

March 18, 2020 Students' Council Meeting – Audio Recording Transcript

Speaker Key:

CH	Chair
SY	Councillor Strayer
DR	Councillor Drummond
EX	Vice President External
CA	Councillor Campbell
SN	Sadiya Nazir
JM	John Mastel
BH	Bailey Harray
SW	Councillor Stewart
AC	Vice President Academic
OP	Vice President Operations
SL	Vice President Student Life
JO	Councillor Johnston
MI	Councillor Mirza
AH	Alan Honey
UM	Unidentified male
YA	Councillor Yanish
TE	Councillor Tesfay
BO	Councillor Bower
DY	Councillor Dykes
FO	Councillor Forbes
HA	Councillor Hassan
NE	Councillor Newton
OU	Councillor Ouellette

00:00:00

CH In there that you would like to be recognised or if you have a question, and then I'll recognise you and give you the floor.

So we'll move on to Item 2, Approvals. 2.1. We have a motion. Can I have someone please introduce that motion? Councillor Strayer?

00:00:26

SY I'd like to approve the minutes for March 18th 2020.

CH I think, Councillor, we'll deal with Motion 2.1 first, if you'd like to read that. We'd like to move to approve the agenda for March 18th 2020. Think you're on mute. Anyone else care to make the motion? Councillor Drummond?

DR I move to approve the agenda for March 18th 2020.

CH Thank you. Can I get a second? Councillor Spencer, thank you. It has moved and seconded to approve the agenda for March 18th 2020. Is there any debate? Questions on the adoption of the motion to approve the agenda for March 18th 2020? I'll just ask that if you disapprove of the motion, that you just identify by saying something. I think that'll be easier.

EX Hi. Sorry. Thank you, Chair. I added my name to the chat, but I'm not sure if it's showing up. I would like...

CH No.

EX To move to amend the agenda to include the Discussion Item... I'm sorry. Rather, I'd like to add the topic of COVID-19 to the in-camera period. Thank you, Chair.

00:02:00

CH Thank you. So we've got a motion to amend to add Item 6.2, COVID-19, to the in-camera period. Can I get a second? Thank you, Vice President Operations. Is there any debate? Questions on the adoption of the motion to amend the agenda to add Item 6.2, COVID-19? Does anyone disapprove of the amendment?

We'll move to the main motion, as amended. Is there any additional debate on the main motion, as amended? The question is on the adoption of the motion to approve the agenda for March 18th 2020, as amended. Anyone disapprove of the motion? Motion carries.

Move on to Motion 2.2 or Item 2.2. Can I get someone to read the motion, please? Councillor Campbell?

CA I move to approve the minutes of February 19th 2020.

CH Thank you. And can I get a second? Councillor Johnston, thank you. Is moved and seconded to approve the minutes of February 19th 2020. Is there any debate? Questions on the adoption of the motion to approve the minutes of February 19th 2020? Anyone disapprove of the motion? Motion carries.

Item 3. We have a presentation. 3.1, Council of Alberta University Students. I'm assuming the Vice President External will be introducing our guests.

EX Yes. Thank you, Chair. I'm very happy to present to you all the Council of Alberta University Students Team, or the Board, rather. So we have Sadiya, who is the VP External at University of Calgary Students' Union, is also the Chair of CAUS. We have the Executive Director of CAUS, John Mastel, as well. And then we also have Bailey,

who is the VP External at University of Lethbridge Students' Union. Also, the Vice Chair of CAUS.

00:04:15

They're going to be doing a presentation for you today surrounding what CAUS is, what we've been working on, and provide you the opportunity to ask some questions surrounding our provincial advocacy efforts. And with that, take it away, CAUS team.

SN Thank you. So yes, as Cole introduced, my name is Sadiya. I am the Chair of CAUS this year, and so I will let Bailey give our introduction here.

CH A presentation for us, I guess?

SN Yes, we do have a presentation. I think it was emailed as well. Maybe if we can get that up on the screen?

AH Yes, we're just trying to get it up.

SN Sure thing.

AH Does everyone see it?

SN Thank you. I think Bailey might just be having a few difficulties, but maybe we can just start and then Bailey can go from there. Yes, so thank you for allowing us to come and present to you tonight. I hope you are all taking care of your mental wellbeing as well as your physical right now. We had hoped to be up in Edmonton for this, but, unfortunately, circumstances have brought us here, so really great to see everyone and be introduced.

00:06:23

So CAUS, the Council for Alberta University Students, which I'm sure most of you have probably heard of over the past year, is our provincial advocacy group. And so there are five schools, five member schools, including MacEwan University's Students' Association, as well as U of A, Mount Royal, University of Calgary, and the University of Lethbridge.

