



STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

**SAMU**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2024-2025**

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## 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 50 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 5-year Strategic Plan (2021 – 2026) and focuses its efforts on achieving the four Strategic Goals outlined in the plan.

This annual report represents the fourth time we report our accomplishments based on the 2021-26 strategic plan.

### Vision

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

### 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.

### 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 OUTGOING PRESIDENT

Serving as your President these past two years has been nothing short of an absolute privilege. To have been elected, not once, but twice, by the student body, is an honour I do not take lightly. Your confidence in my leadership has empowered me, alongside the rest of my executive team, to fight for the student movement with unwavering tenacity. Your voices have been heard and firmly represented in SAMU's advocacy this past year. With your trust and the support of SAMU's staff, my team and I have been able to represent student interests diligently on your behalf. Some of our advocacy achievements this past term include:

- Saving Fall Reading Week
- MacEwan Residence Rent Freeze for 2025/2026
- Advocating to MacEwan for \$200K to support food insecurity
- A reduction of the Medical Clinic Fee from \$12 to \$10
- Waiving the Winter 2025, Fall 2025, and Winter 2026 Technology Fee, saving students \$1.9M, amounting to \$103.5 in savings for each student
- An allocation of \$500K for Textbook Affordability Projects and an additional \$500K for Scholarships, Awards, and Bursaries (SABs) for a total of \$1M

Our advocacy wins this past year would not have been possible without the foundations laid by the passionate SAMU Executives who came before us, as well as the unrelenting support from SAMU staff, volunteers, Council members, and students. However, the work is far from finished. The near-deafening student voice rings loud in the ears of your newly elected representatives.

The end of my term marks the beginning of a new chapter in SAMU's rich history. And so it is with great pride and privilege that I pass on the title of SAMU President, along with all the duties, responsibilities and honour that come with the Office of the President, to Nathan Poon. I have no doubt that President Poon and his team of exceptional student leaders will deliver wins for students, the likes of which I scarcely could have imagined.

**Forever Grateful,**



Gabriel Ambutong (He/Him)  
**2024/25 SAMU President**

## MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT

The Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU) has been working relentlessly over the past year to amplify the student voice and enrich the student experience. Enclosed in this report, you will find a recounting of the work SAMU's operational and governance teams took on in the past year to make that vision a reality. SAMU is funded by student fees, and we are led by students, for students. Our priorities and strategic vision have been developed in conjunction with ongoing student feedback, promising a relevant and effective approach to student service and advocacy for the students of MacEwan University.

As is often the case with democratic institutions, the leaders of today sit on the shoulders of giants, and we owe a great debt of gratitude to those who came before us and who laid the foundation for the work and advocacy we have taken on. It is no secret that students are struggling. The cost of education has meant skipped meals and foregoing pricey but necessary textbooks; the cost of living has forced students into low-quality or downright unsafe housing; and, under the unrelenting pressure of life demands and studies, student mental health is collectively on the decline.

While this paints a bleak picture of the student experience, it's also a call to action for those of us advocating on behalf of students, and it's a call we intend to answer. As SAMU continues to grow and mature, we need your voices as students and members of SAMU to keep us accountable, relevant, and meaningfully impactful. My team and I look forward to the opportunity to serve and represent you over the next year, armed with the trust and voice of students on the MacEwan campus.

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan Poon", with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Nathan Poon (He/Him)  
**2025/26 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.

The SAMU Building continues to be popular with students, with tables and seating being full at peak times. SAMU monitors student traffic and usage of the building to make changes when needed. Building enhancements in the past year include:

- Upgraded the main staircase with three sitting booths, giving students more eating/working options with natural light
- Added four large sitting booths on the main floor between RBC and Deville providing students with more conversation areas
- Comfy soft seating furniture was added to the main floor under the stairs and the existing wooden bench was removed
- Added pick up lockers to the main floor to better serve students who are not around during operational hours
- Planning has started for building upgrades in preparation for the opening of the new School of Business and the increased number of enrolled students it will bring. The following projects will be completed prior to the start of the 2025 Fall Term.
  - A building renovation upgrade to the SAMU office was approved. This upgrade will give SAMU operations more office space in the third-floor admin area and will add more space to the Student Groups area due to the removal of an admin office, providing another bookable meeting room for students. Renovations started in May.

- New sitting booth furniture will be added to the Student Groups area, providing more seating and workspace for students
- A renovation project was approved for the Lookout; these enhancements will provide SAMU and catering companies with a kitchen to prep for events that require catering. Renovations started in May.

The Lookout event space was utilized throughout the past year for a wide variety of SAMU and Student Groups events. SAMU and Students are given priority in the use of the Lookout, and renting the space to MacEwan and others is a secondary option for revenue generation.

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

### Student Communications

SAMU's number one way to communicate with students continues to be the SAMU email newsletter that is sent out every two weeks during Fall and Winter terms. Students identified email as the most preferred method of communication through the Spring Student Survey. The newsletter is sent to over 18,000 students each time and boasts an average open rate of over 75%. Programs, services and events aren't effective if students don't know about them, and the SAMU email newsletter continues to be the main and most effective point of communication.

Video is another very effective form of communication for students. SAMU's part-time videographer remained very busy producing videos to engage with students. Videos posted to Instagram Reels averaged 10,000 views (**+43% compared to last year**) with one video achieving over 28,000 views. Due to the success of the videos, SAMU will consider hiring two part-time videographers and creating a TikTok channel next year.

