation was due to UMSU's advocacy this year!
- UM Sustainability committee
 - We touched on some of our concerns related to the UM sustainability committee, specifically how they have restructured, essentially removing several student voices. As well as some concerns that UMSU has around them changing their Carbon Emissions baseline.
 - We are hoping to hear back from them on this soon.
 - UMSU remains committed to sustainability and environmental advocacy. And we hope to see good from this new “implementation” committee, as President Benarroch put it.
- Anti-choice protestors
 - We also had a robust discussion on the anti-choice protestors who continue to show up on campus. Victoria had ideas surrounding some potential ways to mitigate harm from their imagery and concerning behaviour. I had also cited that there needs to be better signage and that they need to ensure it actually makes students aware of what is going on.
 - President Benarroch noted that he would look to schedule a meeting on this issue to ensure that it is taken seriously, however, the fact remains that those individuals are on public property and are not going against any Canadian laws.
- Online offerings
 - Also had a discussion on UMs online offerings, as well as potential delivery modes and OER implementation.
 - The admin is currently waiting for a timeline to pass that will hopefully bring these new offerings, however, much of this information is up in the air, as teaching staff have a strict definition of academic freedom. In the end, UMSU solely cares about the student experience on this topic, we hope to see a productive change come about soon.
- Meeting with Mayor Gillingham
 - UMSU had the unique privilege to meet with Mayor Gillingham and discuss several topics. s. I have attached a follow-up letter that we sent to the mayor, touching on some of the issues and potential paths forward.

Dear Mayor Gillingham,

I wanted to express my deep and profound gratitude for your willingness to meet with us on April 19th, and the demeanor with which you approached the topics we had to bring up. I wanted to send this letter to follow up on the topics discussed and to invite you to schedule a meeting with the incoming UMSU executive team, who start their term on May 1. In the end, each thing that we touched on at our meeting yesterday was a piece of a larger



University
of Manitoba
**STUDENTS'
UNION**

TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

puzzle which, if implemented properly, will increase student satisfaction, as well as the number of students who stay in our wonderful city, post-graduation.

Firstly, I find it important to touch on the issue of the UPass program. We were delighted to hear that the city supports the program. Students find it incredibly valuable and necessary that the UPass continues to be a service offered to all those who attend post-secondary education in our city. In fact, as we discussed in our meeting, a recent UMSU survey disseminated tall undergraduate students at the University of Manitoba revealed that 99% of students were aware of the program and that 86% of students feel that this should continue to be offered as a program. Our data makes it evident that the UPass must continue to be offered.

However, we are keenly aware that, if trends continue, the UPass fee per student is set to rise by about \$4.00 in the next year. I want to make it clear that UMSU is strongly against a price increase of any kind. Students pay incredibly high ancillary fees, high tuition rates and high housing costs. To support our constituents, we hope to see the cost of the UPass program stay at its current baseline and, in fact, to see it lower in future years. UMSU is more than happy to have further conversations with you on this topic and continue to consult students throughout.

Within this correspondence, I have also attached a draft letter with information on international students in Manitoba, and how they do not receive proper support for healthcare. If we are committed to keeping people residing in Winnipeg (as was mentioned by you in our meeting), we must ensure that they have the proper support in place. UMSU would be incredibly grateful if you were to sign this letter and address it to the provincial government, specifically to Premier Stefanson and Minister Guillemard. We are in the process of collecting support from many sectors in the province – most recently, the President of the University of Manitoba, Michael Benarroch, and Vice Provost, Laurie Schnarr have sent their letter of support, as well as Jamie Moses, the education Critic for the NDP Party of Manitoba. Having your generous support would be a huge success for our advocacy.

We also discussed the issue of student housing, as well as low-income housing across the city. As you are well aware, housing rates continue to climb sky-high. Students are uniquely affected, as they are not often able to work the amount of time afforded to workers in the province to earn an income with which to cover housing costs. Students simply don't have the means on average to get good grades, build their resume contribute to our city, as well as pay for housing without sufficient support and low-enough rates. We were pleased to hear that your team is continuing to evaluate the Pembina Commons outside of the University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus, and we hope to see additional dense housing opportunities which bring safe and affordable living spaces to students in our community. UMSU is again, most happy to consult and continue the conversation on these issues.

