



## STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

**Minutes for the Students' Council Meeting of the  
Students' Association of MacEwan University  
September 20, 2023 at 6:00pm in Council Chamber**

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### **Voting Members:**

Gabriel Ambutong, President  
Abby Beka, Councillor  
Jakob Cardinal, Vice President External  
Freja Cartujano, Councillor  
Jayden Depeel, Councillor  
Cierra Jacobs, Vice President Student Life  
Joseph A. La Torre, Vice President Governance  
and Finance  
Nhi Phan, Councillor  
Nathan Poon, Councillor  
Sasha Ryzhova, Councillor  
Rayyah Sempala, Councillor  
Joehn Torres, Councillor  
Chioma Uzor, Councillor

Stephan Vasquez, Vice President Academic  
Sonia Yusuf, Councillor  
Layal Zidan, Councillor  
vacant, Councillor  
vacant, Councillor  
vacant, Councillor

### *SAMU Officials and Council Support:*

Timothy Jobs, Chair  
Darryl Kostash, General Manager  
Alan Honey, Governance Advisor

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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 SEPTEMBER 20, 2023***

***ZIDAN/VPSL***

***CARRIED***

#### **2.2 MOTION**

***TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 16, 2023***

***ZIDAN/TORRES***

***CARRIED***

\*Sempala arrives @ 6:04pm.

### **3. Presentations**

#### **3.1. 2022-2023 SAMU Audit – MNP (Patrick Moore)**

### **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**

AFN update.

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

As presented.

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

Ending Sexual violence Week of Action update. Oct 24 – bystander intervention workshop.

##### **4.1.6. 2022-2023 Audited Financials**

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

Minutes of August 2, 9, 16, and 30, 2023 provided.

### **5. Question Period**

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

Zidan - President: What was the outcomes of attending CAUS Counterparts Conference?

Pres - Keeping it high-level, the most relevant outcome from CAUS Counterparts Conference was determining our policy recommendations. For any Councillor interested in learning about the specifics of each policy recommendation, please reach out and I can send you additional information.

Zidan - From the Advanced Education Student Leaders' Orientation, Could you please give us an idea about the programs and presentations that were discussed in the orientation?

Pres - The topics presented on included the Alberta Transfer System, Minister's Advisory Council on Higher Education and Skills (MACHES), Alberta Tuition Framework, Alberta Student Aid, Gender Based Violence Prevention, and Student Supports Coordination, International Education, Work Integrated Learning, and Mirco-Credentials. I try to keep my response to questions from Council high-level, but I am happy to follow-up with additional information.

Zidan - From MacEwan University Board Retreat: Did any noteworthy topic or update catch your attention during the retreat?

Pres - Notable topics that caught my attention:

1. Alex Usher, President of Higher Education Strategy, mentioned that the biggest challenge for Student Unions/Associations is that the average institutional memory is 24 months.
2. Myrna Bittner (Founder and CEO), Katelyn Petersen (Chief Operations Officer), and Niloofar Nanafi (Project lead) from RunWithIt Synthetics, mentioned that students, on average, pay 25% more rent compared to the overall Canadian renters.

I would be happy to share more of my thoughts and opinions on these topics. If you're interested, please send me an email and we can set up a time to chat.

Zidan – VPE: I was really excited and proud of the initiative of Beaver Hills Gathering. I would love to hear the updates of Beaver Hills Gathering, and if it achieved the goals and visions that was set earlier.

Vpe - I am happy to hear some excitement for the Beaver Hills Gathering. Unfortunately, due to lack of engagement the event has been postponed because of a lack of students & faculty on campus during the summer months.

Zidan - VPSL: It might be early to ask this question, but what strategy and vision do you have in order to achieve SAMU's presence in Ponoka Campus.

Vpsl - The Executive Committee visited last year (November 2022) and there have been previous Executive Committee visits. This year I am hoping to engage the students more to give us specific feedback on gaps that may be seen from both SAMU and MacEwan on the Ponoka Campus. There has been talk of potentially having this visit live in the budget and there has been brainstorming of how we can show up to advocate for these students or be able to offer tailored support. We are currently working toward debriefing the visit with EC and we will have a bigger update once we are able to receive feedback and involve SAMU's operations, etc.

Zidan - VPA: I think spreading OER to both students and instructors is outstanding. From volunteering as panelists on new faculty orientation, I noticed how much the new faculty wants to help the students, my question is what information was delivered to them and what was some of their concerns or questions?

Vpa – Hi there Councillor Zidan. Thank you for the kind words about my work and events on OERs. The information delivered to the new faculty was similar to what was delivered to the students (which included links on OER data, links to resources, and library contacts) with the added benefit of being partially distributed by several partner librarians that have had given a large amount of time and energy to assisting us with promoting OERs. By being directly distributed by librarians we were able to directly connect those new faculty with those individuals who work closely on promoting OERs. When I distributed some of the QR-linked handbills some of the new faculty expressed satisfaction that they were being supplied with resources. Some of their questions included information on MacEwan's UDL committee (which somewhat covers OERs) contact information, and the location of other events.

