



STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

A photograph of a modern building with a glass facade. The building has a large 'SAMU' sign on the left side. The sky is blue with some clouds. The building has a glass facade with a grid pattern. The 'SAMU' sign is large and bold. The text 'WHO WE ARE' is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

WHO WE ARE

The **Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU)** is a non-profit organization working independently from MacEwan University to support students.

Our purpose is to enrich the student experience by focusing on their non-academic needs through an array of student-driven events, programs and services.

We are governed by the elected student representatives who set the strategic vision on behalf of students. With support from over 50 full- and part-time staff, we keep our mandate student-focused to achieve the vision. SAMU is proud to be an organization serving students, inspired by students.

MISSION

The Students' Association of MacEwan University exists to enrich the student experience. As the collective student voice and champion for leadership and advocacy, we empower students through our programs and services, and create an engaging environment that maximizes opportunities.

VISION

The Students' Association of MacEwan University will be a strong advocate, exceptional resource, and a clear voice for the MacEwan University student. We will have one aim – to create a one of a kind university experience by recognizing the student as our greatest asset and inspiration.

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.

OUR FOCUS

SAMU is a dynamic, fast growing and diverse organization whose approach to success is constantly changing to adapt to the needs of students within the University.

SAMU is dedicated to advocating for student issues, regardless of political ideologies or opinions. We exist to enhance student well-being while they attend MacEwan University, and create a positive impact to the student experience.

Through consultation and continual connection with the student body, we have been, and will continue to focus our resources and energy on our students and what matters to them. Simply stated, students come first. Students are our world and it's why Students First is one of SAMU's Core Values.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sean Waddingham



What a year! It is surprising how much can change in one year. During my 2019/20 year as Vice President Academic of SAMU, the Students' Association underwent a tremendous amount of reform, while facing many unforeseen obstacles and challenges. However, thanks to our remarkable staff, Executive Committee, and Students' Council, we were able to adapt with grace. Here's some highlights of what SAMU has accomplished in the last year.

After a long period of planning, development and construction, the SAMU building, created by students and for students, is finally complete. For us to have a building of our own is a truly colossal achievement. Among the student associations and unions of the five largest universities in Alberta, SAMU was last to accomplish this, and without one it was hard for students to get to know SAMU very well. Now that we have our own space, we can provide critical services like The Pantry, Peer Support, and Breakfast Club at a greater capacity, and host gorgeous events in our beautiful event space called The Lookout. The Students' Association of MacEwan University can now be instantly recognized as a prominent part of MacEwan's campus and a champion of students' interests.

In addition to rejuvenating and upgrading our physical space, it has been exciting to see SAMU's processes and organizational structure change and improve as well. Firstly, SAMU underwent a governance review which saw some of our redundant committees be collapsed into others with similar mandates. We've also added student-at-large seats to our committees, which we've since filled with students who can now get a better understanding of SAMU's governance and can contribute to our decision making. We also had our first winter term election with a Board of Governors position on the ballot, electing a student to that position for the first time.

Our Executive Committee advocated for student interests, to both the university and various levels of government. In our advocacy work with MacEwan, we saw student representation be doubled on the General Faculties Council and we were part of a great win for students when the fall reading break was extended to a full week. Further, in terms of government advocacy, SAMU made some noise this year. Our Vice President External, Cole Baker, not only restarted the Edmonton Student Alliance and led a federal Get Out the Vote campaign for the 2019 election, but also orchestrated a successful protest against the provincial budget that was released in October 2019.

Of course, the 2019/20 year in summary wouldn't be complete without mention of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although many consequences of this crisis were dire, such as closing down in-

person classes and the establishment of new working, learning, and social conditions which have been distressing for students, there have also been opportunities. SAMU met with MacEwan to determine whether, and how, to move classes online as well as how to determine winter 2020 grades and what to do about non-instructional fees. We are immensely proud of our Executive Committee's ability to reach an agreement with MacEwan which saw letter grades given out and made sure the largest MacEwan and SAMU fees (Sports & Wellness and U-Pass) were removed. Lastly, we continue to advocate for an alternative to convocation for our 2020 grads who never got a chance to walk the stage - yet another advocacy challenge brought on by the pandemic, one which is still in progress.

