



Calgary Municipal General Election 2017: Stronger City, Stronger Campus

**OUR PROMISE:
TO SERVE AND REPRESENT**

ABOUT THE SU

The University of Calgary's Students' Union (SU) is 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, 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
- 54.6% 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 candidates in the 2017 City of Calgary municipal election 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 to Calgary Transit at both peak and off-peak times.
- Ensure that all students at publicly funded post-secondary institutions in Calgary have long term access to municipal voting on campus.

Reforming the Secondary Suite Process

Over 90% of University of Calgary students live off campus. This means that the housing market in Calgary deeply impacts the overall cost of education for many students. Legal Secondary Suites, self-contained living spaces 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 their mortgage.

Currently, strict regulations mean that there are tens of thousands of illegal secondary suites across the city. The current process for suite approval is time-consuming and expensive as all applications come before 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 for students and citizens at large.

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



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 SU 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 has been demonstrated by several 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 fare violations, 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 the organization is behind in catching up with Calgary's growth². As of March 2016, 18% of Calgary residents do not have base transit service where they live. Base transit service is a range of transit services operated every 30 minutes or better, 15 hours a day, seven days a week, within 400 meters of every home³. While base service is slowly increasing across the city during peak periods, it declines significantly during off-peak times such as evenings and weekends.

The city is actively working to expand its Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network to provide more direct connections to major destinations and LRT stations⁴. 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 campus. Access to transit, a service that all undergraduate students 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 both during peak and off-peak times.

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



Increase Access to Civic Election Voting

Post-secondary students in Calgary make up a large portion of eligible voters and are increasingly turning out to vote. 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 city⁵. In the SU "Get Out the Vote" campaign for that same election, more than 8,500 students signed up to vote.

Elections provide students with an important opportunity to get involved in the democratic process and to have their voices heard in shaping the future of the city. 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.

Giving students at all publicly funded post-secondary institutions in Calgary access to multi-ward, advanced voting is an important step to ensuring that they vote in this election and in municipal elections for years to come. Hosting these advanced voting stations on campus, where students live, work, and socialize, is an important step to ensuring that students are engaged in the municipal election process and their city!

The SU calls upon all candidates to commit to creating a bylaw that would make it mandatory for the City of Calgary to host multi-ward, advanced polling stations on all publicly funded post-secondary institutions in Calgary.

¹<http://www.calgary.ca/PDA/PD/Pages/home.aspx?redirect=/pda/dba>

² <http://www.metronews.ca/news/calgary/2016/02/21/calgary-transit-severely-underserving-new-neighbourhoods.html>

³<http://agendaminutes.calgary.ca/sirepub/cache/2/dvog3w0htet5srxcwy4o5nfp/46502505092017105130940.PDF>

⁴ <http://engage.calgary.ca/BRT/routes>

⁵ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/university-calgary-students-especially-engaged-this-election-1.3281620>