

Minutes AUSU Council Meeting

APPROVED – March 31, 2014

AUSU Council Meeting
February 19, 2014
Teleconference

Councillors Present: Toni Fox, Bethany Tynes, Jason Nixon, Evan Schmidt, Kim Newsome, James Ramsbottom, Craig French, and Ashley Charlton.
Staff Present: Tamra Ross (Chair), Karyna McDonald, and Karl Low
Other Members: None
Record of Minutes: Karyna McDonald
Absent: N/A

Call to Order: 17:42 (MST)

Agenda and Minutes

1.0 Approval of Agenda

Item 23.0 In-Camera session added to agenda.

J. Ramsbottom/B. Tynes - Carried 7/0 –

2.0 Adoption of Council Minutes 2013-12-09

C. French/E. Schmidt - Carried 7/0 -

New Business:

3.0 Motion: BIRT AUSU accept the presented copy of Policy_4.04_Professional_Development_v2 for inclusion in our policy manual.

J. Nixon/A. Charlton - Carried 7/0 –

4.0 Motion: BIRT AUSU accept the presented copy of Policy_6.04_Travel_Expenses_v2 for inclusion in our policy manual.

E. Schmidt/J. Nixon

- Carried 7/0 -

- 5.0 Motion:** BIRT AUSU accept the presented copy of Policy_9.05_Technology_Infrastructure_v2 for inclusion in our policy manual.

02212014.01

18:05 MST: New point added to Policy 9.05 - BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT AUSU petition AU to benchmark its course delivery systems with other learning organizations inside or outside of Canada, to ensure AU technologies meet or exceed those in the current marketplace.

J. Ramsbottom/J. Nixon

- Carried 7/0 -

- 6.0 Motion:** BIRT AUSU accept the presented copy of Policy_9.06_Government Funding for inclusion in our policy manual.

E. Schmidt/A. Charlton

- Carried 7/0 -

- 7.0 Motion:** BIRT AUSU accept the presented copy of Policy_9.07_Base_Operating_Funding_v2 for inclusion in our policy manual.

J. Nixon/A. Charlton

- Carried 7/0 -

- 8.0 Motion:** BIRT AUSU accept the presented copy of Policy_9.12_Course_and_Program_Development_v2 for inclusion in our policy manual.

E. Schmidt/C. French

- Carried 7/0 -

- 9.0 Motion:** BIRT AUSU accept the presented copy of Policy_9.16_Coop_Programs_and_Job_Placement_v2 for inclusion in our policy manual.

J. Ramsbottom/A. Charlton

- Carried 7/0 -

- 10.0 Motion:** BIRT AUSU accept the presented copy of Policy_9.17_Lowering_Inter-Provincial_Barriers_v2 for inclusion in our policy manual.

A. Charlton/C. French - Carried 7/0 –

11.0 Motion: BIRT AUSU accept the present copy of Policy_9.18_Financial_Aid_System_v2 for inclusion in our policy manual.

J. Nixon/B. Tynes - Carried 7/0 –

12.0 Motion: BIRT AUSU repeal position policy 9.20 Degree Audit Technology – our campaign was successful and AU is now offering this technology to undergraduate students via DegreeWorks.

J. Nixon/C. French - Carried 7/0 –

13.0 Motion: BIRT AUSU accept the resignation of councillor Wendy Barnard as of February 13, ending her term on council 6 weeks early due to a family health matter.*

*AUSU thanks Wendy for her hard work on council over the past two years.

A. Charlton/E. Schmidt - Carried 7/0 –

Reports

14.0 President's Report

Report Accepted

02212014.02 18:30 MST: J. Ramsbottom leaves meeting due to technical difficulty.

02212014.03 18:30 MST: K. Newsome joins meeting.

02212014.04 18:31 MST: J. Ramsbottom rejoins meeting.

