



# REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# 2019-20

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY STUDENTS' UNION





## STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL OPERATING PLANS

The Students' Union is guided by a **strategic plan** which is reviewed and renewed every three years. This plan illustrates the vision, mission and values of the SU and guides the allocation of resources towards student priorities. The 76th executives drafted and the Students' Legislative Council (the SU's elected highest governing body) approved the strategic plan for the SU for 2019-2022.

Each year, the SLC also approves an **annual operating plan** which is developed by the executives to direct their work for their term. The 77th executive created their plan for 2019-2020 with goals divided into three key priorities: engage with students, strengthen the organization, and prioritize advocacy.

### THIS REPORT

*This report aims to inform students and the campus community on the progress and changes completed by the SU over the 2019-2020 academic year. Want more information? You can check out our website or reach out to one of our student executives – they're always happy to speak with students! You can find their contact information on our website.*

Want to keep up with the SU? Visit our website or follow us on your favourite social media platform!

[www.su.ucalgary.ca](http://www.su.ucalgary.ca)



# STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATION



*The SU continues to be a model for student associations across the country in terms of governance policy and practice (including transparency and accountability to students), management of our spaces on campus, staffing, and financial sustainability.*





## LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The Students' Legislative Council (SLC) made several notable changes to several SU policy documents with the goal of increasing transparency, accountability, and accessibility in student governance. During its term, the SLC:

- Passed amendments to the Policy Development and Review Procedure (PDRP), which standardized the formatting and content of all Union policies and procedures to improve their accessibility and readability for students;
- In alignment with the amendments to the PDRP, approved the reformatting of all SU policies and procedures, and the introduction of new content related to transparency and accessibility in all SLC committee terms of reference documents;
- Following the recommendations of the 76th and 77th Policy Development and Review Committees (PDRC), repealed the SLC Transparency Procedure to reduce duplication and ensure clarity in the SU policy structure;
- Updated the Teaching Excellence Awards Procedure to ensure the equitability and accuracy of the process used to allocate classroom visits to nominated instructors;
- Updated student membership requirements and correspondingly adjusted quorum for the Policy Development and Review Committee to empower more student-at-large involvement in SU decision making;
- Strengthened the Elections Policy to enable meaningful participation of the student population by clarifying definitions and text explaining sanctioning options; and
- Adopted a new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Advocacy Policy.

## GENERAL ELECTION 2020

The 78th SLC was elected in the SU General Election in March, 2020. There were 38 candidates for 27 positions with five positions acclaimed and one position left vacant. Voter turnout was 21.9 percent of eligible voters.

*UCalgary SU voter turnout in the annual General Elections continues to exceed that of most other universities across the country.*



## FINANCES

UCalgary students continue to enjoy some of the lowest student union fees in the country while at the same time they benefit from the large number of businesses, programs, and services offered by their SU. This is possible through the strong financial stewardship of student money by the SU. Each year the SLC approves an annual operating budget of nearly \$13 million.

In accordance with the Union Bylaw, the Operations and Finance Committee and the General Manager authorized one extra-budgetary expenditure to a maximum of \$1,700.00 during the 2019-2020 year to fund the attendance of a member of the Executive to the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) National Discussion of Indigenous Student Experiences.

We run multiple, successful businesses in Mac Hall, and the profits from these continue to make up about 90 percent of our annual revenue.

***The annual operating budget is available for review, along with a breakdown of fees and the SU's financial statements, on our website.***