And so, together on CAUS, from each institution, we have the Vice President External and the President, as well as a staff member, if they have one, who are part of our main membership or Board, and that's also where a lot of the decisions happen. So the way our structure works is that our Executive Director, the Chair, and the Vice Chair, form Home Office and work on a lot of the different pieces such as media releases, any plans. We have weekly meetings for Board [?] membership and we, together, set priorities for the year.

And so I don't know if you guys remember, back in the Summer, but your executives went down to Lethbridge, and that was our first Counterparts Conference. And so what we do is we get all of the executives from all of the different five institutions coming together and setting various priorities, sharing different experiences, different projects they're working on. Things like OERs.

Things like, back in the Summer, we talked about our individual campus sexual violence policies and really have that foundation moving forward. And so that's the high-level overview.

And the next slide just shows who's been part of CAUS this year. We have a great team of very strong, very vocal students, and these students have put in a lot of hours over the past several months this year with two budgets and things of that nature, with the new performance funding model coming out. This group of people, along with the staff, have really tremendously tried to get post-secondary out into the public sphere and get media attention around a lot of our different pieces this year.

00:09:03

This year, we also released our Sexual Violence White Paper and that came out and we've had strong traction with that. We've presented it to government, both the Opposition and the Minister of Advanced Education, Demetrios Nicolaidis, and a Minister here for the Status of Women, Multiculturalism, and Culture.

And so, from there, we have had a little bit of uptake with that. They have told us that they're working on a more robust sexual violence policy framework that can be standardised across institutions. And so, right now, given what's been happening, we're not too sure if their timeline has changed and things like that, but we'll continue to ask for information.

The rest of the presentation will go through what our priorities actually are, what we've been advocating to government on for the past several while, and then jump into what we're doing now. And, at the end, we'll take it to what we're doing moving forward. So we can... Yes, so those are the five institutions right there and then our priorities. So I'll hand it off to Bailey, John. So...

00:10:30

JM [Unclear].

SN Yes. Perfect.

JM So, as Sadiya mentioned, we all got together and met in May with all the new executives this past year and, at that time, we set our priorities for the year. At the time, we decided upon mental health funding, sexual violence on campus, affordability of student financial aid, institutional funding, and employment and integrated work learning.

We were successful on the tune [?] of these so far over the year. We did get mental health funding renewed or extended for an additional year. It wasn't exactly what we were asking for, but we do have some funding, so that's at least a partial win.

As Sadiya did mention, we did release our Campus Sexual Violence Paper, and the government has been giving us some favourable signs, at least prior to the plague, that they would probably be implementing a few of those settings.

Government institutional funding, Sadiya also mentioned. Again, we have been focusing on the performance-based funding model and trying to ensure that our institutions aren't drastically cut as we move forward, thanks to this wonderful government. I think I may have just taken Bailey's lines. I'm very sorry if I have, Bailey.

If we can go to the next slide. What we've been focusing on as we move forward because, again, with the plague coming down upon us, some of our asks haven't been... Well, [unclear] didn't do very well by the government, again, just due to the

focus that they currently have on trying to prevent and lessen this epidemic. So we're trying to focus... Again, sorry, can we go to the next slide?

00:12:04

BH Can you hear me?

JM I can now, yes.

BH Oh, what do you know? Figured it out. Sorry everyone.

JM So as we go forward, we're focusing right now with the government on a COVID pandemic response, trying to ensure that the immediate needs of students are met. That would be to ensure that students are able to complete their programmes that they're currently in, that their studies essentially are delayed because all the institutions had to shut down, regardless of whether they were in education or nursing or other placements, other programmes that have practicums or work placements.

Our also [unclear] is to ensure that there's resources for students and residents. Basically, that they're not, if you will, forgotten about by any standard. Also, working on the long-term effects. Basically, know that there will be less jobs moving forward. And we're working with the government... Working on things that we're going to propose to them to try to alleviate those pressures.

00:13:03

As well as what the government announced just earlier today, with the student loan relief, about them making... All of our student loan payments, again, are on a moratorium. We don't have to make our student loan payments or receive any interest. That, again, will affect mostly students that have already graduated as opposed to students who are currently in studies, as your student loans currently receive no interest on it and also don't require any payments.

We are working, moving forward, on adding a question and answer section to our website to try to answer questions that we are receiving to students. Additionally, we're planning, at least, on having a form or something you can fill out to submit your questions or concerns. Again, our website is at caus.net. That's C A U S dot net.

SN Yes. Bailey, do you have anything to add on those two pieces?

