

STUDENTS' COUNCIL

Tuesday, August 15, 2000 at 6:00 pm
Council Chambers 2-1 University Hall

MINUTES (SC 2000-07)

Faculty/Position	Name	Present/absent
President	Leslie Church	Present
VP Academic	Chris Samuel	Present
VP External	Naomi Agard	Present
VP Finance	Gregory Harlow	Present
VP Student Life	Jennifer Wanke	Present
BoG Undergrad Rep.	Mark Cormier	Present
Agric/Forest/HomeEc		
Agric/Forest/HomeEc		
Arts	Jamie Speer	Present
Arts	Kory Zwack	Present
Arts	Christine Rogerson	Present
Arts	Brendan Darling	Present
Arts	Kirsten Odynski	Present
Business	Dean Jorgensen	Present
Business	Erika Hoffman	Absent
Business	Paul Chaput	Present
Education	Morine Bolding	Absent
Education	Janna Roesch	Absent
Education	Dan Coles	Absent
Education	Robert Hartery	Absent
Education	Justin Klaassen	Absent
Engineering	Jordan Harris	Present
Engineering	Wayne Poon	Present
Engineering	David Weppler	Present
Engineering	Justin Lee	Dave Smith(p)
Engineering	Kevin Partridge	Present
Law	Chris Veale	Present
Residence Halls Association	Shannon Moore	Absent
Medicine/Dentistry	Andrew Schell	Absent
Medicine/Dentistry	Karen Cheng	Present
Native Studies (School of		
Nursing	Jennifer Read	Present
Pharmacy	Chelsey Cabaj	Present
Rehabilitation Medicine	Leah Ganes	Present
Faculté Saint-Jean	Wendy Gall	Present
Science	Allen Lim	Absent
Science		
Science	Zaki Taher	Present
Science	Helen McGraw	Absent
Science	Chamila Adhithetty	Matylda Madinowka(p)

President Athletics	Tashie Macapagal	Present
Gateway / Editor in Chief	Dan Lazin	Present
Recreation Action Committee		
General Manager	Bill Smith	Absent
Speaker	Bill Curry	Present
Recording Secretary	Sarah Kelly	Present

Observers

Dr. Don Carmichael, Vice-President, Association of Academic Staff: University of Alberta
Jimmy Jeong, The Gateway
Michael Zimmerman, Student Activities Coordinator

2000-07/1

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

2000-07/2

NATIONAL ANTHEM "O Canada"

Church led Council in the singing of the national anthem.

2000-07/3

University of Alberta CHEER SONG

Cormier led Council in the singing of the University of Alberta Cheer Song.

2000-07/4

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Zwack/Rogerson moved that the agenda for the SC 00-07 meeting be approved.

Late Additions:

00-07/10c – Golden Bears & Pandas Legacy Fund

Consensus

2000-07/5

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

2000-07/5a
TEACHING AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF
ALBERTA

Dr. Don Carmichael, Vice-President of the Association of Academic Staff: University of Alberta, will be giving a brief presentation on Teaching at the University of Alberta, followed by discussion.

Dr. Carmichael began by thanking Students' Council for giving him the opportunity to speak. He explained that he had questions for Council, and that he hoped to hear as many concerns and grievances as possible about teaching at the University. He remarked that the AAS:UA and the Students' Union should have a closer and more functional relationship, given the number of their parallel interests.

Dr. Carmichael went on to explain that he wishes to see an expansion of Academic Staff Committees that can facilitate a roundtable atmosphere, incorporating a higher level of student input to help direct initiatives of the AAS:UA. Teachers, he continued, are professionals who are looking to improve and who need to understand their limitations in order to overcome them. Because students are the ultimate authority on teaching, their feedback is essential to the University's teaching success.

At this point, the floor was open for questions and comments from Council.