Overall, 2019/20 was a bit of an arduous and novel year, but it came with quite a lot of opportunities and growth for the Students' Association of MacEwan University. I believe that despite the challenges of the last year, we have come out of it ahead of where we were in 2019, and I look forward to continuing to help SAMU rise to meet both adversity and opportunity in the 2020/21 year.

Sean Waddingham (He/Him)

A photograph of an empty office interior. In the foreground, a blue leather couch is partially visible on the left. To the right is a large wooden planter box. The floor is covered in a dark, patterned carpet. In the background, there are glass-walled cubicles. One cubicle contains a desk with a chair and some equipment. Another cubicle has a coat hanging on a rack. The lighting is soft and even.

A NOTE ABOUT COVID-19

COVID-19 has changed the world and we now know that “back to normal” is an elusive point in time.

The pandemic and subsequent closing of the MacEwan campus and SAMU building, affected all SAMU events, programs and services during the winter term. COVID-19 required us to pivot, very quickly, in directions that we hadn't gone before and enabled us to turn challenges into opportunities.

Through the dedication and hard work of staff, SAMU ensured continued delivery of important programs and services that students rely on.

The pandemic has had the biggest impact on our student members, as they struggled to adapt to online course delivery, apply for a summer job or start their career journey. Students come first at SAMU so our full efforts focused on the continuation of our valuable services, despite SAMU and the MacEwan campus being closed. Highlights include:

- The Pantry worked to ensure continued delivery of food hampers and increased the amount of food items per hamper.
- An online secure chat platform was implemented for Peer Support to continue its confidential, listening services.
- Our staff developed a variety of specific digital content for students to help them through quarantine called SAMU at Home including live streaming, webinars and student blogs.
- SAMU ensured relevant COVID-related alerts, updates and notifications were sent out in a timely manner through our website and social media platforms.
- Our team developed and implemented a digital SAMU newsletter to keep students informed through email, the channel students identified as most preferred in our spring 2020 survey.



STRATEGIC GOALS & OUTCOMES

To achieve our vision, focus our priorities, and guide our actions, SAMU is driven by seven strategic goals and six values as outlined in the **Strategic Plan**. We ensure all our actions align to our strategic goals and all our outcomes are carefully measured. The Annual Report provides a summary of the achievement of our goals for the year.

1. DEDICATED ADVOCACY

SAMU acts as a voice for students. Whether individually for specific student circumstances, or on behalf of all students, SAMU is there to uphold student rights and needs.

- Food for Thought, SAMU's annual town hall, saw **153 students in attendance**.
- SAMU **led the We Won't Sit Silently march to the Legislature** to protest the announcement of the Alberta Budget and its effects on student tuition, tax credits and other student costs.
- Lobbied MacEwan to almost **double their laptop rentals and provide USB data sticks to students** with unreliable internet connections.
- SAMU worked with the City of Edmonton and MacEwan to **waive the U-Pass and Sports & Wellness fees for the spring and summer terms**.
- The Executive Committee **advocated on behalf of students to keep letter grades for the winter term** in lieu of giving out "pass/fail" or "complete/incomplete" grades.
- In response to COVID-19, **SAMU worked with MacEwan to find an alternative to in-person classes**. Shortly after, all remaining winter term classes were moved to an online delivery.

*Executives voted in favour of a successful motion to include **a full-week fall reading break in every future academic calendar**, something that Executives had been advocating for a couple years.*

2. COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability goes beyond just environmental responsibilities. By instilling practices of trust, integrity, and responsibility, SAMU will be a place where processes and systems focus on long-term goals, rather than short term wins.

- All plates and utensils provided by Breakfast Club are biodegradable.

