



MY PLATFORM

 VP EXTERNAL

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Land Acknowledgement

My campaign team and I honor and acknowledge that the lands on which we live, study, learn, and work is done on Amiskwaciy Waskahigan [a-mis-kwa-CHEE wah-SKAY-gun], or Beaver Hill House (what is now called Edmonton), on Treaty 6 territory. This land has been the traditional homeland for the Nehiyaw (Cree), the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), the Métis, the Nahkawiniwak (Saulteaux), the Nakota Sioux, and the Denesuline (Dene). It is also crucial to recognize that the University and much of the city are located on the unlawfully stolen and unceded land of the Papaschase Cree people.

The University and the Students' Union have benefited directly from the exploitation of land and Indigenous peoples. As a result, I acknowledge that sharing this land means that myself and all treaty partners have a moral obligation to fight ongoing injustices.

I acknowledge the privileges bestowed upon me by the position I currently hold, and I recommit to ensuring that Indigenous voices, knowledge, and traditions are well represented and included in all decisions and policies. Moreover, I commit to pursuing a form of governance that recognizes the value of and incorporates alternate forms of decision making to ultimately foster a culture of inclusivity.

Executive Summary

Hi there!

I'm Christian, and this past year I have had the honor of serving as your Vice President External Affairs. During my tenure, I have successfully advocated for a number of the following measures including:

1. Securing funding to address on-campus sexual violence;
2. Lobbying provincial and federal stakeholders for Campus Saint-Jean funding;
3. Fighting to delay exceptional tuition increases;
4. And building a large network of advocacy allies who share advocacy priorities at the municipal, provincial, and federal level.

Despite these successes, I am seeking re-election to continue this work and also confront the new issues that we as a student body are facing. Specifically I want to:

1. Advocate for more needs-based financial aid;
2. Expand degree relevant work opportunities for students;
3. Organize events to showcase and promote student innovation.

The successes I have had thus far are a result of constructive collaboration, which is the product of my solutions-driven style of leadership. Advocacy requires being a team player, and I will continue to take a relationship-building approach to solving the problems that are hurting students not only at the University of Alberta, but across the province. I intimately share your anger and frustration at the University, the provincial government, the federal government, and even the UASU. However, as your representative I have and will continue to mobilize that anger and frustration to tangibly improve the experiences of students. That's what I have done in the past year and what I will continue to do if re-elected.

Role of VP External

The Vice President (External) shall:

- a. Develop and maintain awareness of significant issues external to the University of Alberta that impact students.
- b. Advocate for the Students' Union to the federal, provincial, and municipal governments; and
- c. Lead and coordinate the Students' Union efforts on external advocacy to the University of Alberta.

My Priorities

1. Improving Financial Supports and the Learning Environment

Tuition and Institutional Funding

Progress Report:

During my term as VP External, I have been working alongside our provincial partners in the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), to lobby the government for increased needs-based financial aid. The provincial government's recent budget announcement saw \$23 million in investments to grants and bursaries for low-income students studying in qualified high-demand programs, and funding for expansion to reskilling and upskilling opportunities via micro-credential based course offerings. This is a step in the right direction, however it still leaves thousands of other students without any support. The Alberta Student Grant for Full time Students was fully allocated this year for the first time in a long time. Examples like that show that the whole financial aid system needs reform and improvements.

If Re-Elected, I will continue to fight against the cost of education by:

- 1.1. Lobbying the provincial government to increase need-based support through grants and bursaries
- 1.2. Encouraging the university to fund more scholarships by eliminating restrictions on the usage of reserve funds
- 1.3. Advocating for the provincial government to increase operational grants to the university to prevent future tuition increases

Support for students of Campus Saint Jean (CSJ)

Progress Report:

This year, the Association des universitaires de la faculté Saint-Jean (AUFSJ), whose powerful, effective and collaboration-driven approach to advocacy, were successful in receiving numerous wins. Most importantly was the "Sauvons Saint-Jean" campaign to seek funding for CSJ. Their advocacy resulted in a temporary funding scheme by the Federal government, which would require the Province to match only 5% the first year, then 25% and 50% the next two consecutive two years. I am proud of the role I played in supporting and empowering AUFSJ's external advocacy. Whether it was through bridging AUFSJ to influential allies in the francophone community, working with MPs who were key in seeking information that kept us connected to the Ministry of Official Languages, or providing SU resources to support advocacy. I have been ceaseless in my drive to support the SU.

But still, more must be done to ensure a longer term sustainable funding. The students at Campus Saint-Jean deserve to access a high quality bilingual post-secondary education and the Students' Union has a responsibility to meet this goal.