One main priority for our team at the meeting was to discuss the sustainability of our city. We were surprised and pleased to hear that you are genuinely evaluating implementing additional sustainability measures. You highlighted your continued interest in the electrification of Winnipeg vehicles and buses. I have included a report from 2018 that outlines the dangers of electrification. (<https://academic.oup.com/cje/article/44/4/953/5859377?login=true>). While UMSU is incredibly supportive of sustainability measures, it is important that we do it responsibly, and I wanted to ensure that this was brought to your attention.

We also wanted to thank you for your commitment to supporting the MMIWG2S movement. We understand that there are several considerations that come into play when evaluating search areas like the Brady Road Landfill, and we understand that there would need to be significant investments in the city's budget to finance such a search. However, we want to reiterate the importance of searching all areas of the city to ensure that we are understanding the full extent of this issue. We appreciate your candor and respect on this topic, specifically your commitment to following the lead of Indigenous leaders across the city and the country. We urge your team to continue pushing forward on this.

Finally, we would love for your office to connect with ours to schedule a meeting with the incoming UMSU executive team. It is truly unfortunate that we weren't able to meet more than once this year as I truly believe that our teams ought to partner and consult with each other more often. In the end, we all want a stronger Winnipeg,



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

and the best way to do this is through proper consultation with one another. If you are interested, please have your office email ours at cfrey@umsu.ca and we would be more than happy to find time for the teams to chat. Thank you again for your time and for the respect which you offered our ideas. We left the meeting feeling energized and excited about the future of our great city.

- We are so thankful for the opportunity to chat with the mayor and are hoping to continue building that relationship with UMSU's new team.
- **UM Student Experience Meeting**
 - I was delighted to join the UM Admin team on a conversation surrounding student experience.
 - The purpose of this meeting was to evaluate current systems at a high level and potentially note areas of improvement that we can see going forward. As well as to review student feedback.
 - Some ideas on how to get more feedback from students are:
 - Surveys, focus groups, etc.
 - NOTE: I suggested that UMSU would be more than happy to help collect such data and share data that we already must further enhance the student experience.
- **Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees (SCHD)**
 - I had a good meeting with the SCHD, to discuss which individuals in the community would be receiving honorary degrees this spring.
 - While the information is confidential as of now, I will say that it seems as if the committee is committed to ensuring that we don't just provide degrees to those with notoriety, but actually those who have committed to the community.
 - We also had a robust discussion on the nature of how we give out degrees. Specifically touching on why one has to have graduate experience with UM, and why undergraduate should be sufficient.
 - Overall, this is a great conversation that I hope will carry over this coming year!
- **Learning, Teaching, & Student Support Sub-Committee (DS):**
 - In my final meeting of the Learning, Teaching, & Student Support Sub-Committee, (UM Digital strategy), we wanted to talk about what resources are needed to fully implement a solid online learning strategy. While I won't be continuing on as a member of the committee, Tracy and potentially Liam will be taking over as members to continue providing feedback! We touched on the following topics in the meeting:
 - Excellent online education resources:
 - Online instruction fully integrated into U of M programs
 - Acceptable alternative path to a degree
 - Same content and assessment as in-person courses
 - Faculty support including 24/7 IST, programming expertise, and multimedia creation and pedagogical support
 - Promotion and support for online courses equal to in-person courses
 - AI:
 - Synchronous or asynchronous teaching methods
 - Academic integrity support/tools
 - OERs:
 - Needs ongoing funding
 - Grants available for adopting, creating, maintaining, and promoting
 - Supplementary material for faculty and students
 - Student support:
 - IST support
 - Orientation to UM Learn



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

- Faster marks turnaround
 - Online booking for appointments with librarians, counsellors, and accessibility staff
 - Hardware/technological minimums
 - Multimedia creation support
 - Orientation to UM Learn:
 - One-stop solution for student support
 - Copyright education
 - Library materials and labour of selection
- UM Mask Mandate removal
 - The UM announced on April 24th, 2023, that they would be removing their Mask mandate as of the beginning of summer term. While UMSU does not have any official position on masking, and we were not a decider at all in the choice to remove masks, we are aware that decreasing numbers of students are wearing their masks in public UM Spaces.
 - UMSU remains committed to keeping students safe, and we hope that if there is a spike in Covid-19 cases, that the administration team of UM will evaluate reimplementing safety measures.
 - I find it extremely important that whatever changes are made, that students remain committed to ensuring that they are kind and accepting of all individuals' decisions on campus. The science still suggests that masks keep folks safe, and while it may no longer be enforced, it is highly recommended that individuals continue to wear masks in public spaces.
- UMSU Accessibility center move
 - After what seems like 5 years (although it was more like 4 months), we are finally going to be moving the UMSU Accessibility center to a more accessible room at the end of Summer. This is to ensure that students who have accessibility concerns can easily get into their lounge.
 - Thank you to Caleigh and her team for working so hard to ensure that this happens, and to the UMSU staff for supporting this initiative!