*SAMU **prioritized digital marketing channels** to promote programs, services and events.*

- The SAMU building was **constructed to LEED Silver standards** and we are just waiting for completion of the certification rewarding process.
- Invested in software for the digital screens installed throughout the SAMU building which helps automate and increase speed of communications and **reduce the amount of paper used for printing posters.**

3. RELATIONS WITH OUR COMMUNITY

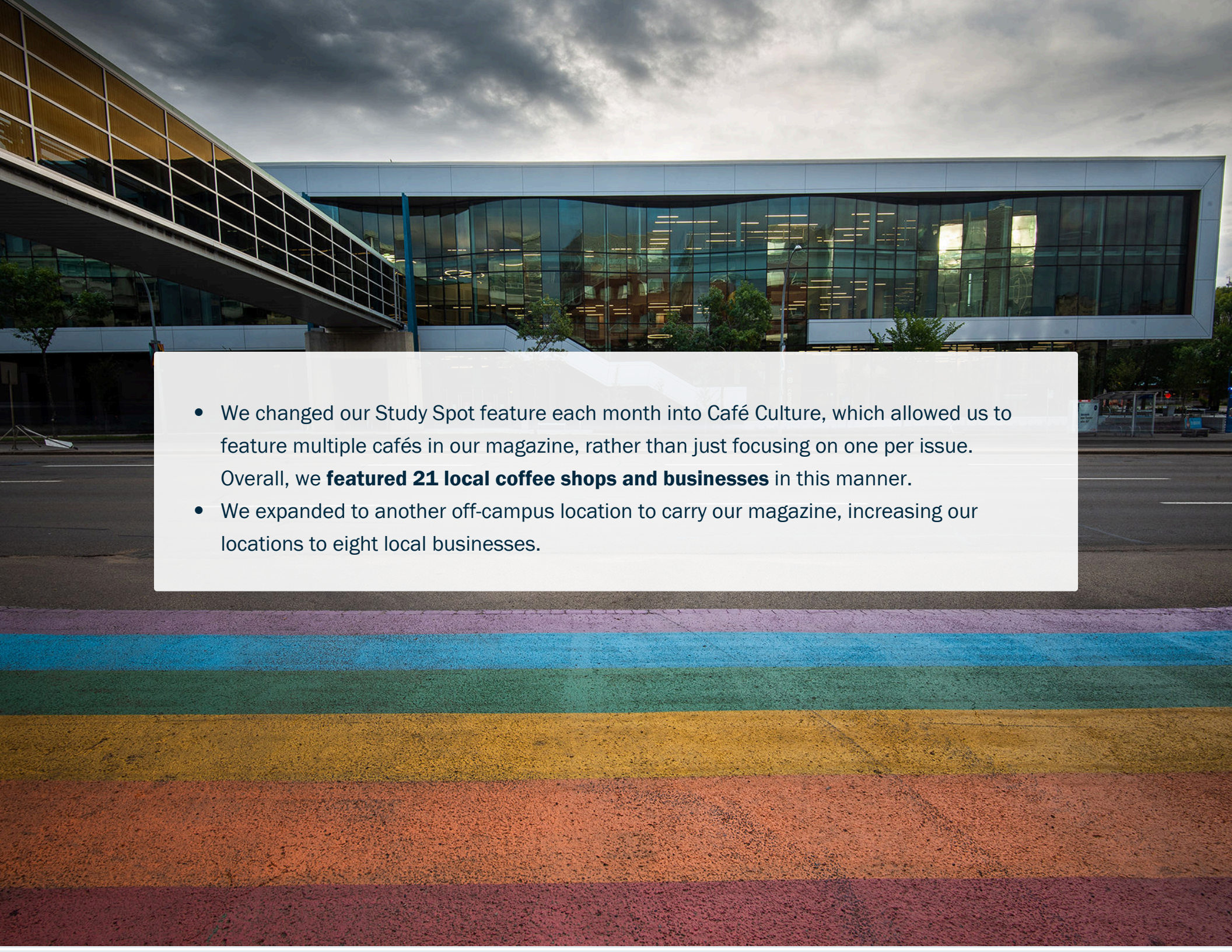
SAMU engages with the surrounding community to build partnerships, support opportunities and collaborate with community projects and programs that improve the lives of MacEwan University students by connecting them to Edmonton.

