

2019-01-16 SC - Audio Recording Transcript

Speaker Key:

CH	Chairperson
VPE	Vice President External
BUR	Councillor Burton
BOU	Councillor Bouwer
DRU	Councillor Drummond
VPA	Vice President Academic
MEL	Councillor Melech
NEW	Councillor Newton
VPO	Vice President Operations & Finance
PRE	President
VPS	Vice President Student Life
STE	Councillor Stewart
STR	Councillor Strayer
RAT	Councillor Ratz
RUI	Councillor Ruiz
YAN	Councillor Yanish

00:00:00

CH Order, thank you. Item 1, Treaty Six Land Recognition. We would like to acknowledge that this meeting of the Students' Association of MacEwan University is taking place on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 6 region in Central Alberta.

The Students' Association of MacEwan University is situated in the centre of what we call the city of Edmonton, which is called Amiskwacyi Waskahikan or Beaver Hill House in Nehiyawewin (Cree). This is the traditional home of the Nehiyaw (Cree) and Michif (Métis), and meeting place for many Indigenous peoples including the Nakawe (Saulteaux), Siksika (Blackfoot), Nakota Sioux (Stoney) and other nations.

Item 2, Approvals. 2.1, we have a motion. Anyone care to make that motion? Councillor Stewart?

STE Thank you Chair. I move to approve the Agenda for January 16th, 2019.

00:00:52

CH Thank you Councillor, and second? Councillor Bouwer, thank you. It has been moved and seconded to approve the agenda for January 16th 2019. Is there any debate? President?

PRE Thank you Chair. I'd like to move to amend to strike item 3.1 from the agenda.

CH Thank you President. So the amending motion will read to remove item 3.1, Diversity and Inclusion, presented by Irfan Chaudhry. Do we have a second on the amendment? Vice-President, Operations and Finance, thank you.

President, would you care to explain why the amendment?

PRE I would love to, Chair, thank you. There was just some scheduled mishandling both on our part in terms of communicating with the Director of the Human Rights Office. This presentation was initially intended for February.

So we'll be looking to present it either at the Council meeting or sometime separate from the Council meeting in the coming days. But it will not be happening today and so we'd like to make that correction by removing it from the agenda today. Thank you.

00:01:58

CH Thank you President. Is there any further debate?

So the question is on the adoption of the motion to amend the agenda to strike item 3.1, Diversity and Inclusion presented by Irfan Chaudhry. All those in favour? Thank you. And opposed? Motion carries.

Back to the main motion. We have a motion to approve the agenda for January 16th, 2019 as amended. Is there any debate?

The question is on the adoption of the motion as amended. All those in favour? Thank you. And opposed? Motion carries.

Item 2.2, we have a motion. Councillor Stewart, do you care to make the motion? Oh Strayer, sorry.

STR I move to approve the minutes of December 19th, 2018.

CH Thank you, Councillor Strayer. My apologies, I was living in the past. I was going to make a back to the future joke there but I didn't know if it was going to work and whether or not that was still relevant with this crowd.

And a second? Thank you, Councillor Ruiz. It has been moved and seconded to approve the minutes of December 19th, 2018. Is there any debate?

The question is on the adoption of the motion as read. All those in favour? Thank you. And opposed? Motion carries.

Item 3, Presentations. No longer any items there.

00:03:32

Item 4, for Information, 4.1 Reports. 4.1.1, President, any oral supplements?

PRE Yes, thank you Chair. As reflected in my report, we are in the process of hiring for an Advocacy Coordinator. We have made a selection so the successful candidate has been informed. He'll be joining us from February 1st which is very exciting, in particular for the external portfolio that we are working on, the Get Up and Vote Campaign on campus.

In addition to that, I attended an advanced education budget consultation on behalf of the Students' Association yesterday with the Ministry staff and the Minister himself, alongside other student leaders from Northern Alberta.

We largely went over our priorities for the year and what we'd like to see reflected in the budget 2019. And that was just a repetition of CAUS's budget submission that we had made earlier this year.

I did ask the Minister to clarify whether or not there would be a budget in 2019 and he gave me a roundabout answer, so that was appreciated. But other than that, no further information came of that session, although we were able to really highlight the need for lights on [?] funding for the building as well as a focus on the student financial. That's all for my verbal supplement, thank you.

