



STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

SAMU

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	WHO WE ARE
	Mission
	Vision
	Values
	Good Governance
4	MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
5	STRATEGIC GOALS & OUTCOMES
5	1. STUDENT EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT
	What It Means
	Strategies
11	2. STUDENT VOICE
	What It Means
	Strategies
14	3. STUDENT SUPPORTS
	What It Means
	Strategies
19	4. STRENGTHENING SAMU OPERATIONS
	What It Means
	Strategies
22	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS
22	STUDENTS' COUNCIL ELECTIONS RESULTS
23	SPENDING BY GOAL

WHO WE ARE

The Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU) is a not-for-profit organization working independently from MacEwan University to support students. With over 40 full- and part-time staff, SAMU exists to serve students' non-academic needs.

We are governed by the elected student representatives who set the strategic vision on behalf of students. SAMU is guided by our Strategic Plan, which was implemented in July 2021. Initially developed as a 3-year plan, Students' Council (SC) voted to extend the duration of the Strategic Plan to a five-year plan (2021 – 2026). It was felt that the start and stop interruptions of the pandemic didn't allow for a proper start to the plan, and an extension would allow more time to focus on the revised strategic goals.

This annual report represents the second time we report our accomplishments based on the 2021-26 strategic plan. The 2022-23 fiscal year also marks the first “normal year” of in-person classes and a fully open campus since the pandemic started in 2020.

Mission

SAMU builds a positive student experience by creating a place to engage and connect, being a champion for all students, and providing opportunities that allow them to get the most out of their educational journey.

Vision

All students benefit from a vibrant student life and a culture of empowerment.

Values

- Students First
- Inclusiveness
- Adaptability
- Relevance
- Accountability

Good Governance

Good Governance, as practiced by a Students' Council composed of individuals who are well-informed and team-oriented, provides strategic direction for SAMU that aligns with the vision of the Association as a whole, anticipating and responding to the needs of present and future students through the effective stewardship of the bylaws, policies, and strategic plan of the Association.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What a journey it has been! Seeing the work that SAMU has done this past year has made me feel incredibly proud to be your President. Last year, we saw just how eager students were to get involved, despite the challenges of adjusting to a fully in-person year. This year, I have already seen the passion of our student body continue to build momentum. The vibrancy of our campus is a testament to not only the great work that SAMU continues to do, but also the culture of empowerment shaped by thousands of exceptional students, too.

As you embark on your academic journey, remember that SAMU is your ally. We work hard to understand the challenges that come with being a student, and our commitment to enriching your university experience is exemplified by our tireless advocacy efforts toward the institution and all levels of government. To that end, your Executive Committee works hard to amplify the student voice at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels – rest assured, we continue to be champions for students.

A holistic student experience isn't just about attending classes. It's also about personal growth, developing friendships, and creating lasting memories. That's exactly why SAMU works diligently to deliver quality events, programs, supports, and services to students. SAMU continues to listen and provide ample opportunities to ensure your success as a student, and we are constantly adapting to meet ever-evolving student needs. We are committed to engaging our community and enriching your student experience.

At SAMU, we strive to empower students. Being a student myself, I know just how challenging life and the balance of things can be at times. We want to make sure that you are provided with the resources and tools you need to succeed. Whether you have questions, concerns, or ideas on how we can better serve students, we are always available to assist you throughout your academic journey. It is such a privilege to be your President, and I look forward to creating a vibrant and inclusive community with all of you!

Warm regards,

Gabriel Ambutong (He/Him)
2023/24 SAMU President

STRATEGIC GOALS & OUTCOMES

To achieve our vision, focus our priorities, and guide our actions, SAMU is driven by four strategic goals and five values as outlined in the 2021-26 [Strategic Plan](#). The Annual Report provides a summary of SAMU's achievements and progress on each strategic goal:

1. Student Experience & Engagement
2. Student Voice
3. Student Supports
4. Strengthening SAMU Operations

1. STUDENT EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT

The overall student experience is enhanced by the opportunities provided by SAMU.

What It Means

The student experience goes beyond attending classes. SAMU offers people the fun and social side of student life by hosting programs and events and providing students space to connect. SAMU also provides volunteer and employment opportunities while supporting Student Groups on campus. The above reflects SAMU's commitment to making on-campus life more accessible for all students.

Strategies

1.1 Put the finishing touches on the SAMU Building, enhancing the safe and intentional spaces for students to gather, relax and study.

SAMU was very excited to have students in the building for the first full year of normal building operations since the building officially opened in 2020! All tenants were operational, with the final two tenants, Edo and Opa, operational for September 1, 2022. It's clear that students like their SAMU building as tables and seating areas are highly utilized and often full.