Continuing Updates

- Meeting with Minister Guillemard (additional notes)
 - While we met with the Minister of Advanced Education on April 11th, unfortunately this meant that I was not able to write a comprehensive report on the meeting as my report was due that morning.
 - We want to thank Minister Guillemard for meeting with us, and I wanted to provide some updates as to what we discussed in this meeting.
 - International student healthcare
 - We brought a copy of our proposal, and the minister seemed interested in evaluating the measures in more depth. Seemingly hoping for a cost model. However, UMSU remains committed to ensuring that students feel well-represented, and the fact remains that international students deserve better than MISHP. They deserve to be on the provincial plan.
 - PSAF
 - We wanted to make our position on performance-based funding clear. It is problematic and will hurt students. In the end, if accountability measures are implemented, we want to see them based on a system of bonuses to support programming, rather than cuts which will ruin our PSIs in the province.



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

- Student Mental Health
 - Discussed the status of student's mental health in the province, brought up that additional funding would better support students and that it would be incredibly beneficial to receive support, such as the \$500 Million that was promised by the provincial government a couple of years ago to create more counselor positions on campuses.
- UMSU Student Guide: COMPLETED
 - ITS DONE! It has been scheduled for release this morning (April 27th)! It can be found on the UMSU Website here: <https://umsu.ca/umsu-student-guide/>
 - Thank you to Annelies, Sophie, Maksym, the UM admin, and all other individuals who played a part in this project. With over 160 pages, this guide will be a resource for an infinite number of students going forward, and I cannot wait to see how it changes and grows!
- ISAP: COMPLETED
 - The auction for ISAP is complete, and I am honored to have finally finished this program this year! Thank you to Kayla for the artwork, thank you to UMSUs marketing team for the support, thank you to the UM Admin for their feedback, and to Ishkode UMSUs Indigenous Students Representative, as well as the UMISA team, and Indigenous leadership at UM for their feedback as well! This could not have happened without you all, and I am stoked to see this program be successful! I hope that the next UMSU team will grow and continue to decorate our campus with wonderful artwork!
- New Security measures from UM Admin
 - We are having a meeting with Gordon Perrier, Head of Security services, to bring up our concerns about the new security measures being implemented by their team. Our UMSU Executive team, and many other students, are concerned about the implementation of potentially violent and police-like measures being evaluated by UM.
 - We hope that if we aren't able to amend them this week, the next UMSU team continues to fight for this to be changed.
- Hire a Bison: PROPOSAL COMPLETED
 - The Hire a Bison proposal has been created and handed to the incoming executive team to evaluate implementation! Should they choose to go ahead with it, we would continue consultations with the BOD as well as the general student body.
 - Unfortunately, by the time we got feedback from students, it was already too late in the year to seriously look at implementation. However, I hope to see the HAB platform implemented into UMSUs services in the coming years.
- Land Acknowledgement Plaque
 - While we won't have enough time to finish this plaque by the end of tomorrow, I have created a document outlining the piece, and we are currently looking for an indigenous artist to create the plaque! If you or anyone you know would be interested, please have them contact Thomas, or myself!
- The Manitoban EOY meeting
 - While I am writing this report prior to this meeting, we are going to be discussing the following with the Manitoban. Continued Paper Waste, Financial accountability, Room allocation in UMSU UC, terms of agreement (UMSU x the Manitoban), etc.
 - I hope to have some firm solutions to these issues at the end of this meeting, and hope that next year's UMSU team continues these critical conversations as well!
- Appointee removal process:



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

- As promised in my campaign last year, I said that I would work to add additional measures of accountability to UMSU. While I am writing this report, I have no way of knowing whether the new “appointee removal process” will pass, however, I hope that it does!
- This is another step to creating additional accountability towards executives, board members, and committee members within UMSU!
- UMSU Wins
 - This year, our team (Exec, Community reps, BOD, Staff, etc.) worked incredibly hard to deliver the very best for students, we wanted to share it with you all!
 - Please take a moment to look over some of the key “Wins” that UMSU had this year:
 - <https://umsu.ca/umsu-wins/>

Farewell speech:

Jaron Rykiss, UMSU President – 2022-23

Keep in mind, this speech is going to be long. But I believe after the year we have had, I have earned it, so buckle in, and humour me... please. Also, I write the way I speak, grammatically this may not make sense when read, so maybe stick to listening...