There appears to be a disparity in curriculum quality between faculties. The more innovative curricula tend to stem from younger instructors, who come in uneven waves to all faculties. Generally, better responses come from the curricula of these younger instructors, but department administration can be bureaucratic about course outlines, to varying degrees. It is a concern that needs to be dealt with, given the complaints coming consistently from, for example, the Faculty of Science. **(Veale)**

Currently, a great concern is with the recruitment of able teaching staff. Finding quality people for the University is difficult, and this could be for two reasons: financial stringency, and the University's isolated location. Our advantage seems to come from those who are deterred by US tax rates. However, the AAS:UA has not seen a great disparity in quality or effort of teaching between those receiving different wages. **(Zwack)**

The effectiveness of course evaluations has been a matter of great debate for some time. The evaluations must become "broader currency" before they can seriously begin to impact an individual department's decision regarding its teaching staff or mandate. If an instructor receives a poor evaluation, it is ultimately weighed against many other factors, the most important being the quality of the instructor's research at the University. As teaching generally falls behind research as a priority, poor instructors are occasionally cautioned, but never disciplined. Some culpability for poor instructors must rest with the department's chair, who places the instructors, and often, instructors are given teaching placements inappropriate to their specialties and talents. **(Partridge)**

No teaching courses are required to become an instructor. Some departments, as part of the interview process, will invite a teaching candidate to give a sample lecture to a selection committee, but unfortunately the emphasis is not on teaching ability in the hiring process. Departments look more specifically for quality research. Teaching Services offers courses to improve teaching, and these seem to be consistently taken by very proficient instructors. **(Harris)**

Instructors rarely realize that newer editions of textbooks are more expensive than previous editions, but no more useful to the student or the course. **(Taher)**

That there is a remedial English course for Engineering students (English 199), but no equivalent Math or Science courses for Arts students is an interesting point. Perhaps it will be looked into. **(Wanke)**

It has been informally established that students prefer course packs to textbooks because they are less expensive. It was expressed that instructors should be more judicious when choosing course material. **(Jorgensen)**

Aside from a student-at-large member on each hiring Advisory Committee, there is little room for student input in selecting instructors. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee are given to the Chair of a given department, who then makes the decisions. **(Rogerson)**

The structure of course evaluations is often not fitting enough to the individual course to be useful to the instructor or the Department. Instructors have always been welcome to supplement the standard course evaluations with questionnaires that cater directly to courses. **(Cheng)**

Church took this opportunity to voice several concerns about teaching to Dr. Carmichael. Some of them were: the language proficiency of professors; unfocused, substandard seminars; reserve reading material (instead of textbooks or handouts); inferior teaching assistants; professors who arbitrarily cancel their lectures; professors who refuse to award a grade of 9; grading weighted unfairly on attendance. **Church** also expressed a desire to see some of the University's research make a relevant impact in the classroom.

Dr. Carmichael explained that many younger instructors feel tyrannized by students regarding grading, and have expressed that there is undue pressure to award sometimes undeservedly high grades. Many other instructors lean towards safety in their marking, and only award middling grades such as 6, 7, and 8. Arts courses, which require subjective judgment by instructors, often inspire grading patterns.

There are few incentives for instructors to improve their teaching abilities. The good instructors often feel that capable teaching is its own reward. **(Poon)**

The better instructors will usually express the desire for feedback directly to students, while others actively avoid it. It is unfortunate that some professors who are ordinarily excellent fall into fugues, wherein they no longer care about student input and the quality of their teaching. **(Wanke)**

Samuel made the complaints that professors expect students to take too many notes during lectures, which deters from the quality of the lecture itself; and that too often, students are held responsible for untaught material on final examinations.

Dr. Carmichael responded by explaining the problem with instructors supplying notes to their students: the incentive to attend the lecture is considerably weakened if a student feels that he/she can acquire lecture material by other means, such as the Internet. Instructors are often wary of this and try to make their lectures as necessary to the course as possible. Interpreting required reading and homework through discussion often brings the better students to class, but the number of overconfident students is quite high.

Internet grade reporting services are often delayed by professors turning the grades in late, or tardy administrators who wait to process the information. However, instructors will often e-mail grades upon a student's request. **(Speer)**

The first step for students to take if they want to affect the quality of teaching is holding forums, such as this one, to express their concerns to parties who can effect change within individual departments and administration. Dr. Carmichael urged students not to be afraid to "call bullshit." **(Smith)**

Technology has its place in a classroom setting, regardless of the concern that it is replacing the lecture altogether. From the instructor's standpoint, it is valuable not only for the inherent resource, but for keeping the interests of students as well. Students must be taught to exploit technology to its maximum. That being said, a certain emphasis on teacher-student contact is being lost, and the impact of the lecture medium must be preserved. **(Harlow)**

At Dr. Carmichael's request, a show of hands was given at this time regarding preferences for classroom sizes. The informal vote showed an overwhelming preference for smaller classes.