The website is central to SAMU communications. All other communication channels drive to the website that contains the information students need. SAMU's website had over 260,000 total visits during this fiscal year.

Instagram continues to be the favorite social media channel for students to engage with SAMU and get information.

- Instagram: +1,501 new Instagram followers | +608,344 total profile views | 9,070 Average content interactions
- Instagram Reels: 10,000 average views | 28,000+ views on one Reel | 304,244 total plays
- Instagram Posts: 304,100 total views | 28,500 reach | 5,900 interactions

## **New Student Events**

SAMU offers two key events that are focused on introducing and raising awareness of SAMU and its programs, events and services to first year students. *Meet SAMU Week* introduces SAMU to new and returning students by offering a whole week of fun and activities during the first week of school in both September and January. The week of popular activities includes:

- MacEwan New Student Orientation (NSO) – organized by MacEwan University
- Meet SAMU Expo & Games (2 days)
- Fall Fest and Winter Fest

Meet SAMU Expo & Games is key to raising awareness amongst new students. The event features all SAMU departments showcasing their offerings in a trade show format. Students can obtain information, ask questions, play games, pick up their U-Pass ARC card, and grab a SAMU Student Handbook, all while entering for a chance to win one of two \$500 tuition credits. It is estimated that over 200 students were engaged during NSO and over 500 students attended Meet SAMU Expo. Winter Meet SAMU also had over 500 students in attendance, an increase of **197%** from the previous year.

Each day of Winter Meet SAMU offered an exciting event, which included Maker Series, Magic Show with Chris Gowen, Music Bingo and Battle of the Bands.

## **SAMU Student Handbook**

The SAMU Student Handbook is another key tool in raising awareness of SAMU while being a valuable resource for students. The calendar planner includes both SAMU and MacEwan information and resources. The Student Handbook is partially supported through paid advertising. The Handbook continues to be very popular, with 6100 copies printed and distributed to students.

## **SAMU's 12 Days of Giving**

SAMU's 12 Days of Giving campaign, which debuted in December 2020, remains popular with students, particularly given the current focus on student affordability. The 12 Days of Giving Campaign is a successful way to engage students and raise awareness. Gift cards and tuition credits were used as prizes each day of the 12 Days of Giving Campaign, as this is what students indicated in the Spring Survey as being most appealing to them.

The 2024 campaign was the fifth time running the campaign

- 1137 average daily entries (-14%)
- 13,643 total student entries (-15%)

The 12 Days of Giving campaign will be reviewed and possibly refreshed for 2025.

### **Ponoka Campus Visit**

EC visited the Ponoka Site again in 2024 to engage with MacEwan students there. They promoted the SAMU programs, services and events available to them and listened to concerns that students had. Ponoka Students often feel alienated from CC campus programs and services while paying SAMU fees. The Executive Committee were able to give students a one-time \$100 grocery gift card to support each of the Ponoka students. The Ponoka SAMU Fee has been reduced for students.

### **Promo Squad**

The SAMU Promo Squad initiative operated for its third year in 2024-25. Promo Squad is implemented through the Marketing & Communications department and consists of a part-time staff and student volunteers who help promote SAMU and its various initiatives. The volunteers engage with students through interactive games, prize draws and snack giveaways, either with a stationary setup in the pedway or by going mobile throughout campus. Promo Squad has been very popular with students, and a second Promo Squad was created to focus on Student Leadership initiatives (see page 15). Results for 2024-25 compared to the previous fiscal:

- 27 active members (+50%)
- Promo Squad shifts (-6%)
- 64 student interactions per shift (-9%)
- 10,497 student interactions (-12%)

### **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. Through student feedback, engagement, and experience, SAMU believes it has a good understanding of the types of activities students want and need. Each year, we offer a combination of new or enhanced initiatives along with the return of student favourites.

#### **Fall Fest and Winter Fest**

Fall Fest is the largest event that SAMU offers and is held as part of Meet SAMU Week to welcome all the students back or to their new school year, and cap off the first week of the Fall Term. The weather and artist lineup (Misfortune Tellers, Dempsey Bolton, Tanner Adell, Lu Kala, Paul Russell, and headliner Mark Ambor) was a big attraction for students, with approximately 3700+ students attending, an increase of 4% from last year.

Held on the lawn in the front of the MacEwan Clock Tower, Vendor tents, activity booths, 360-video booth, games, food trucks and prizes helped keep students engaged and entertained. New activations included subsidized micro tattoos, piercings, permanent jewelry, and free haircuts, all of which were very popular and provided students with a total added value of \$2,400. The event also provides our Executive Committee members with exposure through the introduction of performers and an opportunity to engage with students face-to-face.

For the first time, guest tickets were available for students to purchase, allowing them to bring friends who are not current MacEwan Students. A total of 187 of the 200 tickets available were sold and added \$5228 in new revenue to offset costs.

Winter Fest is an event in January used to welcome new students and welcome back existing students from the winter break. The Winter semester's answer to Fall Fest, Winter Fest was a ticketed concert at the Starlite Room featuring Kuzi Cee, Ari Hicks, Preston Pablo, and DJ Whipped Cream. Tickets were \$5 for students, \$10 for student guests, and \$20 for the general public. A total of 360 tickets were sold (220 students, 82 guests, 22 public and 36 at the door), and students enjoyed a night of live music and dancing.

