

**Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) Changeover
Conference
May 2023**

Attended by: Maleeka Thomas (ULSU President) & Rachele Preston (ULSU VP
External)



2023/24 CAUS Board Members with Executive Director Alex.

Conference Overview

This conference served as the first meeting for the new board of the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS). CAUS is the provincial advocacy body that the ULSU is a part of, and the relationships with CAUS and the other delegates around the table allow us to see higher levels of success in our advocacy work.

CAUS represents over 114,000 undergraduate students across Alberta. CAUS advocates on behalf of students to various different stakeholders, both within the provincial government and broader community. The advocacy priorities for each year are chosen and championed by the board members. More about CAUS and the work they do, can be found on their website www.caus.net or on their instagram @causstudents.

The purpose of the conference was to serve as a level of onboarding for the new delegates around the table, and to introduce them to the work that CAUS does. The conference ran from May 10-13, and ULSU President Maleeka Thomas and Vice President External Rachele Preston, along with outgoing President Kairvee Bhatt and outgoing Vice President External Samantha Scott attended.

If there are any questions about the conference, or the work that CAUS does, please email Maleeka Thomas at su.president@uleth.ca or Rachele Preston at su.external@uleth.ca.

Wednesday, May 10 (Day 1)

Day one consisted of arriving and meeting the other delegates. There were ice breaker activities, as well as a presentation on CAUS and what they have found to be successful in the past and what the new board could look into changing. In this presentation, we discussed the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as the responsibilities of each of the standing committees present within the organization. Additionally, we were able to hear from the other delegates

around the table on their priorities and their platform pillars, as well as what they were hoping to see and achieve through working with CAUS.

Thursday. May 11 (Day 2)

On Day two, we participated in an activity titled “Speed Dating: PSE Issues”. With this activity, we were able to have one on one conversations with outgoing delegates on the intricacies of issues post-secondary students are facing in our province. These conversations introduced the issues, gave background information, as well as discussed the work CAUS has done on each issue as well as the work that could continue to be done.

We also had a presentation from Healthy Campus Alberta. Healthy Campus Alberta is an external stakeholder who does programming and initiatives for mental health supports on campuses across the province. They discussed the toolkits and their process of developing a Community of Practice. The goal of their programming is to create an inclusive, collaborative, and community-integrated approach to mental health and wellness on campuses across Alberta.

After the presentation from Healthy Campus Alberta, we had a presentation from Technology Alberta. This presentation discussed the work that Technology Alberta is doing in the realm of work integrated learning. They discussed ensuring that the programs they implement allow students who are currently enrolled and recent graduates from all faculties and disciplines to find paid positions in the field of technology. The jobs posted are eligible for both Co-op style jobs for students still enrolled in their programs, and paid internship style positions for recent graduates. They offer three different streams for their programming, making it easier for students in all points of their studies. Day two ended with a debrief from some of the outgoing delegates about decisions made throughout the history of CAUS. This presentation gave us understanding and perspective as to how we got to where the organization is now.

Friday, May 12 (Day 3)

Day three started with the CAUS Executive Director, Alex, giving an overview of the stakeholder landscape in Post-Secondary Advocacy work. In this presentation, Alex explained the role that each stakeholder has in CAUS achieving their advocacy goals.

After looking at the stakeholder landscape, we received a presentation on the Get out the Vote initiatives that have been put in place. We also discussed the importance of GOTV programming and the mobilization of student voices.

Day 3 was the day that we appointed a new chair and vice chair for CAUS. The board appointed Chris Beasley from the University of Alberta Students' Union as the Chair. Rachele tried for vice-chair, however, the board decided on Prabhjit Grewal from the Students' Association of Mount Royal University to fill the role. After appointing a new Chair and Vice-Chair, we began our first board meeting in order to ratify the position appointments.

To end off day three, we had a presentation by Janet Brown who is a pollster and political commentator based in Calgary, AB. Within this presentation, Janet spoke about her process when polling people, and some of the results she has seen throughout the past year leading up to the provincial election. She also discussed the power that swing votes, such as students, hold within certain ridings that based on polls do not have a clearly defined winner.

Saturday, May 13 (Day 4)

Day 4 was a half day of planned activities to allow delegates time to travel home. We had one presentation from returning delegate, Christian from the UASU. This presentation talked about the structure that advocacy with stakeholders should take and the role that each of the delegates play in the conversations. This provided perspective on how to have strong and effective conversations with stakeholders, and described strategies we could use when advocating at all levels for student needs.

The remainder of the morning was spent celebrating the outgoing delegates with awards. After saying goodbye to all of the delegates present, we parted ways and traveled home.

Photos:



May 13: First board meeting with the new members, welcoming in the new Chair and Vice-Chair.



May 14: From left to right, Kairvee Bhatt (outgoing ULSU President), Rachele Preston (incoming ULSU Vice President External), Maleeka Thomas (incoming ULSU President), and Samantha Scott (outgoing ULSU Vice President External). Celebrating the awards given out to the outgoing members at the end of the conference.



May 13: Both incoming and outgoing delegates pictured with the Executive Director Alex, as well as support staff.