

Annual Report 2017

March 31, 2017

For the fiscal year spanning October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016



Serving the needs of Athabasca
University undergraduate students
around the world since 1992.



Athabasca University
Students' Union

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The data in this report refers to the 2015/2016 fiscal year spanning October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016. For verification and explanation of all financial data, contact the AUSU VP Finance and Administration at vpfa@ausu.org.

The 'year ahead' section refers to the 2016/2017 fiscal year spanning October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017.

Email ausu@ausu.org if you have any questions pertaining to this report.

AUSU Objectives and Guiding Principles

The Objectives of AUSU are to:

- Assist our members in achieving their educational goals at Athabasca University,
- Represent the will of our members to Athabasca University, to the public, and to all levels of government,
- Promote the general welfare and a sense of community and student involvement for AUSU members, and
- Provide resources and initiatives that further the association's objectives.

In pursuit of our objectives, we will:

- Keep our members at the forefront of our actions,
- Be proud of our organization and celebrate the members' successes,
- Advocate for the individual but never to the detriment of the membership as a whole,
- Enhance the recognition of AUSU members and their interests,
- Advocate for universal accessibility to quality post-secondary education,
- Promote and participate in developing open and distance education,
- Foster opportunities for educational excellence for our members,
- Provide services important to our members,
- Responsibly manage the assets of the organization in the best interests of our members,
- Be aware that all actions set precedent,
- Demonstrate respect towards council, staff, and AUSU members, and
- Constantly measure ourselves against these principles.

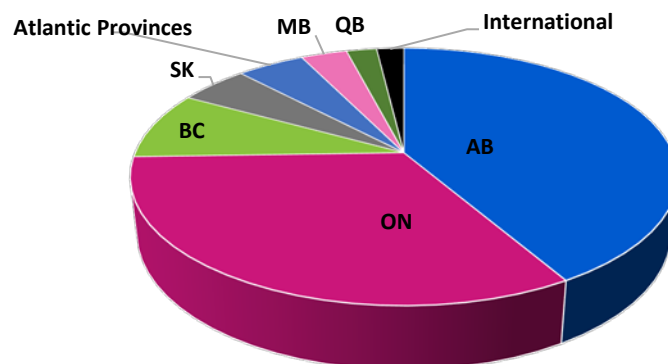
Demographics

AUSU represents a unique demographic of students. Since Athabasca University is an open, online institution, AUSU's membership is spread all across Canada, and increasingly across the world.

Undergraduate Student Enrollment

AU students come from every Canadian province and territory and 87 countries worldwide. *

Location	Percent
Alberta	40.9%
Ontario	32.4%
British Columbia	8.4%
Saskatchewan	4.8%
Atlantic Provinces	4.7%
Manitoba	3.2%
Quebec	2.1%
International	1.9%



* Data from <http://www.athabascau.ca/aboutau/glance/>. January 27, 2017.




Organization Info

Athabasca University Students' Union

301 Energy Square
10109 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB T5J 3L7

Direct Line: 780.497.7000
Toll free: 1.855.497.7003
Office hours: Monday to Friday 8:30 – 4:30

Social Media

 twitter.com/AthabascaUSU
 facebook.com/AthaUSU
 linkedin.com/company/AUSU

AUSU Staff

Executive Director
Vacant executivedirector@ausu.org

Communications and Member Services Coordinator
Donette Kingyens services@ausu.org

Administrative Assistant
Jamie Mulder admin@ausu.org

The Voice Magazine Editor
Karl Low karl@voicemagazine.org

AUSU Council

President
Shawna Wasylyshyn president@ausu.org

VP External and Student Affairs (VPEx)
Julian Teterenko vpex@ausu.org

VP Finance and Administration (VPFA)
Kim Newsome vpfa@ausu.org

Councillors

Robin Bleich	<i>As of October 13, 2016</i>
Andrew Gray	<i>As of April 14, 2016</i>
Scott Jacobsen	<i>As of April 14, 2016</i>
Amanda Lipinski	<i>As of October 13, 2016</i>
Brandon Simmons	