While the building is still new, having its first year of normal usage brought to light some enhancements that were needed:

- Office wall upgrade to reduce sound and enhance privacy for the Executive Committee (EC) offices
- A meeting pod was installed to provide students with privacy when meeting with the Student Advocacy Centre, and two single-person pods were installed in SAMU offices for staff use to free up usage of the larger meeting rooms
- Seven tables and 21 chairs were added to the second floor near the student lounge to provide more seating options for students (existing bench seating was moved to the first floor to provide more seating in open areas)

SAMU's event space, The Lookout, was open all year and utilized for various student-oriented events, meetings and gatherings. Another popular gathering space, Student Groups, extended its operating hours to provide more space for students and groups to gather, work and collaborate. Students were able to ask questions and get assistance with

their Health & Dental Benefits through the Student Benefits Plan Office, which was open during the Fall and Winter terms.

Building branding enhancements continued throughout the year to:

- Improve wayfinding so students can quickly find what they need
- Enhance SAMU brand awareness within the building and add character
- Showcase student artwork

SAMU will continue to observe how students use and interact with the building and make further enhancements to suit the students' needs.

1.2 Increase student awareness of SAMU and its opportunities through strong communications and engaging marketing and branding.

Awareness

The annual Spring Student Survey provides valuable data and feedback that enables SAMU to ensure we are providing the programs, services and events students need and want. Ever since doing our first Spring Student Survey in 2020, it was clear that SAMU needed to focus more effort on raising awareness of not only who we are but all that we do for students – and we needed to get the message to students in their first year. The pandemic decreased awareness even more, but through our marketing, communications, and initiatives, we made substantial progress this past year, compared to when we measured it in 2021:

- 2023 – 63% total awareness (41% either very or quite aware of SAMU)
- 2021 – 50% total awareness (27% either very or quite aware of SAMU)

The majority of the improvement comes from the “Quite Aware” level of awareness which showed a strong 10% increase. The 2023 Spring Survey was completed by 1591 students, a 28% increase from the 2022 Spring Survey.

Students are not only keen to provide feedback, but they also want to hear from us. Communication is crucial to letting students know about SAMU and our digital channels are the most preferred and effective way to deliver information to students:

- Website visits: 345,259 (+16% from 2021/22)
- Email: 145 email campaigns delivered (including email newsletter), 82% overall email open rate, 30% average Click Rate
- Instagram: 4,751 followers (+18%), 921 average daily reach, 755,583 annual impressions

New Student Events

SAMU offers two key events that are focused on introducing and raising awareness of SAMU and its programs, events and services. Meet SAMU Week introduces SAMU to new and returning students by offering whole week of fun and activities during the first week of school in September and January. Started in 2021, Meet SAMU Week was an instant success and was offered in-person for the first time in both Fall and Winter. The week of activities includes:

- MacEwan New Student Orientation
- Meet SAMU Tradeshow & Games (2 days)
- Fall Fest

Meet SAMU Expo is key to raising awareness amongst new students. The event features all SAMU departments showcasing what they offer in a trade show format. Students can get information, ask questions, play games, pick up their U-Pass ARC card, grab a SAMU Student Handbook and enter for a chance to win \$1000 in tuition credits. It is estimated that 500 – 600 students attended each day.

SAMU Student Handbook

The SAMU Student Handbook is another key tool in raising awareness of SAMU. The calendar planner includes both SAMU and MacEwan information and resources. The Handbook is supported financially through sold advertising. The Handbook was very popular with all 5,500 copies given out by the end of the first week of school in September 2022.

SAMU's 12 Days of Giving

SAMU's 12 Days of Giving campaign, which debuted in December 2020, became another instant hit with students and a successful way to engage students and raise awareness. The 2022 campaign was the most successful campaign to date for student engagement. Each day is themed around a different aspect of SAMU that students learn about as they enter the contest each day.

Gift cards and tuition credits were used as prizes each day of the 12 Days of Giving Campaign, a change from previous years, as this is what students said they most wanted for prizes (from Spring Student Survey 2022). This change made prize distribution easier, the campaign more appealing and daily engagement more consistent.

- 1204 average daily entries – 149% increase from 2021
- 14,446 total student entries – 191% increase from 2021
- Cost per student engagement: \$0.83

Ponoka Campus Visit

EC connected with the Ponoka Campus Dean, Ken Kustiak, to re-establish the relationship with SAMU. EC presented on the services SAMU provides to students on Ponoka campus, toured the hospital and listened to feedback from students.

Promo Squad

The Promo Squad initiative was brought back for the first time in three years. Promo Squad is implemented through the Marketing & Communications department and consists of a part-time staff and student volunteers who help promote SAMU and it's various initiatives. The volunteers engage with students through interactive games, prize draws and snack giveaways, either with a station set up in the pedway or by going mobile through campus. Results for 2022-23:

- Number of trained active members: 16
- Total number of promo squad shifts: 93

- Number of SAMU initiatives promoted: 27
- Average number of student interactions per shift: 65
- Total number of student interactions: 3,588

1.3 Increase student engagement by offering relevant and meaningful events, programs, services, volunteer activities and employment opportunities for students.

Providing events, programs, and services is at the core of what SAMU does, but doing so while most students take classes from home remained a significant challenge. Your EC and SAMU staff were up to the challenge and figured out ways to maintain and enhance student engagement.