00:04:43

CH Thank you President. So just for those who may not be aware, CAUS is Council of Alberta University Students. Just be mindful of acronyms.

Okay, 4.1.2. Vice President Academic, any oral supplements?

VPA Yes, thank you Chair. The text book CAUS campaign rounded up yesterday. It was really successful in my view. I haven't been able to count [?] the data yet, but I look forward to sharing that with you all as soon as it is done.

I'm really glad that we did the second day in the [unclear] because we got a lot of students from health and community settings and nursing [?] which we don't really get in Building 6 [?]. So that was awesome to engage with those students. Thank you.

CH Thank you. 4.1.3. Vice President External, any oral supplements?

VPE Yes, thank you Chair. On Friday I met with ASAPA, which is the Alberta Student Awards Personnel Association I believe. They were talking about what kind of changes to scholarships that might be coming up in the upcoming year and how to administer it.

If you want to know more about that I'd suggest you talk to me in person because it's really detailed and complicated. So I can for sure explain the impression created by it but it's a lot of [unclear] details.

00:05:57

And then we hired a [unclear] Coordinator. What else? And I attended the budget consultation on behalf of CAUS or Council of Alberta University Students along with the President. And I also kicked off the Get Up and Vote campaign and we had a decent first day. Thank you, Chair.

CH Thank you. 4.1.4. Vice President Operations & Finance, any oral supplements?

VPO Yes, thank you Chair. I attended the MacEwan Committee on Internationalisation Students Sub-committee, where we have been working on a proposal for Institutional Analysis and Planning, IAP, at the Institution, to access information that we currently have on international students that's collected by the university. As well as some proposal for some data that would be useful to start tracking within the institution, so we can better identify international students, their needs, how they utilise services etc. So it was very productive in that. And we'll be working on that over the next few months.

I also had a VPC, Valors' [?] Policy Committee as well. We will have some recommendations for next month's meeting. Unfortunately since we had the meeting yesterday we weren't able to get it on the agenda for this month. But I'm excited for the work of that committee.

00:07:32

I also attended the Integrated Strategic Plan Resources Foundation Plan Committee meeting as well. This is one of the four Foundation Plan Committees for the Integrated Strategic Plan for the University.

Resources specifically deals with finance, HR, facilities, maintenance, etc. on the resources of the University. And we were tackling value before in the ISP, which is the MacEwan experience. And so we discussed how Resources can meet the goals and objectives of the other Foundation Plan Committees.

Essentially we get to sit around and everyone tells us what they would like to do and we have to find a way to pay for it. It's the long and short of that [unclear] committee. But well worth the time and I'm excited to see that roll out the new Integrated Strategic Plan [unclear].

I also attended the quarterly UPASS [?] Advisory Committee meeting this afternoon, where they gave a presentation on the Smart Fare system that the City of Edmonton is launching. So it is similar to cities like Seattle, Toronto, etc. So it is a Smart Fare system that comes with cards and tap in to access transit as opposed to tickets and bus fare.

And we've been working specifically on the UPASS component of that; how we handle and manage that as institutions and student associations and how we facilitate back to our students; and how the student experience can be affected by that.

00:09:28

So very interesting. They seemed like they really are working hard, so that's great news. And so far on track for a 2020 [unclear] which is exciting. So that was a great meeting also this afternoon. And that is it, thank you Chair.

CH Thank you. Item 4.1.5. Vice President Student Life, any oral supplements?

VPS Yes, thank you chair. I just wanted to bring the attention to next month already, just because a lot of planning has been happening around a lot of [unclear] going on. It's a jam-packed month with it being Black History Month. It's the first time the university and [unclear] have been doing an official event. We're going to be having eleven different activities, presentations, workshops happening throughout the month.

Then the fourth to the seventh is Wellness Week. It's pretty encompassing as far as different issues that students are facing with wellness. And then the week after that it's Red Flag Campaign which is about balance in your relationships and different forms of that.

00:10:37

So a lot is happening in February. But more important, or also importantly, happening at the end of this month is the deadline for Student Community Engagement Grant. We've seen a very low turnout for that right now.

The deadline is the 30th of this month, but students are eligible for up to five grants. So if you know anybody that's interested in doing a Student Community Engagement Grant, or you yourself are, just reach out to me so that I can give you the information.