Previous Council & Executives

Josh Cross	<i>Until August 9, 2016</i>
Megan Daigneault	<i>Until April 14, 2016</i>
Colleen Doucette	<i>VPEx until April 14, 2016</i>
Philip Kirkbride	<i>Until June 24, 2016</i>
Pierre Plamondon	<i>Until April 14, 2016</i>
Tamra Ross	<i>Until April 14, 2016</i>
Dixie Toliver	<i>Until January 10, 2017</i>
Laura Zhu	<i>Until April 14, 2016</i>
Brandon Simmons	<i>VPEx until August 31, 2016</i>

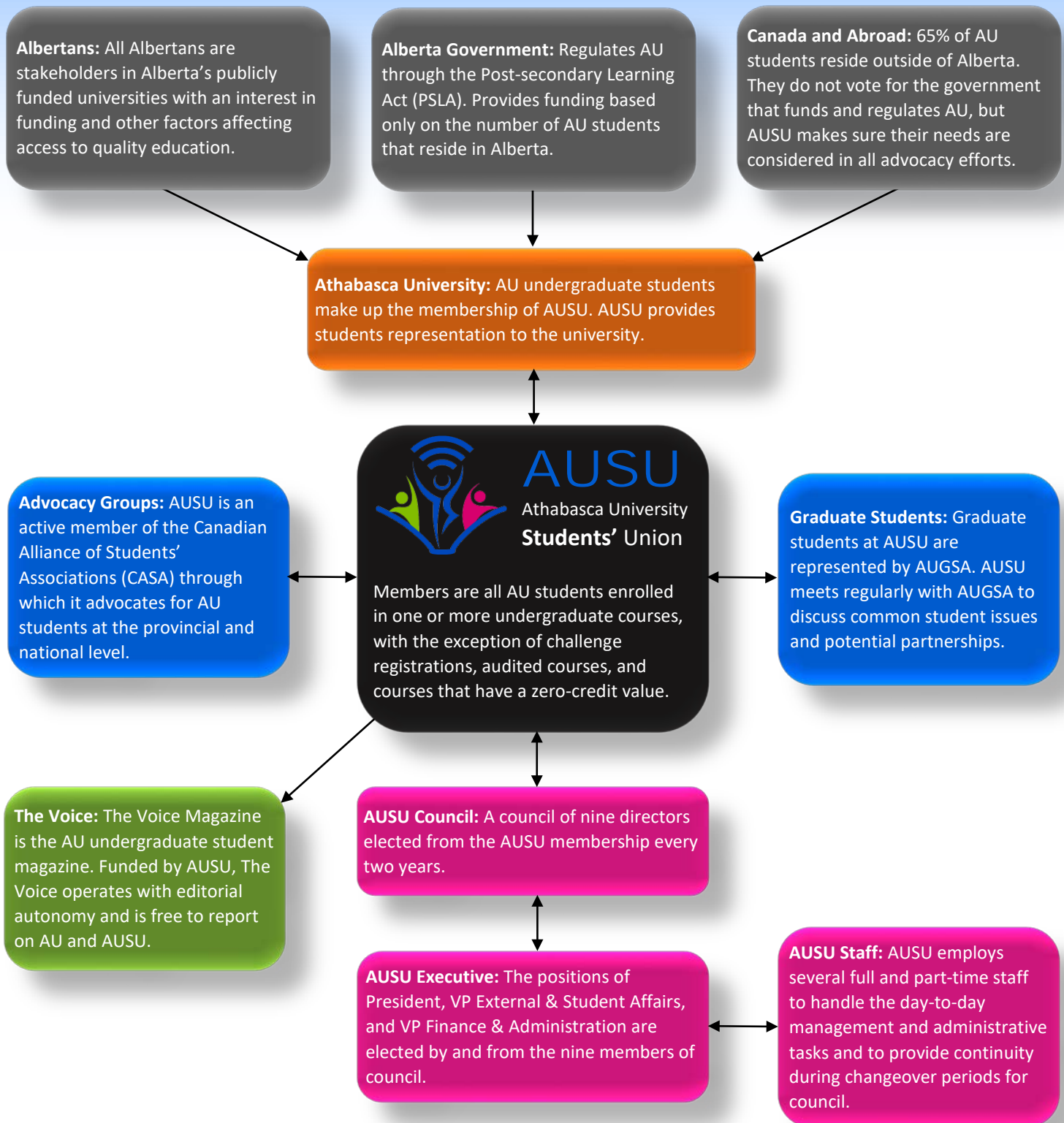
www.ausu.org

DID YOU KNOW?

AUSU was the first students' union in the world devoted to serving the needs of distance education students. Since our inception in 1992, we have developed programs and practices that have been adopted by other burgeoning students' unions serving distance education populations worldwide.



Organization Structure



President Report

The AUSU fiscal year ending September 30, 2016 represented a period of increased stability, engagement, confirmed relevance to our stakeholders, and commitment to our mandate.

Financially, AUSU had a successful year, boasting an increase in net assets largely due to revenue surpluses from our investments and student fees, as well as an emphasis on lowering operating costs. AUSU remains in a strong and stable position financially due to accurate budgeting and mild revenue growth. We have also begun investigating the possibility of long-term office space with AU in hopes of further reducing office costs for AUSU in 2020 and beyond.

This year, AUSU held more official member engagement opportunities than ever before, and worked hard toward transparency and accountability. We hosted in person member meet and greet events in Edmonton, Halifax, and Ottawa, as well as offered a 30-minute question and answer period as a portion of each public meeting of council. Council also created a framework for members at large to participate on AUSU committees, and we developed three ad-hoc committees to help council address issues of concern.

- The Forensic Audit Recommendation Committee was formed in response to a member request for an in-depth forensic audit of AUSU. While the committee did not recommend a forensic audit, it did make several recommendations to council, which were all implemented.
