



Office of the **VICE PRESIDENT EXTERNAL**

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Report: Council of Alberta
University Students (CAUS)
Transition in Canmore,
Alberta

As part of our commitments to the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), President Hailey Babb and I attended the CAUS transition in Canmore, Alberta, from May 13th-16th, with the outgoing President, Cam Howey, and the outgoing Vice-President External, Cody Ciona. The overall point of this conference was to transition the new executives, to elect a new Chair and Vice-Chair, and to set our priorities for the upcoming year. Although we had previously met many of the incoming delegates at CAUS Advoweek in April, it was still a great opportunity to bond with the new executives and learn about the people we will be spending the next year with. I was also honoured to be selected by my peers to serve as Vice-Chair of CAUS for the 2017/2018 year.

On Saturday, May 13th, myself, Hailey, Cam, and Cody travelled to Mount Royal University in Calgary where we met for lunch with all the incoming and outgoing delegates. After, we attended a presentation by Zain Velji, a political consultant, on the political landscape here in Alberta. We learned many tips for meetings, including how to communicate with MLA's and staffers, and how to advocate our priorities effectively. After that, we introduced ourselves and did a team building exercise. We then drove from Calgary to Canmore, where we had dinner with the incoming and outgoing delegates.

On Sunday, May 14th, the conference sessions began, starting with a session on the annual yearly cycle for CAUS, followed by a brief introduction to CAUS Strategic Plan and provincial partners. Following those sessions, we then had a session on CAUS 2016/17 Year in Review, which included information about the fundamental government consultations happening this year, including the External Stakeholders Advisory Group (ESAG), this review involves tuition and the funding model, it is currently in phase 3, and the recommendations should be ready by the fall. We also heard updates on the Mental Health Review, which is completed and we should hear about the funding distribution by the end of May or the beginning of June. Following that session, we had an introduction to government session, presented by Lisa Fox, the Director of Policy and Engagement in the Ministry of Advanced Education. Lisa introduced us to how Advanced Education functions, including the Ministry structure, legislation including the



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Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA), the role of the Minister and the bureaucracy, and a review of the upcoming and ongoing consultations. After Lisa's presentation, we had a session on stakeholder/external communication. After that, we drove to the Canmore Recreation Centre to play Frisbee Golf for the Horner Cup. This is where all 5 students' unions compete against each other. We finished in 4th place. After the Horner Cup, we went out for supper with Lisa Fox.

On Monday, May 15th, the sessions continued with membership expectations and internal communications. The purpose of this was to outline on how to use various forms of communication in different situations, whether it is Highrise, Basecamp, or WhatsApp. We then had sessions on policy and legislation, tuition and fees, and mental health. All of these sessions were very informative, especially considering the fact that recommendations on consultations with mental health and tuition will be upcoming at various points this year. We then had a team-building activity in the form of Advocacy Jeopardy. After that, we had a session on student employment and student financial aid (SFA). During this session, we reviewed the statistics on who is currently accessing student funding, and the process of applying for the Alberta Student Loan Program and the Canadian Student Loan Program. We then reviewed the SFA model in New Brunswick and in Ontario. After that, we had our CAUS meeting. This CAUS meeting was the outgoing members official last meeting, and it was the incomings first official meeting. During this meeting, we signed our CAUS Membership Agreements, went through the CAUS financials, discussed CAUS' ACAT Council Representative nominations, and had the elections for Chair and Vice-Chair. One candidate ran for Chair, and I ran for Vice-Chair. After giving a speech and answering questions, the delegates voted, and I was elected as Vice-Chair of CAUS. Reed Larsen, the Vice-President External at the University of Alberta Students Union (UASU), was elected as Chair of CAUS. I believe me and Reed will have a very good Chair/Vice-Chair working dynamic. As Vice-Chair, my job will be to work collaboratively with the Chair and the Executive Director of CAUS, and to fulfill the duties of the Chair when Reed is absent. This will involve more meetings with Reed, and our Interim Executive Director Josh, and will require more travel to Edmonton. Fortunately, this year CAUS will introduce a Chair Subsidy to help remove the burden of the Chair and Vice-Chair's travel costs, which will help save money on our travel budget, and encourage more delegates from Lethbridge and Calgary to run for Chair/Vice-Chair positions in the future.

On Tuesday, May 16th, CAUS was officially handed over to the incoming delegates. Our new Chair led a discussion on working expectations, and as the Vice-Chair, I took notes. We had a very productive discussion. We then had a discussion in order to set our goals and priorities for the upcoming year, this included setting our policy and research priorities. Our policy priorities included Governance, Mental Health, Student Employment, Affordability encompassing tuition,



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international tuition, and student financial aid. Lastly, we established Funding Framework, encompassing deferred maintenance as our fifth policy priority. For our research priorities, we decided to focus on Open Educational Resources (OERs) and student employment. Overall, our transition was a huge success, and I look forward to working hard throughout this next year on behalf of 100,000 post-secondary students in Alberta. If you have any questions about this report, feel free to send me an email.

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