Zidan - Executives: Amazing, tremendous, and remarkable work on SAMU week and fall fest!! I would love to hear your reflection on these events and what feedback have you received so far?

Vpgf - Meet SAMU was a great opportunity for not only EC to engage with the student body but also for SAMU to promote all the things we can do for students. The overall feedback we've heard is that students received a full showcase of what SAMU can do for them. That's to say, the information we gave was well received, and students know further what SAMU can do for them.

For Fall Fest, it was a huge success with over 3000 students attending the event. Specifically, a lot of students commended SAMU on the artists that performed at Fall Fest because we got Armani White, Emeline, and BBNO\$. Also, Fall Fest was a great opportunity for EC to get some face time with students and engage with them and let them know that Fall Fest is a SAMU event.

Sempala - For the President: On the Meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education -

Can you expand more on what your meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education entailed?

Do you see any benefit and or potential collaboration for MacEwan students through this meeting?

Pres - 1. The session with the Minister included discussion on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Alberta Post-Secondary Education. This was in response to the recently released survey which was conducted across the 26 publicly funded Alberta post-secondary institutions. If you are interested in looking at the survey, please reach out. I would be happy to follow-up with some links to relevant information.

2. This meeting certainly benefits MacEwan students. Meeting with government officials ensures that student issues are always on their radar. In terms of future collaboration, the Minister's office mentioned that they intend to hold future gatherings similar to the Student Leaders' Orientation. SAMU was represented at Calgary during the Student Leaders' Orientation. I see no reason why SAMU would not be in attendance at future events held by the Minister's office.

Sempala - On the Retreat: Could you expand more on what was recommended and or discussed on the future of PSI's?

Pres - There was no direct recommendation. The following are some of the topics discussed by Alex Usher (President of Higher Education Strategy):

1. Post-secondary institutions (PSIs) should look at setting a standard for micro-credentials.
2. PSIs would benefit from being more collaborative with each other.
3. The biggest challenge for Student Unions/Associations is that the average institutional memory is 24 months.

Sempala - For the Vice-President Governance and Finance: On Tuition - What recommendations did SAMU make to MacEwan?

Vpgf - In the meeting, SAMU did not make any recommendations - instead we stated our guiding principles, which are:

- SAMU is the official voice for students.
- We will do what's in the best interest of students.
- We do not support paying for buildings that students will not use.
- We do not support any tuition increases.

However, in the next meetings with MacEwan, we will be finalizing our position on Tuition/MNIFs to MacEwan.

Sempala - For the Vice-President Student Life: On Ending Sexual Violence Week Planning (ESVW) - Thank you for championing this great initiative, how does SAMU plan on getting student engagement up for this week so as to ensure it gets to its intended audience which are the students.

Vpsl – I have been working closely with Roxanne Runyon from the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Education and Response about how to best market and promote this. As the Student's Council has seen the dates and times of events in my report, word of mouth helps to get students involved. Beyond that, we have already been promoting on our social media for the art gallery submission call and will be promoting the marketing material the Roxanne supplies us with in our newsletter and socials.

Sempala - *To everyone* - In the Audit, a situation involving fraud and a misuse of funds by a student and a President of a student group was identified although the overall audit identified SAMU as an organization in good standing. How will SAMU approach this matter so as to maintain the integrity of student groups and prevent further issues like this from arising? What steps have been taken in response to this?

Vpsl - In response to this event, information was brought to the Audit Committee and Executive Committee during the investigation process. After deliberation and understanding of the happenings,

your Vice-President Governance and Finance and I worked closely with our General Manager, Darryl Kostash, Student Groups Manager, Erika Head, Director of Programs and Services, Megan Viens, and our Governance Advisor, Alan Honey to change the Student Groups Procedure and Student Group Handbook in hopes of mitigating future incidents. Notably, we have made the attendance of Student Groups Orientation mandatory for both the group's Vice President Finance and President.

Ryzhova - To VP Student Life: I commend you for attending the International Students' Orientation; however, were there any efforts made to reach out to and attend other orientations to expand SAMU's outreach?

Vpsl - Thank you for your recognition! This presence at International Students Orientation stems from my specific portfolio's work on a special project focusing on international student support. We also attended the New Student Orientation on September 5<sup>th</sup> where the team was able introduce ourselves to hundreds of students and speak on our events happening that week. We tabled that day in front of the bookstore where we were able to speak more personally to students who came by. Notably, we also tabled at the New Faculty Orientation on August 30<sup>th</sup> where we were able to reach new faculty members. There is an opportunity to speak at other orientations like School of Business and Arts and Sciences, however, we have received a lot of buzz and interest at Meet SAMU with the promotion put out, thanks to our marketing team, so our efforts of engagement are progressing and I'm excited to see what other relationship building projects future executives will pursue.