When I ran to become UMSU President, I promised you that I would make things better. That you could be proud of the union when I was through here. And I believe we did that.

From securing more carpool parking stalls right at the beginning of the year, to completing the UMSU Student guide, this year has been full of projects and efforts. We have aimed to change the landscape of UM politics and student support and re-engage with the provincial government in a slightly different way than previous UMSU teams have.

I have had this board of sticky notes in my office all year, just like I had planned to do. And each time the “complete” section fills up, I take the notes down, staple that stack together, and keep it. As a reminder of how much work has been done, and how much there still is to do. Well, after almost an entire year, I can tell you that my board is bare, and I have completed roughly 405 sticky notes from small tasks like bringing XYZ up to President Benarroch, to big and complex initiatives like creating the Indigenous Student Art Program. Not to mention the thousands of goals that did not make it onto sticky notes, but were completed, nonetheless. My team and I have accomplished a lot. It reminds me of the late nights, the early mornings, and the hard work of myself, the UMSU executive team, and the Board of Directors.

None of those accomplishments would have been possible without the unsung heroes of UMSU. Even those who no longer work with us, I want to extend a huge thank you to Carly, the best assistant in the world who somehow handles my incessant bothering, and still finds ways to impress me after what feels like the longest year of our lives. I consider Carly a close friend, and one that I can always count on to bring me back down to earth.

Sophie, a fantastically capable and intelligent (emotionally and intellectually), advisor, that has made my life as president so much easier. See, I will occasionally have weird ideas a lot of the time, and instead of telling me no right away, Sophie always entertains them and provides me with the information I need on every decision we make. Not to mention that Mayor Gillingham's assistant said that the agenda which she created for our meeting was the best one they had ever seen. Sophie is fantastic and I am so grateful for her friendship and her tact.



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

Thomas, seemingly the best GM in the country, potentially the world. Thomas has been giving his all to UMSU for over 15 years now. He wakes up every morning and gives the executives, as well as all UMSUs staff, the same care and attention that he would give to his children. Thomas knows how to do everything. Whether it's asking him how to solve world hunger, or simply how to hire a research advisor, Thomas is willing and ready at all times to support the executive team. He truly gives his all, and I don't think I would have made it through this year without his constant reassurance and support. I believe UMSU is lucky to have Thomas. Hearing the perspective from other unions who have negative things to say about their GMs or their EDs, I believe we are extremely fortunate to have Thomas.

Now to ensure this speech doesn't get too long I want to thank all the other people who have made this year possible. To Annelies, Ricardo, Lauren, Sam, Ben, Carmela, and Daniel, Thank you. To Mat, Leandra, Sabrina, Jeana, the service center team, Jack, Lauren, April, Danny, all the Degrees, VWs, GPAs, and IQs staff, thank you. To our BOD, to the Judicial, governance, Member Services, and finance committees, thank you. To our UMSU Volunteers, to Laurie Schnarr, Naomi Andrew, Diane Hiebert Murphy, President Benarroch, thank you. To the MAPSS, CASA, and provincial government teams thank you. And most importantly, to the student body, thank you. Thank you for trusting me to lead this organization this year and thank you for letting a 21-year-old boss you all around. No other organization would let someone without several years of professional experience be the President or CEO. I will always be grateful for this opportunity and therefore, I have been so incredibly lucky to have legitimately the best staff in the world supporting me. I have been spoiled here. The truth is that for me to go anywhere else after this, I will be lucky to feel even 1% of the support that UMSU has provided me this year. I am indebted to you all. Thank you.

To the Community representatives, and this UMSU BoD. Thank you for entertaining my nonsense, my rambling, my sitting at tables and most of all, my frankness. I wanted to ensure that we felt like a team this year, and although we had moments of tension, heated debate, and disagreement, I believe that in the end you all did an amazing job. Our team needs the BoD. We cannot function without it. So, thank you all!

I will never be able to thank the UMSU executive team enough for allowing me to lead them, but more importantly, for teaching me how to do so. Brook, Tracy, Elishia and Victoria have been a team like no other. We have laughed together, cried together, struggled together, and celebrated together. And I wish the best to those carrying on next year.