- The Executive Compensation Committee was formed to create a long term, consistent method for an executive compensation review. All of the recommendations of this committee were implemented.
- The Joint Voice/Council Action Plan Committee was formed to help address questions about the future of The Voice Magazine. This committee's work extended into February of 2017, and recommendations and action items are still being worked through.

AUSU council held an in-person retreat in Edmonton in June 2016, which included participation of 5 councillors and 2 staff members. Everyone who was involved in this event agreed it was invaluable to the success and cohesion of a council that works almost entirely at a distance. Funding for a 2017 event was included in the 2016/2017

budget and we hope that this is something that future councils will continue to facilitate.

This fiscal year presented council with some difficult decisions, including discontinuing an AUSU Health and Dental Plan. Unfortunately, as a non-mandatory opt-in plan; this service was plagued by low enrollment and high utilization by participants. Given a choice to supplement the cost of the plan to ensure profitability for the insurer, or cease operations of the plan, council made a decision to shut down this service. Recognizing the consequences for those who enrolled in the plan, AUSU council created a health care bursary in an effort to support members who would not have access to health care benefits on their own.

In our role as representatives of all undergraduate students at Athabasca University, AUSU council was busy in 2015/2016. We continue to hold seats as members of AU's governing bodies - the Board of Governors and General Faculties Council (GFC), as well as standing committees of each. We also participate on each AU Faculty Council and meet regularly with each member of the AU executive team, as well as each Dean. This year, AU also welcomed its 8th President, Dr. Neil Fassina, and I was proud to represent students on the hiring committee that selected him.