15.0 Vice President External Report

Report Accepted

16.0 Vice President Finance

Report Accepted

17.0 Executive Meeting Report
Report Accepted

18.0 Finance Committee Report
Report Accepted

19.0 Awards Committee Report
Report Accepted

20.0 Media Committee Report
Report Accepted

21.0 Executive Director's Report
Report Accepted

22.0 Office Coordinator's Report
Report Accepted

23.0 Next meeting date and time
To be determined through email

02212014.05 18:59 MST: Motion to move in Camera

J. Nixon/ C. French

24.0 In-Camera Session

Discussion regarding personnel changes and ASEC

02212014.06 19:49 MST: Motion to move out of in Camera

J. Nixon/B. Tynes

Meeting adjourned at 19:50 MST
B. Tynes adjourned

AUSU President Report

Toni Fox, President



Athabasca University
Students' Union

Covers: January 2014

Current Issues

AUSU Election – Things continue to move along smoothly for the election with no major issues reported at this time. We are on target and meeting the scheduled date. The campaign period will open soon and a special section of the forums will be open for the students to post questions to the candidates. The executive continue to discuss ways to best orient the newly elected group after the election.

Call Centre/Student Support Centre – Many students have contact AUSU recently with letters to address their concerns with the potential implementation of the call centre/student support centre. AUSU has spoken about concerns for some time, and the continued efforts of students to make their voice heard will help. Please see the report created by the Executive Director for more details about some of the recent news coverage, letters and interviews on the issue.

Meetings

Presidential Search Committee: January 10, 2014

Board of Governors meeting: January 10, 2014

Executive meeting: January 13, 2014

AUSU Council meeting: January 13, 2014

Presidential Search Committee Meeting: January 14, 2014

Executive meeting: January 21, 2014

Director of Library and Scholarly Resources Search Committee: January 22, 2014

Director of Library and Scholarly Research presentation: January 22, 2014

Director of Library and Scholarly Research presentation: January 23, 2014

Director of Library and Scholarly Research Search Committee: January 23, 2014

Executive Meeting: January 29, 2014

Executive Director Review: January 30, 2014

Meeting notes

AU Board of Governors (BOG) – In my report I was able to draw attention to the lack of a system for student fee consultation between AU and AUSU. My report provided the board with key points in the PSLA that are not currently being met, as well as the requests that AUSU made during the annual fee consultation meeting. We will continue to request that AU work with AUSU to implement a system that meets the PSLA requirements and ensures student input is provided throughout the budget and fee adjustment process.

I again spoke about students' concerns of the potential move to a call centre/ student support model. I discussed students' worry of the impact it would have on their learning experience; concerns of an extra step to contact tutors; and the impact it would have on enrollment numbers. This is an issue that has been brought to the attention of the BOG on several occasions for over a year, and we will continue to do so until action is taken.

Director of Library and Scholarly Research Search Committee – The position has been reposted, and the committee will review the next batch of candidates once they are received.

AU Presidential Search Committee – During this reporting period, I attended additional meetings that were not included in the above meeting list. Unfortunately, the confidential nature of the committee's work does not allow me to comment on the meeting dates, times or content. For updates from the committee, please refer to the AU President Search website: <http://ous.athabascau.ca/search/>

Other Items

Executive Director Review – The ED review and review meeting were completed on time this year. A slightly different format was used than in year previous, and I made note of some potential challenges a new executive might encounter when conducting future review. I am currently working with the ED and VPFA on potential areas of improvement to ensure the process is streamlined for the next executive team.

January 2014 Report

Reporting – The executive team has been working out the details of a new reporting system. The new system would help to ensure that regular reports are being submitted, and would allow executive reports to be posted online after they are approved at council meetings.

Hours

My weekly average: 39.1875 hours

I have reviewed the hours of the other executive members.

AUSU Executive Report

Bethany Tynes, VP External and Student Affairs

Prepared: February 10, 2014



Current Issues

ASEC Bylaws

This month, I spent a greater than usual amount of time working on ASEC's governance. For the past two years, the ASEC Governance Committee has been working on improving ASEC's bylaws (and other governance documents), but unfortunately, in the transition from last year's group to this year's group, there was some work lost, and as such, the governance committee wanted to ensure that any work we accomplished this year was completed and put forward to the membership for approval at the final conference of the year.