Victoria has the ability to do great things. She is smart, dedicated, and most of all, knowledgeable about the world of politics and advocacy. She has a flame within her to do what is right, to fight for others, and to support those who might be struggling to support themselves against the problematic and harmful structures of our world. I have never had someone challenge me as much as she has, and while sometimes it can make this job harder, I believe that difficulty is necessary to make sure we are taking the right steps in the right direction. Early this year, when the anti-choice protestors came to campus for the first of (unfortunately) many protests. I was unsure how to approach the situation, in fact, I believe I didn't want to say or do anything at first. Victoria suggested a path forward, and recently, as referenced in my final report to the Board, when we had conversations with the UM admin, Victoria provided ideas on how we can make things better for students and potentially less triggering as well. I have no doubt wherever she goes next, she will stand for what she believes in. From Victoria, I learned more about politics and the Canadian government than I ever knew before.



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

Elishia, my Chief Mischief officer, and a wonderful VPCE. She is kindhearted, capable, and understanding, not to mention a kickass drummer and karaoke-ist. Ellie wants to help others. Whether it's organizing events for thousands of students or exploring new avenues to better the projects that UMSU undertakes, Ellie is determined. Earlier this year, when we were organizing Bison Bash, Ellie and I spent days and days and days in meetings, talking to what seemed like hundreds of talent managers, organizers, and agencies. At every turn, we ran into roadblocks. It turns out, people like money, and Ellie, as caring as always, didn't want us to spend an ungodly amount of student money on a concert, the memory of which would become hazy and ultimately be forgotten in a couple of years anyways. Elishia cares. As a joke, she'll often come up to me and asks if I need someone to "Care for me". Of course, she is only half joking. From Ellie, I have learned that it is okay to not be okay. The stress of being a student leader is high. The job demands perfection and when you aren't perfect, people often make you feel that feeling quite harshly. Ellie has always been a supportive and caring co-executive, and I am lucky to have had her on my team this year.

Tracy, my successor, and the person on the team who I was most intimidated by from day one. I remember calling each incoming executive right after the announcement meeting last year. Each phone call was energetic, exciting, and full of hope. NOT TRACY's. Tracy seemed ready to go, ready to work, ready to put the hours in and make sure that the union is strong. I have never been so intimidated by someone I barely knew. See, prior to that phone call and a few messages exchanged throughout the campaign, Tracy and I had only spoken when she coordinated the Sexual violence prevention workshop for the ASBC team I was on last year. That being the case, Tracy and I rarely interacted, but after that phone call, I knew not to worry about her being VPSL at all. Students respect Tracy, she is strong, dedicated, Firm, understanding, and extremely capable. Tracy has taught me that you can always learn more. For every question, there are 35 follow ups. That every decision has room for more decisions to be made. And that no matter what, we have to learn, otherwise, we fail as leaders. I cannot wait to see how Tracy differs from me as a president. I am always only a phone call away, and no matter what, you know I'm here to help. Even if you don't need me to... I'll be here.

And finally, Brook. See, from the beginning of the year, I have been confident that Brook doesn't like me and that he is simply too kind to act in such a way. I ask Brook about 12 questions every day that range from "What is the process of making paper?" to "What is the best way to cook a chicken?", and somehow, this human encyclopedia has all the answers. Somehow, every time that I leave for the day or go to a conference, and Brook becomes the executive in charge, something goes wrong, however, he always handles those moments with grace, and a sense of calm. Brook and I have had some surprisingly deep conversations this year. But my favourite one was right after a UMSU BOD Meeting, we had been discussing something pretty heavy, and I remember I had given a speech (shocker), that was decently passionate and seemingly pretty argumentally sound. And after the uproar was finished, Brook came up to me and said, "Damn dude, that might have been one of the most moving speeches that I have heard from an UMSU President since Sanderson." See, for some reason, the only person I wanted to really impress this year, besides everyone because I am a serial crowd-pleaser, was Brook. He is so intelligent, understanding, and truly one of the most understated leaders I have had the honour of working with. Brook has taught me that sometimes, it is better to listen than to talk. That you can get a point across in only a few words, and still leave a great impact, and that no matter what, you need to make sure that every decision is thought out. Whether he admits it or not, I believe Brook and I have gotten really quite close this year. And I am extremely lucky to have him as my second in command.

I've learned more about myself and the world of advocacy this year than I ever thought possible. I have learned of the impact we have when we put our heads down and put in the work.



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

See, some people don't like UMSU, and whether it's because they had a bad experience, don't like the fee per semester, felt unsupported, or feel like we aren't doing enough, it will always be a challenge for the UMSU executive and Board of directors to try and fight back against that perspective. But the rub becomes when people dig their heels in and say no.