If Re-Elected, I will continue to support CSJ Students by:

- 1.4. Coordinating with AUFSJ to lobby the federal and provincial governments to propose a long term support for International students

- 1.5. Continuing to support and empower AUFSJ's advocacy by providing resources, networks and any other relevant or needed support
- 1.6. Bringing forward a minority language learning in Post-Secondary policy to the Federal Policy Committee of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) for approval. This will provide CASA staff the basis and platform to build connections within the various federal departments.
- 1.7. Collaborate with AUFSJ, CSJ Administration, the Franco-Albertan community and other stakeholders to address disparities of application rates from french speaking african countries.

Supporting On Campus Indigenous Learning Centers

Progress Report:

Funding Indigenous centers in Universities was a main priority for the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) this year. During our lobby meetings, my colleagues had the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Indigenous Relations. During these meetings, we highlighted the crucial role Indigenous Centers on campus play in supporting First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) students during their university journey and outlined the immensely positive outcomes that dedicated and sustained funding for these centers can have both academically and mentally for Indigenous students.

At the Federal level, through the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), we have lobbied MPs, Ministers, and Senators for the Government of Canada 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 per Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 66. While we wait patiently for what the Federal budget will have in store for Indigenous students, Alberta's budget saw \$5 million dollars allocated to increase training opportunities for Indigenous students. While this initiative will be beneficial to Indigenous students seeking to increase their experience in the workforce, more is still needed to be done by the Province to fulfill their commitments to the recommendations outlined in The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) calls to action on post-secondary education.

I will continue to advocate for supports to Indigenous Students by:

- 1.8. Calling upon both the Provincial and Federal Government to meet their commitments to the TRC's call to action 62 & 66
- 1.9. Advocate to the Provincial government to provide more financial support to Indigenous Centers like First People's House to increase its ability to better support the increased enrollment of FNMI students.
- 1.9.1 Coordinate with Indigenous representative groups and stakeholders on campus, and the Undergraduate Board of Governors Representative on avenues of publicly pressuring the University and Board of Governors, to ensure that Maskwa House of learning is a priority applicant for the University's next Capital Infrastructure Plan submission

Diversifying our Approach to Deferred Maintenance.

As a result of the dangerously increasing deferred maintenance issues on our campuses, the learning experience for many students has worsened. The University of Alberta's deferred maintenance cost has accumulated to over \$1 Billion and the deteriorating quality of facilities whether it be old and unfurnished gymnasiums, neglected ceilings, walls and classrooms, have left many students unsafe or uneasy. We need to think bigger if we want to address this issue head on. We must bring in other levels of Governments, not just the province and we the students and the University, must all work together in trying to bring down these rising deferred maintenance costs.

As YOUR VP External, I will:

- 1.9.2. Collaborate with Universities Canada, Polytechnics Canada and any other relevant stakeholder to advocate for the re-launch of the Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund.

Addressing the Added Expenses of Being a Student

Progress Report:

While textbooks and tuition have made our education more expensive, the added costs of living(from housing and groceries to transit) contribute heavily. This is why we must advocate to all levels of government that play a role in the student experience. Edmonton has an advantage of having housing that is relatively affordable in comparison to other cities, but we must keep it that way. During my tenure as Chair of the Edmonton Student Alliance, we have planted the foundations to build highly focused advocacy surrounding transit and housing. By developing the relationships with City Council and within city administration, we can easier support or understand better transit or housing initiatives.

As VP External, I will continue to build on this foundation by:

- 1.9.3 Advocating to the City of Edmonton to implement Zoning Bylaw changes and to approve more new small-scale to larger scale residential development near the university as a means to provide more housing options within commuting distance for students.
- 1.9.4 Advocating to the City of Edmonton and other municipalities in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region to improve transit frequency and coverage to improve students' commutes to school.
- 1.9.5. Publicly address lack of affordable transportation from Camrose to Edmonton for Augustana student with the City of Camrose and the City of Edmonton
- 1.9.6.Promote student involvement in community leagues by educating students on the importance and influence of community leagues
- 1.9.7. Increase collaboration between the SU and Garneau community league
- 1.9.8.Promote resources that Increase awareness of tenancy rights, obligations, and dispute resolution methods

2. Improve Access to Work Opportunities

Supporting Student Innovation

Our Campuses are filled with driven students whose ideas, projects, research, and/or initiatives are addressing problems within our community and society at large. U of A students are inventing technologies, solving inefficiencies in business, and addressing social issues by creating and leading innovative organizations and enterprises. The SU can and should be supporting these students by connecting them to sector leaders, other student entrepreneurs, and relevant resource providers. To support student Innovation, as your VP External I will:

- 2.1. Create opportunities for student innovators and entrepreneurs to showcase their ideas, and help them gain connections and resources to facilitate their growth and success

- 2.2. Work with the University's VP Research and Innovation, and VP External to grow partnerships with stakeholders at the local, national and international level to help students find support for their ventures and projects

Promoting Student employment Opportunities

Progress Report:

Through our municipal advocacy and my capacity as Chair of the Edmonton Student Alliance, we have reopened conversations with the City about the role they can play in providing more student employment opportunities (especially as we plan for Edmonton's economic recovery and eventual growth). Through discussions with the Mayor and current city councilors we began discussions on the importance of prioritizing the retention and recruitment of students in Edmonton, as brain drain is a very real problem. However, we all understand the time for talk was yesterday and the time for action is now.

I have also been engaging with the Province on the need to fund more work integrated learning opportunities (WIL). The government announced \$6 million dollars over three years to create 1,200 student work placements. While this amount barely covers the amount of students that it would have been able to under the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP). It is a step in the right direction and we must continue our advocacy to expand these opportunities. I will continue advocating for eliminating barriers international students face in accessing work opportunities,

As your VP external, I will continue to build on this work by:

- 2.3. Collaborating with City Council and the Mayor's Office to create more work opportunities in Edmonton for students as well as explore strategies to address brain drain in our city.
- 2.4. Advocate to the provincial government for the expansion of WIL opportunities for Arts
- 2.5. Advocate to the federal government for a 100% wage subsidy for renewable energy jobs in the Canada Summer Jobs Program.
- 2.6. Advocate to the federal government for the elimination of a requirement to obtain a separate work permit to participate in co-op or internships.
- 2.7. Lobby the provincial government to address labor and skills shortages by creating a new permanent residency pathway for international students (similar to the one recently launched in New Brunswick)

3. Fostering Community On and Off Campus

Addressing Campus Sexual Violence

Progress Report:

Earlier this month, the provincial government announced \$2.5 million dollars in grants for institutions, which would provide them with the funds to modernize their campus sexual violence policies. This is the result of years of advocacy by student leaders. Through collaboration with CAUS and the Associate Minister of the Status of Women, we were able to make the first major push in change towards addressing on campus sexual violence. Now it is time to ensure that money is spent properly and fairly and there are methods in place to measure intended outcomes.

As Your VP External, I will continue advocacy on addressing Campus Sexual violence by:

- 3.1. Work with the provincial government to develop a province wide survey to research campus sexual violence, which would allow for the creation of better strategies to curb it
- 3.2. Address the vastly decreased resources for the Augustana campus with the provincial government to lower the disparity in student supports between the two campuses

Diversify Strategies for Seeking Mental Health Funding:

Progress Report:

The Federal government appointed a Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. The creation of this portfolio is a signal from the Federal Government for the need to address the ongoing mental health and addiction crisis occurring within our country. Through our advocacy with CASA, we have met with the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, to illustrate the situation on our campuses and asked for federal funding to address worsening mental health outcomes.

As VP External, I will

- 3.4. Work with the Vice President Student Life (VPSL) to identify gaps in current mental health supports, then lobby different levels of government for funding to address said gaps
- 3.5. Work with VPSL to identify or designate spaces for students to take virtual therapy sessions

Promoting Safety and Security On Our Campuses

The announcement of the City's recently approved \$3.9 million transit safety plan has shown that City Council is taking the issue of safety and security on transit. This comes after issues of transit safety reported by International Students, the stories and experiences of Muslim hijabi women being harassed and a sense of unease and fear when using transit by City and transit riders. The City's approach of a joint response via the Community Outreach Transit Team shows an effort of understanding that is not simply a crime issue but a socioeconomic one.

If Re-Elected, I look forward to:

- Continue advocacy with the Edmonton Student Alliance to lobby the municipal government to continue integration of more social services alongside police and EPS officers, in enhancing transit safety

My Approach

a. Building Engagement between Students and their Representatives

Students-At-Large

Throughout many conversations – whether casual or formal – and even in consultation meetings, I continue to hear from students that they are not really aware of what the SU is, or are unsure of the work done by the executive team or the council that represents them. It is clear that despite current efforts, more has to be done. We need to seriously rethink how the UASU communicates with the student body in order to close the knowledge and information gap between students and student governance leaders. If nothing is done, we risk a continued downward trend towards even lower voter turnout in UASU elections, increased dissatisfaction and disillusionment, and an increased sense that students are not receiving value for the fees they pay.

