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## **Conference Report: CAUS Nov. Counterparts and Advocacy Days (Nov. 19 – 21 2019)**

### **What is CAUS Counterparts**

Much like the conference hosted by us in July/August, Counterparts is a chance for all student executives from the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) to meet each other and discuss provincial issues, portfolio plans, and get to know the other people in your role. This time was heavily centered around the recent developments provincially with the budget, however; we had a multitude of session, with everything from strategic planning to life after being an executive.

### **What is Advocacy Days?**

Advocacy Days is an opportunity for the Presidents and VP Externals from each institution to interact with government officials in Edmonton. Given how spread out the schools are; this was a great opportunity to meet with people who we may have not been able to meet with otherwise. Advocacy Days was interlinked with Counterparts to save on travel costs for each institution as well as time for everyone involved.

### **Tuesday November 19**

While we arrived in Edmonton the Monday of this week, the conference didn't officially begin until the Tuesday. It was so great getting to see all the people who we haven't seen since August. We ate lunch together in the Students' Union building on the U of A campus and had a quick opportunity to catch up together. Following this, we had a discussion/presentation around tuition and the provincial budget. It was extremely useful to hear what everyone is doing at their institutional level and how they are interacting with their university administration. We then had a session on strategic planning for CAUS where we covered the need to update our strategic plan this year. As we are doing the same at the ULSU, this was a nice opportunity to see how other people approach the process. We then covered advocacy training, a federal election follow up, and had a freedom of expression update. Overall, it was a great day and I really enjoyed seeing everyone again.

### **Wednesday November 20**

Wednesday was the first full day at the conference. As such, it was an extremely busy day. We began the day with breakfast and went immediately into a session around life after being an executive. There were two past executives who were able to provide perspectives around this area. It was quit useful to see the obstacles that inevitably follow these positions and how to appropriately deal with them. We then had a presentation around open educational resources from a faculty perspective. Given the rise in prominence around this area recently, it was a great opportunity to discuss potential obstacles and how to best move forward through them as a student leader. The sessions then continued into council accountability. It was interesting to see how each member school approaches their council and how accountability was defined. Unfortunately, I was



scheduled for two advocacy meetings this week that were cancelled by the government officials last minute. This was very disappointing as it was a large part of why I went up to Edmonton, however; it was unavoidable and very last minute. Additionally, I still do feel as though my time at this conference was still well spent; conversations with other schools' counterparts and the rest of the Presidents really helping to clarify a few directions and set new intentions.

### **Thursday November 21**

The final day ended at noon to allow for schools to travel back to their respective institutions with enough time. We filled the morning with a CAUS meeting, which is always easier to do in person as opposed to over the phone. Overall, the conference went very well! While it was unfortunate my advocacy meetings were cancelled, I still enjoyed my time discussing matters with the other schools and having that exposure to so many other perspectives.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [su.president@uleth.ca](mailto:su.president@uleth.ca). Thank you for taking the time to read my travel report.

Best regards,

Andrew Gammack  
President