



## STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

**Minutes for the Students' Council Meeting of the  
Students' Association of MacEwan University  
January 18, 2023 at 6:00pm in Council Chamber**

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### **Voting Members:**

Gabriel Ambutong, Councillor  
Abby Beka, Councillor  
Jakob Cardinal, Councillor  
Freja Cartujano, Councillor  
Jayden Depeel, Councillor  
Myles Dykes, President  
Cierra Jacobs, Councillor  
Joseph A. La Torre, Councillor  
Mary-Excel Okey-Nwaka, Councillor  
Nhi Phan, Councillor  
Rayyah Sempala, Councillor  
Justine Tan, Councillor  
Alem Tesfay, Councillor  
Elaine Tran, Vice President Student Life

Stephan Vasquez, Vice President Academic  
Larissa Williams, Vice President Operations  
and Finance  
Matt Yanish, Vice President External  
Sonia Yusuf, Councillor  
Layal Zidan, Councillor

*SAMU Officials and Council Support:*  
Timothy Jobs, Chair  
Alan Honey, Governance Advisor  
Grace Tsang, Admin Support

### **Absent:**

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Meeting called to order at 6:00pm.

<Intros>

### **1. Treaty 6 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 Amiskwaciy 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.

### **2. Approvals**

#### **2.1 MOTION**

***TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR JANUARY 18, 2023***

**PHAN/TESFAY**

**CARRIED**

#### **2.2 MOTION**

***TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 21, 2022***

**BEKA/TAN**

**CARRIED**

### **3. Presentations**

#### **3.1. Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS)**

### **4. For Information**

#### **4.1. Reports**

##### **4.1.1. President**

**As presented**

##### **4.1.2. Vice President Academic**

**As presented**

##### **4.1.3. Vice President External**

**As presented**

##### **4.1.4. Vice President Operations & Finance**

**As presented**

##### **4.1.5. Vice President Student Life**

Reminder re. feedback form responses at end of meeting. Reminder re poll sent to everyone.

##### **4.1.6. Appointment Advisory Committee**

##### **4.1.7. Audit Committee**

##### **4.1.8. Leadership and Review Committee**

##### **4.1.9. Governance Remuneration Advisory Committee**

##### **4.1.10. Budget and Finance Committee**

##### **4.1.11. Bylaws and Policy Committee**

##### **4.1.12. Executive Committee**

##### **4.1.13.**

#### **4.2. Executive Committee Minutes**

Minutes of December 14, 2022 and January 4, 2023 provided.

### **5. Question Period**

#### **5.1. Written Questions**

Phan - To President: (I love the photo included as always!) **Tuition Increased by 5.5%**

Pres - When consulting with SAMU on tuition and fees, administration is primarily looking at the revenue that the institution generates. The university's primary sources of funding are the AB government, tuition and fees, and ancillary services (bookstore, food services, etc.). In the short-term, the university will likely not get an increase to the government grant and ancillary services will likely not have growth with consumers' reigning in spending. In response, the university has a couple of options if they want to balance their budget in the midst of inflation; reduce expenses in the operating budget, utilize the current year's predicted surplus to support operations next year, or increase tuition and fees.

The university chose the easiest lever to utilize and not shake the status quo. To cut expenses would mean not moving forward on Teaching Greatness and to allocate from the surplus means those funds can't be used to capital projects like buildings or purchasing land. When SAMU was in consultation with administration, they did not directly point to programs or services that would face financial constraints if tuition was not increased. For this year and next year, services are expected to remain at the same level. The SAMU Executive is hoping to partake in more discussions with administration on the allocation of funds and how they can best be utilized to support students.

Phan - What services the administration claimed to reduce if the tuition increase was not approved? At the moment, will services remain the same/added compared to now that tuition is increased?

Phan - I found that not communicating to students officially about the extra 5.5% increase on top of 7% increase annually is outrageous, what are their motives/reasons for this?

Pres - Unfortunately I can't speak to the motives of the university for their reason to not communicate the tuition increases, though like previously mentioned I think it provides room for opportunity as SAMU if we communicate it in the right way. For more on this, please see my answer to Councillor Tesfay.

Phan - Is SAMU going to increase the membership fees to adjust to inflation?

Pres - The SAMU membership fees are automatically adjusted to CPI meaning that our fees will increase by 6.6% this next fiscal year. This automatic adjustment is built in to our Finance Policy. There has been discussion about putting a cap on the maximum allowable increase, given that these membership fee increases are directly paid by students. Where we struggle with this is balancing it with the needs that we're seeing student face, such as with food insecurity and general affordability. Our budget lines go to directly supporting our membership, and with inflation the expenses of these budget lines have seen exponential increases in some departments.

Phan - To VPA: **UDL Project** (hooray)

- Congrats on the process! What departments or faculties would this project start with? How will the integration process look like (added features on Meskanes, mystudentsportal, separate app, etc)?

Vpa - Thank you for the kind words. At the moment, we are not working with specific departments or faculties. However, MacEwan's newly launched UDL Committee will focus on developing networks and projects with instructors and working with the Center for Teaching and Learning to develop UDL in the classroom.

UDL is an important component to aiding students to have a successful experience at MacEwan. There are multiple methods to integrate UDL into the classroom, but some of the most prominent are about increasing the ways you engage with course material. This can take the form of different assignment options via presentation, audio recording, or written statement. Flexible working spaces are another UDL concept we'd like to see more of, especially with the uptake in hybrid courses and the increasing ease at recording and delivering video lectures online. I'm hoping that this symposium can continue to generate motion in the faculty and perpetuate it further.

Tesfay - This question is directed to the President. In the final part of your report, you mentioned that there is an opportunity for SAMU to be the one to communicate to students about the increase in tuition. Although I see the benefit of getting the message to students, I also see the potential risk of students associating the tuition increase with SAMU. Is there an option to advocate for MacEwan to notify students instead of having SAMU be the only entity to inform the students of the tuition increases?

Pres - Thank you for your question! This risk in communicating the decision to students is one that we have taken into account, and I feel as though we can mitigate it by clear and concise communication. Recently, the Student Affordability Response Group was created to assess how we can respond and address the compounding issues of affordability on behalf of students. This group, composed of executives and staff support, decided that the first action must be communicating the decision of increased tuition towards students so that they would have the most accurate information when helping inform our group of how we should respond via the survey we are in the middle of producing. One of the reasons I find it necessary to inform students is to challenge the narrative that some students possess; that tuition increases, while bothersome, are necessary because of the cuts our university has faced in past year's. I want to be clear--MacEwan's financial position as a university is one of the best in the province given our nimbleness and low deferred maintenance.

We as SAMU would still have the option to advocate to the university for them to be the ones to communicate the decision. This feedback is something I will provide for EC and SARG as we have discussions regarding communications.

## **5.2. Oral Questions**

Topics include: Winter NSO tabling; YEG Nighttime strategies; proposed bylaws; tuition and fees; finances at MacEwan U; Indigenous Learners Circle & associated communications; conveying information re. tuition increases to students;

\*Sempala leaves at 7:10pm.

## **6. In Camera Period**

## **7. Motions & Business Orders of the Day**

## **8. Consultation**

## **9. Evaluation**

## **10. Recognition**

## **11. Adjournment**

***MOTION TO ADJOURN***

***ZIDAN***

***CARRIED***

Next Meeting Date: February 15, 2023

Meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.