ABOUT THE SU
As of 2017, the University of Calgary’s Students’ Union (SU) will be in its 75th year. The SU advocates on behalf of all undergraduate students at the University of Calgary. The Students’ Legislative Council (SLC), the SU’s governing body and is made up of five executives - the president and four vice presidents - and 19 faculty representatives, elected annually to represent students’ interests. The SU’s operations are supported by a professional team of staff and hundreds of student staff and volunteers.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT U OF C STUDENTS:
- Number of undergraduate students: 24,624
- Average age: 22.5
- 84% from Alberta, 11% from other provinces, 5% international students
- 65% live with their parents, 22% rent, 8% live in residence, 5% own their homes
- 56% of students take transit to campus, 31% drive, 13% bike or walk
- 33% expect to graduate with more than $20,000 in student debt.

The University of Calgary Students’ Union is calling on all 2017 City of Calgary Municipal General Election Candidates to prioritize and invest in accessible, inclusive, and innovative strategies to support post-secondary students in Calgary throughout their education.

THE SU RECOMMENDS:
- Increase safety and affordability of housing by reforming current Secondary Suites legislation.
- Increase transparency of Calgary Transit by creating and implementing an administrative process for bylaw offences such as transit tickets.
- Increase base line access of Calgary Transit to new communities.
- Work with the Government of Alberta to expand exemptions from taxation to include university residences.
- Ensure that students have long term access to municipal voting on campus.

Reforming the Secondary Suite Processes
Over 90% of University of Calgary students live off of campus. This means that the housing market in Calgary deeply impacts the overall cost of education for many students. Legal Secondary Suites, a self-contained living space consisting of a bedroom, bathroom and kitchen located within or on the same property as a single-family home1, are a way for students to access affordable and safe housing while helping a homeowner pay for their mortgage.

Currently, strict regulations mean that there are tens of thousands of illegal secondary suites around the city. The current process for suite approval is time-consuming and expensive as all applications come before Calgary City Council. The time and money needed to legalize an existing secondary suite is no doubt dissuading some homeowners from going through the process. This leads to potentially unsafe conditions.

The SU calls upon all candidates to support reform to the current secondary suite process in the city of Calgary. This reform should legalize secondary suites across the city, decrease administrative barriers to legalize a suite, and change the approval process to better reflect the needs of both citizens and City Council.

1http://www.calgary.ca/PDA/PD/Pages/home.aspx?redirect=/pda/dba
Revising the Process for Appealing Transit Tickets

Municipal tickets are enforced through the overburdened provincial court system, which is plagued by long delays and complex, overly-rigid processes. This results in expensive, ineffective, and difficult outcomes for students and all Calgarians who enter the system.

The University of Calgary Students’ Union recommends the addition of an administrative tribunal system for bylaw offences such as transit tickets to the newly proposed City Charter. This administrative tribunal would allow all citizens to dispute tickets issued for fare violations when they can prove they have paid for transit fare. This system would build citizens’ trust that the transit system is fair and transparent, and will lead to increased ridership in the future, as is demonstrated by a number of cities that have already implemented similar systems such as Vancouver and Toronto.

The SU calls upon all candidates to support the creation and implementation of an administration tribunal system for bylaw offences, such as transit tickets, to allow citizens to appeal their tickets in a place other than the provincial courts.

Increase Access to Calgary Transit

Calgary Transit has acknowledged that a number of new communities are waiting to get base transit services because Calgary Transit is behind on catching up with Calgary’s growth. Currently only 60% of homes in Calgary have base transit service. Base transit service operates every 30 minutes or better, 15 hours a day, seven days a week, within one kilometre of every home.

The city is actively working to expand its Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network to provide more direct connections to major destinations and LRT stations. Routes are selected based on existing demand for service, forecasted demand for service, existing options, traffic near proposed route, existing and future land use and development, accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, and connectivity with other transit routes.

The University of Calgary is a commuter campus with 90% of students living off of campus. Access to transit, a service that all undergraduate students already pay for, is increasingly important as the cost of education continues to rise. Students need to be able to rely on the transit system to take them to and from campus every day.

The SU calls upon all candidates to support and actively work to ensure that all communities in Calgary have base transit service by the end of 2018.

Expanding Property Tax Exemptions

Alberta is one of the few provinces in Canada that allows property taxation of student residences at post-secondary institutions. Residence Services at the University of Calgary operates on a cost-recovery basis, meaning funds currently paid to the municipal property tax cannot go towards student programming, upgrades, and maintenance. The experience that students receive living in residence is transformational. Campus residences provide a unique community which contributes to students’ overall educational experience.

Currently the Municipal Governance Act (MGA) is being reviewed by the province and a proposal to exempt residences owned by universities and colleges from property taxes is being considered. This would be done through the Government of Alberta recognizing that it is fair and appropriate to compensate municipalities for the services that the municipality provides to these properties.

The SU calls upon all candidates to commit to working with the Government of Alberta to ensure that residences owned by universities and colleges in Alberta are exempt from paying property taxes to allow institutions to reinvest this money back into the residence student experience.

Increase Access to Civic Election Voting

Students in Calgary make up a large portion of eligible voters. In the 2015 federal election, voter turnout in the Calgary Confederation riding, which includes the University of Calgary, was 75.2 percent, the highest in the city. In the Students’ Union’s “Get Out the Vote” campaign for that same election more than 8,500 students signed up to vote. Both of these point to increasing voter turnout among students.

Elections provide students with an important opportunity to get involved in the democratic process and to have their voices heard. Voting on campus is a relatively new initiative but has led to increased voter turnout among young people. It is important that the momentum established during the 2015 federal election be capitalized on.

The SU calls upon all candidates to commit to being advocates for on-campus voting stations during municipal elections in the city of Calgary through at least 2021.

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3 http://engage.calgary.ca/BRT/routes