### **The Black Parade Halloween Dance Party**

SAMU partnered with the Starlite Room on the Emo Dance party by purchasing 100 tickets for the event. A total of 91 tickets were sold to students at a discounted rate.

### **Battle of the Bands**

Battle of the Bands is an event that provides exposure and opportunities for student bands to showcase their talent and provide another fun event for students to attend. The event consists of five MacEwan Bands competing live to win the favour of an adjudication panel at the Temple Bar in the Starlite Room. The winner received the opportunity to perform as part of the Fall Fest 2024 lineup, along with a \$250 prize. Participants included Fin McDowell, The Carpoolers, Delta '88, Morning Coyotes, and the winners, Blood Pressure. Students enjoy the event, which was sold out (200 tickets) again for the second year.

### **Comedy Series**

Comedy Series was first offered in the 2022-2023 year and was a hit with students. This past year, SAMU and students welcomed TikTok sensation and podcaster Connor Wood to the stage in the Lookout. Maggie Winters, comedian, opened for Connor, and students experienced an evening of laughter. A live Q&A session followed Connor's set, allowing students to ask questions. The event was nearly sold out, with 97% of the 256 tickets being sold. As with other events, tickets are made very affordable to students (\$5 Early Bird, \$10 General Admission), providing them with opportunities to experience signature events at a price that fits within their student budget.

### **Campus Clash**

Campus Clash is an event offered to students in partnership with the Edmonton Elks football team and in collaboration with MacEwan University and other post-secondary institutions in Edmonton. The event allows students to experience a CFL Football game at an affordable cost. It also allows students to have some fun competition with other schools to see who could show the most school spirit. This past year, 567 MacEwan students purchased tickets (-22% from last year). The Edmonton Elks donates a portion of ticket sales back to each school, which means that The SAMU Pantry (student food bank) received a \$1134 donation.

### **Maker Series**

Introduced in 2022-23, Maker Series continues to be very popular with students. Maker Series features some DIY crafts for students. There were five events held in 2024/25, providing students with opportunities to participate in: Candle Painting, Charm Bracelet Making, Hot Chocolate Mix Creation, Valentine's Card Crafting, and Microgreens Jar Painting. A total of 779 students participated in the five Maker Series events.

### **SAMU Markets**

SAMU organizes two special markets each school year, the Holiday Market and the Spring Awakening Market. Both markets allow students, alumni, and locals to set up tables to sell locally made crafts and items to MacEwan students and staff.

The Holiday Market, held in December, had 42 vendors **(+14%)** and estimated 2500 customers over the course of five days **(+79%)**. The Spring Awakening Market, held in March, had 39 vendors **(no change)** and an estimated 1587 customers over the course of three days **(+76%)**.

### **Wellbeing Programming**

Wellbeing Programming offered several initiatives to support students and help them through stressful times:

- Ask a Banker was hosted in both Fall and Winter terms, with support from RBC On Campus and The United Way, providing financial advice to 59 students.
- Zen Zone provided a space for students to take a mental break from studying for final exams and provided refreshments and wellness activities to over 200 students each term.
- The Sound of Wellness was an initiative between SAMU's Programming department and the MacEwan Wellness Club, which consisted of a karaoke event that saw over 850 students attend.
- Over 2,660 Wellness Bags were given to students over the course of the year, featuring local items such as lip balms, soaps, lotions, toothbrushes, and more.

### **Discounted Ticket Programs**

#### **Edmonton Oilers**

The Edmonton Oilers ticket program continued in 2024-25 and was very popular among students, as the Oilers advanced all the way to the Stanley Cup final. The Oilers ticket program allows students to experience hockey games at a cost which is more affordable than purchasing at the box office.

- 270 pairs of tickets available
  - 1 pair donated
  - 269 pairs sold to students at a \$70 discount off the standard ticket price
  - 1 pair sold on Ticketmaster (didn't sell to students in time)
  - 60 pairs (10 games) of Stanley Cup Playoff run home tickets were sold to students

## Ski Passes

Students also had the opportunity to purchase discounted lift tickets for Marmot Basin, Lake Louise and Sunshine Village ski resorts. This was the third year offering the discounted ski passes and a total of 172 passes were sold, **32%** more than the previous year.

## West Edmonton Mall

WEM Attraction Passes were added to the discounted ticket program in 2024/25. A total of 83 passes were sold to students.

## Student Advocacy Centre

During the fall and winter terms, the Student Advocacy Centre put on three main events that increased student engagement. The first event was hosting a Uni 101 booth event in collaboration with Library Services, Writing Centre, Student Success Centre, Access and Disability Resources, and Makerspace. Over 200 students were in attendance.

The second event was a two-day collaboration with the Academic Integrity Office to promote information about academic integrity and the various resources available to students that would help them throughout their academic journey. This event had over 300 students attend the booths over the course of two days and collaborated with the Library, The Writing Centre, Student Success Centre, and the Academic Integrity Office.

The third event organized by the Student Advocacy Centre was an AI discussion panel. This event took place over two days, featuring two unique panels that comprised both students and professors. Approximately 15 to 25 people attended each panel.