As YOUR VP External, I will:

- 3.1. Improve communications between students and their representatives by:
 - 3.1.1. Working with the rest of the executive team to conduct town halls at the start of the semester to introduce the executive team to students.
 - Create short one-two minute videos at the end of each Friday providing students the updates that may have occurred in post-secondary education.
 - 3.1.2. Working with the UASU Council to implement a structure for Councilors to better engage with their constituents.
 - 3.1.3 Continue to attend student group events when available and if invited.
- 3.2. Work with Students' Council to make accessing and/or participating in our policy creation/updating process more accessible by:
 - Sharing amendments to, or the creation of of SU political policies, to the general student body for feedback
 - Newsletters
 - Shorby
 - Sharing through social media
 - Working with SRAs and UASU Council to reform the process of opting out of SU political policy.

Student Representative Associations

The strength of our student governance system can be credited to the unique structure of Student Representative Associations (SRAs). This includes, Faculty and Departmental Associations (FAs and DAs), as well as the International Students Association (ISA) and Aboriginal Students' Council (ASC). SRAs have direct communication with their constituents and are best positioned to respond to the needs and concerns of the students they represent. Better yet, because they have such close links with their fellow students, they know best the events, initiatives, and projects to fund or produce that provide immensely to student life on and off campus.

While this structure has its positives, it does not mean that the relationship between the UASU and FAs has been perfect. For many years and many elections, we have heard student leaders voice legitimate complaints about only hearing from SU reps around the election period, and once elected, silence. This year,

I have worked hard alongside my fellow executives to improve, re-build and make more consistent the relationship between SRAs and FAs. Through continued consultation, engaging in greater dialogue with counterparts from some FAs about issues both internal and external, and offering SU support and resources when needed, we have begun to re-bridge the relationship between the UASU and its SRAs. Now it is essential that what has been re-established, continues for many years to come.

As YOUR VP External, I will:

- 3.4. Work to improve UASU relationship with SRAs by:
 - 3.4.1. Working with the Vice Presidents External (or equivalents) of SRAs to create a communication space between counterparts where we can explore topics including but not limited to:
 - 3.4.1.2 How to best centralize and/or share best practices and resources to support fundraising and sponsorship initiatives.
 - 3.4.1.3 How FAs can support SU external advocacy efforts or initiate their own.
 - 3.4.1.4 Consult on issues that require student feedback.
 - 3.4.2. Attend meetings of the Council of Faculty Associations (CoFA).
 - 3.4.3. Continue to provide SRAs the resources including SU Research, funding, marketing and physical spaces (so long as use of these resources do not violate SU political policy).
- 3.5. Connect SU networks or partnerships to SRAs to further support their projects by:
 - 3.5.2 Utilizing the semester reports submitted by SRAs as a tool to inform the VP External for how to further facilitate connections in the community to relevant SRAs.

University of Alberta Senate

Each year, the nomination committee of the Students' Council selects three students from a pool of applicants to represent Undergraduate students on the University of Alberta Senate. The Senate is a body of University and community leaders that work to improve the University's reputation and image provincially, nationally and globally. The Senate has various other committees that undertake certain tasks. This body, made up of influential community members within the worlds of business, healthcare, education, politics, etc. can be instrumental in supporting the advocacy efforts of students and the SU, especially if the goal is to promote the University as an attractive place to study. With this, it is important that the selected Undergraduate representatives are given the tools and resources to connect and consult with students. It is also important to provide better transition for the incoming Senators.

As YOUR VP External, I will:

- 3.6. Better Support Future Undergraduate Senators by:
 - 3.6.1. Working with the Current Student Senators to develop a transition plan and manual for incoming Senators.
 - 3.6.2. Connect Student Senators to SRAs and other relevant student groups to increase and improve consultation for student feedback on senate committee projects.
- 3.7. Facilitate Connections between the Senate and the Student Body by:
 - 3.7.1. Connecting Senators to SRAs and Student Groups.
 - 3.7.2. Inviting Senators to student run events or initiatives.

