
Adam Garcia Vice President Education Report

October 2013

Federation of Students
University of Waterloo

1.0 Executive Summary

It's only been about two weeks since our last meeting, however, as University

committees have begun lots has been happening!

Some of the exciting things going on include the launch of the "Report That Fee" campaign which is an inquiry-based system where students can report sketchy fees or materials that their instructors require students to purchase. The system works as such: student sends syllabus of the course to fees@feds.ca and highlights the questionable fee, and Feds investigates, follows-up with the instructor/Chair/Dean/Provost if there is an issue, and then follows up with the student either way to let them know the outcome. Any emails received also trigger an automatic reply with information so students can learn more and self-advocate if they wish.

Further to the fees situation, a small working group of USRC was formed to investigate Retail Services selling online access codes which are allowed to be required by Ministry policy. And further to that, the new fee agreement is looking like it will be coming together in the next few months, which I am very excited about

We've also been making great headway on course evaluations, both making the results public and creating a uniform instrument. I am looking forward to progress on this.

Finally, I was able to make some great connections with VPs Academic/Education at the Societies Conference, notably with Alanna Benson from ASU and Ben Balfour from AHSUM. We discussed the possibility of ongoing meetings which I have always thought was a great idea, so I look forward to the enthusiasm seen from some of the Society VPs at this idea.

2.0 Executive-Related Activities

2.1 Committees:

Education Advisory Committee

EAC will be held Mondays at 6:00p.m.

Undergraduate Student Relations Committee

Responsibilities: A forum to discuss undergraduate student issues in a broad sense at UW.

Timeline: Monthly meetings; ongoing

Partners: Beth Jewkes, Chris Read, Daniela Seskar-Hencic, Feds Executive

Synopsis: At this meeting I raised the issue of Retail Services selling online access codes labeled as required when in fact, government policy does not allow these materials to be required. After much discussion, it was agreed that a small working group would be formed to investigate the issue further. We also discussed the issue of international student eligibility for student financial assistance and through this, were able to clarify eligibility issues and Chris Read and I will be following up with SAFA on this. Finally, we also discussed the issue of funding Athletics at USRC, which I saw as a "student-University relations" issue. It was discussed that it might be easier to keep this discussion siloed to SSAC, but that regular updates should be heard at USRC since the student-at-large membership is not the same in both committees, and this provides a wider mechanism for student consultation and approval.

2.2 Commissions:

To get in contact with either of the staff:

Taylor Emond, Local Affairs Commissioner, local@feds.ca

Maaz Yasin, Academic Affairs Commissioner, academic@feds.ca

3.0 University-Related Activities

3.1 Committees:

Co-operative Education Council

Responsibilities: A forum to review and advice on Co-op at UW

Timeline: Monthly meetings; ongoing

Partners: Bruce Mitchell, Peggy Jarvie, Faye Schultz, faculty reps, student representation through faculty VP Academic/Educations

Synopsis: I was unable to attend the September meeting of CEC as I was in Toronto for OUSA business. Next meeting is October 30.

Senate Undergraduate Council

Responsibilities: To consider questions involving academic quality and undergraduate studies and provide recommendations to go forward to Senate

Timeline: Monthly, ongoing

Partners: UW VP Academic & Provost, Associate Deans of Faculties, student representation through VP Academic/Education

Synopsis: At the September 10 meeting, several items were addressed including the Foundation run through the Student Success Office, and a new program in Biomedical Engineering. Program reviews were approved for Cognitive Science and Speech Communication. Next meeting is October 8.

English Language Proficiency Working Group

Responsibilities: Advises the Provost and his Special Advisor on English Language Competency on strategies to implement the recommendations of the Stubleby Report on English Language Proficiency.

Timeline: Ongoing

Partners: Sheila Ager, Judi Jewinski, Mario Coniglio, Donna Ellis, Associate Deans of Faculties, Writing Centre

Synopsis: Next meeting to be held October 7.