Unfortunately, we won't ever be able to have everyone like us completely. That is an unfortunate fact of our world. But what we can do is stand up for what we believe in. We can fight for what's right. We can use our voice to tell the wrong people no, and we can stand together when injustices rear their ugly head.

If I can leave you with anything. Any final words of wisdom from my 21-year-old self. And if this means anything to you. Just remember that people are people, so please, treat them with compassion, and never forget your humanity.

Running for UMSU doesn't mean you are impervious to gossip, to negativity, to hatred. This isn't professional politics, even though some may view it as such. We're students. We are learning. And while I believe this year, we have done some incredible things and moved the needle of support further than ever before. There will always be roadblocks. There will always be difficulties, but this is an educational institution after all. We are learning. For those of you who have stayed with us and witnessed the challenging year we've had, please keep in mind that this job can be highly stressful. If you contribute to increasing the stress level unnecessarily, it will only make the job harder. Instead, work collaboratively with your colleagues. It's acceptable and encouraged that you raise questions, debate, or even disagree, but it's unacceptable to be disrespectful or cause others to feel negative emotions without a valid reason.

So next year, and every year after, if you can do one thing for me, Bisons. One small request. Be kind.

In the words of Walt Whitman, and later Ted Lasso, **"Be Curious, not Judgmental"**.

If we all spent a little more time being curious, we would learn that student leaders get one year, two if you're lucky, and that we still somehow accomplish enormous amounts in that small blip of time.

If we all spent a little more time being curious, we would see that we are all on the same team. We all want the same things. We want UM students to feel supported, we want healthcare for international students, we want our community to feel strengthened, and we want to have experiences we can one day tell our families about.

And if we spent a little less time being judgmental, maybe we would see that criticism without constructive ideas rarely leads to positive change.

I will be eternally grateful that you put your faith in me this year. To my team, thank you. To the UMSU staff, thank you. To my wonderful friends and family, thank you. But most of all, to every bison, every student, from here to Bangladesh, thank you.

They never tell you about the end of the line, and they never talk about the stress it takes to get there. But take it from me. Every moment of doubt I've ever had about this job was brief. Because I am continually amazed by the dedication of those around me. I loved being YOUR president. This has been the most incredible honor of my life. I wouldn't trade the late nights stressing about inconsequential details, the intense anxiety and fear, or even the 14-hour days for anything in the world. I truly hope that I have made you proud. That's all I have wanted from



TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

day one: to show you that your vote mattered. It will always matter. So, remember, whatever you do. Be Kind. Be Kind. Be Kind.

Humbly, and with great pride,

Jaron Rykiss, your 98th, UMSU President.

External Events & Meetings Attended

- **April 17th, 2023**
 - o Incoming VPA Transition meeting
 - o Incoming president transition meeting
 - o UMSU x Laurie Schnarr Transition meeting
 - o UMSU Mental Health Working group
- **April 18th, 2023**
 - o Learning, Teaching, & Student Support Sub-Committee (DS)
 - o Incoming president transition meeting
 - o Incoming VPSL transition meeting
 - o UMSU Finance Committee
- **April 19th, 2023**
 - o UMSU x UMGSA Presidential Transition meeting
 - o Meeting with Mayor Gillingham
- **April 20th, 2023**
 - o Meeting with President Benarroch and Laurie Schnarr
 - o UM Student Satisfaction meeting
 - o Incoming VPFO transition meeting
 - o Incoming VPCE transition meeting
- **April 21st, 2023**
 - o UMSU Campaign Promises – 2023-2024 System Meeting
- **April 24th, 2023**
 - o UMSU Student Guide – Final Meeting
 - o UMSU President Exit Interview
- **April 25th, 2023**
 - o Canadian Union Presidents – final meeting
 - o Dinner with Pitblado - EOY
- **April 26th, 2023**
 - o Incoming president transition meeting
 - o Meeting with UMSU accessibility representative
 - o Meeting with the Manitoban
- **April 27th, 2023**
 - o Incoming president transition meeting
 - o Meeting with Gordon Perrier from Security Services
 - o Final UMSU BOD meeting



University
of Manitoba
STUDENTS'
UNION

TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: President, Jaron Rykiss
DATE: April 27th 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, April 2023**

- April 28th, 2023
 - o UMSU EOY Staff appreciation lunch
- April 29th, 2023
 - o Empty
- April 30th, 2023
 - o EMPTY.