Partridge disagreed with **Church's** point that teaching assistants and graduate students are too prevalent, and professors, as a rule, give better quality instruction. Younger instructors, he argued, bring fresh ideas to course content and lecture style. It was also asserted that sessional instructors and teaching assistants are more enthusiastic about students and lectures than professors.

Gall agreed that many sessionals are excellent instructors, and was concerned that these people were not being offered permanent positions at the University. Dr. Carmichael suggested to Council that during the next tuition debate, students should agree to the proposed increase, with the stipulation that they dictate where the dollars are spent. In this event, students could curry more control, and better instructors could be hired.

Dr. Carmichael thanked Council members for their time, insight, and input, and expressed a desire to work more closely with the SU. **Samuel** returned the thanks to Dr. Carmichael.

2000-07/6

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Zwack/Speer moved that the minutes of the SC 00-06 meeting be approved.

Corrections:

- an attendance report for SC 2000-06 will be made available to councillors.
- During Question Period, **Agard's** reference was to Millennium Scholarships, not to the Jason Lang Scholarships.
- The smell under discussion during Question Period was improved by an enclosed composting system.
- The Agriculture buildings on the South Campus, not the main campus, are unusable.

Consensus

2000-07/7

REPORTS

- a. Leslie Church, President
 - A written report was provided with the agenda package.
 - **Church** recently had lunch with Dr. Fraser.
 - **Agard** will be leading the provincial CAUS campaign, which will include a "cost-of-living" project that will monitor average students in Alberta.
 - A Tuition Planning Committee meeting is coming up on August 17. It will be held at the Sugarbowl Café, to provide a different forum for discussion. Councillors are urged to attend; the meeting will cover a number of different issues.
- b. Christopher Samuel, Vice-President Academic
 - A written report was provided with the agenda package.
 - The **COFA RETREAT** continues to draw near... It will be **FUN** as well as **InFoRmAtIvE . . . !** August 26, at the new **FUN and INFORMATIVE** venue of the 3rd floor SUB. (...fun!... informative!... fun! ... informative! ...fun...!)
- c. Naomi Agard, Vice-President External
 - A written report was provided with the agenda package.
 - A separate cost-of-living project will be undertaken exclusively on campus, and volunteers are needed.
 - The Millennium Scholarships have suffered a decrease, because the provincial government has not gotten the money it needs to maintain them. Compounded on this is that there are significantly more applicants.

- d. Gregory Harlow, Vice-President Operations & Finance
 - Harlow apologized that he had no report, owing to his recent return from a vacation.
- e. Jennifer Wanke, Vice-President Student Life
 - A written report was provided with the agenda package.
 - **Wanke** is very enthusiastic about WOW. Volunteers are needed.
- f. Mark Cormier, Undergrad BoG Representative
 - An oral report was provided at the meeting.
 - The Board of Governors is very sleepy at the moment.
 - The President's appreciation picnic for NASA went very well this year.
 - **Cormier** has been meeting with **Church** to work on tuition planning.
 - Health & Safety Committee meeting upcoming.
- h. Pharmacy Faculty Report
 - A report was unavailable at this time.
- i. Rehabilitation Medicine Report
 - An oral report was provided by **Ganes**.
 - Currently, mandatory orientations are being provided, some by the faculty, and some by returning students.
 - The faculty is giving a Welcome BBQ.
 - The faculty is hosting a Student-Rehab conference, perhaps the first of its kind.
 - The faculty is organizing charity events, such as clothing, food and blood drives, as well as a Texas Scramble.
 - The faculty has a concern about its low profile, and is trying to become better known.

2000-07/8

QUESTION PERIOD

The SU requires three Access Fund Administrators this year, as opposed to the familiar two, because one of them is working only part-time hours. Also, changes to the structure of the Access Fund have created more work. These changes will be available for Council to review at the next meeting. (**Lazin**)

It is an absolute necessity that the Researcher have a television at her disposal. Often, Executives are too busy to keep abreast of all current events, and so, just as she has a subscription to major newspapers and magazines, so should she have access to news programs on television. (**Partridge**)

The SU's current telephone system is antiquated, but unfortunately, it still serves its purpose. This year, there will be no changes or upgrades. (**Jorgensen**)

The ONECard purchasing ability will be uniform throughout SUB, including RATT. There will be no restrictions on paying for alcohol with the ONECard. (**Zwack**)

Supplemental: Security issues surrounding this change are being explored and dealt with.