CH Thank you. Very busy executives you can tell. Item 4.2. Executive Committee Minutes, the Minutes of December 12th 2018 are provided in your package for your information.

Item 5. Question Period. 5.1 Written Questions. Gold star to Councillor Newton for submitting the question. Thank you. And item 5.2 Oral Questions, the question period is open. Councillor Newton?

NEW Thank you Chair. My question is for the President, just following up from my written question. Has there been any potential candidates that have applied for the position?

CH Thank you, Councillor Newton. President?

PRE Thank you Chair. I don't actually oversee it. That would have to be the Governance Advisor who could answer that question.

CH Governance advisor? No. Councillor Newton, any further questions?

00:12:02

NEW Yes, just one final question. I'm just wondering, for the future, will SAMU [?] consider other means of promoting Councillor positions, possibly through posters, banners and even the promo squad, to kind of increase their scope of advertising rather than just doing it online?

CH President?

PRE Thank you Chair. Promo squads are already being utilised to promote the vacancy. And I do believe that we have some print materials out in circulation, although not a large amount of it, simply because of the timelines that we're working with in terms of getting materials turned around.

I would say that the lack of interest is perhaps not due to the fact that there's not enough advertisement, but because the Council is seen as quite a significant commitment from a student's perspective. So it's unlikely that if they're not already within kind of this orbit and understanding what's happening, that they'll be able to, or they'll have interest in joining the Students' Council.

The more successful strategy that we have seen is essentially head-hunting candidates. So if there's someone that you know that is very interested, and we've seen this with folks who are around the table today [?], how they start by being encouraged to apply for those open positions outside of an election context. We have seen that be very successful.

00:13:17

And so, as I said in my written answer, I think if Councillors do feel that there is an opportunity for them to share that with their networks and they recognise individuals who would make valuable additions to the conversation around this table, I would really encourage them to take advantage of that. Thank you Chair.

CH Thank you President. Councillor Newton, any [overtalking]?

NEW Thank you Chair.

CH Any other questions? Councillor Stewart?

STE Thank you Chair. I just have a question for the President or Vice-President External, in regard to the Advocacy Coordinator hired. I see in the President's report that the Advocacy Coordinator is replacing the previous position of director of advocacy in governance. How does this new role differ and with advocacy,

what will they really be doing? Is it organising different campaigns and meetings along with the VP External or what does that role encompass? Thank you, Chair.

CH Thank you Councillor Stewart. President?

PRE Yes, thank you Chair. This is a great question. We had an opportunity when the last Advocacy Director departed from the organisation to do a review of kind of the roles that we expected that position to fulfil and the supports that it provided.

00:14:26

And we recognised that at a director level, which is more kind of oversight, looking at a very kind of big picture approach, it wasn't really working. The executive needed someone who was able to provide administrative support in terms of providing research and briefs and things like that, to kind of be making that kind of decision; making process simpler and more streamlined.

And so the new position is kind of geared towards that, which is why it's now called an Advocacy Coordinator as opposed to a director, as it doesn't oversee a department.

The scope hasn't changed much. So still working on campaigns; still providing research support; still providing support to the VP Academic with Student Appeals. So that will remain consistent. But I imagine that that role might also evolve as a new person comes into the role and actually carries out the duties.

So we'll be working, myself and VP External and the General Manager, are currently working on an onboarding plan for the new staff member. And so we'll be looking to kind of integrate that a little bit into their position and kind of setting them up for success in that way.

00:15:27

CH Thank you. Councillor Stewart, any further questions?

STE Not at this time, thank you Chair.

CH Thank you. Other questions? Councillor Strayer?

STR Thank you Chair. I've got two questions. The first one I'd like to ask the Vice President Academic. You wrote about the academic appeals processes that changed with the new instructions coming from the province. Tell me about the [unclear] that you and Doctors Wells have developed. Thank you Chair.

CH Okay. So the question, I think, is can you tell me about the new process.

STR Yes.

CH Is that correct? Okay thank you, Councillor. Vice-President?

VPA Thank you Chair. So the new proposed framework is still kind of a thought in the sky. As of right now we will still be proceeding with the appeals policy that is in

place. However, something that has, so, with the PSLA changes, essentially the only legislated change to student appeals is that students can or should be able to appeal to the Board of Governors.