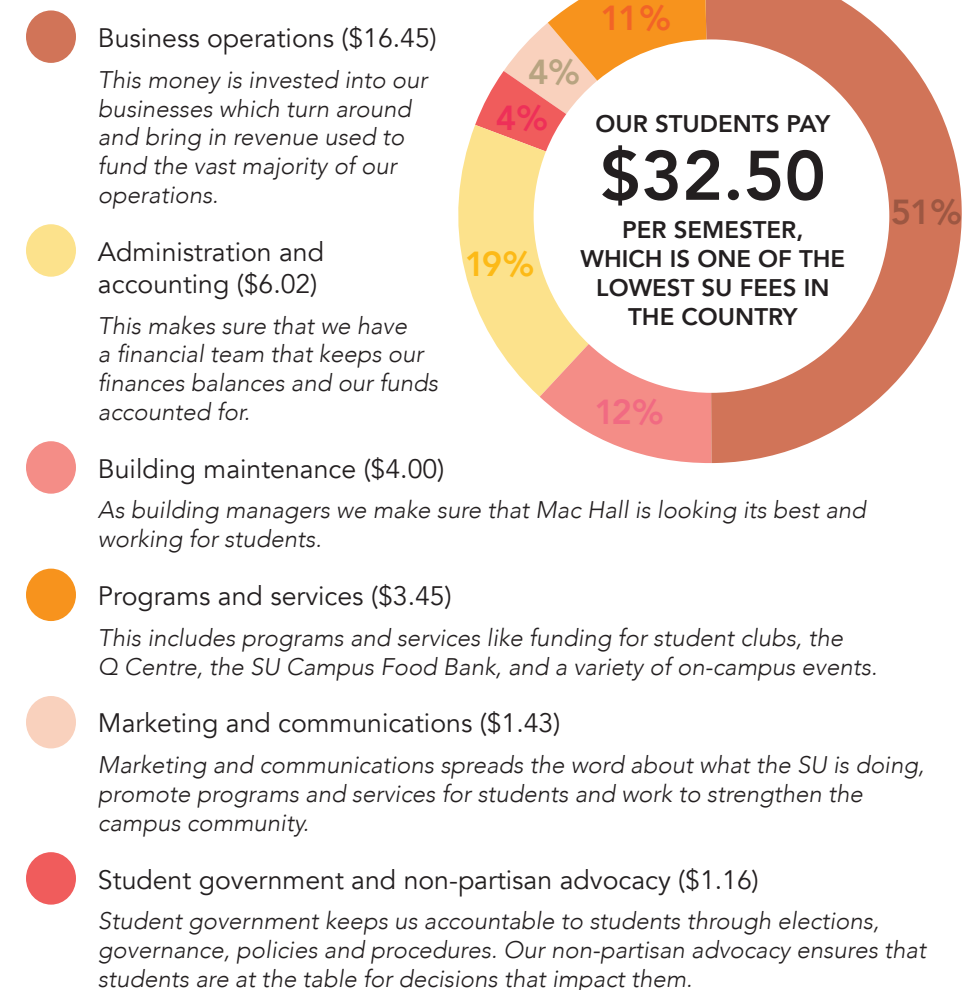
## 89% OF OUR REVENUE COMES FROM OUR FAMILY OF BUSINESSES:



MacEwan Student Centre (lease revenue)	\$2,282,450
MacEwan Conference and Event Centre	\$1,945,700
The Den	\$1,116,327
Stör	\$859,655
Mac Hall Concerts	\$686,609
Bound and Copied	\$507,102

***UCalgary students have not had an increase in the SU operating fee since 1995.***

## 8% OF OUR REVENUE COMES FROM STUDENT FEES:





## FUNDING FOR CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT

The SU approved funding allocations for 26 projects, totaling \$1.42 million, that benefit students through the Quality Money, Sustainability Fund, and Campus Improvement Fund programs. These include:

- Supporting interprofessional mental health first aid training in the faculties of Social Work and Nursing
- Providing certified on-campus compassion cultivation training
- Building campus capacity for United Nations Sustainability Development Goals implementation
- Providing grants and funding for Indigenous leadership and engagement experiences in the Yukon
- Enabling increased diversification and participation in ucalgarycares programming through student grants
- Creating the first ever post-secondary on-campus multi-sensory room in the TFDL
- Installing mobile whiteboards in math science classrooms
- Creating an endowment fund to provide three new scholarships for students in the Faculty of Kinesiology
- Renovating an area of the Gold Gym to provide new functional fitness space
- Supporting the Arts Undergraduate Research Symposium and Arts Alumni Mini-Mentorship Conference
- Doubling the availability of grants for the Students' Union Program for Education-Related Work (SUPERWork)
- Providing grants for co-curricular and academic experiences through the Student Activities Fund
- Implementing a service-learning program for diversity in the Werklund School of Education
- Offering cross-cultural community building opportunities at Unwind: Bonfire events
- Funding to support the publication of the Undergraduate History Journal
- Enhancing engagement opportunities in the Schulich School of Engineering with new projector equipment
- Upgrading outdated washroom facilities in Mac Hall
- Funding student peer support groups in the Faculty of Social Work
- Adding a treadmill desk at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Spy Hill campus to encourage physical activity while studying
- Installing new sustainable furniture in the Faculty of Kinesiology
- Providing new study carrels in the Faculty of Science
- Renewing the Undergraduate Research Symposium Sustainability Award
- Installing a sustainable community garden at the Spy Hill campus
- Encouraging sustainable transportation by installing an on-campus bike repair stand
- Implementing a paperless volunteer station at SU Volunteer Services
- Ensuring the campus community is aware of the Climate Action Plan through public awareness activities and events

