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**Conference Report: Student Orientation to Government, June 25-26, 2018**

**What is Student Orientation to Government?**

Student Orientation to Government is a two-day conference in Edmonton hosted by the Ministry of Advanced Education. Student representatives from all twenty-six post-secondary institutions across the province were invited to learn about the Ministry's role in our education, as well as to meet each other and connect about issues happening on our respective campuses.

**June 25, 2018**

Firstly, we kicked off the conference with some networking activities, which was a great way to engage with students with whom I do not regularly interact. We were able to hear from high level ministry officials about the ministry structure, funding models for post-secondary institutions, tuition levels in Alberta, and how the post-secondary structure is constructed. After this, we were able to engage with the Minister of Advanced Education, the Honourable Marlin Schmidt. It was good to see him again after our last meeting in April. He spoke to us about the government's priorities, and then each advocacy group was given five minutes to present to the Minister about our own priorities. Andrew Bieman and Amanda LeBlanc, our Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council of Alberta University Students (of which the ULSU is a member), did a fabulous job presenting our concerns. Then, we had the opportunity to engage in a Q&A session with the Minister before breaking for lunch. Unfortunately, after lunch I had a family emergency that I needed to handle. For more information about the afternoon sessions, please consult Victoria Schindler's report.

**June 26, 2018**

The second day of the conference was only half a day, and mainly consisted of sessions presented by bureaucrats from within the Ministry of Advanced Education. Our morning mainly consisted of sessions on student aid and mental health. Largely, the student aid session discussed how the Alberta Student Aid program functions, how it works in conjunction with the Canada Student Loan Program, and different statistics about the number of students that use these programs, and to which extent they do so. The mental health session focused mainly on government funding and the importance of these services. Our last session of the day was centered around learner pathways, and how students use the post-secondary education system; for example, we discussed transferability of credits from one institution to another. After this, the conference was over with an optional lunch.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.



## *Office of the* **PRESIDENT**

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Very Best,

Laura Bryan  
President