Provost's Advisory Committee on Scheduling

Responsibilities: Advises the Provost and the Registrar's Office on systems and business practices related to implementation of a new course timetabling software

Timeline: Ongoing

Partners: Mario Conglio, Ken Lavigne, Mark Walker, Registrar's Office representatives, Faculty representatives, FAUW, GSA

Synopsis: This Committee was formed to advise the Provost and Registrar's Office on systems and business practices related to scheduling. The issue has been fairly heated with the Faculty Association being very adamant about faculty members' ability to block off any time in their schedule without giving justification. Naturally, this is in conflict with giving students the widest possible options for creating conflict-free schedules. Simulations will be run with new software and some systems may change over the next few months for full implementation later down the road.

Student Services Advisory Committee

Responsibilities: Advises the Provost and on student services funded by the

Student Services Fee.

Timeline: Ongoing

Partners: Beth Jewkes, Chris Read, Dennis Huber, Student Services staff, Feds, GSA

Synopsis: The first meeting of SSAC was primarily a clean-up meeting from outstanding items from last year that carried over into the summer through a working group on Athletics. GSA & Feds reps met prior to this meeting to discuss our goals and these were brought forward for discussion. Next meeting is November 12.

Copyright Advisory Committee

Responsibilities: Advises the Provost and Library to promote and ensure copyright compliance within the university

Timeline: Weekly; ongoing

Partners: UW Librarian, Centre for Extended Learning, Retail Services, representatives from Faculty Association, Graduate Students' Association.

Synopsis: Committee members were given notice that this Committee would be meeting again in the near future, and I expect a meeting to be held later in the month.

4.0 External Activities

4.1 Municipal/Regional-level

Town & Gown Committee, City of Waterloo

Responsibilities: Represent UW students to all of the stakeholders involved in the Town & Gown Association, bring forward student concerns, and identify opportunities for integration in the community

Timeline: Ongoing, once every other month

Partners: WULSU, Waterloo Community Relations (Kaye Crawford), Councilor Henry, UW, WLU, regional police and fire safety departments, bylaw enforcement, and permanent residents.

Synopsis: Jennifer Casey from WLU was nominated and acclaimed as the new Chair of the Committee in advance of the September 24 meeting. At this meeting we heard roundtable updates from all stakeholders, and discussed pedestrian safety on near-campus roads, and St. Patrick's Day which will be this year's hot topic and the City moves in to end the "Ezra Street Party." For the first time, graduate student representatives were added and in attendance at the meeting which has raised the number of student representatives on the Committee.

4.2 Provincial-level

Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)

Responsibilities: Represent UW students to the provincial government through an alliance of like-minded undergraduate student associations. For more information on OUSA visit: www.ousa.ca.

Timeline: Ongoing

Partners: OUSA Home Office staff, BUSU, MAPS, MSU, Queen's-AMS, TOSA, USC-Western, WLUSU

Synopsis: General Assembly hosted by US-Western will be held November 1-3. I will post details on delegate selection prior to Council meeting and highlight this at the meeting. Training Day at TOSA went very well, Jenn Kwong our OUSA Campus Coordinator and Maaz Yasin who I have designated as the OUSA Campus Researcher attended with myself and it seems like we had a very good day. OUSA

Campus Visit will be held Wednesday, October 2, so hopefully you will have the chance to stop by the booth in the SLC and say hello.

Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) Steering Committee

Responsibilities: Represent UW undergraduate students to OUSA and serve the OUSA Steering Committee as Secretary of the Corporation.

Timeline: Ongoing

Partners: OUSA Home Office staff, BUSU, MAPS, MSU, Queen's-AMS, TOSA, USC-Western, WLUSU

Synopsis: At the September 27 Steering Committee meeting we designated policy paper editors, and discussed at length ancillary fee policy and an organizational response to some government roundtables that were ongoing. Additionally, I have been working closely with the Executive Director and a law firm on updating OUSA's by-laws to be compliant with new legislation.

4.3 Federal-level

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)

Responsibilities: Represent UW students to the federal government through an alliance of like-minded undergraduate, graduate, college, and polytechnic student associations from across Canada. For more information on CASA visit: www.casa-acae.com.

