



Adam Garcia

Vice President Education

Report

March 2013

Federation of Students
University of Waterloo

1.0 Month Summary

It has been a while since I've written one of these! The past few months have been great, and I am certainly playing catch-up due to the election campaign along with the host of conferences I have over the month of March.

A couple of the highlights have been meeting with the NDP Critic for Training, Colleges, and Universities Teresa Armstrong (MPP for London-Fanshawe) to discuss tuition and flat-fee structures prior to the OUSA Lobby Conference. Another great opportunity I had was to sit on the University Tenure & Promotions Committee, during which I was able to review files of professors who apply for tenure and promotions, and discuss their applicability for either. It provided very interesting insight into faculty and what activities are incentivized at uWaterloo (hint: it's not teaching; though it was still considered far more than I thought it would be).

Another exciting initiative that I've been asked to be a part of is the Centre for Teaching Excellence and the Teaching Fellows have brought together individuals from a variety of areas on campus together to submit an application to the Association of American Colleges and Universities Summer Institute on High-Impact Practices and Student Success. If our application is successful, I will be part of a traveling team to University of Wisconsin-Madison in June to work on bringing together a variety of experiential education initiatives on campus into a cohesive and coordinated action plan.

Looking forward, I have OUSA General Assembly and CASA Annual General Meeting, in addition we expect a decision on tuition to be made before the end of March. The University budget is also in the process of being prepared so discussions of fees on campus will certainly be a topic for discussion. Additionally, I will continue to work on the ancillary fee protocol, graduate retention strategy, department re-structuring and start volunteer hiring for next year.

2.0 Executive and At-Large Activities

2.1 Committees:

Education Advisory Committee

Education Advisory Committee will be meeting Mondays 4:30-6:00pm.

Co-op Students' Council

Responsibilities: Forum for students to provide feedback on initiatives within co-op to CECA, and to suggest new ones.

Timeline: Twice per term

Partners: Director, Student & Faculty Relations, Co-op Student Experience Manager, Faculty Society VPs, Education Advisory Committee, interested students

Synopsis: At the February 13 meeting we had a productive discussion with CECA and students regarding such items as student input on final evaluations, the CECA Systems Strategy, peer-to-peer support, and communication channels between CECA and students on work term. The next meeting is to be held March 27.

2.2. Commissions:

Academic Commission:

The Academic Commission has worked on two projects recently in particular: the Feds Teaching Awards and the "What Does Educational Quality Mean to You?" forum.

Municipal Affairs Commission:

Is working on an "Explore Waterloo" project that would encourage students to get out into the community, take photos of their experiences, and submit them for prizes.

Provincial Affairs Commission:

The Provincial Affairs Commission has been attending conferences, assisting with the Feds Teaching Awards, and preparing for OUSA General Assembly.

Federal Affairs Commission:

2.3 Projects:

- **Advocacy Coordinator Co-op**

Luke has been working on a number of projects including finishing up and coordinating the publishing of the Academic Rights Handbook, research on course evaluations, examination deferrals, graduate retention programs and planning a small student advocacy conference event at Feds on April 6 called "Advocacy Matters" to get a sense of what policies and issues we need to develop and progress over next year. Luke is also assisting the Commissions with their events and programs, and working on creating a coordinated strategy for Feds in the event of a provincial election.

- **New Ancillary Fee Protocol**

I was able to meeting with Robbie Henderson, current VP Student Affairs and incoming President for GSA on the Ancillary Fee Protocol, and we have been able to identify our shared goals. We still await response the University, and rest assured, I follow up on this regularly.

- **Graduate Retention Strategy**

Although this was something I brought up during my re-election campaign, I have begun some preliminary groundwork on this particular item. I've actually had the opportunity to discuss with Mayor Halloran, who is very eager to pursue the idea and come to some sort of outcome sooner than later. I am working on meeting with some other partners including Tim Jackson (VP University Relations), and Jennifer Casey who is in a similar role at Laurier, and also sits on the Waterloo Economic Development Advisory Committee.

- **Department Re-structuring**

I am working with several individuals on identifying some of the current strengths and weaknesses within the current department structure. We're looking into a number of combinations of titling of different roles, what roles need to exist, and what full-time and part-time staffing resources are necessary to ensure accountability and increased output within the VP Education portfolio.

3.0 Internal University Activities

2.1 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: The biggest project currently undertaken through CEC is the RFP process that is underway to re-develop PD 4 (Teamwork) and PD 6 (Problem Solving). Anne Fannon and I have been in communication during the process, held a session where representatives were able to come and provide feedback informally, and we've recently held a presentation of the short-listed proposals. A formal recommendation will be made at the

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: Associate VP Academic, Associate Deans of faculties, student representation through VPs Academic/Education

Synopsis: At the February 12th meeting we discussed some curricular items for most faculties. Then we also continued discussion on the examination policies which were forwarded to Senate for approval. We also approved a pilot program regarding English Language Pathways, and as well a decision on degree title. The Undergraduate Operations Committee made a determination of the criteria that would be applied against any request for a new degree title.