Fall Fest and Winter Fest

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, SAMU was able to bring back Fall Fest in 2022, its signature event for students. This is the largest event that SAMU offers and is held as part of Meet SAMU Week to welcome all the students to a new school year. Artists were already booked from the previous year, which had to be cancelled due to Covid. The event was held in the grassy area behind SAMU for the first time. The event was well attended with an estimated 1800 students throughout the day who all enjoyed a lineup of 5 popular music artists. The event gave EC exposure as the President introduced the various acts, and also allowed EC to engage with students at the SAMU vendor tent.

Winter Fest is an event used to welcome back students from the holiday break in January. The format for this event was a 70's Disco Dance Party held at and in collaboration with the Starlite room. While not on campus, the event was a sell-out with 250 students taking advantage of free tickets. Students who registered to attend had to pick up tickets prior to the event and as is with free events, there was a drop in actual tickets claimed with 13% remaining unclaimed. The event was a success due to the popularity with students, and the relatively low cost and resources required to put on the event. SAMU plans to hold Winter Fest again in 2024.

Speaker Series

Having students on campus again meant the return of the in-person SAMU Speaker Series events. The Fall Speaker Series featured Jessica, a former MacEwan grad and singer with the chart-topping hit "I'm Not Pretty". The event didn't sell as many tickets as expected at the \$10 price, so tickets were offered for free which resulted in 64 students attending. After evaluating the event, it was determined that a number of factors led to the lower than expected attendance including: students not understanding who Jessica was, students still adjusting to be back on campus, and having a high number of students who are unfamiliar with the Speaker Series event.

The Winter Speaker Series was renamed "Live Comedy Show" as it featured TikTok and YouTube comedian Trevor Wallace. The Events and Marketing team took what was learned from promoting the Jessica Speaker Series and made modifications to the promotions plan. The Trevor Wallace event sold out all 300 tickets within a week and was thoroughly enjoyed

by students. The event was held in The Lookout, or event space and another Live Comedy Show is being planned for 2023-24.

New Programming

The Events department hired a part-time assistant to help with events this past year. Maker Series and Games Café were two new events planned by the Events Assistant (a MacEwan student). Maker Series held four different events that gave students the chance to participate in making a craft. A total of 412 students engaged with the Maker Series. Games Café was held in The Lookout and ran three times in the Winter term. Students could take a break from their studies and drop in to play some popular board games. A total of 259 students attended Games Café.

Last Class Bash

To help students celebrate the end of the regular school year, a trip to Cuba was organized for students. Last Class Bash enabled students to book the trip and travel with friends, and fellow MacEwan students. Collaborating with NAITSA, the trip exceeded expectations with 39 MacEwan students travelling to the sunny destination.

Holiday Market

Run by the Vice President Student Life (VPSL) and Vice President Governance and Finance (VPGF), the second annual Holiday Market, held in early December 2022, had 18 student vendors sell their wares to hundreds of students, staff and faculty who attended to shop the local handmade crafts, artwork and other items.

Discounted Ticket Programs

The Edmonton Oilers ticket program continued in 2022-23 and was popular with students, with most games selling out. The Oilers ticket program allows students to experience hockey games at a cost which is more affordable than purchasing at the box office.

Students also had the opportunity to purchase discounted ski lift tickets for Marmot Basin, Lake Louise and Sunshine. This was the first year offering the ski passes and a total of 135 passes were sold.

Artworks

A strategic planning session was held with the Programs Manager to plan the future of the Artworks program. All artwork initiatives and programs will now fall under the name Artworks Factory. As part of the Artworks Factory, SAMU purchased four student art pieces from the 2021-22 Grad Show which are now on display in the SAMU Building. Artworks Factory also held two pop-up events that encouraged students to try out different forms of art, no matter what their level of expertise. The two events attracted approximately 75 – 100 students each and were facilitated by 5 -10 student artists.

The Griff

The Griff went through a few significant changes throughout the year. A new Managing Editor was hired in September to fill the vacant position. Thai Sirikoone, a MacEwan grad and former Griff part-time employee, took on the role and continued to publish The Griff each month, while putting together a strategic plan in the background.

The Griff lost a considerable amount of readership and awareness over the pandemic and a new approach was necessary to revitalize the magazine and its audience. Immediate transition objectives and results included:

- Build the subscriber base (gain more readers)
 - More engagement opportunities with students through tabling and events on campus led to not only increased readers, but 51 student editorial contributions (an increase from 4 the previous year). High-profile interviews with Ashley Eckstein, Jessia and Trevor Wallace also helped to attract more readers.
- Integration of Multimedia (expand digital content)
 - A Digital Editor position was hired again for this year.
 - The number of TikTok and Instagram videos increased from 14 in 2021-22 to 49 in 2022-23, a 250% increase.
- Align with Student Interests (research what type of content students want)
 - Students want to see more campus-focused content, so the broader lifestyle content was reduced and more content focused around MacEwan was produced, including student video engagement around campus with The Griff “Streeters” team.
- Enhance Campus Presence (more in-person presence around campus)
 - The Griff attended various SAMU and MacEwan initiatives to set up a table and engage with students. The engagement through the Streeters content also enhanced The Griff's presence on campus.