BH Not a whole lot. We pushed the student loan aspect on Sunday. I'm assuming they probably followed suit with the federal government, but I'm going to take that as a win for us. Excited to see that happen. Hopefully, over the next while, it can be worked on. I know a lot of students in ed and medicine practicums have been having a lot of uncertainties of ability to complete, and so we're working to figure that out and get that pushed forward so that they aren't affected [unclear].

SN Yes. And so, as Bailey mentioned, on Sunday, we had a call with the ministry to raise questions and then to get a few answers. Of course, the government, at the time, didn't really have many of the answers, and so we compiled a list and sent it to them. In addition to these areas, we also talked about things like, what if a student just doesn't have the Wi-Fi or a laptop or resources at home to adjust to the online delivery of their courses and how are we effectively helping those students who are disproportionately affected by these changes?

00:15:24

And so, if I could maybe now just go into what we will continue to be doing. Of course, COVID is not the only thing that impacts students, and we are continuing with our regular advocacy priorities as well.

So, moving forward, we are looking to switch our Advocacy Week, which is set by the end of March, to be, instead of person meetings, which we were planning on up in Edmonton... Instead of that, what we'll be doing is trying to switch to video calls with MLAs and stakeholders so that we can still keep post-secondary on their minds and really have conversations about how we can be best supporting students during this time of crisis.

But then also looking at resources for mental health and how everything being so intersected with student loans, with how they're accessing all of the various services that they were relying on. We just want to make sure that all MLAs are aware of the current student circumstances.

00:16:42

And so, moving forward also, we just had the budget passed and, of course, we were expecting the cuts to post-secondary and expecting that the performance-based funding model coming out might also result in some cuts. So we're still continuing to, A, get feedback from students to have those personal stories. And we're trying to look now because we had originally planned to have a letter-writing campaign come out probably by the end of this month.

With COVID and things like that, that's why we've switched to having a more focused question and answer section on our website. But, that being said, we are going to be working on pieces for a public interest campaign so that once... Of course, nobody can predict the future, but, as things might settle with COVID, we can just launch back right into our public interest awareness campaign.

And there's still ways to bring post-secondary into the public sphere with everybody being on social media, everyone at home and trying to connect and things like that. We're hoping that we can still reach a broad audience with any social media messaging, paid ads, that sort of thing. And ensuring that post-secondary is not lost from the public sphere because students are the future of Alberta.

And especially with everything going on right now, and we've talked about the outlook on less summer jobs right now. That's a very real reality. And in trying to have more conversation around how students are the future of Alberta and how we need to be supporting students if we want to have our economy grow and flourish. Those are things that we will still be working on as well.

So, with that, I don't know if John and Bailey have anything else to add for our next steps? Cool. So, with that, I don't know how your rules work, so maybe I'll let the Speaker monitor the question part.

00:19:22

CH Yes, so we don't have formal rules around question and answer during presentations. I just ask councillors, if you have a question, ask it and just be [unclear] of others who might also have questions. So I'll just turn the floor open to councillors. You can direct

your question or just direct it [unclear]. No questions? There's got to be questions.

I have a question for John. We've known each other for long, long time. You haven't aged. I'm surprised. How do you keep your face so youthful? Obviously, that wasn't a real question. Councillors, any questions? Well, you got off easy this time.

SN It's fine.

CH Oh, Councillor Stewart, go ahead.

SW Sorry. I just had a question in regards to... I remember last year in the Fall, there was a letter-writing campaign and they did it through an online thing to send in letters. If that's something that would be of interest to do to continue to push for [unclear] and lobbying towards the government as an option?

SN Yes, so we are continuing to collect any feedback from students, whether it's COVID-19-related or not. We're just looking at those windows of opportunity where we can really press things. And so, any feedback that you have, any letter-writing that we do have.

00:21:01

We still have our mental health focused letter-writing campaign up as well because, originally, we were worried about the mental health funding not being renewed, and so we had a submission form-type thing on our website. So it is something that we're open to, to have... Even if we're not actively lobbying at the moment on things like our infrastructure maintenance programmes and things like that at the moment.

Just because they're not top of mind for government doesn't mean that we're not going to continue to reach out to students, gain an understanding of what their experiences are, and communicate that back to the government. And, as I said, with developing a public interest campaign right now, what we'll be doing is boxing it up and waiting for the perfect moment once everything settles down to push that out. And, of course, if you have specific questions, whatever they may be, feel free to reach out to us at any time and we're always happy to listen.

CH Good. Councillors, any other questions? No?

AC I have one.

CH Go ahead, Vice President.

