



# History

July 2016

## OUR PROMISE: TO SERVE AND REPRESENT

### ABOUT THE SU

As of 2016, the University of Calgary's Students' Union (SU) is in its 74<sup>th</sup> year. The SU is an effective advocacy and service group for all undergraduate students at the University of Calgary. All undergraduate students are members of the SU. 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. As well as managing MacEwan Student Centre (MSC), the SU runs a number of businesses. All proceeds from these student-owned ventures are reinvested directly into SU programs, services, events, and advocacy to benefit students and the campus.

### TIMELINE

- 1945 The first Students' Union (SU) is established in accordance with the Provincial Universities Act to "represent and serve all undergraduate students" at the university.
- 1951 The SU possessed \$276.70 in its treasury and "a few sticks of donated furniture," according to financial statements.
- 1953 The first Students' Union Building (SUB) was officially opened in a converted wing of a small war-time Quonset hut behind Heritage Hall previously occupied by nurses' aid classes that vacated the space in November 1952.
- 1960 The SU Council officially changes the name of the Cal-Var to The Gauntlet. Maurice Yacowar then became the newspaper's first Editor-in-Chief. He was also the first Gauntlet editor to get fired. He eventually returned to become Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts and is now a Professor Emeritus at the University of Calgary's Department of English.

1961 The idea of constructing a SUB was first conceived by the Students' Council. A referendum was passed to increase fees to \$10 for the purpose of constructing a Students' Union Building.

The first Bermuda Shorts Day celebration is held when Alan Arthur wrote "April 1<sup>st</sup> is Bermuda Shorts Day" on a board used for announcements.

1965 The Foothills School of Nursing becomes formally affiliated with the SU and begins sending representatives to council meetings even though they were not yet university students.

1966 On April 15, the Universities Act replaced the old University Act and the University of Calgary officially became autonomous from the University of Alberta, although the Act was made effective as of April 1. The Act also perpetuated The Corporation of The Students' Union as The Students' Union of The University of Calgary.

Construction began on the original MacEwan Hall. It was opened November the following year.

The University of Calgary began as the Alberta Normal School (ANS) in 1905 and was renamed the Calgary Normal School in 1913. It was not for another thirty-two years, on April 1, 1945, before the name changed again, this time as the Calgary Branch of the Faculty of Education of the University of Alberta. All assets and personnel were subsequently transferred to the Calgary campus. Later that year, on September 28, all 145 students of the Calgary campus met at the Assembly Hall (now Heritage Hall at SAIT) and formed the first Students' Union. John Malcolm Black was elected and officially assumed office as the first President of The Students' Union.

1970 On November 24, the Students' Union officially opened the Dinnie's Den across from the snack bar in MacEwan Hall. Initially, the establishment was only intended to operate for a few hours on Friday afternoons. On its opening day the pub with a 300-student capacity served over a thousand students in four hours. The beer special that day was three for a dollar.

1974 The SU dissolved the MacEwan Hall Directorate, a joint board appointed by the Board of Governors (BoG) and the SU and took over direct management of MacEwan Hall. That same year, the Chairman of the BoG, G.C., Swann, acknowledged the SU's joint ownership of MacEwan Hall in a letter addressed to President David Wolf.

1979 In an SU referendum, students agree to fund a special capital fee increase to be used for improving MacEwan Hall or to go towards future capital expansion.

1980 A brewery strike resulted in the Den having run out of alcohol.

1985 The SU, BoG and the Government of Alberta agreed to expand MacEwan Hall with the addition of MacEwan Student Centre in anticipation of the upcoming 1988 Winter Olympics. It officially opened in 1987, more than doubling the amount of physical space under SU management.

1988 University administration prohibited most BSD events and activities, including the licensed BSD beer gardens in response to injuries and \$30,000 in damages to university property that resulted during the 1987 BSD festivities.

1990 The General Faculties' Council (GFC) agreed to take student teaching evaluations into account when assessing teaching staff as the result of much lobbying by the SU.

1995 Students vote in favour of a referendum to implement a building expansion levy for what would become the new MacEwan Hall.

1997 GFC approves the introduction of Universal Student Ratings of Instruction after concentrated advocacy efforts by the SU.

2000 On October 26, ground was broken for construction of the new MacEwan Hall. It opened January 23, 2002.

2002 Students vote in favour of the University Student Transit Pass (UPASS) during a General Election referendum.

2003 Negotiations with university administration through the tuition consultation process result in the establishment of Quality Money. The BoG allocated \$1 million to the SU for quality enhancement.

The Women's Resource Centre is established.

2010 The 67<sup>th</sup> SLC Governance Renewal project established the SU's current system of governance.

2013 The first Stress Less Week is introduced by the SU, the most popular event being the Puppy Rooms.

## CLUBS

The SU created the first SU registered club, the Education Undergraduate Society (EUS) on December 1947.

## AWARDS

In 1969, upon receiving \$25 from the SU Council as a gift for his appointment as the University of Calgary's second President, Dr. Carrothers requested that the money be donated to a student cause on his behalf. Council thereupon increased the amount to \$200 and established the A.W.R. Carrothers Scholarship, the first SU endowed financial award.

## HEALTH AND DENTAL

The first health insurance coverage fee was approved by students via referendum in 1989. The first dental plan fee was approved similarly in 1991.

## COMMITTEE OF 10,000

Madam Olga Valda, a refugee of the Russia Revolution and an internationally renowned ballerina, spent several years as a part-time student at the University of Calgary, during which she won two SU Awards. When she died in 1973, Valda bequeathed her estate to the students of the University of Calgary to be sold to aid a student cause. The program was made permanent as a tribute to her and was known as the "Committee of 10,000" to commemorate the approximately 10,000 students on campus at the time.

## STUDENT RIGHTS

The SU created the full-time position of the Student Rights Advisor in 1998 to handle the increasing number of students seeking help regarding academic problems. The Ombudsperson's office now fulfills these responsibilities.

## Q CENTRE

Originally named Qmunity, the Q Centre opened its doors in 2010 to the university's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, and asexual/ally (LGBTQA) community. It provides a safe and comfortable space for LGBTQA students on campus.