## The Griff

The 2024-2025 season of the Griff saw many changes and improvements to workflow and quality of work through the implementation of a new role: the Research Editor. The Griff continued to improve its standards and ethics by developing more guidelines and processes to ensure correct, factual reporting, as well as transparent and ethical behaviour from the staff and contributors.

The editorial direction of the magazine had a natural evolution from the previous year's rebrand, solidifying the Griff's brand and expanding its audience through purpose-driven collaborations and journalism.

Monthly magazine launch events at Towers were successful in bringing contributors and editors together to celebrate.

Highlights from the Griff strategic plan implementation include:

### Content

- 84 contributors published with the Griff **(+83%)**
- 160 assignments (written or visual) completed wholly or in-part by contributors **(+43%)**

### Magazine Distribution

- 14,000 copies of the Griff printed (+23%)
- 12,267 magazine pickups (+22%)

### Website

- 30,385 website visits (+7%)
- 50,718 page views (-2%)

### 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 run its programs, events and services:

- 218 volunteers (+8%)
- 5,671 volunteer hours (-5%)

SAMU hires students for part-time positions, which helps students gain employment while attending school and provides valuable experience, often related to their chosen career, that can aid in securing employment upon graduation. These positions are also vital to enhancing the capabilities of SAMU, enabling it to offer more comprehensive programs, services, and events. SAMU added one new part-time position in 2023-24, bringing the total number of positions hired to 35 (+3%). SAMU also added two new full-time positions and hired three students to fill vacant FT positions.

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

Student Groups and the Student Groups space saw an increase in activity and engagement. As of June 2025, there were 118 Student Groups (+37%). Student Groups planned various events and training sessions to help raise awareness, encourage new group start-ups, and assist existing groups with recruiting members.

- 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. Four Minglers were held, one in the Fall and three in the Winter term, attended by a total of 172 students.
- 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 48 groups participate (+7%), and Winter had 56 (+17%). The Expos were busy with students exploring all the groups and were successful in recruiting new members with over 2250 students total, attending the two Expos (+150%).
- Student Groups Connect: This was the third year on the new platform, and it grew to over 4562 users (+43%). A room booking system, Skeeda, was added in May 2024 and has been highly effective and efficient for students. There were 4119 room bookings made by 679 users.
- The Student Groups department hosted the second annual "Student Group Appreciation Night" in April to show their appreciation for all the hard work the

various student groups do in enhancing our university community. The appreciation night provided an opportunity for groups to get together and celebrate their accomplishments. A last-minute venue change impacted attendance, with 120 students attending (-20%).

### **Student Groups Event Grant**

Student Groups helps increase student engagement by providing Event Grant Funding to groups, allowing them to host events for students. SAMU awarded \$37,698 in Event Grant Funding (-5%), which helped groups host 64 events (-7%). 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.

### **Student Groups Operational Grant**

Student Groups utilized a total of \$17,286.58 in operational grant funding, which enabled 60 groups to purchase food, promotional materials, and supplies necessary for hosting meetings and conducting other group operations. This represents a 6% increase in utilization from the previous year.

## **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.**

#### **Fall Reading Break**

After over 4000 survey responses, countless letters to the General Faculties Council, a joint statement with the Grant MacEwan University Faculty Association, and a sit-in protest, SAMU Executive Committee and students were successful in advocating for MacEwan to keep Fall Reading Week at MacEwan.

The *Don't Take Our Break* campaign highlighted the importance of Fall Reading Week for student mental health and emphasized that students at MacEwan deserve a week-long break during the semester. Led by the Vice President Academic (VPA), the campaign was featured in local news, including CBC.

During a crucial General Faculties Council meeting on October 28th, the VPA spoke to advocate for and galvanize support to keep Fall Reading Week at MacEwan.

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

### **Student Leadership Week**

Student Leadership Week was created to increase interest and the number of candidates running for Students' Council and Executive Committee. Student Leadership Week is held in September for the Students' Council Election and in February for the Executive Committee Election.

#### **Student Leadership Week – Students' Council Election**

Student Leadership Week included three days of tabling (Info Booth), an open Students' Council meeting in The Lookout, and a Students' Council Mixer where students could drop by for free food and talk to SAMU staff, Executives, and Councillors both to ask questions about the role.

- 434 students visited the Info Booth
- 19 students attended the Students' Council Meeting as guests
- 57 students attended the Students' Council Mixer

#### **Student Leadership Week – Executive Committee Election**

This edition of Student Leadership Week was focused on providing information to students about running for a position on the Executive Committee. Students could talk to current Executive Committee members at a table (Info Booth) on Feb 3 and 4, and could also set meetings with a member of the Executive Committee, taking place on Feb 5. Those who had a meeting would also have the opportunity to have lunch with the Executive Committee. This new format and initiative worked well, with 10 meetings booked and 11 students running in the Executive Committee election.

### **Student Leadership Promo Squad**

Due to the success of the SAMU Promo Squad, a second Promo Squad was created to focus on Student Leadership Initiatives (Students' Council, Executive Committee, and MacEwan and SAMU Committees). The Student Leadership Promo Squad had a strong start and helped to raise awareness and increase results for both elections:

- 22 active members
- 165 Promo Squad shifts
- 47.5 average student interactions per shift
- 11,883 student interactions

### **SAMU Brand Ambassador**

As part of the Student Leadership Promo Squad, a SAMU Brand Ambassador position was created (filled by a student) to engage with students through video content. This approach resonated strongly, keeping students engaged and eager for the next video. The role was instrumental in reshaping SAMU's digital presence and raising awareness of both SAMU and Student Leadership. The role will be hired again next year.