On behalf of AUSU, we advocated to AU on topics such as response times for academic questions and assignment grades, as well as e-text/course material cost savings and choice. The majority of our advocacy efforts this year were dedicated to students in the Faculty of Health Disciplines. In January of 2016, FHD announced that it would be making program changes that would be applied retroactively to all students enrolled in a program, as well as adding GPA pre-requisites to core courses in the program. Over the following few months, other changes were added as well, such as a new form of GPA Calculation called Average Grade Threshold (AGT). Program changes of this scale and scope had never occurred previously at AU, and these changes rendered students incapable of completing their program. We advocated tirelessly on this topic to every stakeholder, and were successful in having the AGT removed, as well as the GPA pre-requisite implementation delayed by one year. We have worked hard to ensure that permanent changes are made to AU's

President Report continued...

internal governance structure through GFC so that similar program changes would be impossible in the future.

As members of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), we participated in 4 CASA conferences, including sending all 3 executives to the CASA Policy and Strategy conference in Halifax in November 2015, as well as 2 executives to CASA Advocacy Week and AGM in Ottawa in February, 2016. We had two executives attend CASA Foundations in Ottawa in May 2016, and the AUSU Executive Director, Sarah Cornett represented AUSU at a conference in Winnipeg in August 2016. An important way to realize the value of our CASA membership is to ensure representation at CASA events.

In March of 2016, AUSU held a general election and surprisingly only 9 candidates submitted a nomination,

which resulted in election through acclamation. Following the vacancies of two council seats, a successful by-election was held in September of 2016. Although we have noted an increase in member engagement (through social media, meet and greets, and elsewhere), interest in AUSU council positions remains low and this is a risk to our association. We must ensure a strong, accountable, and elected council is in place to work toward the mission of AUSU and maintain representation of our membership.

AUSU has a strong staff, a dedicated council and a stronger than ever set of policies and bylaws to guide our organization into the future. We remain committed to our guiding principles and our mandate, and understand our role in advocating for the future of online post-secondary education.



Shawna Wasylyshyn
President

AUSU continues to provide lynda.com membership for free to all members.



The advertisement features a dark, geometric background with a Lynda.com logo on the left. The main headline reads "New Skills. Improved skills. Now." Below this, there are ten colored squares, each representing a different skill category with an icon and text: 3D Printing (green), 3D Modeling (orange), Design (teal), Photography (dark grey), Developer (light grey), Web (yellow), Animation (light green), Video (blue), and Audio + Music (light blue). The text "lynda.com" is also visible in the bottom left corner of the banner.

VP External and Student Affairs Report

Over the past year, AUSU has accomplished a great deal. We have increased our advocacy efforts and presence with AU, as well as provincially and federally. Through meetings, committees, consultations, and advocacy conferences, AUSU always makes sure that AU students have a voice.

Within AU, we regularly meet with AU executives, allowing us to bring forward concerns and ideas to improve the student experience at AU. We sit on all faculty council committees, where we find out what is going on in the faculties and suggest ideas. AUSU has also given input in the AU budget consultations, helped with the Student Experience Team, sat on student advisory group committees and sub-committees on the General Faculties Council, among others, where we have been able to successfully bring forward the student viewpoint.

AUSU executives also hold seats on the Board of Governors and several of their sub-committees, and have helped with the management and operation of the institution in accordance to its mandate. Since the institution is for students, we are able to bring student viewpoints to AU.

Provincially, AUSU met with members of the Alberta government to discuss student concerns and the future for Athabasca University. We met with the Minister of Advanced Education to discuss with him the uniqueness of AU, future funding for the institution, and the uncertainty that students had regarding the stability and future of AU.

On the federal side, we have been active with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), and participated in various committees and conferences that took place. It is important for AUSU to be a part of this as it helps us give AU students a voice at the national level.

During election season, we helped in CASA's Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaign, which aimed to get more students participating and voting in the federal election. As a part of CASA, we brought awareness to the importance of voting to students all across Canada, which lead to successfully getting tens of thousands of students to pledge to vote.