A comprehensive strategic plan and rebrand of The Griff is near completion and will be launched in Fall 2023.

Volunteer and Part-Time Positions

SAMU’s volunteer program is vital to providing opportunities for students to gain real experience while, in turn, helping SAMU to support students. This past year saw another year-over-year increase in the volunteer program:

- 201 volunteers (+46% compared to 2021-22)
- 5,725 volunteer hours (+13% compared to 2021-22)

SAMU hires students for part-time positions which helps students gain employment while they are going to school and provides valuable experience, often pertaining to their chosen career, that can help them gain employment upon graduation. SAMU added 5 new Part-time positions in 2022-23, for a total of 25 positions hired (an increase of 3 positions from 2021-22).

Student Groups Event Grants

Student Groups helps to increase student engagement by providing Event Grant Funding to groups so they can put on events for students. SAMU awarded \$41,064 in Event Grant Funding which helped groups host 69 events, a 792% increase compared to \$4602 for 3 events the year prior. Groups used the funding for events ranging from small-scale game nights to large-scale galas. The funding means groups can focus more time on planning to make their event successful, and less time on fundraising.

1.4 Support Student Groups by offering networking opportunities, meeting space, outreach support and online platforms.

With students being full back on campus, Student Groups and the Student Groups space saw an increase in activity and engagement. Student Groups planned various events and training to help raise awareness of Student Groups, encourage new group start-ups and assist existing groups with recruiting members. The Student Groups Connect platform, the new online platform that was introduced last year, continued to be integrated.

- Student Groups Mingler: an in-person networking event for groups and their members to get to know one another and share ideas while playing various board games. The event was attended by 70 student group members.
- Student Groups Expo: The Student Groups Expo is a chance for students to see what groups are available in a tradeshow format. An expo was held each of the Fall and Winter terms. The Fall expo had 35 groups participate and Winter had 42. The Expos were busy with students exploring all the groups and successful for the groups in recruiting new members. Some Student Groups saw their membership numbers grow by 300%.
- Student Groups Connect: This was the second year on the new platform and it grew to over 2000 users. The platform continues to be built out and improved to ensure it is used to its full potential. Finance, election and service hour functions were developed to increase the usability for the groups.
- SAMU Awards: Various Student Groups were recognized and appreciated at the SAMU Awards Night celebration. Groups received awards for New Student Group of the Year, Student Group of the Year, and Student Group Member of the Year. SAMU highlighted the winning groups through their media channels in the “Student Groups Spotlight”.

2. STUDENT VOICE

The Student Voice is amplified by SAMU.

What it Means

SAMU is a Students' Association, meaning it provides ways for students to be heard collectively by the University and at all levels of government. Students also have a voice through its democratic processes, electing Students' Council and Executive Committee members to govern SAMU.

Strategies

2.1 Develop an Advocacy Plan and implement processes to strengthen SAMU's advocacy program.

Executive Project Planning

Each year, the newly elected Executive Committee undergoes an intensive strategic planning process to determine their priorities and projects for the year, resulting in a work plan that will shape their term. Over the past year, SAMU has revamped the process to better align with our strategic plan, as well as providing new frameworks for selecting and measuring

metrics for projects. This process was used for the first time this past year, resulting in a total of 19 Executive Committee projects for the year, based on student need, advocacy relevance and opportunities, and SAMU's strategic plan.

2.2 Enhance awareness and interest in SAMU's democratic processes through education and encouraging student participation.

Pizza & Portfolios

This event gave interested students the chance to learn more about EC roles in preparation for the upcoming elections and provided them with opportunities to engage with EC members, ask questions and learn more about the importance of governance at SAMU.

GovWeek

GovWeek had an increase in engagement in student governance as in-person sessions were held to inform students who are interested in running or who are interested in hearing from the candidates. Sessions included Build Your Platform, A Governance Panel, and GovWeek tabling that gave students the opportunity to find out more about governance and for potential candidates to get their nomination package signatures.

Food for Thought

This was an opportunity for Student Councillors to engage with the student body to gather feedback on emergent issues affecting the SAMU membership. Over 110 students attended the round table-style event for lunch and to provide feedback. SAMU received 21 responses from students for feedback on our Bylaw changes.

2.3 Continue to build collaborative relationships with other Students' Associations and organizations to enhance the collective student voice with all government levels.

Edmonton Student Alliance

SAMU's President was elected to the Chair position at ESA by a unanimous vote of 8 members. The organization met 4 times in this period in accordance with bylaws, and the President met with Councillors Cartmell, Wright, Salvador, Stevenson, Paquette, and Hamilton as a part of our municipal advocacy.

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations

SAMU's Vice President External (VPE) was elected to the CASA board as Director of Policy, where they successfully advocated for an increase in the Canada Student Grant, the elimination of interest on Federal Student Loans, and a \$400 million investment in Canada Summer Jobs program.

Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS)

The SAMU VP External was elected Vice Chair of CAUS mid-year as a result of an early departure for the previous person in the role. We were able to take a leading role in CAUS's Advocacy Week, with more than 10 meetings with stakeholders and MLAs alike, as well as provincial budget wins, including: a reduction of interest on Alberta Student Loans to prime from prime plus one, and a cap on domestic tuition for the coming academic year.

National Indigenous Advocacy Council (NIAC)

In collaboration with the VPE, SAMU was able to put forward an Indigenous Student Representative to our federal advocacy organization, CASA. Through NIAC, we met with the Assembly of First Nations and Indigenous Services Canada, 1 Member of Parliament, and 1 Senator, among other stakeholders.

Get Out the Vote

SAMU, alongside CAUS, ran a Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign as the provincial election geared up. Tabling events and a Pints & Politics information session at Towers were held. Nearly 700 pledges to vote were collected from students over the course of the campaign.

Strengthening Relationships with Elected Representatives

Over the past year, SAMU hosted multiple meetings with MLAs and MPs in the area to advocate to them on student issues. Meetings on campus included MP Blake Desjarlais, MP Heather McPherson, MLA David Shepherd, and MLA David Eggen.

2.4 Foster positive relationships with MacEwan University to better serve students.

Deans Meetings

As a part of SAMU's institutional advocacy, we met with Deans across the institution at the beginning of the EC term to determine their priorities and share ours. EC met with Deans Perlow, Keiller, Schalomon, McRae, and Gilliland.

Brain Freeze

SAMU partnered with MacEwan again in 2022 to offer the Brain Freeze Festival to students in December. Brain Freeze offers students a chance for a little bit of fun during the last week of classes before the Winter Break including: activities, games, food and drinks, a local vendor market, a resource fair focused on student wellness, an Indigenous light art display, music and the Coca Cola Holiday Truck.

Open House

SAMU participates in MacEwan's Open House to engage with potential students and let them know how SAMU supports their student journey at MacEwan. It is a good opportunity for EC to engage with potential students and offer SAMU building tours.

Time Capsule

In coordination with MacEwan, items were gathered and placed in the time capsule during a ceremony led by SAMU's President and President Trimbee. SAMU had its own package of info addressed to future SAMU and supplied the plaque to seal the capsule, which will be open on SAMU's and MacEwan's 100th anniversary in 2071.

3. STUDENT SUPPORTS

Student supports provided by SAMU are responsive to unique and evolving needs.

What it Means

Student life can be difficult. SAMU offers students a variety of programs and services to help with financial, mental, physical, and social stresses. SAMU is an inclusive organization, supporting diversity and participation of all students. As student needs evolve, SAMU watches trends and listens to students to ensure that SAMU offerings are reflective of those needs.

Strategies

3.1 Develop and deliver initiatives that are inclusive and are responsive to all student needs.

SAMU is proud of all our support services that help enhance the student experience. Being a student is stressful at any time, but the pandemic and its effect on the economy have made it even more challenging. Our lineup of support services that we offer include:

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club was one of, if not the most, popular services this year. SAMU supplied 7,158 meals over 14 pop-up events. Demand exceeded expectations, which led to the Breakfast Club budget being 27.9% over budget. A budget increase was approved by EC and the selection of items was reduced slightly so SAMU could continue offering Breakfast Club for the remainder of the year.

The Pantry

The 2022-2023 fiscal year saw the largest increase in hamper pick-ups with a rate of growth of approximately 145%. A total of 1287 Hampers were given out between Fall 2022 and Winter 2023.

SAMU received our Statement of Service in February from Food Banks Alberta and the membership accumulated in an estimated value of \$44,400. This includes an online course for volunteers about safe food handling, monetary donations from donors, and pantry inventory supplements. The membership with Food Banks Alberta added an approximate value of \$21,000 to The Pantry inventory over the course of a full year.

Peer Support

Peer Support successfully launched an online training portal for volunteers that was well received by not only new volunteers but also returning volunteers. The additional learning enabled the Peer Support Volunteers to be better equipped to support students looking to talk.

Peer Support conducted 43 sessions over Fall and Winter (this number doesn't include students who visit the Support Hub in person to ask questions or get resources). Of the students who utilized peer support, 33% were school stress related, 32% were relationship issue related, and 16% were mental health related. There were approximately 12% of students that disclosed they were facing thoughts of suicide.

Safe Walk

Safe Walk had a challenging year due to minimal interest in volunteering for Safe Walk which led to some shifts not being able to be met. Safe Walk was unable to be open for a large portion of the time Safe Walk was meant to be open. At the times that Safe Walk was open, there were 13 walks total through the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 terms.

Study Buddies

Study Buddies was switched to a passive means of support by creating a Discord community. Over the course of the 2022-2023 year, the Study Buddies Discord was transitioned to include a full SAMU community. There are 237 students within the SAMU community discord and 125 students who have added the Study Buddies role to their profiles.