AC Maybe I misheard you, but I think during, Sadiya, your portion of the presentation, you mentioned something about changes to student loan regulations, was it? I was just curious if you could restate that or elaborate on it because I felt like I missed some details.

00:22:52

SN Yes. So just a couple hours ago... I'm guessing that's what you were talking about? Yes. So a couple of hours ago, the government announced that, following suit from what the federal government announced on the... I can't say the word.

BH Moratorium.

SN Thank you. That there is going to be, for students who are currently paying their loans

or graduated students who are paying their loans, currently, there is no added interest and they don't have to pay those right now. And so that was something that we had consistently pushed on as all of this was ensuing, so that's one instance where we've had some uptake on one of our asks.

And, of course, it doesn't stop there. We're still concerned about students right now and how they're making progress on their degrees and if they'll be able to afford school once September comes. Then maybe they haven't had a Summer job. So those are very real realities and we'll just continue to talk about student financial aid in all of the various aspects that that pertains to.

BH Another thing is that this refers only to people who have graduated and are repaying.

00:24:26

There's also some worry, so people who finish in April of this year, like I am, we'll have to start paying back in November, that in [?] November, we don't know what the economy is going to be like, what employment's going to be like. That's something that I pushed on Sunday and that I'm hoping to push, is to look forward to those who are graduating now so that, in six months, they're not just getting back on their feet and have these student loan payments. So that's something that, well, we're trying to push forward [unclear] on top of what we already have.

CH Great. Other questions? So we'll let our three guests go. Thank you for joining us. You can stay if you like. I'm not kicking you out. But I'm sure you're eager to go wash your hands, so take care. Thank you for the presentation.

SN Thank you so much for...

BH Thanks everyone.

SN Having us. Yes, if you have questions, want to reach out to us, feel free to do so, and you can see everything that we're working on on caus.net as well.

CH Great. Thank you.

SN Thanks guys. Bye.

CH We'll move on to Item 4, For Information. 4.1, Reports. 4.1.1. Vice President Academic, any oral supplements?

AC No, I don't have any oral supplements this time around.

CH Thank you. 4.1.2. Vice President External, any oral supplements?

00:26:02

EX Yes. Thank you, Chair. From the 12th, I called an emergency meeting with MacEwan admin regarding COVID-19, to which the VPSL, the VP Academic, and myself attended.

I then also had a call with the Presidents of the students' association and the student unions at U of A, U of L, U of C, and Mount Royal, to which we discussed what the SASU perspective on this is.

Then I attended the team building event that was put on by LRC. It was awesome. Really thankful for everyone who came out.

And then, Sunday evening, I had a phone call with the Minister. I think Sadiya alluded to that earlier. Sadiya or Bailey. I think it's actually Bailey who alluded to it. Where we asked some questions surrounding COVID-19. It was a late-night phone call, but good to know.

Then had a directors meeting with our EC to update on what SAMU's doing with COVID-19. As you can tell, there's a trend here.

Then I had a CAUS meeting with some of the folks you just saw, where we talked about a plethora of different things.

Then I had my first ever Zoom call advo meeting with Councillor Nickel from City Council, so that was good. That was part of the Edmonton Student Alliance.

00:27:32

And then I had the Policy Committee, where I'm a part of for the Council of Alberta University Students, CAUS, and I'm revamping the mental health policy.

And then we had our EC meeting today. And that brings us to this point. Thank you.

CH Thank you. 4.1.3. Vice President Operations and Finance, any oral supplements?

OP Yes. Thank you, Chair. Hopefully, everyone can hear me. Upon my return after my vacation last week... I was out in the middle of nowhere, but I still had access to the news. But I got caught up on Monday with all emails to get updated on what I had missed and also attended the meetings with fellow EC and the directors about addressing COVID-19. MacEwan and SAMU. How that'll affect all of us.

And then yesterday, had our Budget and Finance Committee commence with presentations from each department for the budget. Part two was today. And then also, we had our EC meeting this morning, as VP External explained. And that's everything. Thank you, Chair.

CH Thank you. 4.1.4. Vice President Student Life, any oral supplements?

SL As presented. Thank you, Chair.

CH Thank you. 4.1.5. The Leadership and Review Committee Report is in your package, for your information. 4.2, Executive Committee minutes of February 12th, 19th, 26th, and March 4th 2020 are in your package, for your information.

Item 5, Question Period. 5.1. No written questions this time around. This is where I'd like to use the chat, councillors, and only because there are some councillors that I can't see on video and I want to give them equal opportunity to ask questions. So I think what you need to do is, in the To field in the chat, you need to click Everyone. And I just ask that you type in a question or... Yes, let's just say that, I have a question. And then I will recognise you in the order that I see them.