As this conference is rapidly approaching (March 1-2), the Governance Committee spent one full day in a room hashing out the details of what ASEC's bylaws need to include, following which I wrote up draft bylaws, and worked with the ASEC Vice Chair (who chairs the Governance Committee) to polish them. These draft bylaws have subsequently been put forward to the membership with notice that a special resolution to adopt them will be on the conference agenda. I look forward to being able to tell you that ASEC's governance structure has been greatly improved!

ALEC Learner Support Working Group

For the past year, I have been sitting on an AU working group, created by General Faculties Council (GFC) as a subgroup of the Academic Learning Environment Committee (ALEC). This Learner Support Working Group, composed of four academics and myself, was tasked with studying the various learning models currently in use at Athabasca University (primarily the "tutor" model and the "student success" model, which was formerly referred to as the "call centre" model). This committee sought information from various sources within the university community, and has compiled their findings into a report that has now been sent to ALEC, where it will be discussed prior to moving to GFC.

FHSS Strategic Plan

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is currently undertaking some strategic planning. I am sitting on the Steering Committee for this process, and will strive to facilitate the efficient collection of student input. This project is incredibly positive and future-focused, and will seek to help the faculty move strongly forward. I greatly appreciate the leadership of FHSS Dean Dr. Veronica Thompson is displaying with regard to this initiative. On February 13th, I will also be attending a full-day session called "Envisioning the Future of FHSS."

Pending Issues

AUSU Lobby Document

I continue to work on composing a draft lobby document for the provincial government, based on our AUSU position policies and current political climate. I hope to be able to verbally report at our next meeting that this draft has been sent to the executive for their review.

Quarterly Student Roundtable with the Minister

On February 8th, I will be attending the third Quarterly Roundtable with the Minister of Advanced Education, now Deputy Premier Dave Hancock.

Meetings

AUSU Exec with VPA and Dir Finance – January 8 - with Dr. Alex Kondra and Rocky Brown

AU GFC ALEC LSWG – January 8 – AU's Academic Learning Environment Committee Learner Support Working Group

AU FHSS Strategic Plan Steering Committee – January 10

AUSU Exec – January 13

AUSU Council – January 13

ASEC Governance – January 14

ASEC Board Meeting – January 15

AU ALEC LSWG – January 20 – AU's Academic Learning Environment Committee Learner Support Working Group

ASEC Governance – January 20

AUSU Executive – January 21

AUSU Executive – January 22

AU GFC SAAC – January 23 – AU's Student Academic Appeals Committee

ASEC Policy – January 28

AU FHSS Strategic Plan – January 29

News Roundup

A collection of headlines and optional readings related to post-secondary education:

At AU

Athabasca University and Qatar University researchers have partnered to create a mobile learning application to help employees in Qatar's oil and gas industry learn technical English terms specific to the sector. [AthabascaU News Release](#)

Alberta

Alberta's Advanced Education Minister Dave Hancock says the provincial government remains in a period of "fiscal restraint," preparing for "major" growth in the PSE sector. Hancock acknowledged the province is in better shape than it was last year, when it cut operating grants to PSE institutions by \$147 million (the government later restored \$50 million in funding), but warned that "the spending floodgates won't open" with the release of the 2014 budget. [Calgary Herald](#)

General

The World Economic Forum has released its 2013 issue of the *Global Gender Gap Report*, which measures 4 areas: economic participation, educational attainment, health outcomes and political participation. Canada, according to the report, has a perfect score in educational attainment, but the report only measures progress using enrolment numbers, while between 70% and 80% of senior administrative roles are occupied by men, and only 22% of full professors are women. [Globe and Mail](#)

The British Columbia government says its open textbook project has benefited almost 300 PSE students, who saved an average of \$146 each on textbook costs for the fall 2013 semester. [BC News Release](#)

The Ontario government has announced a \$42-million Centre of Excellence for Online Learning that will provide a central platform where students can access online courses. Called Ontario Online, the centre will operate through 3 inter-related "hubs:" a course hub that will offer the online courses, which are fully transferable between participating colleges and universities; an instruction hub that will allow institutions to develop and share best practices, research, and data on how best to teach online courses; and a support hub that will provide academic and technical assistance to students, instructors, and institutions. The \$42 million in startup funding will be disbursed by 2016, with up to \$12 million available this year, reports the *Globe and Mail*. [Ontario News Release](#) | [Globe and Mail](#)