## **Students' Council and Executive Committee Elections**

The Marketing and Communications department was tasked with increasing interest and engagement with Student Leadership, which includes Students' Council, Executive Committee, and SAMU and MacEwan Committees. Collaborating with the Governance Assistance and Support Team and the Events Team, new strategies were developed to transform how students perceive student leadership. Both elections showed a substantial increase in interest in Student Leadership, the number of candidates running, and the percentage of students voting. Results compared to the previous year's elections:

### **Students Council Election 2024**

- 34 students submitted nominations, 22 students ran in the election **(+69%)** - the highest in over a decade
- 13.2% of student members voted **(+53%)** – 2<sup>nd</sup> highest voter turnout in over a decade

### **Executive Committee Election 2025**

- 11 students ran in the election **(+267%)** – 5<sup>th</sup> highest in over a decade
- 20.6% of student members voted **(+227%)** – 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in over a decade

## **Food For Thought**

Food For Thought is an event where Students' Council members engage with the student body by tabling in the Lookout. Each table has a different topic, an assortment of information related to the table's topic, and Councillors who discuss the topics and answer questions from students. As an incentive, each student received a passport that would be stamped when they had a discussion at a table. When they acquired 3 stamps, they could redeem the passport for a sandwich, a drink, and a bag of chips. A total of 213 students attended Food For Thought in 2025 **(-22%)**.

## **The Griff**

The Griff published 22 articles about or mentioning current events pertaining to Student Governance, a **57%** increase from the previous year. These articles helped to bring increased awareness to the various Student Leadership opportunities available at SAMU.

## **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, along with the Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA), met with the Mayor's office to discuss student housing issues. The ESA and the City of Edmonton collaborated to develop a student housing survey, which is set to launch in Fall 2025.

### **U-Pass Negotiations**

SAMU alongside student representatives and staff from other students' associations (including the University of Alberta Undergraduate and Graduate Students' Union, Nait Students' Association, Concordia Undergraduate Students' Association, and NorQuest Students' Association) negotiated the next U-PASS contract with Edmonton Transit Services

(ETS) and the surrounding regional transit providers (Strathcona, St. Albert, Beaumont, Leduc, Spruce Grove, and Sherwood Park).

After a couple of rounds of negotiations and attempting to get the best possible deal for students, an agreement was made on a three-year contract spanning from September 2025 to August 2028, which consists of \$180, \$182.50, and \$185, respectively.

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

### **Deferred Exam Fees**

The Vice President Academic (VPA) had pledged to reduce the Deferred Exam Fee (DEF), which—at the time—charged students \$75 per deferred exam. The VPA worked with the MacEwan University Provost to reduce this fee to \$50 per deferred exam. Following months of more advocacy, the VPA and Vice President Student Life (VPSL) collaborated to reduce the DEF further. As of Fall 2025, the DEF will be reduced to \$0 per exam.

### **Don't Go Textbook Broke**

In collaboration with the MacEwan Library, the Vice President Academic initiated the *Don't Go Textbook Broke* campaign to support textbook affordability initiatives. As the MacEwan Library continues to support Open Education Resources (OERs), supporting OER visibility and usage on campus directly addresses the growing costs of textbooks.

### **Food Insecurity Funding**

As student affordability continued to be the number one concern amongst students (as indicated by the 2024 Spring Student Survey), a Food Insecurity survey was sent out to students to find out how costs were impacting the ability of students to feed themselves.

The results from 390 students who filled out the survey were clear:

- 35% of students indicated that they often couldn't afford to eat balanced meals and 39% said they sometimes couldn't afford to eat balanced meals
- 65% of students said they eat less food because there wasn't enough money to buy food
- 29% of students indicated they had skipped eating for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food.

Through advocating for students and talking to MacEwan leadership, the Executive Committee was able to secure a \$100,000 donation from MacEwan towards The Pantry (SAMU's food bank for students). The donation will ensure The Pantry can continue to offer up to two food hampers per month to students accessing its services. MacEwan University also announced cooking classes for students and subsidized \$5 lunch options offered by the Italina Centre Shop. Over 2,000 affordable lunches were sold through the program.

### **Tuition/MNIF Meetings**

The President and VP Governance and Finance (VPGF) represented students to MacEwan during the ministry-mandated tuition and fees consultation process. The advocacy and representation resulted in fee reductions and investments:

- The Student Information Technology Mandatory Non-Instructional Fee was waived for the winter term, resulting in a total \$650,000 in savings overall for students.
- The Medical Clinic MNIF was reduced in the winter term, and going forward, from \$12 to \$10/student/term.
- \$500,000 to be allocated to the textbook affordability program to continue the work of promoting Open Educational Resources, and ensuring proper resourcing for library staff to build capacity in the creation and sourcing of Open Educational Resources.
- An additional \$500,000 will be added to scholarships, awards and bursaries, depending on the greatest demand.
- MacEwan Residence rent freeze for 2025/26
- Tech Fee waived for Ponoka Students

### **Brain Freeze**

SAMU partnered with MacEwan again in 2024 to offer the Brain Freeze Festival to students in November. Brain Freeze offers students a chance for a little fun before exams and Winter Break, including activities, games, food, drinks, a local vendor market, and more. SAMU had 280 students visit the booth to engage with SAMU, which promoted its upcoming events. The event was scheduled for an earlier date and time than in previous years to make it more accessible for students.

