



University
of Manitoba
**STUDENTS'
UNION**

TO: UMSU Board of Directors
FROM: VP Advocacy, Liam Pittman
DATE: November 7, 2023
RE: **Report to the Board, November 9, 2023**

Updates

Collaboration with First Lake Solutions

Over the last two weeks, UMSU has continued its proactive engagement with First Lake Solutions, our government relations consultant. The primary objectives have been to prepare for the impending changes in government policies and priorities in the university sector, fill the gap of our Policy and Strategy Advisory and to ensure we are well-prepared to make an impact on the newly seated government. This collaboration aims to strategically position UMSU to align with and effectively represent student interests in upcoming discussions. We are preparing for our meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education and Training, ensuring our asks are well-crafted and impactful. This meeting holds a crucial significance in laying the groundwork for understanding and potentially influencing the course of UMSU and the role it plays in government for the next four years.

Alignment with University Leadership

Tracy and I engaged in discussions with key university stakeholders, Laurie (Vice Provost), and President Benarroch. The focus was to discuss alignment with the University of Manitoba's strategy for government relations and vision vis-a-vis the new government. While significant alignment was observed on almost all issues, there was a notable discrepancy regarding the proposed tuition freeze. These discussions emphasized the need for further dialogue and



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negotiation to ensure the best possible outcome for students both with government and administration.

Security Services

In response to growing concerns about safety on campus, UMSU initiated discussions with a Student at Large and Gordon Perrier, the head of security services at the University of Manitoba. These conversations aimed to understand the ongoing issues and improvements in campus security. Valuable insights were shared regarding new preventative measures implemented by the security team, enhancing safety within the university premises. Additionally, the student offered crucial perspectives on areas needing attention, providing a comprehensive view of the situation. Although Gordon has noted that all security measures cannot be shared, as doing so could compromise their efficacy and operational integrity, he has reassured us the security on campus is being taken very seriously and there is cross-organizational communication with varying levels of government and protective services both locally and federally.

Manitoba Alliance of Post-Secondary Students (MAPSS)

UMSU actively participated in the final meeting of MAPSS concerning its formalization. A significant development was the commitment of \$500 from each association and union towards startup costs. This financial commitment underscores MAPSS dedication to fostering a united front among post-secondary institutions, ensuring collaborative support and initiatives aimed at



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benefiting students collectively. The money will be used for name registration, and incorporation purposes and ensure the viability and legitimacy of MAPSS in the sector and with provincial government.

Senate

The Senate meeting resulted in the decision to cease the BSc Honours and major in biotechnology. With only three students currently enrolled, it was determined that the program will be phased out once these students complete their studies. Lack of interest and practicality of this program has led to its removal from the U of M.

Holiday Hampers Program and Babysitter Registry

UMSU has launched its holiday hamper program. As such I have been given the opportunity to acquire sponsorships for the holiday hampers program. Over 35 departments at the U of M were contacted in an attempt to gather support for this charitable initiative aimed at providing assistance and support during the holiday season. We are aiming for a goal of \$30,000.

Additionally, I was able to participate in an interview with the Free Press to discuss the U of M's new babysitter registry. This registry aims to connect faculty and students with U of M students offering babysitting services, contributing to a stronger community support system within the university. We are happy to see this initiative on campus and it is a reminder that students come from all walks of life and often have needs that are different to our own.



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Meetings and Events

- First Lake Solutions – Oct. 25
- Student Advocacy Case - Oct. 25
- Tabling for Campus Safety + AI – Oct. 25
- UM Open House – Oct. 25
- President Benarroch & VP Schnarr – Oct. 26
- Office Hours – Oct. 26
- Meeting With Student & Security – Oct. 26
- MAPSS Meeting – Oct. 30
- First Lake Solutions – Nov. 1
- Student Advocacy Case – Nov 1.
- National Advocacy Committee CASA –Nov. 1
- Senate – Nov. 1
- Indigenous Students Working Group – Nov. 1
- Meeting With Science / VP Schnarr – Nov. 2
- Training With Security – Nov. 2
- Free Press Interview – Nov. 2
- Park & Ride Reel – Nov. 6
- Student Advocacy case – Nov. 6