Study Buddies had limited engagement with volunteers as well as students within the discord role with some channels going unused for months.

Student Advocacy Centre

In July of 2022 the role of the Student Ombud Support was changed to better address supports that MacEwan students needed. The title of Student Advocate and Policy Support Specialist was implemented to continue to support students facing academic or non-academic issues, but also provide policy guidance, edits on correspondence with MacEwan faculty or staff, and attend meetings with students. From Spring/Summer 2022 to Spring/Summer 2023, the Student Advocate and Policy Support Specialist responded via email to 182 initial submissions and provided further support to 92 of those initial submissions through meetings, edits on correspondence with MacEwan Faculty/staff, and in-depth policy explanations. The top three issues that students reported were Academic Integrity Violations, Academic Standing, and Student-Professor Conflicts.

Anti-Racism Week

Anti-Racism Week, hosted by the VPSL in November 2022, saw the expansion of programming, external connections, and resources for students. SAMU handed out 120 wellness bags containing self-care and educational materials over the course of the week. An anti-racism event to educate students about racism prevalent in our community, school and daily lives was held to raise awareness of the discrimination and systemic barriers that marginalized members of our community face and promote an understanding of racial equity and justice at MacEwan so we can all strive towards a more inclusive campus.

Indigenous Learners Circle

The Indigenous Learner's Circle was a joint project with the kihêw waciston Indigenous Centre. Our goal was to uncover the gaps in advocacy for Indigenous students on campus that we at SAMU may not have been privy to. The event was attended by a dozen students who revealed a series of unexpected advocacy points such as sexual harassment when leaving campus.

3.2 Evaluate and assess student supports to remain relevant and accountable to students.

Student Health & Dental Plan Increase

Working with the Student Benefits provider, enhancements were made to student benefits including:

- HPV Vaccine included in the plan;
- \$100 increase for all paramedical maximums, maximum of \$400 per benefit year;
- \$100 increase in psychologist & social worker coverage, maximum \$600 per benefit year;
- No referral required for massage and physiotherapy;
- \$200 increase in dental coverage, maximum \$950 per year

Tuition and Fees Focus Group

As a part of the tuition and fees consultation process between SAMU and MacEwan, SAMU reaffirmed advocacy priorities through a series of focus groups. The goal was to unveil how the rises in living expenses, tuition, and fees were affecting students across faculties. Results from student interviews were compiled and the findings of the focus group were incorporated into the 2022 Tuition and Fees Focus Group Report. As a result, the concerns of students were highlighted to the administration with multiple detailed student testimonials.

Student Affordability Response Survey

In December, the Board of Governors approved a plan to increase next year's tuition by 5.5%. To gauge if there was an appetite for a response from the student body, the Student Affordability Response Survey was distributed to the student body on February 3rd. SAMU received an overwhelming 4,394 responses over the course of one week.

Internal Grants Adjudication

Each year, the Internal Grants Adjudication Committee reviews dozens of Dissemination Grants, USRI Dissemination Grants, SSHRC Institutional Grants, and Strategic Grants. To ensure that up-and-coming student research was advocated for, the VPA adjudicated 51 grant applications over the course of a month. As a result, 30 successful applications distributed \$34,841 CAD to student researchers.

SAMU Cares

SAMU was recognized at National Philanthropy Day for our donation to the SAMU Cares Bursary, which pushed the bursary principal value to \$1,000,000. This will in turn yield \$40K to students annually which is double what is currently being given out and allow for bursaries to be given out every term. A total of 72 bursaries were given out this past year.

Student Groups

The Student Groups department conducted verbal and written surveys to assess satisfaction with events and other aspects of Student Groups.

- Student Groups Expo was the most enjoyed event with a 76% satisfaction rate
- 62% of groups are satisfied with Student Groups Connect platform
- 76% of groups are satisfied with the Student Groups Handbook

- 80% of groups are satisfied with their overall experience as a student group

It is believed that the lower satisfaction score with Student Groups Connect is due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the new platform. More focus will be put on educating student groups on the platform.

3.3 Strengthen collaborations and partnerships with MacEwan University to expand supports and resources for students.

Cause Collaboration with MacEwan

SAMU is always keen to help advocate for initiatives and causes that benefit or interest students. SAMU and EC collaborated with MacEwan to help promote several worthy causes to students, including: Pink Shirt Day, Black History Month, Pride Week, Mental Health Week, Healthy Relationships Week, Sexual Violence Awareness Week and Truth & Reconciliation Day.

Period Products

The VPSL collaborated with MacEwan's pilot project for period products to successfully get an agreement to place period product dispensers in SAMU's female and all-gender washrooms. Dispensers will be in the washrooms for the start of the Fall 2023 term.

Hack the Brain Symposium

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a teaching modality that focuses on reducing barriers to a student's education by increasing methods to participate with class material. The goals for the Hack the Brain Symposium were to facilitate a meeting between like-minded faculty and instructors and to eventually generate a UDL committee/community of practice/UDL Center. Organized by SAMU's VPA, the event was attended by over a dozen MacEwan faculty members and included four guest speakers. On January 23, 2023, the GFC Committee on Teaching and Learning approved the terms of reference for the creation of an Accessibility and Universal Design for Learning Working Group.