### **Open House**

SAMU participates in MacEwan's Open House to engage with potential students and their parents, informing them about how SAMU supports their student journey at MacEwan. SAMU had a booth on the second-floor pedway to engage with potential students and inform them about the SAMU building, its programs, services, and events.

## **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 inflation, the rising cost of living, and the cost of education have made it even more challenging. SAMU understands students' needs and offers several support areas to make it a little easier for students. Our lineup of support services that we offered included:

### **Breakfast Club**

Breakfast Club is always very popular with students. SAMU supplied a total of 10,450 meals (+73%) through 13 events (+30%), which consisted of 10 cold breakfasts, two hot breakfasts and one special Exam Fuel pop-up. Due to the popularity and food insecurity issues facing students, plans are underway to hold a weekly Breakfast Club in the Fall and Winter Terms of 2025/26.

### **The Pantry**

In 2024-25, 677 new website accounts were created (-34%). A total of 2715 hampers (+19%) were provided to 753 students, with each hamper supplying two weeks' worth of non-perishable goods. The increase in hampers, coupled with a decrease in new accounts, could suggest that more students are in need of long-term support than before.

### **Peer Support**

Peer Support conducted 57 supportive listening sessions (+12%) over Fall and Winter Terms. Of the students who utilized peer support, 39% were mental health-related, 32% were school stress-related, 26% were relationship-related, and 5% were about financial stress (note: a conversation can be multiple topics). Approximately 14% of students disclosed they were facing thoughts of suicide, a 10% decrease from the previous year.

### **Support Hub**

The Support Hub contains access to the Peer Support and The Panty, but also has local resource information as well as a variety of personal hygiene and care products available to students. There were approximately 5,500 visits the Support Hub (+98%) throughout the year and students took 2498 quick grab personal items.

### **Safe Walk**

Safe Walk is a service provided by SAMU and student volunteers. Students can request a walk and are escorted by two volunteers to their car or bus stop. A total of 22 walks were conducted in Fall and Winter terms (-31.3%). Safe Walk volunteers distributed 344 cold-weather items (toques and gloves) to students when the temperature dropped. A Safety Survey was conducted in March and received 138 responses.

### **Farmers' Market**

SAMU Farmers' Market is a new initiative first launched in the 2025 Winter Term. Students can drop by and receive a bundle of various fresh vegetables and fruits. Over 229 bundles of fresh produce were given to students, and any leftover produce was donated to kihêw waciston. Due to the success of the initiative and to further help with food insecurity, the Farmers' Market is planned to be a recurring initiative for the 2025/26 school year.

### **Student Advocacy Centre**

The SAMU Student Advocacy Centre supports students facing academic or non-academic issues, but also provides policy guidance, edits on correspondence with MacEwan faculty or staff, and can attend meetings with students.

The Student Advocacy Centre had a total of 221 students contact the Centre through initial submissions (+91%). Of these 221 students, 53 (24%) met with a Centre Representative to discuss their concern further. The primary support provided to students was providing information on MacEwan's policies and procedures.

The breakdown of student visits by faculty are as follows: 50% Faculty of Arts and Science, 19% School of Business, 11% Faculty of Health and Community Studies, 7% Faculty of Fine Arts and Communications, 7% Faculty of Nursing, and 5% School of Continuing Education.

The top issues that the Student Advocacy Centre assisted students through were: Academic Misconduct Violations 19.8%, Filing Complaints 15.5%, Reassessment of Marks 12.1% and Required to Withdraw 12.1%.

Based on the information provided by students, the most prominent issue they requested support for was academic misconduct, with 70 cases. The reason for this could be that the Advocacy Centre's contact information is included at various stages of the process and in the email templates that professors send to students when notifying them about potential misconduct. Other more common issue types that students reached out for support for include student-professor conflict (29), Reassessment of Marks (26), and Required to Withdraw (15).

### **Queer Time Tuesday**

Queer Time Tuesday events continued in collaboration with Deville Coffee which engaged and supported 246 students over the course of 6 months. Held once a month, this initiative provides a safe space for people from all communities to meet and discuss issues and opportunities.

### **Dirty Sexy Bingo**

Dirty Sexy Bingo is an event where students play bingo to win a variety of prizes, both NSFW and SFW. It is hosted by the hilarious drag queen, Vanity Fair. This event is very popular and sells out very quickly. The event is held once in the Fall term and once in the Winter term. Held in Towers, both events sold out selling 83 tickets each at \$5/ticket. Due to the popularity, two events per term are being planned for the 2025/26 year.

### **Black History Month**

In the Winter term, Black History Month engaged students through student stories shared on social media, as well as an event at the end of the month that engaged 215 students through food and dance.

### **Eco SAMU**

A Community Mixer was held to teach students pickling and engaged 192 students in creating their own pickled vegetables.

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

#### **SAMU Cares**

The SAMU Cares program is a bursary which assists students and families and is funded by the creative fundraising efforts of the SAMU community. The bursaries are to help students and their families with financial assistance in the Fall and Winter terms. SAMU Cares supported 75 students and their dependents over the course of last year by providing a combined total of \$41,312 of bursary funding.

