

NOVEMBER 2022

CAUS COUNTERPARTS

Samantha Scott
ULSU VP External
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Attendees from ULSU:

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Samantha Scott
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Hosted by:
Students' Association of
Mount Royal University

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT CAUS

The Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) represents the interests of over 114,000 Alberta university students across Alberta.

We represent undergraduate students from the University of Alberta, the University of Lethbridge, Mount Royal University, MacEwan University, and Athabasca University to the public, government and other post-secondary education stakeholders. Based in Edmonton, CAUS is a non-partisan and active advocacy group driven by our members looking to ensure a fully accessible and high quality system of education in Alberta.



A LITTLE BIT ABOUT COUNTERPARTS

Counterparts is a CAUS-hosted conference in order to facilitate knowledge-sharing and networking between CAUS members. Each member of CAUS has 2 delegates who attend regular board meetings - however, we want to ensure we engage with and provide value to all of the folks on your executive council, and Counterparts is our way of doing so! Key goals of Counterparts include knowledge sharing, networking, and bonding between different teams.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT OUR HOSTS, SAMRU

GOALS FOR THIS CONFERENCE (FROM THE CAUS EXEC TEAM)

Information Sharing:

This is a chance for you to best practices with your peers (both your direct counterparts and those in other roles). There are very few people who know what student leaders do, so perspective from different institutions is always welcome!

Connection with Counterparts:

Connecting with those who perform the same role as you can give you new ideas on how to accomplish your goals, or maybe inspire you with new ideas! Either way, we hope you'll meet a kindred spirit

Learning:

We hope that you will take away at least some information from these sessions! Ideally, you'll gain new skills and new ideas that will help you be the best student leader you can be!

The Students' Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) represents and serves Mount Royal University students, with an undergraduate population of over 12,000 students attending MRU. A students' council has existed at Mount Royal for over 100 years now, since the time the institution opened its doors in 1910, meaning that SAMRU is one of the oldest student governments in Alberta. In September of 2009 Mount Royal College officially became Mount Royal University, and following that the Students' Association of Mount Royal College became SAMRU!

DAY 1: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Upon arrival our Vice Chair, Tera Cardinal, performed a smudging ceremony. This was a great way to start our conference with open minds, ears, eyes, and hearts.

After a quick presentation on expectation setting, we went right into a session on Electoral Priorities where different Counterparts were prompted to give suggestions on what CAUS should advocate for specifically during the upcoming provincial election!

We also met with the Minister of Advanced Education, Demetrios Nicolaides, to discuss concerns we have heard from students (both at U of L and across the province).



DAY 2: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

The day started with a "Mindfulness Session" in MRU's Immersion Centre, which was such a calming way to start our second day. It was a chance to centre ourselves as we prepared for the day of presentations ahead.

We also got an MRU/SAMRU Campus tour, where we saw some things very similar to the ULSU, and some new ideas (who else wants a nap room?!)

Our ED, Alex, gave a presentation on how student leaders can support first generation students. It was super interesting and gave a lot of really good advice on supporting particularly those students who face intersectional oppression within PSE.

Our Vice Chair, Tera, gave a presentation on student mental health, which focused on emotional first aid, how to help students in crisis (other than calling police), the importance of Peer support, and the importance of engaging professors in mental health support.

I then did a presentation on framing and negotiating within advocacy, both for internal and external situations. How we frame arguments and negotiate is extremely important as we navigate the realm of student governance!

We ended the day with a session on budget submission prep. Very similar to the electoral priorities session, it was a chance for Counterparts to give suggestions on what they would like to see in the CAUS budget submission which we will be putting forward in early 2023!



DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, NOV 30

The presentation gave important perspectives on what institutions are doing well, and what institutions can be doing better!

The final day, we had a presentation given by the SAMRU VP Student Affairs, Pamela, which was focused on supporting EDI specifically for visible disabilities. It was such an important reminder about diversity within student leadership and why we are motivated to do what we do





CONCLUSION

A few parting words!

Overall, this conference was a huge success! It was such a wonderful chance to connect with our Counterparts, as well as a fantastic opportunity to get input on the advocacy CAUS does for all of our member institutions.

Our chat with Minister Nicolaidis went very well. We asked him questions surrounding affordability/inflation, Work Integrated Learning, and mental health funding, and I am looking forward to the CAUS Exec follow up with his Chief of Staff within the next few weeks.

The tour of the SAMRU building was fantastic because it showcased where we had similar services (ie. their foodbank), and where the ULSU can potentially expand services. Ultimately, that's why we had this conference. Its purpose was to see how we can grow our organization to best serve our constituents... you!

Thanks so much for reading this far. If you have any questions, please reach out to su.external@uleth.ca

Thanks,
Samantha