- SAMU's two annual fundraisers, Bids that Matter and Grayworks art rental auction, **raised \$2535 towards SAMU Cares.**
- Splash & Bash, a collaborative event presented by SAMU, NAITSA and UASU, hosted a party at the West Edmonton Mall Water Park, with **600 MacEwan students and guests in attendance.**
- SAMU partnered with NAITSA on Flee the Freeze, to host 35 students and their guests on a winter reading break trip to Mexico. Three free trips were given away to MacEwan students this year (increase of 2 trips from previous fiscal).

*The Pantry **received 2451 donated food items (with an estimated value of \$4000)** from a fundraiser hosted by MacEwan and United Way.*

- SAMU **donated \$500 to Black Lives Matter.**

MacEwan University's student media, the griff, made strides in community relations. The griff reports:

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- The background image shows a modern building with a large glass facade and a skybridge. In the foreground, there is a crosswalk painted with rainbow-colored stripes. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.
- We changed our Study Spot feature each month into Café Culture, which allowed us to feature multiple cafés in our magazine, rather than just focusing on one per issue. Overall, we **featured 21 local coffee shops and businesses** in this manner.
 - We expanded to another off-campus location to carry our magazine, increasing our locations to eight local businesses.

4. STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES

Our vision can only be accomplished by carefully managing our resources along the way. SAMU's operational goals are aligned with the Strategic Plan and best practices and careful planning are reflected in all operational activities.

- Students' Council unanimously passed the SAMU 2020-2021 budget.

*Distributed **\$21,300 in bursaries to students in need** from the SAMU Cares program.*

- Student Groups received **\$6760 in operational grants and \$10,645 in event grants.**
- SAMU building construction is trending on budget (final budget will be completed and reported next fiscal).
- SAMU continues to implement recommendations from a plan developed by external consultants in the previous fiscal that help to increase operational efficiency and effectiveness.

5. INTEGRATION OF THE SAMU BUILDING

After many years of hard work and planning, the SAMU building opened to students at the beginning of 2020. The building can now be brought to life and better allow SAMU to provide vital programs, events, services and operations to all students. This extraordinary new building acts as a meeting, studying, socializing and collaboration destination for students.


SAMU's new building is approximately 50,000 square feet (an increase of 40,000 square feet from our previous space) with dedicated spaces for Student Groups, Students' Lounge, Peer Support, The Pantry and four food vendors.

- The enclosed quiet study space contains **23 stations with LED lighting, USB slots and plugins** for charging.
- The building offers a wide range of seating areas and additional charging stations on all three floors for students to use for working and socializing.
- RBC on Campus opened in January, offering students free financial literacy, workshops and a no fee ATM on-site.
- We had **675 students attend our grand opening** event in January where we gifted a current MacEwan student with a \$1500 tuition credit.

6. CONNECT TO STUDENTS

Engaging, empowering and supporting students during their academic journey is the core of SAMU's mandate. SAMU is constantly looking at ways to support student initiatives and encourage involvement throughout the campus. We connect to students and connect students to each other through relevant channels and programming efforts.

- The SAMU website had **245,682 page views with 59,007 total users** to the site (9% and 6% increase respectively from previous fiscal).
- SAMU earned **826 new followers on Facebook and 710 on Instagram**.
- SAMU conducted a campus-wide survey in spring 2020 to gain student feedback on SAMU events, programs and services and to let us know how Covid is impacting students. There were **more than 2800 student responses and \$5000 worth of prizes** was given away to 22 students.
- We introduced a digital student newsletter, which saw **over 1900 students opt-in** over the first three months.
- SAMU's annual awards night transitioned to a digital format to ensure we could still recognize award winners. We issued **13 awards to students, with more than \$2600** given to winners.
- Fall Fest, SAMU's September kick-off party, saw **4082 students in attendance** with 13 interactive vendors on site.
- The Vice President Student Life hosted VPSL held Sex Week with **more than 300 people attending** the Sexy Resource Fair and 50 students attending other events.
- The Community Program introduced remote programming through Twitch streaming, with **138 views over three streams**.