Timeline: Ongoing, monthly

Partners: CASA Home Office staff, ASU, AUGSA, BUSU, DSU, FEECUM, GSA-UW, GSS-UBC, MSU, MASU, RRCSA, SMUSA, SAITSA, SFXSU, STUSU, SAMRU, UASU, UCSU, ULSU, UNB-SRC, UNB-SU, UPEISU, UFVSU, USC-Western

Synopsis: No updates.

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Board of Directors

Responsibilities: Act in the best interests of CASA from a legal and financial perspective.

Timeline: Ongoing, weekly meetings

Partners: CASA Home Office staff, Amanda Nielsen, Chair (AUGSA), Lauren MacLean, Treasurer, (RRCSA), Shane Potter, Secretary (UFVSU), Missy Chareka (SAMRU), Ben Gunn-Doerge (SFXSU), Raphael Jacob (UCSU)

Synopsis: The Board was able to meet on September 27, but I sent regrets as I was at the OUSA Training Day in Oshawa.

5.0 Meetings with Decision-makers

5.1 University-level:

Beth Jewkes, Associate Provost, Resources

- I was able to have an introductory meeting with Beth Jewkes, who is new to this role, and discuss some of the priorities and my perspectives on USRC and SSAC for the year. I discussed the new fee agreement I would like to create with the University, as well as issues with Athletics and the SSO that have been discussed at SSAC. We also briefly discussed academic integrity initiatives as this is something that is also within Beth's portfolio.

Peggy Jarvie, Executive Director, CECA

- Not having met with Peggy for a while, we got together for a lunch to discuss CECA goings-on and some of the upcoming issues. Peggy and I had a good discussion about the co-op fee, and also about mandatory salary disclosure for job postings and how that might be integrated with WaterlooWorks.

Rob Esselment, Senior Government Relations Manager

- Rob and I had our monthly meeting where we discussed ancillary fee policy which is being discussed at the provincial level as well as differentiation and its impact on Waterloo.

Mario Coniglio, Associate Vice-President, Academic

- Mario and I met to discuss some of the research and analysis I had completed on course evaluations and to discuss next steps. From there, we agreed to meet with Provost McBoyle to gain perspective on further direction.

Feridun Hamdullahpur, President

- Devin, David, and I were able to attend a meeting with President Hamdullahpur. At this meeting we discussed the University's Strategic Plan and how Feds can be a partner in its execution, as well as student space/social space, the new student building, and cost sharing models for Athletics.

Geoff McBoyle, Provost & Mario Coniglio, Associate Vice-President, Academic

- Mario and I met with Geoff to discuss course evaluations, and to get a sense of direction from Geoff based on his experience with the previously existing Task Force. Mario and I are touching base next week to finalize next steps.

5.2 Municipal/Regional-level:

No meetings to report.

5.3 Provincial-level:

Catherine Fife, Member of Provincial Parliament (Kitchener-Waterloo)

- Steve and I met with Catherine Fife and were able to discuss credit transfer, billing processes, and capital projects for universities. Catherine was interested in the idea of submitting formal constituent petitions for presentation in the legislature and Steve and I would like to discuss further how we might utilize this tactic.

5.4 Federal-level:

No meetings to report.

5.5 Other:

Robbie Henderson, President, Graduate Student Association & Coleen Even, Vice-President Student Affairs, Graduate Student Association

- Robbie, Coleen, Devin and I met in advance of SSAC to discuss Athletics. Some of the takeaways from that meeting included: the need for the student-University fee split to be revisited, the need for the graduate contribution for Varsity to be reduced, and some hypothetical discussions on how to deliver on those goals.

6.0 Upcoming Activities

This is a list of scheduled, upcoming activities/meetings before the next Council meeting:

- October 3, Community Information Fair
- October 8, WaterlooWorks Student Panel Drop-in
- October 8 & 10, Region of Waterloo Housing Strategy Consultation
- October 17 (Tentative), Academic Advocacy Week Training
- October 21-25, Academic Advocacy Week

- November 1-3, OUSA General Assembly