## MAC HALL UPGRADES

Mac Hall serves a campus population of approximately 40,000 people and welcomes more than 100,000 visitors a week during the busy fall and winter semesters. As building manager, the Students' Union strives to provide a clean, safe, and welcoming building environment, provides food court and common space cleaning services, and administers the recycling programs for Mac Hall. We also strive to continuously improve the space to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students.

This year, we implemented a new **waste diversion system** that includes waste sorting stations in the food court and a machine that initiates the composting process on site in the loading dock.



# ENGAGE STUDENTS



*The SU devotes significant resources each year to ensuring that undergraduate students have the best possible experience on campus. We offer a wide range of services, programs, and scholarships, host events, provide student leadership development opportunities, and support student initiatives. For the full list of everything we do for students, visit our website.*





### UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

This symposium is designed to encourage and celebrate undergraduate research across faculties. Each year students are encouraged to submit their projects to compete for awards in various categories. This year, a record 37 awards totalling \$28,500 were given out.



### Refugee Student Program

Working with the World University Service of Canada and the University of Calgary, the SU sponsors two refugee students to come and study here each year. Not only do we offer financial support, we also assist these students in becoming acclimated to ensure they will be successful. This year, we received one Somali student who was living in a refugee camp in Kenya, and one Rwandan student who was living in a refugee camp in Malawi.

## TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Since 1984, the SU have recognized outstanding teaching at the University of Calgary with the Teaching Excellence Awards (TEA). TEA are the only teaching awards on campus where students determine the nominees and winners. This year, 1,143 students submitted nominations and the SU honoured 37 instructors and teaching assistants for their commitment to student success. When the TEA ceremony was cancelled due to the pandemic, we asked award-winners to send in video messages for a virtual ceremony. The full list of award winners and the virtual ceremony video is available on our website.



## CLUBS

The SU provides supports for student-led activities on campus through our clubs system. Clubs who register with the SU have free access to space, funding, and various other kinds of assistance throughout the year. For more information on what we provide to student clubs, and a complete listing of all our clubs, visit our website. There were 372 active clubs, holding more than 2,300 events last year, that are recognized and supported by the SU.

*The SU started distributing **free period products** to students in 2017, available at the Information Centre and the main SU offices. More than 13,000 period products were given out last year.*

### Wellness Wednesdays

This year, we expanded our events to include a series of monthly events that focused on wellbeing. In the fall semester, we hosted the SU Swap Shop (clothing swap) and Take Ten - a ten minute recharge session that included motivational messages, massage, and healthy snacks. In January, students attended a winter carnival called the Ice Box in MacEwan Hall. Our planned Brain Break laughter yoga session was cancelled due to the pandemic.