Our executives were able to attend four CASA conferences, which is where we discuss the future work of CASA, work on policies, and advocate for students at the national level. In November 2015, we attended the Policy and Strategy

conference in Halifax. In February 2016, we were in Ottawa for the CASA AGM and Advocacy Week, where CASA delegates from across Canada meet with MP's, Senators, and other public servants on Parliament Hill to discuss what the government can do for students on a national level. In May 2016, we attended CASA Foundations in Ottawa, which is when new delegates learn more about CASA, and board and committee seats are determined. For the last conference in August 2016 in Winnipeg, AUSU's executive director attended on AUSU's behalf.

Our member engagement increased during the 2015/2016 year as well. AUSU has been able to host a number of meet and greets in Edmonton, Ottawa, and Halifax to help foster student engagement, and we also increased our presence on social media and the student mobile app.

During 2015/2016, we also started on a Social Media Communications Strategy to help us improve our engagement with our members. We continue to work on this with the help of the Member Engagement and Communication Committee, and hope that it can result in even better communications with students.

In December 2015, we launched a survey for our members about AU service standards and response times. We received over 900 responses, which were compiled and shared with our membership and key personnel at AU. This survey gave us valuable information to help direct AUSU's advocacy goals on our member's behalf.

AUSU met in person for a council retreat for the first time in over a decade. We met in June over the course of a few days, and this resulted in many great and new ideas being discussed. It was invaluable to the success and the continued steadiness of the council. As we are a distance council, being able to meet in person greatly improved the overall work and cohesion of the council.

AUSU will continue to represent its members to AU and the provincial and federal governments. The unique situation of attending a distance university is always at the forefront of our minds, and we will continue doing our best to advocate on behalf of AU students with our guiding principles in mind.



Julian Tetrenko
Vice President External & Student Affairs

VP Finance & Administration Report

Hello AUSU members and Board of Directors,

The following report is a summary of the annual financial statements for the fiscal year ending September 30th, 2016. Complete statements and notes are included at the end of this report.

The main source of income for AUSU continues to be student fees. AUSU budgeted for a deficit of \$133,594.10 during the 2015/2016 fiscal year. However, AUSU ended the fiscal year with a surplus of \$37,697.47.

The 2015/2016 budget was created when both the executive director and the VPFA at the time were new to the organization. The budgeting process was based on past expenses, with a goal to reduce internal operating expenses as much as possible over the year.

This was accomplished, and is evident in the documented savings as shown in the year-end financial statements.

The following is a breakdown of significant differences in budgeted spending in 2015/2016 fiscal year:

Actual student fees were approximately 3% higher than budgeted.

Investment income was significantly higher than expected, more than \$34,000 over the budgeted amount. Additionally, investment fees ended up being only approximately half of what was budgeted, resulting in over \$5000 in savings.

Approximately \$7000 in additional savings were realized from reduced administration expenses such as insurance, postage, and telephone/internet.

Approximately \$32,000 in staff and councillor payroll savings mostly due to vacancies or unused benefits.

Approximately \$16,000 was unused in the awards and bursaries category. Emergency and travel bursaries had low interest, and an additional \$9200 was budgeted in this area but not dedicated to a particular award.

Approximately \$13,000 was below budget in representation expenses. Low costs in the internal/external advocacy efforts and realized savings in delegate fees contributed to this.

Approximately \$13,000 in savings were realized under member programs because billing for several member

services was either renegotiated to a lesser amount, or billing was less than expected.

We have completed our 2015/2016 financial audit by the firm Kingston Ross Pasnak. This is the 10th audit with this firm, and we continue to be satisfied with the dedicated and detailed work of the audit staff. We are pleased to note KRP's testing of AUSU's financial records did not reveal any illegal or possibly illegal acts. Throughout the auditing process, we included AUSU's bookkeeper in the communication, and as a result we were able to enhance some of our internal procedures to assist with our financial record keeping and reporting.

Changes in Policy 1.01 were approved by council and this resulted in some new procedures for how policies are reviewed. AUSU has struggled for some time with to keep up with the timelines previously set out for review of policies consistently. These changes have already proven to be beneficial and AUSU is currently on par with the schedule that was set out. Additional efforts were made to consolidate policies in several areas and address policy gaps by revising current policies and creating some new ones.