#### **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 93% - 96% satisfaction rate
- 75% of groups are satisfied with the Student Groups Connect platform (76% previous)
- 89% of groups are satisfied with the Student Groups Handbook (86% previous)
- 89% of groups are satisfied with their overall experience as a student group (82%previous)

#### **Evaluating Supports and Identifying Student Needs**

The annual Spring Student Survey provides valuable data and feedback that enables SAMU to ensure we are providing the programs, services and events that align with students' needs. The 2025 survey had 1,984 responses, a 8.7% decrease from the previous year but still enough to provide a high confidence level and low margin of error.

SAMU also conducted student focus groups and another survey focused on first years as part of a project that will help provide student segmentation insights and a student journey map for SAMU. The insights provided through this project will help SAMU identify the needs and preferences of specific groups of students (e.g., first-year students) and provide initiatives tailored to their particular needs. This project will be completed before the start of the 2025 Fall Term.

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

#### **Student Groups**

Over the past year, the Student Groups Department has built and maintained 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, MacEwan Residence, Student Affairs, MacEwan Student Experience Record, and MacEwan Alumni, the Office of Emergency Management, and MacEwan Security. These relationships will benefit student groups in various ways, such as helping them access services, reach 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 NAITSA, Concordia, The King's University and West Edmonton Mall, and was held again for students on February 2nd. The event allows students to enjoy an exclusive pool party at the World Waterpark at a discounted price. UASU was not involved this year, which meant each partner had to sell more tickets. SAMU had no problem selling out all 860 tickets, which gives students a fun night out at the Water Park at a discounted price.

#### **U-Pass**

In March 2025, a campus-wide referendum was held to continue the U-Pass program for the next three academic years (2025–2027), with 77.8% of students who voted in favor.

#### Fall 2024

16,237 Students Participated in Fall 2022 U-Pass **(+11%)**

9669 Activated U-Pass **(+3%)**

60% Activation Rate **(64% previous)**

#### Winter 2024

15,746 Students participated in Winter 2023 U-Pass **(+10%)**

10,042 Activated Winter U-Pass **(+11%)**

64% Activation Rate **(60% previous)**

#### Spring/Summer 2024

4931 Students participated in Spring/Summer 2023 U-Pass **(no change)**

2392 Activated Spring/Summer U-Pass **(-4%)**

49% Activation Rate **(54% previous)**

As a convenience and easy access for students, SAMU sells Arc cards on campus at cost and supported over 4000 students with sales and troubleshooting.

#### **Student Refugee Program (SRP)**

This past year was not an intake year but SAMU continued to support two ongoing sponsored students. A public engagement initiative was held to educate the student community about the Student Refugee Program. New and ongoing connections with MacEwan staff were made with the Office of the University Registrar and the Academic Advising Centre to enhance consistency in the academic pillar of sponsorship. SAMU's SRP Guidelines were updated, focusing on a more inclusive, practical sponsorship outline. A new SRP intake is scheduled for the 2025/26 year.

## 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.

With the completion of the Governance Review Project in the 2023/24 fiscal year, SAMU routinely reviews Policy, Procedures and Directives as per policy and on an as-needed basis.

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

#### SAMU Project Evaluation and Analysis Report (SPEAR)

SPEAR is a new initiative launched by the AMU Marketing department to track and analyze key metrics for key SAMU events, initiatives and projects. The process captures data such as attendance, sales, and engagement, allowing department managers compare results year over year. The reports empower every department within SAMU to make informed and impactful decisions on their initiatives, which leads their initiatives to be more effective and efficient.

#### New Full-Time Positions

SAMU added two new full-time positions to the SAMU Team. With the success of adding the Internal Advocacy Advisor last year, an External Advocacy Advisor was added this year to help support the Executive Committee. With the increasing demands on the services team for student supports, a full-time Student Services Coordinator was hired to support the services department and our student members.

#### 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: \$35,978 (+9%)
- SAMU Student Handbook advertising revenue \$13,654 (-33%)

## **Sponsorship**

Fall Fest has sponsorship opportunities for businesses that allow them to engage with students through activities. Revenue is also generated through Food Truck fees, guest ticket sales and a portion of beer garden sales. A total of \$16,192 in revenue (+13%) was generated for Fall Fest in 2024 to help offset costs.

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

### **SAMU Membership Fees**

Recognizing that students are in an affordability crisis, SAMU implemented a number of initiatives to help reduce costs for students:

- SAMU membership fee increase was paused for the 2024/25 academic year.
- SAMU membership fee increase for the upcoming 2025/26 academic year was also paused, along with a reduction in SAMU Membership and SAMU Affiliate Fees for students taking classes in the Spring/Summer 2025/26.

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

### **SAMU Awards**

The SAMU Awards Night is an opportunity to celebrate the students, staff, and Student Groups nominated for a SAMU Award. SAMU Awards recognize outstanding individuals who have contributed to, supported, or assisted the goals and efforts of the SAMU organization and community. A total of 64 people (nominees and guests) enjoyed dinner and a fun evening held in The Lookout. Students captured the festivities with a fun photo booth and professional photos of the winners.

The SAMU Employee of the Year award was not part of the SAMU Awards Night. The employee awards were expanded to include four full-time and four part-time awards, as well as 10 fun employee choice awards for each. Employees create fun categories for the Employee Choice awards, and voting happens live during the event.