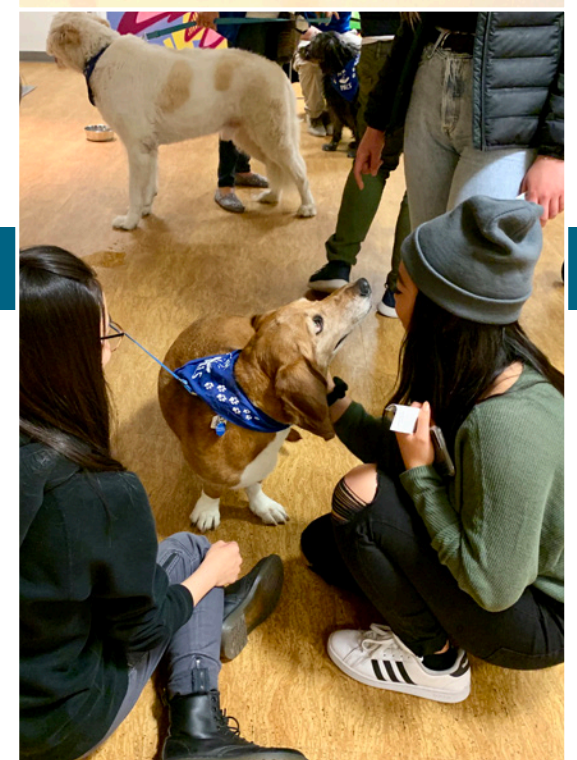
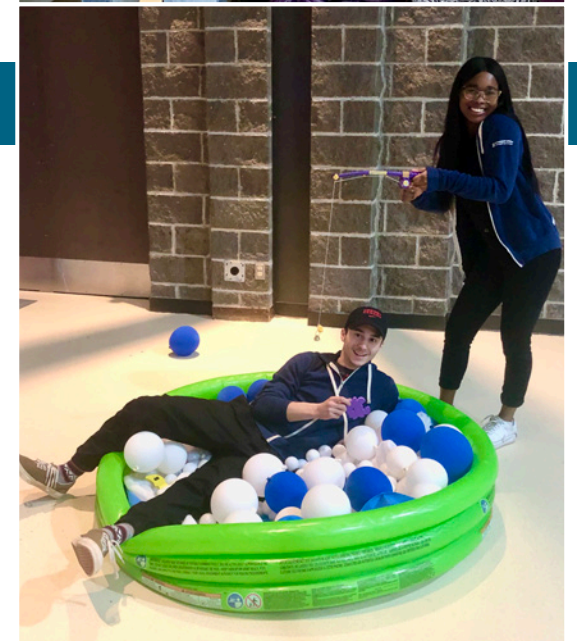
## STRESSLESS WEEK

At the end of every fall term, the SU organizes drop-in activities to help students combat stress. This year, we offered several activities, including extra Pet Therapy sessions, yoga classes, bath bomb building, cookie decorating, DIY stress balls, and a very popular build-your-own-terrarium workshop. Everything was free for students – 1,516 participated – and an integral part of the SU and its commitment to good mental health.

### Pet Therapy

Our monthly Pet Therapy events continue to be some of our most popular with students. We partner the Pet Access League Society to bring therapy dogs to campus to help students manage their stress. Last year, 1,319 people attended.

*The SU handed out \$45,229.34 in **travel grants**, enabling 256 students to attend conferences and competitions, nationally and internationally.*







## VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Since 1993, the SU's Volunteer Services has provided volunteer opportunities and social services to students and other members of the campus community. Not only do we operate as a volunteer centre, connecting students with volunteer prospects both on and off campus, we also run ten of our own volunteer programs that students can get involved with. To find out more, check out our website.

Last year, 41 volunteers contributed 581 service-learning hours to community organizations in Calgary through our **Into the Streets** program.

The **Information Centre/Lost and Found** answered 7,670 questions and received 5,692 lost items.

*A total of 8,719 hours were worked by 272 Students' Union volunteers last year.*

### Campus Food Bank

The SU's Campus Food Bank provides 7-day emergency hampers to campus community members. They also offer other programs designed to address student hunger on campus. SU volunteers perform client intakes, pack food hampers, and assist with general food bank operations. Last year, 43 volunteers worked over 1,953 hours to support Campus Food Bank programming and services, including the **Breakfast Program**. They fed 1,363 people.

Last year, 32 children received holiday gifts thanks to 15 community sponsors involved in the Campus Food Bank's **Adopt-a-Family** program.

### Q Centre

The SU's Q Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity strives to create a safe, comfortable, and open space for LGBTQIA+ students. The Q Centre coordinators and volunteers raise awareness about community issues by promoting diversity and organizing educational activities and events. They also offer peer support, direct clients to community resources, and award the Q Centre Pride Scholarship to undergraduate students who have made significant contributions to the LGBTQIA+ community on Campus.

### Volunteer Tax Program

The Volunteer Tax Program was able to complete 351 tax returns before service for the program had to be canceled due to COVID-19.