Administratively, AUSU continues to work on creating and documenting processes and procedures within the organization. This will help create consistency in work for both staff and councillors.

I would describe the 2015/2016 fiscal year as one of the most stable years for AUSU for some time. There were no significant changes in staff or member services. AUSU was able to continue focusing on improving and promoting current services and also focus on improving advocacy efforts.

AUSU will continue to work on behalf of our members to strengthen our reputation and presence within the AU community and external opportunities where possible. AUSU will continue to evaluate current services and investigate new programs and services to ensure we are consistently meeting the needs of our members.



Kim Newsome
VP Finance and Administration

AUSU Goals and Progress Report*

Approved by council on July 9, 2015.

Website – *Launch and promote new AUSU website to better serve the needs of members and council*

1. Work with the web developers to ensure that all desired content is incorporated or archived into the new website including:
 - Digital awards applications (new)
 - Course evaluations (new)
 - All current website content

COMPLETE

2. Work with web developers and AUSU staff to train staff and develop written instructions for maintaining and updating the new website including:
 - Posting blogs
 - Updating/uploading policies and documents
 - Creating/deleting pages as needs and services change

COMPLETE

3. Use social media and other appropriate avenues to promote the new website and its features.

COMPLETE

Communications - *Improve outgoing communications and membership engagement*

1. Develop a procedure to communicate with new members that highlights AUSU's services.

COMPLETE

2. Develop and implement a social media strategy that incorporates AUSU's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

COMPLETE

3. Investigate a Writer in Residence program.

COMPLETE

4. Analyze the results of the recent survey that closed June 15 and explore possible changes based on member feedback.

COMPLETE

External Advocacy – *Highlight and communicate AUSU membership's unique needs and priorities more effectively to external stakeholders.*

1. Become familiar with CASA organization (goals, policies, bylaws, etc.).

COMPLETE

2. Actively participate in the 4 yearly conferences with minimum of 1 executive attending in person.

COMPLETE

Services – *Successfully launch and monitor new and recent services available to the AUSU membership*

1. Work with AUSU staff and Oohlala to successfully launch and promote the new AUSU/AUGSA mobile app.

COMPLETE

2. Work with AUSU staff and Ceridian to successfully launch and promote the new Student Life Line (Mental Health Services).

COMPLETE

3. Review all usage reports provided by Oohlala and Ceridian to gauge uptake of the new services.

COMPLETE

4. Work with Gallivan to assess the feasibility of the Health Care plan and discuss the ability of the plan to continue.

COMPLETE

Governance – *Review and revise the AUSU policy manual as needed*

1. Evaluate the current bylaws and policies and their current compliance with the PSLA. Review previous legal opinions and suggestions regarding bylaws. Make appropriate updates as a result of recommendations and implement changes.

COMPLETE

2. Conduct a successful general election.

COMPLETE

3. Complete all policy review and revision in the 2015/2016 year as outlined in Policy 1.01.

COMPLETE

4. Investigate Governance Training for staff and executive members.

COMPLETE

Internal Advocacy – *Improve services and support to AUSU membership within the AU community*

1. Continue to foster a positive working relationship between AU and AUSU through regular meetings and discussions with AU executives.

COMPLETE

The Voice – *Support The Voice as an important member service and form of communication of AUSU*

1. Work collaboratively with The Voice to help create a meaningful action plan to improve the publication and increase readership by:
 - Providing support to The Voice as requested to ensure a successful consultation process,
 - Reviewing and making recommendations to the action plan as presented by The Voice, and
 - Supporting the implementation of the action plan through non-financial resources as agreed.

ON TRACK & CARRIED OVER TO 2016/2017

2. Work collaboratively with The Voice to develop a procedure to review and reassess the action plan on a regular basis that shall include:
 - Inviting The Voice to meet with council to discuss the successes and challenges at defined points in the action plan, and
 - Making recommendations to The Voice on potential ideas where AUSU can help with the identified challenges.