The new employee awards, called the SAMMYs, were held at the SAMU Holiday Party in December for full-time staff and at a special luncheon in Spring for part-time staff. The awards are a chance to celebrate the amazing work and dedication staff have in helping create a vibrant student life for students. The SAMMYs have been very well received and will be held again in 2025/26.

### **Remuneration Review**

SAMU successfully implemented the final piece of the recommendations from the third-party review of the remuneration for SAMU staff. An approved RRSP/TFSA program for staff was added, and work will continue on the final step of adding long-term incentives to the program.

### Human Resources (HR) Processes

SAMU continued piloting and adjusting the new HR process for conducting staff reviews and performance development.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

### Official 2025 Executive Committee Election Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
3305	16079	20.6

11 Candidates ran for 5 positions

### Previous Year – 2024 Executive Committee Election Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
953	15196	6.3%

3 Candidates ran for 4 positions

### Official U-Pass Referendum Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
3459	17171	20.1%

77.8% In Favour

## STUDENTS' COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS

### Official 2024 Students' Council Election Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
2153	16313	13.2%

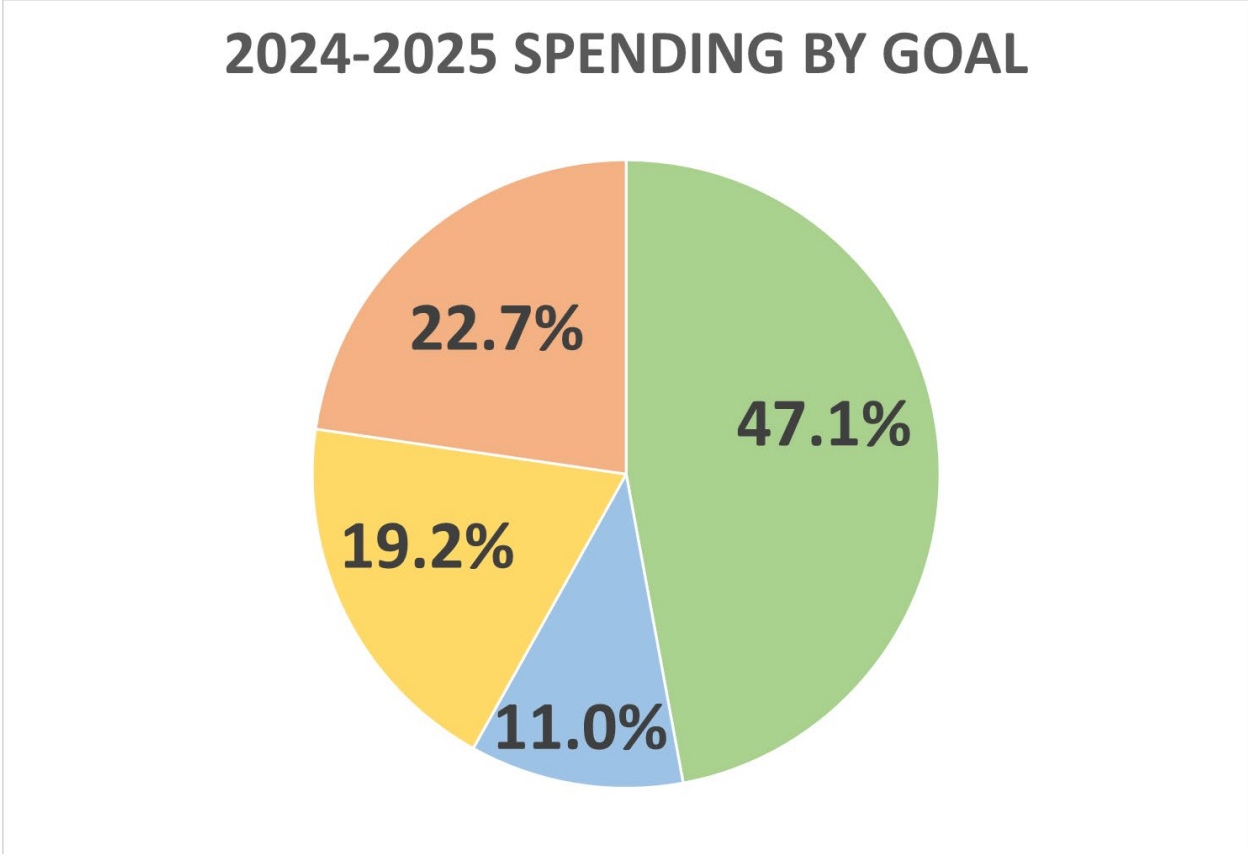
22 Candidates ran for 14 positions

### Previous Year - 2023 Students' Council Election Results

Number of Students Voting	Eligible Voters	Percentage
1333	15548	8.6%

13 Candidates ran for 14 positions

# SPENDING BY STRATEGIC GOAL



Strategic Goal		2024-2025
1. Student Experience and Engagement	The overall student experience is enhanced by the opportunities provided by SAM	47.1%
2. Student Voice	The student voice is amplified by SAMU.	11.0%
3: Student Supports	Student supports provided by SAMU are responsive to unique and evolving needs.	19.2%
4. Strengthening SAMU Operations	SAMU is an innovative and sustainable organization with an engaging work enviro	22.7%