Restorative Resolutions Community Service

In collaboration with the Office of Academic Integrity, the VPA created a pilot project to integrate academic integrity violation resolution agreements with community service. The rationale was to give the student a chance to give back to the community. This process was piloted on six cases and all six cases completed their assigned community service hours.

Service and PHET Collaboration

The SAMU Services department and MacEwan's Peer Health Education Team (PHET) started a project to produce content that not only educates students on mental, emotional, and physical health but is also interactive to customize support to students. The long-term goal of this project is to create a suite of resources for MacEwan students. The project started with three resources in the content generation phase and plans to roll out more throughout the next few years.

Student Groups

Over the past year, the Student Groups Department has built relationships with various MacEwan Departments, including MacEwan Conference Services, the International Department, the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Education, and Response (OSVPER), Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, and Residence. These relationships will benefit individual groups in various ways including: helping them access their services, reach their audiences, and collaborate for future activities.

3.4 Enhance relationships with external organizations to leverage resources and supplement new and existing initiatives.

Splash and Bash

Splash and Bash is a collaborative event with UASU, NAITSA and West Edmonton Mall and was held again for students on January 27th. The event allows students to enjoy an exclusive pool party at the World Waterpark at a discounted price. The event sold out with 350 tickets being sold to students and their friends.

U-Pass

U-Pass saw a reduced activation rate (percentage of students who were assessed for U-Pass and activated it) this past year, compared to pre-pandemic years. SAMU believes this could be due to a couple of factors: the transit ARC Card system is still new and students are not used to it and the U-Pass program has lower awareness due to not being issued in some semesters during the pandemic causing more students to be new to the U-Pass program.

Fall 2022

13,658 Students Participated in Fall 2022 U-Pass
7885 picked up Arc Card and Activate U-Pass
58% Activation Rate

Winter 2023

13,419 Students participated in Winter 2023 U-Pass
8411 Activated Winter U-Pass
63% Activation Rate

Spring/Summer 2023

4635 Students participated in Spring/Summer 2023 U-Pass
2586 Activated Spring/Summer U-Pass
56% Activation Rate

Student Refugee Program (SRP)

SAMU completed the Intent to Sponsor process and expects to welcome a new SRP member in Summer 2023. Collaboration between Local Committee Group Membership and MacEwan Academic and Finance increased which has strengthened the relationship with MacEwan for all matters concerning SRP. Local Committee Group Members are actively searching for better ways to support SRP students' self-reliance and settlement in Edmonton.

4. STRENGTHENING SAMU OPERATIONS

SAMU is an innovative and sustainable organization with an engaging work environment.

What it Means

SAMU can best serve students when its own house is in order. By fostering strong relationships between elected student roles and staff, documenting policies and processes and being responsible stewards of resources, SAMU can be a supportive and sustainable organization for students for years to come.

Strategies

4.1 Review SAMU governance structures and make improvements to reduce duplication of efforts and delays in decision-making processes.

Governance Review Project

Through a third-party governance review in 2021/22, SAMU started work on 45 of the recommendations that came from the review. SAMU formed a Governance Project Implementation Team, consisting of two Executive Committee members, the General Manager(GM) and the GPIT Project Manager. More team members will be added and subtracted as work continues through the project. The project is broken down into three phases and seven more tasks were added to the 45 existing for a total of 52 tasks in the project. Phase one is complete, 11 tasks are outstanding in phase two and four tasks in phase three. As a part of phase one, SAMU underwent a review of our bylaws, which were approved by Students' Council in Winter of 2022 and resulted in a change from the title of VP Operations & Finance to VP Governance & Finance. Additionally, an Elected Representatives Code of Conduct was created and approved by Students' Council to further bolster accountability among members.

Executive Coordinator

A new position was added to the SAMU Operations team. An Executive Coordinator was hired to help EC in their day-to-day operations at SAMU. The position has been a welcome addition to helping coordinate all the various projects and duties of EC.

4.2 Document main policies and processes to support business continuity and transitions in leadership and staff.

Strategic Plan

Students' Council (SC) voted to extend the duration of the Strategic Plan from a three-year plan to a five-year plan (2021 – 2026). It was felt that the start and stop interruptions of the pandemic didn't allow for a proper start to the plan, and an extension would allow more time to focus on the revised strategic goals.

4.3 Diversify revenue streams to reduce reliance on student fees.

Advertising Revenue

SAMU and the SAMU Building offer opportunities to generate revenue through various advertising channels including posters, tabling, digital displays, email newsletter and the student handbook. Advertising for the Handbook offsets the cost of printing.

- SAMU Building & Campus advertising revenue: \$19,200
- SAMU Student Handbook advertising revenue \$20,260

4.4 Act as financial and environmental stewards and implement effective practices to enhance sustainability.

Student Grant Increases

Over the course of the last year, SAMU determined the amounts for the Student Professional Development Grant and the Student Groups Operational Grant were insufficient given the steadily increasing cost of goods and services. Both grants received a \$200 boost, bringing the total per grant, per student to \$500, up from the previous amount of \$300.