# PRIORITIZE ADVOCACY



*Despite province-wide post-secondary sector budget cuts, the SU continues to have tremendous success representing the needs of students to the university and all levels of government. Our advocacy efforts continue to be effective, and we saw progress and successes on multiple issues over the past year.*



Expansion of the Canada Student Grant Program

After years of SU advocacy, the Government of Canada took steps to make sure that grants are more robust for the students who need them most. Grants are a progressive mechanism to reduce barriers to post-secondary education by fostering affordability and accessibility. Following an increase in the interest-free grace period for student loans in 2018/19, the Federal Government has committed to increasing the Canada Student Grant for low- and middle-income students by 40%, from \$3,000 to \$4,200 per academic year.

Provincial Budget Cuts and Tuition Increases

The 2019 provincial budget was released in late October and included an in-year cut to post-secondary institutions, with UCalgary receiving a 6.9% cut resulting in over 250 jobs lost. Subsequent regulation ended the tuition freeze and allowed tuition to increase beyond the CPI-regulated cap, up to 7% per year for the next three years. Throughout the ensuing consultation, deliberation, and ultimate decision-making process at the UCalgary Board of Governors, the SU maintained open communications with students, bringing their immediate and long-term concerns to the forefront. A webpage was created and regularly updated with information and developments to keep students informed. Although the UCalgary Board of Governors ultimately decided to increase tuition for 2020-21, continuing students (domestic and international) will only see a 5% increase. While other institutions raised tuition to the maximum 7% cap, the total average increase at UCalgary is 4.8%. SU advocacy also led to the first ever reduced parking rate (50% off for lots 10, 11, and 32) for students during the exam period, beginning in the 2020/21 academic year. Importantly, thanks



largely in part to SU advocacy, the university committed to contributing 15% of revenue from these new tuition increases towards student scholarships and bursaries. The SU continues to push for these to be upfront, needs-based grants.

Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees

The SU advocated against increasing the university's Student Services Fee, which is a Mandatory Non-Instructional Fee (MNIF) for all UCalgary students. Thanks to the SU's efforts, increases were capped at 7%, while many other schools increased these fees by over 10%, or to the regulated cap of full cost-recovery. Importantly, the SU also exercised students' legislated right to veto new MNIFs, declining a proposal from the university to implement a new arts and culture fee amidst the ongoing budget cuts and fee increases being imposed on students.

Performance-Based Funding

Budget 2020 also included significant cuts to post-secondary; however, SU advocacy ensured that student financial aid was maintained at 2019/20 levels.

Citing the need to better account for how public money is spent, the provincial government announced in early 2020 that they would move ahead with implementing a performance-based funding model that would put up to 15% of the institution's funding at risk in 2020-2021 in addition to another 6% cut to the UCalgary grant. Through extensive research and lobbying efforts, the SU encouraged evidence-based decision-making in the implementation of any

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new funding models and called for a reduction in the number of metrics, a delay in implementation, and a reconsideration of the metrics themselves. Currently, the government of Alberta has agreed to reduce the total number of metrics, delayed implementation for at least one year, and agreed to reconsider which metrics will be tied to funding. A student-selected metric will also be included in the final model. The SU continues to push for transparent, meaningful consultation and for a

reconsideration of the rapid shift to performance-based funding.

Campus Sexual Violence Prevention

Working with our partner schools through the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), the SU supported the publication of an in-depth research paper exploring campus sexual violence at Alberta's post-secondary institutions. This publication was the first of its kind in Alberta to be written by student leaders that is research-intensive and focuses on recommendations. We have received bi-partisan support in the Alberta legislature for many of the recommendations that were made and are looking forward to consultation and legislation in the fall of 2020.

Campus Mental Health Grants

Alberta campuses rely on predictable funding from the province to ensure accessible, comprehensive on-campus mental health supports remain in place for students. The SU took a leading role in advocating for the continuation of the Campus Mental Health Grant, which was reaffirmed in Budget 2020. We will continue to advocate for expansion of this program on a



per-student basis to meet the needs of students on our campus.