Over **119 SAMU volunteers** contributed **5373 hours** (54% increase from previous fiscal), assisting with various SAMU programs, services and events.

- SAMU's student-run magazine, the griff, produced **167 articles** with the help of seven part-time editors and 24 volunteers.
- During the spring term, the griff launched a partnership with MacEwan University's Bachelor of Communication program to host two field placement students.



7. ENHANCE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

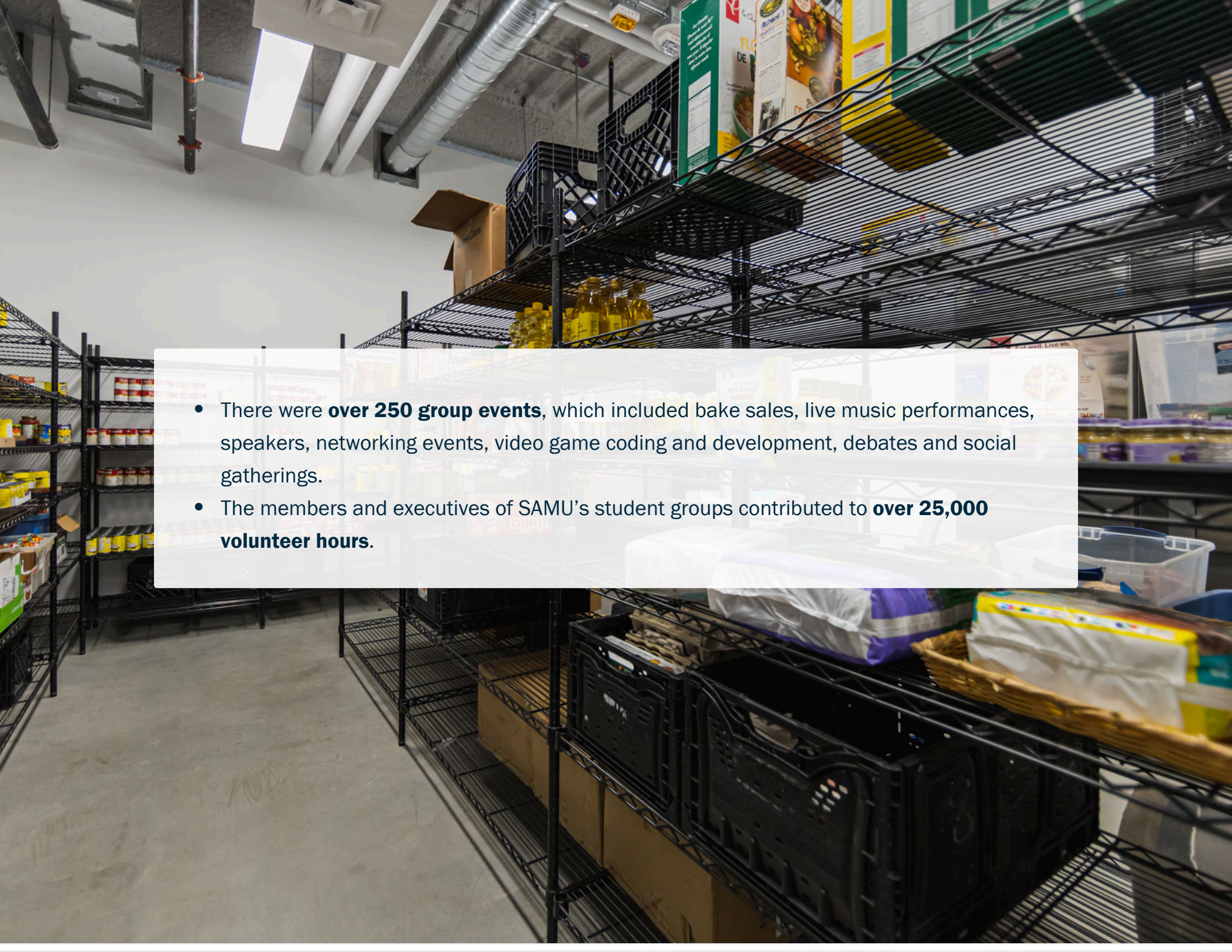
SAMU dedicates its efforts to lessening the stress of the university experience for students. By providing relevant and meaningful programs and services for students, we act as champions for student accessibility and support. Students first, always.