Business Credit Card

In an effort to streamline tracking, reporting, and spending on credit cards issued to SAMU's staff and executives, the organization conducted a review of the current structure, where cardholders were split between two banks. The review indicated that a move to a consolidated system would best serve the organization's needs by lowering fees, bolstering accountability and increasing efficiency with regard to the use and reporting of credit card expenditures.

Food Recycler

SAMU implemented an in-office waste diversion program for staff in response to the amount of trash and food waste from our areas going into our landfills. SAMU purchased a Food Cycler Composting System that transforms up to 5L of food waste into a nutrient-rich soil amendment/compost. As the compost material are produced, staff can use it in the community or at home gardens.

4.5 Foster a professional and supportive work environment that lives the organizational values and delivers a culture of excellence.

General Manager Hiring

A public posting was made for the General Manager (GM) role which was currently vacant. Over 60 applications were received and a thorough review process was conducted to make a shortlist of three candidates. A few rounds of interviews were conducted by the hiring panel and SAMU's current Acting GM, Darryl Kostash, was hired to oversee the operations of the organization.

SAMU Awards

SAMU Awards Night is a chance to celebrate the 31 students, staff, and student groups nominated for a SAMU Award. A total of 53 people enjoyed a buffet dinner in The Lookout (SAMU's event space), played a fun game of trivia bingo and applauded all the nominees and winners. SAMU Awards recognize outstanding individuals who have interacted, supported, or assisted with the goals and efforts of the SAMU organization and community.

Remuneration Review

SAMU conducts a remuneration review approximately every three years as part of best business practices. Ensuring salaries and benefits are comparable and competitive is key to ensuring that we can attract and retain the talent needed to continue to grow as an organization and serve students. A comprehensive review was started in 2021-22 by a third-party consultant, and the recommendations from the review were implemented this fiscal.

Human Resources (HR) Processes

More HR responsibilities were added to the Volunteer Manager position to help streamline processes. The new position, Volunteer and Hiring Manager, is working on hiring, onboarding and offboarding processes utilizing the technology available within our current HR Software package.

Staff Survey

A SAMU Staff Survey 2023 was conducted with close to 100% of eligible respondents responding to the Survey. The survey helps to measure staff satisfaction and wellness and there were improvements in all areas when compared to the previous survey.

- Mental wellbeing improved by 48%
- Good work-life balance improved by 43%
- Likelihood of recommending SAMU as a place to work 8.45 out of 10.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

Official 2023 Executive Committee Election Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
2173	14325	15.20%

8 Candidates ran for 5 positions

Official 2023 Vice-President External By-Election Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
1008	14322	7.00%

2 Candidates ran for 1 position

Previous Year – 2022 Executive Committee Election Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
1417	14113	10.04%

7 Candidates ran for 5 positions

STUDENTS' COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS

Official 2022 Students' Council Election Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
948	14683	6.5%

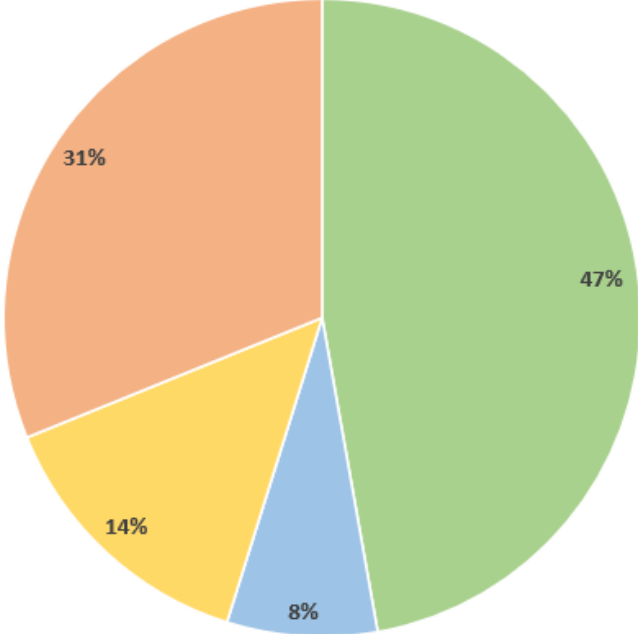
13 Candidates ran for 14 positions

Previous Year - 2021 Students' Council Election Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
1071	14895	7.19%

11 Candidates ran for 14 positions

SPENDING BY STRATEGIC GOAL



Strategic Goal		2022-2023
1. Student Experience and Engagement	The overall student experience is enhanced by the opportunities provided by SAMU.	47%
2. Student Voice	The student voice is amplified by SAMU.	8%
3. Student Supports	Student supports provided by SAMU are responsive to unique and evolving needs.	14%
4. Strengthening SAMU Operations	SAMU is an innovative and sustainable organization with an engaging work environment.	31%