The next provincial election is set to be on or before the end of May next year, therefore it is essential that the UASU, alongside other Students' Unions and Associations across the province work together to make post-secondary education an important priority for this upcoming election.

b. Building Partnerships in the Community to Strengthen Student Advocacy

“Many hands do light work.” While I may not know the origin of the statement, it’s message rings true at every level of collaboration – whether it is a Stats 151 group assignment, a team project, or with student advocacy. The fact of the matter is that when we work together and allow the input of diverse voices, we accomplish our shared goals quicker and more effectively. This year, I have had the honor of being the Chair of two advocacy groups the UASU belongs to: our Federal lobby group, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), and the Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA) respectively. Through these spaces I was able to collaborate with my counterparts not only across our city, but across the country. I was able to share the stories and issues that UofA students experienced and work with them to identify common interests and solutions that would benefit us all. These collaborations, at every point, had a purpose and a mission, not just meeting for meeting sakes. This is how we were able to organize the very first Mayoral Candidates Forum in partnership with the City of Edmonton Youth Council. It is essential that the UASU continue to broaden its advocacy partners and create more spaces and opportunities for purposeful collaboration.

As YOUR VP External, I plan to continue creating a culture of collaboration through:

- 2.1. Communicating with Counterparts in ESA, CAUS, and CASA to:
 - 2.1.1 Establish shared goals and projects and offer support for other initiatives.
 - 2.1.1 Work with post-secondary institutions in CASA, as well as the Indigenous student members of CASA’s National Indigenous Advisory Committee (NIAC), to examine and offer the necessary support and reform that the committee requires to work to its potential.
- 2.2 Build Bridges with other student organizations:
 - 2.2.1 Meeting more frequently with the boards of Alberta Students’ Executive Council (ASEC), Undergraduates of Canadian Research Universities (UCRU), Calgary Student Alliance (CSA) and others to share our priorities and explore establishing similar asks.
- 4.5.1. Working within sector partners to develop shared principles on consultation expectations for institutions when proposing ETIs that will be sent to the Ministry of Advanced Education for reform to the Tuition and Fees Regulation
- Initiate an informal partnership between the United International Students’ Unions of Canada (UISUC) and CASA to advocate for:
 - Express entry consider pilot
 - More funding to IRCC to process visa applications much faster
- 2.3, Launching of the UASU Alumni Network
 - 2.3.1 Work with past alumni to support as mentors
 - 2.3.2. Support in establishing or continuing to establish relationships within the community that aid in our advocacy efforts.

c. Preparing For the Provincial Election

The next provincial election is set to be on or before the end of May next year. It is essential that the UASU, alongside other Students’ Unions and Associations across the province, work together to make post-secondary education an important priority for this upcoming election. By working with our provincial lobby group, the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) and with other provincial lobby groups such as the Alberta Students’ Executive Council (ASEC), we can pool our resources to ensure that post-secondary issues are a focal point for the platforms of the candidates and parties running in this upcoming election. Most importantly, we can give students the platform they need to share their thoughts on what they expect from their future governments in making their advanced education experience more affordable.

As YOUR VP External, I plan to prepare for a provincial election to get more students out to the polls and have a say about what our student government does. Say what I have already been doing.

- Improve stakeholder engagement by:
 - 1.1.2 Use the experience and networks I have developed across the various parties this year to bridge them directly to students through town halls for party platform consultation.
 - 1.1.3. Continuing to engage with the various stakeholders in proposing the solutions and interests that students want reflected in their platforms.
 - 1.2.2. Working with the CAUS board to obtain third party advertiser status. This will allow CAUS to run advertisements highlighting the importance of funding Alberta's future during the provincial election.
- 1.3. Hire a GOTV Coordinator to begin planning and preparation of a GOTV plan for the upcoming election

d. Direct Action

Why this is important:

In Budget 2022, the UofA received yet another devastating round of cuts, specifically \$52 million. This adds up to \$222 million dollars in lost revenue over the last three years, and who suffers the most for this? Students. As a result of these cuts, the university will likely raise tuition another 7% to balance their books, students will continue to experience a subpar academic environment and once well resourced academic support centers will take longer to provide students the aid they need. This is not helped by the looming threat of exceptional tuition increases proposed for certain professional programs that will hurt accessibility to post secondary education. This is why we must continue to take direct action and let our provincial government know that students, academic and non-academic staff, and voters are enraged by cuts being made to Alberta's PSIs, and therefore indirectly to Alberta's future.

We have built upon past demonstrations from previous years through the Blue Ribbon Rally. I am proud of the role I played in the organization of that rally, but the JOB IS NOT FINISHED. We must continue to build on this momentum as we head into a possible election year. Over hundreds of students, staff and community members came out to march to the legislature while classes were online and amidst brutal weather. Imagine what we can do, when we are all back in person and under warmer skies.

If re-elected, I will ensure that our organizing continues to be effective, strategic and purposeful by:

- 1.2. Creating a broad multimedia campaign on the issues facing post-secondary education in Alberta .
- 1.3. Seeking organizer training for all members of the Executive board
- 1.1 Inviting more sector allies to join and plan in future demonstrations.