



University  
of Manitoba  
**STUDENTS'**  
**UNION**

**TO:** UMSU Board of Directors  
**FROM:** VP Advocacy, Liam Pittman  
**DATE:** November 28, 2023  
**RE:** **Report to the Board, November 30, 2023**

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## Updates

### **Minister of Advanced Education and Training**

Myself and Tracy were able to meet with the new Minister of Advanced Education and Training, René Cable. We were able to discuss UMSU's priorities for post-secondary education in the province of Manitoba. Some of the topics discussed include: student housing, affordability, and Manitoba Student Aid. Tracy and I were happy to hear the minister is taking a proactive approach to fixing issues. The Manitoba Student Aid contact system has been updated via phone which should allow for students to no longer receive a "busy line" issue and a menu with options for students to be connected to the correct individual. We were also informed that the Minister is already working on the preliminary pieces of reinstating international students back on the provincial healthcare plan. As such, Min. Cable has said they will contact us if they have concerns regarding international student healthcare.

### **CASA - Ottawa**

I was able to travel to Ottawa with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) during my visit to Ottawa. Our discussions with Members of Parliament, Senators, and governmental departments responsible for copyright, which focused on advocating for fair use of educational materials.



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We were able to discuss the importance of maintaining current copyright laws which allow up to 10% of textbooks, articles, and related materials to be used in classrooms. This initiative supports a dynamic learning environment, giving educators and students greater flexibility in access to diverse resources.

This success highlights the impact of collaborative advocacy and reinforces our commitment to ensuring fair and effective use of educational materials in Canada. Access to these excerpts is imperative in the advocacy charge for affordability.

### **Policy and Strategy Advisor**

I am thrilled to update the board on a significant development in the UMSU team— the successful hiring of a Policy and Strategy Advisor. Following a robust interview process, we identified a standout candidate whose expertise aligns seamlessly with our organization's objectives. I am pleased to announce that she officially joined our team this Tuesday.

Our new Policy and Strategy Advisor brings a wealth of knowledge in both research and governmental affairs, making her well-rounded and equipped to navigate the complex landscape of policy development and implementation. Her extensive background positions her as a valuable asset, particularly in our efforts to engage with government bodies and shape



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We look forward to leveraging her expertise to enhance our strategic initiatives and advocacy efforts. Her insights and capabilities will undoubtedly contribute to the continued growth and success of UMSU and its advocacy efforts.

### **Advocacy Cases**

As always, I have continued assisting students with advocacy cases and concerns. These take up a large amount of time but I am not able to share the details in order to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. I want to assure the board that my dedication to supporting students and their advocacy cases at the University of Manitoba remains unwavering.

### **Meetings and Events**

- Virtual Meeting with Jeff Leclerc – Nov 7
- Student Support Meeting – Nov 7
- First Lake Solutions Virtual Meeting – Nov 7
- UMSU Townhall – Nov 8
- Student Advocacy Meeting – Nov 9
- Meeting Minister Cable – Nov 9
- MAPSS Executive Meeting – Nov 10



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- Jeff Leclerc Virtual – Nov 10
- MAPSS Meeting – Nov 14
- Finance and Infrastructure Meeting – Nov 14
- First Lake meeting – Nov 15
- National Advocacy Committee CASA – Nov 15
- CASA Policies Consultation – Nov 15
- Policy Interviews – Nov 16
- Policy Interviews (2) – Nov 17
- Student Wellness Centre Consultation – Nov 18
- CASA Ottawa Advocacy Week – Nov 19 - 24