The proposed date for the unveiling of the new SU web page is September 1, 2000, and work is going according to schedule. **(Jorgensen)**

All activity on the ONECard is recorded for the holder's security. These records fall under FOIPP regulations and will not be viewed by any but the holder. **(Lazin)**

More machines for refuelling the ONECard will be installed soon. Unfortunately, the possibility of being able to use coins in these machines is remote, due to our coins' incompatibility with American machines, of which the ONECard refueller is one. **(Harris)**

2000-07/9

LEGISLATION

Speer/Zwack moved to omnibus items 9a through 9e inclusive.

26/1 Carried

2000-07/9a
BYLAW 2100
FINANCIAL
AFFAIRS BOARD

CHURCH / HARLOW MOVED (SECOND READING) THAT Students' Council, upon the recommendation of the Internal Review Board, approve the changes to Bylaw 2100 - Respecting the Financial Affairs Board of the Students' Union

2000-07/9b
BYLAW 2400
INTERNAL
REVIEW BOARD

CHURCH / HARLOW MOVED (SECOND READING) THAT Students' Council, upon the recommendation of the Internal Review Board, approve the changes to Bylaw 2400 - Respecting the Internal Review Board of the Students' Union

2000-07/9c
BYLAW 2600 -
ACADEMIC
AFFAIRS BOARD

CHURCH / SAMUEL MOVED (SECOND READING) THAT Students' Council, upon the recommendation of the Internal Review Board, approve the changes to Bylaw 2600 - Respecting the Academic Affairs Board of the Students' Union

2000-07/9d
BYLAW 2700
-STUDENT LIFE
BOARD

CHURCH / WANKE MOVED (SECOND READING) THAT Students' Council, upon the recommendation of the Internal Review Board, approve the changes to Bylaw 2700 - Respecting the Student Life Board of the Students' Union

2000-07/9e
BYLAW 2800 -
EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS BOARD

CHURCH / AGARD MOVED (SECOND READING) THAT Students' Council, upon the recommendation of the Internal Review Board, approve the changes to Bylaw 2800 - Respecting the External Affairs Board of the Students' Union

Partridge expressed some concern over the accountability of Executives to cover these boards' activities in their final reports.

Church responded that each Executive is bound to complete a final report, and even if these items are not covered therein, each board has agendas and minutes on record for edification purposes. A given board's report is the responsibility of the chair, but they are rarely completed. Including them in Executive reports gives them a better chance of seeing light.

These changes are part of the foundation of a legal review. There is a philosophy that either practice conforms to law, or law conforms to practice. In this case, the futility of seeking the former has led the Executive to adopt the latter. Council was informed that there are changes being made to Executive bylaws as well, and they will be made available shortly.

Collective Vote on Items 9a through 9e inclusive: 26/1 **Carried**

2000-07/10

NEW BUSINESS

**2000-07/10a
EUGENE BRODY
COMMITTEE**

AGARD / CHURCH MOVED THAT Students' Council ratify Gerald Lim to sit on the Eugene Brody Committee as a student-at-large for the 2000/2001 school year.

25/2 **Carried**

**2000-07/10b
UNIVERSITY
BOOKSTORE
EXPLORATORY
TASK FORCE**

SAMUEL / CHURCH MOVED THAT Students' Council appoint one (1) councillor to sit on the University Bookstore Exploratory Task Force.

Congratulations to **Taher**.

**2000-07/10c
GOLDEN BEARS &
PANDAS LEGACY
FUND**

HARLOW / CHURCH MOVED THAT Students' Council ratify Shemeena Jadavji and Sheligh Dunn to the Golden Bears & Pandas Legacy Fund for the 2000/2001 school year.

27/0 **Carried**

2000-07/11

INFORMATION ITEM

2000-07/11a

Due to delinquent attendance, Science representative **Allen Lim** is no longer a member of Council.

2000-07/12

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Agard** needs volunteers for the cost-of-living project.
- **Church** wished to thank Bill Curry for an excellent job serving as Speaker this summer. She also thanked Council for a productive discussion with Dr. Carmichael.
- **Wanke** needs volunteers for WOW.
- **Samuel** joined **Church** in thanking Council, and reminded everyone about the COFA Retreat on August 26. FUN! *INFORMATIVE!* FU-U-U-U-NNN!
- Athletics shirts are now available, for \$12.00 or \$17.00.
- Michael Chalk will be serving as speaker for the August 29 meeting.

2000-07/13

ADJOURNMENT

Harlow/Speer moved that the meeting be adjourned at 8:32 p.m.