00:29:40

So 5.2, Oral Question Period. We'll open the floor to questions now. Councillor Campbell, go ahead.

CA Thank you. It's a question to the VP Academic. I just was wondering if there's been any update on 24-hour study space in this building?

CH Go ahead, Vice President.

AC Thank you, Chair. From what I have heard, that is no longer happening. I think, because of the COVID-19 response, it won't be possible. MacEwan's reducing their hours. I think we're looking at closing entirely, and MacEwan's reducing its hours to 7 AM to 6 PM on weekdays, 8 AM to 4 PM on weekends. It's not going to be possible this year, unfortunately.

00:30:36

The good news is students won't be on campus anyways, so I imagine they won't have much of difficulty studying at home, which is good. But they won't have access to the library, which is too bad, but there's a lot of things that aren't great that are happening from the virus and this is one of them. So yes, that's about all I know right now.

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

CA Yes, thank you. To clarify, have we thought of all in MacEwan [?] in terms of looking ahead to the next Fall? Has there been any talk about just ploughing ahead for that at that point?

CH Thank you, Councillor. Vice President?

AC Yes, there has a little bit. So we've been working with our Director of Building Operations on this, Darryl Kostash, and it's been a discussion about beta testing it this year and seeing how it goes. So certainly, we were going to test it out this year, see what the demand was like and see how manageable it was and how costly it was and then see if we were going to do it again next year.

So since we can't do it this year, I imagine we might do that in the Fall because we wanted to have at least a test run to see what it was like. So yes, there is a potential to test it out in the Fall term. And it also depends on how long the library stays closed for because I think that if the library is... Because they're doing some renovations. If they stayed close until the Fall term, we would definitely be happy to do a 24-hour study space while they're closed.

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

CA Nothing further.

00:32:13

CH Thank you. Vice President External, I didn't understand the shorthand, so I apologise for not recognising you first. So go ahead, Vice President.

EX Thank you, Chair. My question is to Councillor Johnston. I just wondering if they could speak a bit more to the report that they submitted through LRC. Just hoping to garner some context for folks. Thank you.

CH Thank you, Vice President. Councillor Johnston?

JO Thank you, Chair. Yes, so what we found reading through the reviews [?] is that they could be a little bit more specific and a little bit more relevant to things that could help us to improve the efficiency of the meetings.

So, to give an example of a comment or a feedback that doesn't really help, that would

be something like, I want more French fries at meetings. Whereas what does help us out is, this process was or wasn't being followed effectively [unclear], so it could be improved.

CA Point of personal privilege [?].

JO If that helps...

CH Yes, I'm sorry, Councillor...

00:33:27

JO [Overtalking] at all.

CH Councillor Johnston, I don't know what we can do here but you're really choppy.

JO Yes, thanks for that. Does that help at all or...?

CH Can you maybe cut the video and see if that works?

JO Yes, my internet is very slow where I am. It's the best it can do. How...

CH That...

JO Is it now?

CH Working better. Go ahead.

JO A little bit better? Yes. My internet is extremely slow so I [unclear].

What we're looking for with the reviews is really comments that help us improve the overall efficiency of the meetings, if we can, things that directly comment on how we're following policy during the meetings. So an example of a comment that doesn't really help us out, for example, would be like, I want French fries at the meeting. It's not within the scope of the Leadership and Review Committee. Things like that. We're asking that the reviews be kept within the scope of the Committee's goals.

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

EX No. Thank you, Chair.

00:34:41

CH Thank you. Councillor Strayer?

SY Yes, my question is for the Vice President Academic. I'm curious if there's any updates about the Ombuds woman. Thank you, Chair.

CH Thank you, Councillor. Vice President?

AC Yes, there are some, although I think this crisis has put a wrench in things. So I met the Provost a month ago to talk about this because I think it's really important that students have someone in that position to do it. I think SAMU would be willing to take on some kind of salary cost to make sure that it happens, but we'd much rather the university share. Whatever position it ends up taking on that role, we'd rather the university pay for part of it.

So, from what I've heard, some of central admin doesn't mind the idea of splitting the cost with us so long as that cost is lower, and they're thinking of still rolling it into

another position [unclear]. But the last time I talked to the Provost was on Thursday and I brought it up at the end of our meeting. Our meeting was mostly consumed with budget topics.

Sorry, you can hear me okay, right? I've got a pop up that said my internet connection is bad, but it's really not, so I'm sure you can still hear me.

00:36:05

CH Yes, [unclear].

AC Good, good, good. So all I was going to say is that our meeting was consumed with budget topics, so we only touched on it for five or ten minutes. But from what I can tell, he has brought our suggestion to MacEwan's Executive Council and it sounds like they are amenable to the idea of splitting a cost with us.