Right now, what's being discussed is whether every single appeal that comes through the office should be taken to that level, whether it should be more of an appeal of process versus the result of an appeal, at a lower level, and the different levels that you could take certain appeals to.

00:16:58

So, you know, academic versus non-academic, in the classroom versus when the class is over, and so on and so forth. So at this time there's nothing solidified. But what we've discussed so far is that there would be essentially a more streamlined process and there would be two different processes that would mirror each other. There're similar, there's different levels for each; that would mirror each other for academic misconduct and then non-academic misconduct, for students. If that answers your question.

CH Thank you, Vice-President. PSLA is the Post-Secondary Learning Act for those of you who might not be familiar. Councillor Strayer, your second question?

STR Thank you chair. What we see in the minutes dated December 5th, 2018, section 5 relates to the reporting structure for GM reports might change. More specifically relates to about how the GM reports would no longer come to BC, sorry SC, but it's that EC would select the information which is relevant.

This question is for the President. What's the risk in simply allowing SC to see the full report as it currently is?

CH Thank you Councillor. President?

00:18:13

PRE Thank you, Chair. I think if memory serves correct as the meeting was a while ago, the question is not about EC selecting the information. Rather it's about kind of simplifying it in a way that's relevant to the scope of SC. So at the moment we find that the information that we provide can be quite overwhelming in that it is down to the complete minutia of the activity. It doesn't necessarily concern the scope that SC is looking at.

What we're looking to do is kind of shift more towards an accountability and a risk assessment model, so we're looking at the success of programmes, looking at the growth. But also looking at organisational risk that we might be wanting you to be aware of and things like that, which I think fit well within the governance review, kind of that we're wanting to also undertake with regards to the other pieces, or review rather of the existing kind of practices around there.

So it's not necessarily again that EC will be hand-selecting that information, not at all. Rather it will be something that EC will have a more specific operational

look at it and then a broader I guess scope will be provided to SC for review. This is not going to change the kind of information that is available to committees for example.

So executives, or sorry councillors, who sit on committees will still have access to the same kind of information they've had previously. But we were talking about a reporting structure that is kind of what's going to be changing a little bit.

00:19:40

CH Thank you President. Councillor Strayer, anything further?

STR Did our Vice President of Operations have something to add?

CH Vice President?

VPO Yes, thank you Chair. I was just going to add to the explanation as I was also a part of that. The GM reporting schedule was also confusing. The position was required to report on a quarterly basis but they were, the structure, required that they report half way through the quarter.

So there was confusion on what the report should actually be. There was no direction on what capacity that would look like. So that was confusing for the General Manager to navigate. It also feeds again, as the President stated, feeds into the reporting structure that we are hoping to strengthen and to implement. For the Executive Committee to receive more reporting and more streamlined reporting than we do currently and then translate that information as was stated.

So there was a couple they wanted to the discussion around that schedule being another one of those factors.

CH Thank you Vice President. Councillor Strayer, anything further?

00:21:03

STR Yes, thank you Chair. If we asked something to you that was too operational, you would deem it out of order, correct?

CH Correct.

STR Okay. So my question is again for the President. Does she think that what might be relevant to what Council sees and though it might be overwhelming, it's relative to the Councillor? Thank you Chair.

CH Okay, I don't quite know what to make out of that question, but President?

PRE Thank you Chair. I think this question begs for some speculation, so I will do my best to answer. The fact of the matter is that executives already make a judgment about what is relevant to Student Council and what is not, in their reporting structure, simply with our own reports.

Our reports don't contain every single activity that we partake in, simply those that we find to be relevant to the portfolio of our Student Councillors. This doesn't mean that Councillors are barred from asking questions that demand further detail whether in person or at a Students' Council meeting. And the same is true for the information about our programmes and services.

We of course rely on the Chair to determine what is operational and what is not. But that is an overwhelming burden to put on the Chair to kind of have to do that for every piece of information that we bring forward.

00:22:31

In terms of what's relative to Councillors, you know, as a former VP External and Chair of SCRC one of the things that we saw, and one of the things that we continue to see now, is a lack of engagement with us through asking questions or reviewing materials. And so we have to draw some conclusions based on rational grounds, about what is causing that. And one of the things that we do see is that the amount of information that we provide will impact the amount of engagement that we get.