Ryzhova - To VP Student Life: What strategies were discussed/finalized in the Peer Support Training to best support students going through addiction, self-harm, abuse, etc.

Vpsl - The point of Peer Support is to engage in supportive listening. We practiced and discussed ways to validate feelings, ask questions relevant to the main concern of the students' visit, empower them in coping skills, normalize their experience, check in with them throughout the session and as they bring up their perspective on how they are feeling. Essentially, it is a one-time, high-level supportive listening service for students and once we are able to pinpoint where the situation points, we can provide them with ongoing support resources, whether that be to MacEwan's Wellness and Psychological Service, external supports or to SAMU supports like The Pantry or Breakfast club. If you're curious about more details, please come see me as it was an in depth and extensive 4 day training with more information than is necessary for SC as a high level oversight, but I'm willing to expand if necessary.

Ryzhova - To VP Academic: Do you have any data that shows that students were not aware of the services demonstrated to them at the Don't Go Textbook Broke Event, to begin with?

Vpa – For our event, data collection on perceptions of OERs was not covered. However, face value evidence from my all-day tabling showed that the majority of students, especially first and second year students) were not aware of OER services and options provided here on campus and online. In general, first and second year students need more aid to become aware of services and resources like OERs, so a second tabling event is scheduled for the winter term in February.

Ryzhova - To VP Academic: What has been done to look into the matter discussed previously about addressing excessive Lab Kit prices?

Vpa – I will be scheduling a meeting with some stakeholders in the Faculty of Nursing to learn more about the pricing, supply, and reasoning behind the current lab kit prices in the next few weeks. I'll be sure to report my findings, and any options available to students, at the next meeting.

Phan - President: CAUS Counterparts Conference: out of the 3 central priority areas, which one was dedicated the most time to and which was the least and why?

Pres – Currently, CAUS has dedicated equal time and resources to all 3 key priority areas. At CAUS, it is SAMU's opinion that affordability, mental health, and honouring treaties are all important.

Phan - MacEwan uni board retreat: how prevalent is the risk of weakened cybersecurity issue in PSIs?

Pres – Cybersecurity is an issue at every modern organization. Publicly funded PSIs face a higher risk compared to organizations in the private sector. Companies in the private sector can typically offer more competitive salaries compared to PSIs. Therefore, PSIs typically cannot afford to employ the top talents in the industry.

Phan - How has the new business building changed MacEwan's role in Edmonton's downtown?

Pres - I cannot speak directly to MacEwan's role in downtown Edmonton, but I can provide some on my own thoughts. I don't think that MacEwan's role has changed. I think that MacEwan has always tried to play a role downtown, but I believe that the new business building will increase MacEwan's integration in Edmonton's downtown.

Phan - VPE: Congrats on your role as the chair of the ESA! I love your informative report. How do you feel about the new role and what are you expecting from the experience at ESA?

Vpe - Thank you! I am excited to begin the work advocating for students at the municipal level. I expect to further the student message at the municipal level, through whichever form of advocacy this may entail. We are in the process of finalizing ESA priorities for the year which will lead to more definitive expectations.

Phan - VPSL: What's interesting thing you learned during your visit at Ponoka campus? How is the student life different from the downtown campus life here?

Vpsl - We learned how different the program of Psychiatric Nursing is to say a 4-year Nursing degree. They are situated in a psychiatric hospital so they often get patients wandering over to visit with them during classes and the students learn first-hand, on patients as their clinical placement works with the hospital. Many students commute from Edmonton, Calgary and surrounding areas so their days can be very long. It is a beautiful small town, Ponoka, and the students are very close as in each of the 3 years, there is around 30 students enrolled which comes out to under 100 students total. The dean, Ken Kustiak, is very involved in the students' experience and has been teaching for over 20 years on this campus. I'm excited to continue ongoing communication and be able to show up for these students.

## **5.2. Oral Questions**

Topics include: CAUS policy recommendations re. affordability; Don't Go Textbook Broke initiative; Ponoka visit; MNIFs & tuition increases; potential three year program at MacEwan; Universal Design for Learning; AI in the classroom; Bridge to Canada program; Ponoka Campus; Beaver Hills Gathering; LGBTQ community support; potential for an MBA program at MacEwan;

## **6. In Camera Period**

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

#### **7.1. 2022-2023 Councillor of the Year Vote**

#### **7.2. 2022-2023 SAMU Audit**

#### ***MOTION TO ACCEPT THE 2022-2023 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FROM MNP***

#### ***VPGF/VPSL***

Favour: Uzor, Sempala, Yusuf, Depeel, Ryzhova, Poon, Phan, Vpe, Torres, Cartujano, Beka, Vpa, Zidan, Vpsl, Vpgf

#### ***CARRIED***

**8. Consultation**

**9. Evaluation**

**10. Recognition**

**11. Adjournment**

***MOTION TO ADJOURN***

***ZIDAN***

***CARRIED***

Next Meeting Date: October 18, 2023

Meeting adjourned at pm.