We're going to have to wait for a lot of this to blow over because the Provost is working so hard with the various faculties on moving to the... I hesitate to call it online delivery, but the stop-gap online delivery that we're going to be moving to. So it's going to be a work in progress, but it sounds like the negotiations are going pretty well because SAMU may not end up having to take on the whole cost, which is good news.

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

SY Yes. Thank you, Chair. Two questions. To my understand, we are already splitting the cost 50-50, correct me if I'm wrong. And because of this whole COVID-19 thing, if I'm understanding what you are saying, was there potential that her contract was going to continue past April? Thank you.

CH Thank you, Councillor. Vice President?

AC Yes, good question. Maybe I was a bit obscure with my answer. So the first part about splitting the cost. So when they terminated the position, and this is somewhat difficult because we didn't come to this conclusion in the [unclear], but as they're taking on the role entirely, you [unclear] higher numbers to do that.

00:37:58

CH Sorry, Vice President, you're choppy. Maybe you can cut your video as well and that'll allow us to hear you a little bit better. Just have audio [overtalking].

AC [Overtalking]. Can you hear me okay now?

CH That's better.

AC Cool. That's a shame. God, this is so difficult. So much harder than in person.

So basically, when we were considering the elimination of the role, when MacEwan told us they'd eliminated the role, one thing that SAMU thought of was taking on the role ourselves. And in negotiations with MacEwan, it looks like we don't have to do this anymore. So what I meant to say is that it looks like we can probably continue to split some kind of student support role that is like a Ombuds role that will continue to exist as a MacEwan employee, which is good because office space and salary would be a big drain on us.

The second part of your question was the COVID-19 thing. So what I was trying to say

there is that it's really hard for me to get ad hoc meetings with central admin right now because of the COVID-19 crisis. So it won't affect the termination of employment. It looks like her layoff is still at the same time. But the year is wrapping up. This would be the time when I'd be meeting with them more regularly on this and now, it looks like we can't.

00:39:25

So we talked about it briefly on Thursday, but then it didn't go anywhere after that because Friday morning is when we got ambushed with the petition and a couple 100 emails from students and all that kind of stuff. Good question, though.

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

SY No, that's everything. Thank you, Chair.

CH Thank you. Councillor Mirza? Councillor Mirza?

MI Sorry, I was trying to fix my mic. Can you hear me?

CH Yes.

MI So my question is for VP Academic. Enrolment started earlier this week and I had quite a few students actually message me about the difficulty they were having with the system and there was just a lot of ambiguity about it. So I was wondering if there was a place where students can give their feedback...

CH Thank you, Councillor.

MI For the rollout of the new programme?

AC Sorry?

CH Thank you, Councillor. Vice President?

AC Yes, to clarify, is this about the new layout of myStudentSystem?

00:40:38

CH Councillor Mirza?

MI Yes.

CH Go ahead, Vice President.

AC Thank you, Chair. Yes, so what I heard... So this was rolled out on a committee that I sit on called Student Systems Joint Operating Committee, SSJOC for short. So VP Operations and I sit on that. And so, basically, what Michelle, and she's one of the Associate Registrar Portfolios, and then the Registrar himself told us that they had a communication plan for students, so they had a way to tell them.

I think it was on your portal, on the main screen of the portal. There was supposed to be a banner explaining all of this and urging students to fill up their card first before enrolling because there's actually more steps now between selecting your classes and confirming them.

But, as far as what you said, complaints, getting student feedback on it, I think it'd be fine if they contacted me because I can compile those and talk to SSJOC about them.

They could also contact the VP Operations because we both sit on SSJOC. And ultimately, if there's enough concerns about it, we can talk to SSJOC about fixing the things that are causing concerns because we do have two student voices at that committee and SSJOC is a committee where they actually do listen to us quite a bit.

00:42:02

So yes, it's unfortunate that maybe SSJOC didn't do enough to get that word out there. They were talking about that banner on the portal to explain this stuff, but if they have complaints, we have seats on that committee. VP Operations and I can bring that to them for sure.

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

MI No, that's everything. Thanks.

CH Thank you. Councillor Stewart?

SW Hello. Thank you, Chair. Do you think I should turn off my video or just see how it goes?

CH Seems to be working fine.

SW Cool. So my first question is for the Vice President Academic. It's actually in relation to what Councillor Mirza brought up as well. I kept hearing from students that they were having troubles getting into classes in the Winter or Fall term that they needed to have prereqs for but they already had the prereqs or were enrolled in them for the Spring or Fall. So students were having issues getting into other classes that, although they hadn't completed the prerequisites for, but they had them in their schedule.