I was unable to attend the March 5th meeting due to being in Toronto for OUSA Lobby Con.

Student Technology Advisory Committee

Responsibilities: advises UCIST on issues relating to the provision of information technology and information technology support to students.

Timeline: Ongoing

Partners: Bud Walker, representation from IST and faculty computing offices, undergraduate and graduate at-large student representatives

Synopsis: I was unable to attend the February 28 meeting due to a Board meeting.

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: CAC has not met since Winter term.

4.0 Municipal Activities

4.1 Committees:

Town & Gown Association, 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: UW Admin, WLU Admin, WULSU, Community Relations (Kaye Crawford), Councilor Henry, regional police and fire safety departments, bylaw enforcement, and permanent residents.

Synopsis: At the January 22 meeting, we approved our vision and strategic plan for the Town & Gown Committee. At this time we also struck a sub-committee to gather information and recommend to the larger committee a more operational and impactful committee structure. We have held two meetings on this February 14 and March 8 with one more scheduled on March 21 prior to the March 26 Town & Gown Committee.

5.0 Provincial Activities

5.1 Committees:

Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) Steering Committee

At the January 14 meeting the main items for discussion centered around our campaigns, the annual action plan, and updates of the policy papers. Steering

Committee decided not to continue the Hire Education campaign, on recommendation of the Director of Communications, and instead pursue a campaign focused on mental health. President Li gave an update on progress on the annual action plan, which has not been great on all fronts due to the political landscape.

I was unable to attend the February 11 Steering Committee meeting in person, but was able to provide feedback on the agenda prior to. At this meeting the Steering Committee identified suggestions for policy topics for General Assembly to task Steering Committee with, the topics for discussion at our Lobby Conference, and our provincial budget submission.

At the March 7 Steering Committee meeting, the main focus of our discussion was follow-up from Lobby Conference and some general strategy of what outcomes we would be satisfied and unsatisfied with, specifically on the tuition framework. We also approved an amended budget as due to some staffing changes and later-than-expected hiring, we had some additional monies to re-allocate.

Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) Executive

As Vice-President Administration for OUSA, I continue to organizing the documentation at OUSA Home Office in collaboration with the Operations Coordinator. I have been tasked with is to create a succession plan for Home Office, in the event that a staff member suddenly leaves the organization, which involves identifying key accountabilities for each position, and who would take those responsibilities on (if necessary) in their absence. This project is on pause as I am awaiting response from the Executive Director to move this forward. I will be working with the other OUSA Executive to develop transition materials for next year.

5.2 Current/Continued Projects:

- **Student Employment Policy Paper**

I finished writing the draft of Student Employment! If you'd like to see a copy of it, let me know. It'll go through several more drafts before becoming it's final copy for approval at the General Assembly Plenary March 17th.

- **OUSA Lobby Con**

Amy Zhou, Deputy Commissioner in the Provincial Affairs Commission, and I attended the OUSA Lobby Conference in Toronto, ON from March 3-7. Over the course of three days, the student delegates had over 45 meetings with MPPs and sector partners. The topics for discussion were the tuition framework, credit transfer, and mental health services. Overall, it was a very enlightening experience to see the variability among the parties and even caucus members on the feasibility of our asks. I think credit transfer and flat fees have the most opportunity, though there is more consensus that mental health support services are critical – these are just more costly. Tuition receptivity was varied, but I am hopeful that significant progress will be made.

- **OUSA Spring General Assembly**

OUSA Spring General Assembly is to be held March 15-17 at Brock University in St. Catherine's. Skaidra Puodziunas and I held OUSA Delegate Selection & Training on March 9, which was a very productive opportunity get wider uWaterloo student feedback on the papers, as well as make more informed choices about who to invite. The quality of those who attended the session was very high across the board, but with some input from President Noble, we have a very strong team to send to OUSA General Assembly. As mentioned before, the three papers up for approval will be Student Employment, Online Learning, and Students, Universities, and the Private Sector.

6.0 Federal Activities

6.1 Committees:

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)

The dates for the March AGM have been released as March 20-22, 2013.

CASA Policy Committee

Responsibilities:

Timeline: 2012-2013

Partners: Representatives from Federation of Students (UWFEDS), Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS), Athabasca University Graduate Students Association (AUGSA), St. Thomas University Students' Union (STUSU), Fédération des étudiants et des étudiantes du Centre universitaire de Moncton (FÉÉCUM), McMaster Students' Union (MSU), and CASA Home Office Staff

Synopsis: The policy on Mental Health is coming along quickly, and several others are being worked on as well. Policy is also being developed by member associations on Open Educational Resources and Summer Jobs which is great. I am currently scheduling a regular meeting time for the Committee and working with Home Office on updating expired policy.