- We **introduced the MyWellness program** as part of our health & dental plan, which includes a free mental health assessment, education tools and online video counselling.
- In response to the pandemic, **SAMU created the SAMU At Home series** featuring webinars, student blogs, mental health tips and free online resources.
- SAMU had approximately **300 students attend new programming** including a Halloween craft table, Mental Health Resource Awareness booth and a “Kissing Booth” to talk about the importance of consent.
- **Over 1500 students participated in activities** such as free hot beverages, free massages provided by the Massage Therapy Club and stress relief bag handouts.
- Our week-long “Free Store” saw **over 1200 donated items given away to students** and staff.
- The digital scavenger hunt had more than 160 entries from students.
- Our wellness dog program, Doggo Time, had **683 students attend over seven events**.
- Random Acts of Kindness volunteers interacted with **more than 1200 students with activities** like a trivia contest, shareable snack bags, free postcard station, candy cane giveaway, hot chocolate station, cookie decorating and various gift card giveaways.
- Our digital Random Acts of Kindness Instagram contest saw **110 students participate, with 40 students receiving food delivery gift cards** as prize.

- The Gray Gallery hosted two student/MacEwan staff-led exhibits.
- Safe Walk helped students get to their destination safely with **120 walks completed**.
- **Safe Walk partnered with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra**, where Safe Walk volunteers walked patrons safely to their destination and got to see free concerts in return.
- Peer Support, a student-operated service, provided **123 clients with a confidential environment to talk** to a trained listener.
- 15% of Peer Support sessions dealt with suicide and abuse.
- Peer Support volunteers **distributed 1600 mental health bags**, each filled with mental and sexual health resources.

*The Pantry, a food support service, issued **421 food hampers (126% increase from previous fiscal)** to students in need.*

- The Pantry implemented an online client management system which streamlined operations and moved to a grocery style model.
- SAMU's Breakfast Club at City Centre Campus **provided 4922 students with healthy breakfast options**, while also increasing its vegan and vegetarian items from two options to six vegan options.
- Alberta College Campus provided **breakfast snacks to 2392 students** and a hot breakfast to 402 students.
- The Student Groups department had **over 90 active groups**, which included academic, cultural, recreational, religious and social issues.

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- There were **over 250 group events**, which included bake sales, live music performances, speakers, networking events, video game coding and development, debates and social gatherings.
 - The members and executives of SAMU's student groups contributed to **over 25,000 volunteer hours**.

OFFICIAL 2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

VOTER TURNOUT			
Year	# of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
2020	2,141	14,625	14.64%
2019	1,728	14,859	11.63%

Election Notes:

- *10 candidates ran for 6 positions*
- *The Chief Returning Officer added a third day for voting.*
- *SAMU introduced a new position to the Executive Committee election ballot, the Board of Governors representative.*

OFFICIAL 2019 STUDENTS' COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS

VOTER TURNOUT			
Year	# of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
2019	1,624	15,282	10.63%
2018	1,405	15,387	9.13%

Election Notes:

- *18 candidates ran for 14 positions*

SPENDING BY GOAL

Actual - without Fixed costs		Percentage change from previous fiscal
1. Dedicated Advocacy	17%	+2%
2. Commitment to Sustainability	3%	-4%
3. Relations with our Community	3%	-1%
4. Stewardship of Resources	13%	-10%
5. Integration of the SAMU Building	2%	-4%
6. Connect to Students	19%	+1%
7. Enhance Student Experience	43%	+16%
	100%	