University Business reports on the growing trend of PSE institutions providing students with free or low-cost textbooks. [University Business](#)

January 2014 Report

University Affairs reports on the momentum that e-portfolios, online tools that allow students to store assignments and reflections on their educational experience, have gained among PSE institutions across the country. [University Affairs](#)

A recent US survey of online education reveals that online enrolment growth is slowing, though not yet plateauing, and that a divide is forming between institutions that offer online courses and degree programs and those that don't. [Inside Higher Ed](#) | [Full Report](#)

A new report by the US-based Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) found that 58% of public PSE institutions restrict free speech on campus. How does this impact academic freedom? A [Canadian report](#) released last year graded Canadian student associations and institutions on free speech regulation, with only 6 institutions receiving an "A" grade. [Inside Higher Ed](#) | [Report](#)

Universities that award credit to students who pass MOOCs offered by their faculty could be undermining their ability to invest in promising students, because universities depend on donations from alum – the receipt of which, in turn, depends on the deep emotional connection that these students have to their school. [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) | [Full Paper](#)

The number of US students enrolled in at least one online course has increased faster (at 283%) than has overall PSE enrolment between 2002 and 2010. [DNJ.com](#) | [Report Summary](#)

A research paper by 2 Princeton University researchers compares social networks such as Facebook to an infectious disease, and abandonment of the platforms to recovery. The study also predicts that Facebook, which is “just beginning to show the onset of an abandonment phase” will lose 80% of its users by 2017. [Globe and Mail](#) | [Study Abstract](#)

Hours

Timesheets and Compliance

I have reviewed the hours of my fellow executives and found them to be consistently at or very near compliance with policy.

AUSU Executive Report

Jason Nixon, VP Finance and Administration

Prepared: January 10, 2013



Athabasca University
Students' Union

Current Issues

Holiday Quiet

I hope everyone had an excellent holiday season, I know myself and my family had a great Christmas and are looking forward to a productive new year. Things as they always end up slowing down around the AU community just before the holiday season and just after the holiday season and are just not starting to get back to normal. Of note during the holiday period AU has some furlough days that appear not to have significantly impacted students.

E-Text Sub Committee

Just before Christmas the E-text Sub Committee meet for the last time. The current E-text program has been un rolled across dozens of courses and the work the committee was doing to ensure that role out was as pleasant as possible for students was now completed. There have not been many major hiccups with the e-text role out which is a positive thing for our membership. However AUSU has maintained and continues to maintain that we want choice for all students on this issue. We will continue to advocate that position which we believe is what the majority of our membership wants. I am happy to report that we have been given assurances that this is the direction that AU will go with in regards to text books. Exactly when and how that will take place we still have not been able to nail down but we will continue to push this issue going forward. However during the role out we were able to gain some positives for our membership even though we have not been able to obtain full choice yet. The biggest wins were that we were able to get membership access to text books when the register not when the course starts to keep it the same as it was and most text books will be available to students for life as long as they own the devices they use to download.

Pending Issues

Audit

The audit for the 2012 / 2013 fiscal year is well under way and appears to be going very well. No major issues have arisen during this process and we should have the results to report to council and to membership in the coming weeks.

Meetings

Exec Meeting – December 12

AUSU Council – December 9

AUSU Exec with SAMHC – December 10

ASEC Finance Meeting – December 11

AU Board Finance and Property Meeting – December 13

ASEC Finance Meeting – December 14

AUSU Exec with AU VPA and Dir IS – December 18

AUSU Exec with VPA and Dir Finance – December 20

Exec Meeting – January 7

AU Board Meeting – January 9

AUSU Exe Meeting – January 13

AUSU Council – January 13

Hours

Timesheets and Compliance

At present, all executives, including myself, are behind on sending out our hours for the period immediately before and after the holiday office closure, but as of the most recent hours we had submitted, all executives were within the acceptable range dictated by policy, and I have no doubt that we will catch up on sending our hours to fellow executives in the immediate future.