



October 12, 2016 - December 6, 2016

We are pleased to submit this update on the SU's governance, programs and advocacy.

### **SU Governance**

#### **Vacancies**

The SU currently has vacancies for Faculty Representatives in the Faculty of Social Work and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Both of these positions will be filled through an appointment process.

#### **Senate**

The SU recently appointed Jonah Zankl to the Senate Student-at-Large Representative left vacant after the previous senator was disqualified. He was sworn in at the Nov. 24 SLC meeting.

#### **Quality Money**

SLC approved changes to the SU Quality Money Committee approval process in early Oct. These changes increase the voting requirement for approval of projects from a simple majority, meaning a minimum of 50% +1 of the votes cast, to a two-thirds super-majority. The deadline for 2017-18 project submissions was Nov. 25. The SU received 41 project proposals totaling approx. \$5.4M.

#### **Sustainability Policy**

The SU recently renewed its commitment to sustainable organizational practices and sustainability advocacy when SLC voted to accept our Sustainability Policy for another three-year period.

### **SU Programs and Services**

#### **Teaching Excellence Awards**

The SU received 253 nominations from students for exceptional instructors and teaching assistants for fall 2016. The nominees have been shortlisted to 42 instructors and 11 TAs, and class visits are being conducted to survey their students. The Teaching Excellence Awards Committee will review both fall and winter nominations in March and select and celebrate winners at that time. Winter semester nominations open on Jan. 13, 2017.

#### **Undergraduate Research Symposium:**

The SU received 119 applications from undergraduate students from ten different faculties. The Undergraduate Research Symposium working group reviewed the abstracts in late Oct. and accepted 101 students for this year's symposium. More than 50 judges were recruited to adjudicate the poster presentations. The Undergraduate Research Symposium was held from 11 to 2 p.m. in MacEwan Hall on Dec. 1 and awards were announced on Dec. 7.

### **Pet Therapy**

208 students participated in Pet Therapy in That Empty Space on Oct 28. Another Pet Therapy session was held on Nov. 18. 206 students participated in this event. The Cumming School of Medicine Representatives also hosted a Pet Therapy session at the Foothills Campus. Over 100 students attended this event. This monthly event is held in partnership with the Pet Access League Society (PALS) to engage students and relieve stress.

### **Stress Less Week**

The week of Dec. 5 to 9, the SU provided a week of stress relieving and fun activities for students in the midst of a stressful term. These activities help students to achieve balance at the end of the semester. Activities and events included:

- Destruction Therapy – an event in the North Courtyard of MacHall that invites students to relieve stress with Lego, playdough, and kinetic sand.
- Pet Therapy – a monthly event held in partnership with the Pet Access League Society (PALS) in That Empty Space in MacHall.
- Nap Rooms – in response to surveys showing that 45% of students identify sleep deprivation is a problem during the day, That Empty Space was designated as a “nap room” with relaxing music, mats, and pillows (for students to keep).
- Yoga – held regularly throughout the academic year, Yoga in the Space provides students with free yoga classes to enhance their physical and mental wellness.
- Art Therapy – based on research showing that creative processes can increase focus and decrease symptoms of physical and emotional distress, this event in the North Courtyard invited students to colour in colouring pages, decorate Christmas cookies and paint.
- North Courtyard Carnival – this event in the North Courtyard included attractions such as balloon animals, cotton candy, bean bag toss, giant jenga as well as the colouring pages, kinetic sand, and playdough activities that had also been available to students at events earlier in the week.

The SU also distributed 750 destress packs to students studying on campus. These destress packs contained pamphlets with information about mental health resources, wellness tips, and healthy snacks

### **SU Campus Food Bank**

The SU Campus Food Bank provides emergency food hampers to current students, staff members, and alumni who have graduated less than two years ago. In October and November, the SU Campus Food Bank fed 80 more people than it did during the same period last year.

|                        | October and November<br>2015 | October and November<br>2016 |
|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Number of Hampers      | 62                           | 87                           |
| Number of Adults Fed   | 90                           | 132                          |
| Number of Children Fed | 39                           | 77                           |
| Total Fed              | 129                          | 209                          |

### **SU Holiday Food Drive:**

The 28<sup>th</sup> annual SU Holiday Food Drive wrapped up on Nov. 24. For three days’ clubs competed to collect the most donations for the SU Campus Food Bank. This year, the event collected \$3,058.15 and 1,046 items, this is a substantial increase from last year when \$918.03 and 1,342 items were collected.

### **Information Centre/Lost and Found**

During the school year, the Information Centre/Lost and Found is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. It provides visitors with directions, and information about on campus resources and events. It also stores lost items,

returning them to their owners. As shown in the table below, compared to the same period last year, traffic almost doubled.

|                           | October and November 2015 | October and November 2016 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Items handed in           | 868                       | 866                       |
| Items returned to owner   | 335                       | 386                       |
| On campus directions      | 671                       | 1,037                     |
| Campus services questions | 193                       | 368                       |
| Total number of clients   | 2,155                     | 3,272                     |

### **Support for Student Clubs**

177 clubs are currently registered in the SU’s Jr. Executive program, an increase of 61 over last year. This program encourages clubs to recruit first year students as executives-in-training who can potentially take over leadership of the club. This term, the SU is offering Jr. Executive workshops on banking, budgeting, campus space bookings, and funding applications.

The SU currently has 320 registered student organizations.

### **Q Centre Anniversary**

On Nov. 3, the Q Centre celebrated its fifth anniversary. Members of the campus community were invited to enjoy cake and write testimonials on one of the walls in the space. Approximately 30 people attended for the cake cutting.

### **MacHall Dispute**

On Oct. 7 the judge ruled against the SU’s application for an injunction to prevent the termination of the License of Occupation, Operating and Management Agreement for MacHall. This was only the first step to preserve students’ rights in the building and does not affect the lawsuit against the University of Calgary and the Board of Governors related to student ownership of MacHall.

As a result of the recent court decision, the lease revenue (approx. \$1.9M/annually) from the SU’s tenants will now be collected by the university. The impact of the loss of this revenue is still to be determined. The university has committed to returning the proceeds of the revenue to the SU to fund programs and services and the SU is optimistic the university will honour their commitments, and that students won’t be impacted by the changes. In the meantime, the negotiations around the transition of responsibilities have been productive and respectful.

### **Advocacy and Representation**

#### **Board of Governors Appointments**

The SU appreciates that the Government of Alberta is working to review all agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs) in order to make them more representative, find cost savings and eliminate duplication of services. There are currently 302 agencies, boards, and commissions in Alberta. This process has taken much longer than originally planned.

The SU recognizes the importance of a board that is representative and diverse but would be encouraging the government to look at relevant skill sets when filling board positions. We continue to advocate to the government and specifically to the Minister of Advanced Education that all vacant board appointments be made.

## **Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) – Advocacy Week**

In November CASA delegates, including the SU's President and VP External met with over 160 Senators and Members of Parliament to advocate for students across the country. Delegates advocated for nine priorities:

- Interest-Free Grace Period for Student Loans
- Grants for Master's and Doctoral Students
- Supporting Students with Mental Health Disabilities
- Open-Educational Resources (OERs)
- Effective Funding for Indigenous Students
- Reconciliation Through Post-Secondary Education Programming
- Supporting Paid Employment Opportunities for Students
- Promoting Workforce Skills Development
- Adequately Funding the Indirect Cost of Research

## **Conclusion**

The Students' Union is proud to serve and represent undergraduate students in nearly every aspect of their experience at the University of Calgary.



Stephan Guscott  
The Students' Union, The University of Calgary