I was wondering if that was intentional at all because then people were trying to scramble and had to get permission numbers and it was causing a lot of issues for students getting into those classes. Yes, I'm just wondering if that was an intentional change or what happened there for students? Thank you.

00:43:40

CH Thank you, Councillor. Vice President?

AC Yes, that's a really good question because, actually, I had emails about that in my inbox and it's insane because if you have the prereq in your Fall, you should be able to take it in Winter. That's the way it's always worked. So I think, from what I understand, that's probably a glitch with the new interface, the new user interface. That whole change of myStudentSystem, they're calling it fluid, so we can collectively look at... Both these questions are about that fluid change and the problems it's created.

That one sounds like it's caused by fluid because when we first unveiled fluid and they did some testing, there were glitches similar to that and they had thought that they'd gotten rid of them but maybe it sounds like they haven't. So I know the Registrar has something to do with that. I know that the person who manages PeopleSoft might be able to look into that, and that would be the same thing to bring to SSJOC.

00:44:35

I have heard about this. I don't know nearly enough about the software to actually give reasons of why or how it failed, but that sounds like a glitch caused by moving everything over. So I think both those should be brought up at SSJOC and that will be

give me and the VP Operations something to request that they look into when we sit on that committee next. By the looks of things, by the time we call into that committee next.

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

SW Yes, Chair. Thank you. I actually have a question to our Vice President Student Life regarding a situation I recently came across. Just a couple days ago, I found out that we are hiring a new Student Groups Manager, which I know this can be very operational or HR-related, as I've been told, but when I enquired about the whole situation to Councillor Dykes, involved in the student group life, they said that this individual had resigned just after Reading Break for quite a while ago already and then this was forwarded to some people in student groups.

But as a member of student groups and talking to some others, I found out that they did not receive information around this or at least some people didn't. And this is, in my perspective, such a huge front-facing student role, so the Student Group Manager meets with students all the time and is really well-known as well.

And a student reached out to me. They were like, oh, do you know about the situation regarding the previous manager? And I was taken aback because I didn't really know what was happening. And then they're like, oh, but I had saw that one post so I assumed something had happened or at least maybe they were resigning or something. And so I...

So they were asking for the individual, if they were gone yet because they wanted to say bye and they had said that other students wanted to reach out to them as well, the previous person in that position. So obviously, very front-facing role. Students are asking and enquiring about what has happened, what's happening.

00:46:58

And so I understand it was a busy time, but I noticed it wasn't in anyone's reports, especially for the Student Life position, having it to be about student groups. And even just a mention that this was a role that was going to be needing to be filled in that...

CH Councillor Stewart, is there a question in here?

SW Yes, I have three, first being why did student groups not hear about this in a formal address? Second being why didn't Student Council hear about this or be updated about it? And the third being if there's any details you can disclose about the situation. Thank you.

CH Thank you, Councillor. Vice President?

SL Thank you, Chair. I will say that this is extremely operational and is very out of scope for Council, hence it not being mentioned in the reports. And it is really just, as with any other role, despite it being a really forward-facing, student-facing role, that we don't report on matters such as this just because it is out of scope.

00:48:09

And as far as student groups not having been made aware, I can't speak to what happened on the operational side as far as that, but the responsibilities have been divvied up between the other employees of the Student Groups department, and they

are doing very well in the interim.

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

SW Yes, just... What was I going to say? Sorry. Yes, if we could look into student groups learning about what had happened, just because it is such an integral role to them, that would be really great. I wonder if that would be something our Vice President Student Life would be interested in, considering the situation. And in the past, we have updated Council on resignations or farewells by different employees. So yes, that's all. Thank you.

CH Thank you, Councillor Stewart. Other questions? I don't see anything in the chat. Last call for questions.

We will move on to Item 6, In-camera Period. I'll entertain a motion to move in-camera. Vice President Operations?

OP Thank you, Chair. I move to go in-camera period.

CH Thank you. And a second? Councillor Campbell. It has been moved and seconded to move in-camera. Is there any debate? Questions on the adoption of the motion to move in-camera? Is there anyone in opposition of the motion? That motion carries.

Just an operational matter. Alan, because one of the items involves me, I'm going to leave the call and I would appreciate it if you just sent me an email to let me know that I can re-join the call. All good?

00:50:19

AH All good. Actually, I can just put you in the waiting room, if you like?

CH Put me in the waiting room.

UM Point of Parliamentary Inquiry [?].

CH Sure.

UM Who becomes the Chair at this point?