Increased Commitment to Education for Indigenous Students

Following the recommendations of the Assembly of First Nations, the SU and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) have for years advocated for a substantial increase in investment for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, which assists Indigenous learners with the financial barriers that exist when accessing a post-secondary education. The SU advocated for the full adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by the Government of Canada and, following this, that they make the necessary investments to support the implementation of the rights there within. The Government of Canada has indicated that they will move forward with legislation on UNDRIP by the end of 2020. This is a step in the right direction for both reconciliation and to decrease the systemic and systematic barriers that exist for First Nations, Inuit, and Metis students.

Get Out the Vote

With the goal of showing decision makers in the Government of Canada that students do indeed vote, the SU ran a modified three-month Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign leading up to the October 2019 Federal Election. This non-partisan campaign engaged with over 6,400 students and focused on helping answer student questions about voting, including where, when, and how to vote. The SU engaged over a dozen volunteers who spoke to students through activations, street teams, and classroom visits to encourage them to pledge to vote. We then texted and emailed students in the days leading up to the election to remind them to vote and point them to valuable resources. An all-candidates town hall was held in partnership with the Graduate Students' Association and the University of Calgary, attracting over 100 attendees to engage with candidates from Calgary-Varsity. The campaign was run alongside our colleagues at CASA with over 35,000 students pledging to vote nation-wide.







## COVID-19 Relief

Following the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, several measures were enacted federally thanks to the SU's advocacy efforts and our partners at CASA. This included broadened eligibility for student financial assistance, a temporary increase to the Canada Student Grant amount to \$6,000 for the 2020-21 academic year, expansion of the Canada Summer Jobs program and the addition of 70,000 more jobs for students, enhancements to the Canada Student Loans program by raising the maximum weekly amount from \$210 to \$350 for the 2020-21 academic year, and an additional \$75.2 million for First Nations, Inuit, and Metis students. Additionally, a Canada Emergency Student Benefit of \$1,250 per month (\$2,000 for caregivers or students with disabilities) is available for students earning up to \$1,000 between May to August 2020. International students may apply to extend their visas, and allowable hours were increased from 20 to 40 for international students working in essential services. A Canada Student Service Grant of between \$1,000 to \$5,000 is also available for students who gain work experience and skills while volunteering in their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The provincial government responded to SU joint advocacy efforts to ensure that residential rental tenants were protected from evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The province also committed to maintaining health care coverage for international students who chose to remain in Canada.

SU advocacy to university administration included collecting and bringing immediate and long-term student concerns with course delivery, exams and grading, financial impacts, mental health, and access to technology to the forefront of the conversation. We were successful in ensuring students had a choice to accept credit or a letter grade in the winter semester, deadlines were

*We were successful in ensuring students had a choice to accept credit or a letter grade in the winter semester, deadlines were encouraged to be relaxed, emergency peer bursaries were expanded, and technology was accessible for those most in need.*

encouraged to be relaxed, emergency peer bursaries were expanded, and technology was accessible for those most in need. The SU advocated for residence to remain open for students who cannot return home due to travel restrictions and for partial refunds to be issued for parking, residence, and meal plans for students who were able to leave campus in March. Additionally, SU advocacy ensured spring and summer course offerings and capacities were expanded and that students would pay reduced fees (UPass and Campus Recreation) for taking these courses online.

# 77<sup>TH</sup> STUDENTS' LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



## Back row, left to right

Candace Cho (Faculty of Nursing), Ayotomiwa Oje (Faculty of Arts), Dalal Souraya (Faculty of Law), Maggie Shortt (Haskayne School of Business), Khaled Elmalawany (Schulich School of Engineering), Barney Miao (Schulich School of Engineering), Joshua Lee (Cumming School of Medicine), Angie Hu (Faculty of Science), Mathieu Chin (Faculty of Kinesiology), Michael Nguyen (Faculty of Science), Manpreet Sahota (Faculty of Science), Douglas Doyle-Baker (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine), Marie Beaupre-Olsen (Faculty of Social Work)

## Front row, left to right

Marley Gillies (Faculty of Arts), Rayane Issa (Faculty of Arts), Kevin Dang (VP Academic), Sadiya Nazir (VP External), Jessica Revington (President), Alisha Gordon (VP Student Life), Omer Mansoor (VP Operations and Finance), Huzaifah Abbas (Haskayne School of Business), Justin Gotta (Faculty of Arts), Georgia East (Werklund School of Education)