So if a Councillor is in the middle of mid-terms, for example, we sees that a package that is 200 pages, that's not going to be something that they're going to prioritise because it's going to be overwhelming amount of information.

As I said, the information is not going to be taken away completely. But it is something that we're looking to reduce in terms of our reporting mechanisms and our reporting structures and is not going to impede Councillors from doing their job, because we are looking at the relevance to the role of the Councillor and to the role of Students' Council as opposed to our personal feelings or opinions about those information pieces that we're bringing forward. Thank you Chair.

CH Thank you President. Is it safe to make an assumption that this decision will not be made in a silo but will be consulted with relevant Councillors at a particular committee?

00:23:40

PRE Correct.

CH Thank you President. Councillor Strayer, anything further?

STR No, your question actually appeased me.

CH I aim to appease, thank you. Any other questions? I'm in a marriage, so I aim to appease. We both do. It's a partnership. Councillor Ruiz?

RUI Thank you Chair. I would like to ask whether it is the President or the Vice President, Operations and Finance, to explain more as to what the new structure of reporting will be like as well as what type of information will potentially be

changed from like their current way. And [unclear] with the General Manager's report. I just want to ask them more information like reporting. Thank you.

CH Thank you Councillor. I'm going to say that once a decision is made on any changes I would expect that to be communicated to a committee and to this Council. We can talk about what had been discussed and if there have been any decisions, but that's as far as I want to go with that question. So President?

PRE The December 5th discussion is essentially the only one that's happened since this topic was broached on the reporting mechanisms. So there's nothing further to report at this moment.

00:25:07

But I can assure you again that this is not going to be a decision that EC makes on the fly or without adequate consultation with relevant stakeholders. So it will be a question that will come back for consideration. Whether it fits at this table or at a new [?] table I can't comment at the moment, but it will be brought forward for review.

CH Thank you President. Councillor Ruiz, anything further?

RUI No, that's it. Thank you Chair.

CH Thank you Councillor. Councillors, any other questions? Good questions period, thank you. Item 6, In Camera Period, no items there. Item 7, Motions and Business Orders of the Day, none there.

Item 8, Consultation, nothing there. And Item 9, Evaluation, we will distribute the forms. Order, thank you. Nobody's still filling out the form are they? Okay.

Item 11, Adjournment. We have a motion?

Oh sorry, Item 10, Recognition. Councillor Stewart?

00:26:17

STE I would like to recognise two people in particular. One being the Vice President External on starting up the Get Up and Vote Campaign [unclear] as well as the Vice President Academic for their work on the text book campaign and being out there for two days helping students. It seemed like there were a lot of people who were participating and we got lots of data from that.

Also once [unclear] for getting [unclear] because that's this week, or at the end of this week. So yes, that's all. Thank you Chair.

CH The temperature will be right for Winter Fest. I'm full of them today. It's a new year, a new me. Any other recognition? Vice President.

VPE Thank you Chair. I would like to recognise the Chair for his dynamite [?] commentary [unclear] and the fact that all of it will be recorded and transcribed in all the associated minutes.

CH It will live beyond me. Any other recognition? President?

PRE Thank you Chair. I'd like to recognise all the Councillors who submitted a questions or asked questions in question period. A lively question period is always both entertaining and heartening, so thank you for that.

CH Any other recognition? Vice President?

VPA I hope that's why you didn't [unclear]. Thank you Chair. I would like to recognise, I read the study this morning but I would like to recognise Councillor Stewart and Councillor Newton for helping out with the Text Book CAUS Campaign, as well as the Vice President Student Life and Vice President External, and Vice President Operations. And Councillor Drummond for saying that she was going to but she couldn't make it out there, which is [unclear]. But they all were volunteers, so...

00:28:40

CH Councillors, any other recognition?

So Council, I just want to recognise you for showing up today and I think I'm looking forward to a good 2019 of meetings. We started off the year right, I think, with a short but lively agenda. So thank you for that.

We'll move onto item 11, Adjournment. We have a motion? Councillor Ruiz?

RUI I move to adjourn.

CH Thank you Councillor. This motion only requires one mover and is not debatable. The question is on the adoption of the motion to adjourn. All those in favour? Thank you. Unopposed motion carries, this meeting is adjourned.

00:29:48