CH I think in-camera doesn't necessarily need to have a Chair, but if you must, then it would be whoever is the longest serving member of council, which I'm not sure. Alan would have the answer to that.

AH That would be Councillor Drummond.

CH There you go. Conduct yourselves accordingly. I'll be in the waiting room.

DR Sorry, my audio was muted. I move to move out of camera.

CH Thank you. And to second? Vice President Operations and Finance. It's so hard looking at 15 screens at once. My old eyes can't handle it. It has been moved and seconded to move out of camera. Is there any debate? Questions on the adoption of the motion to move out of camera? Is there anyone opposed? Motion carries.

Item 7, Motions and Business Orders of the Day. Item 7.1, Chair of Students' Council appointment. Vice President Student Life, you want to read the motion?

SL Yes, sorry about that, Chair. I move to appoint Tim Jobs as the Chair of Students'

Council for a term of May 1st 2020 to April 30th 2021.

CH Thank you. And do we have a second? Councillor Strayer. Councillors, before we get into debate, I just have to declare a conflict of interest. I think I can still adequately chair this section of the meeting, but unless there is strong opposition by any one of you, I can step away.

01:10:33

It has been moved and seconded to appoint Tim Jobs as Chair of Students' Council for a term of May 1st 2020 to April 30th 2021. Is there any debate? The questions is on the adoption of the motion to appoint Tim Jobs as Chair of Students Council for a term of May 1st 2020 to April 30th 2021. Is there anyone opposed? Motion carries.

Item 8, Consultation. Nothing there today.

Item 9, Evaluation. You have the link to the form in your package. Alan, can you just let me know when everyone is done [silence]?

TE Sorry guys, it's not opening up for me for some reason. Give me one sec [silence].

CH Yes, Councillor Tesfay, you're having an issue with the form?

TE Yes, it's giving me this. I don't know what to do. Here, I'll try doing it with my [unclear]. Oh, here. Let me try my data. The Wi-Fi is not working. Yes, it's literally not opening it for me.

CH Alan, is there another solution for Councillor Tesfay? Can we email him the form and he can fill it out later? Oh, you just texted me. He will send you a form afterwards, Councillor Tesfay.

TE Thank you. Thank you very much.

CH Was there anyone else that we're waiting on? No? I can never tell if you guys are TikToking or still filling up the form, so thank you for completing that activity.

01:18:26

Item 10, Recognition. So if you'd like to offer recognition, just type Me into the chat and I will recognise you. I'm not seeing... Are... Oh, there we go. Councillor Stewart?

SW Thank you, Chair. I would just like to recognise everyone for using this new technology of Zoom and making yourselves available during this time and making it through this difficult time. Things are weird and wild out there right now.

I also would like to recognise all of the work and the executives and, or councillors as well, who participated in Pride Week. It seemed like it was a really great success. Ten days [?] of events. It was really awesome, so I just wanted to give kudos to that.

And for all the work the executives are putting in right now with the COVID-19 situation. I can't imagine and it's unfortunate that it's going to be the end of you guys' terms, but you guys have been killing it. So yes, that's all. Thank you.

CH Thank you, Councillor Stewart. Anyone else? I don't see anyone else wanting to write... Oh, there we go. Vice President Operations and Finance?

01:19:58

OP Thank you, chair. Just want to give recognition to yourself for wanting to re-join us. Thank you ever so much.

Recognition, again, to my fellow ECs while I was away and everything that they handled along the way. Amazing job, team.

And just thank you to everyone for being so accessible, what with the barriers we are dealing with and this whole social distancing ourselves from each other, as they are coining it, which will be the meme for 2020. So just thank you to you all and, yes, just keep safe and healthy, please.

CH Thank you, Vice President. Vice President External?

EX Yes, thank you. I'd like to echo what the VP Operations and Finance said. Thank you to everyone.

But amongst all this garbage and trash, we had an election. So I just want to give huge recognition and congratulations to all the folks who were successful in their bid for their positions and also a huge shout out to everyone who ran in general. You all led some incredible campaigns. Me and the entirety of Hogwarts is so proud of you.

CH Thank you, Vice President. Anyone else? I'll give you one last minute.

Councillors, I just want to recognise you for reappointing me for another year. I do truly enjoy this activity and I think I add a lot of value, so I do appreciate that.

So we'll move on to Item 11, Adjournment. Can I get a motion? Vice President External, you move to adjourn. Do we have a second? Vice President Student Life. This is a movement effectively to adjourn. This requires only one mover and is not debatable. Is anyone opposed to adjourning? This meeting is adjourned. Wash your hands. Don't touch your face. Goodnight.

[General discussion 01:22:10 - 01:25:09]