ON TRACK & CARRIED OVER TO 2016/2017

Forensic Audit Recommendation Committee Recommendations – *Implement the recommendations contained in the report to council of the Forensic Audit Recommendation Committee by the end of the 2015/2016 fiscal year.*

1. Work to provide clear and open answers to the members' questions, and address their concerns by:
 - Council formally adopting the committee report at the March 10th regular meeting, making the report readily available to the AUSU membership immediately thereafter, and
 - Including each of the committee's recommendations on council's action sheet to be tracked.

COMPLETE

2. Work to address issues surrounding Jason Nixon collecting executive director salary by:
 - Creating policy specifically around compensation in the event of the president taking on the role of executive director,
 - Considering policy to limit the time period that a president can take on the role of executive director,
 - Having the executive committee look at a procedure for executive motions in addition to recent changes at council level.

COMPLETE

3. Work to address issues surrounding the 2015 executive compensation increase by:
 - Ensuring the current ad hoc Executive Compensation Review Committee fulfils its mandate in a timely manner and that council duly consider the committee's recommendations.
 - Making the Executive Compensation Review Committee, or a comprehensive executive compensation review process, permanent.

ON TRACK & CARRIED OVER TO 2016/2017

4. Work to address issues surrounding general overage in budgeted expenses by:
 - Continuing VPFA, executive director, and finance committee awareness of, and compliance with, the policy requirement for expenses above budgeted amounts.
 - Considering amending policy to include a dollar value as well as a percentage value for expenses over budgeted amounts requiring council approval.

COMPLETE

5. Work to address general concern over unclear decision-making processes by:
 - Directing the executive director to facilitate council education by ensuring thorough orientation and governance training.
 - Directing councillors to continue to take responsibility to ensure they are aware of governance, policy, and procedures.
 - Completing bylaw and policy review by end of 2016.

ON TRACK & CARRIED OVER TO 2016/2017

6. Work to address general concern over lack of documentation regarding decisions and financial information by:
- Complete review of all financial management policies.
 - Continuing with meeting processes and documentation and adopting a habit of continual improvement in this area.

COMPLETE

7. Work to address general concern over lack of communication and transparency to membership regarding decisions and financial information by:
- Posting regular financial reports on the AUSU website similar to the way meeting minutes are posted.
 - Continuing council and staff efforts at increasing transparency to the membership regarding decision making and financial information and adopt a habit of continual improvement in this area.

COMPLETE

2016 Council Retreat

In June 2016, AUSU held the first face-to-face council working retreat in over a decade, and we are happy to report that it was a great success!

The council retreat took place over a three-day period and had numerous intensive working sessions, two dinner events, a tour of the AU Edmonton Learning Center, as well as an in-person member meet and greet hosted at the AUSU office, and a face-to-face public council meeting. The objectives of the retreat were:

- to get to know each other
- facilitate teamwork
- ensure everyone is on the same page about where AUSU is and where it is going with respect to the work of AUSU council
- to set direction and start planning for the upcoming council year.

The retreat met all the above objectives, with a lot of brainstorming and action plans about AUSU goals, bylaws, budget, and advocacy efforts. Some highlights included plans for an ad-hoc Joint Council/Voice, an action plan for a bylaw review working group, and using feedback from the 2016 AUSU Services Survey to form budget, goal, and service priorities for the upcoming year. By holding an in-person retreat, the planning process for the 2016-2017 year allowed for maximum participation, open brainstorming, and great team building.

AUSU put together a report outlining all of the ideas and action items that came out of the retreat, which is available online [here](#).



Committee Representation

Athabasca University Committees		
AU Board of Governors	Brandon Simmons and Shawna Wasylyshyn	
Finance and Property		Brandon Simmons
Honorary Awards		Shawna Wasylyshyn
Institutional Advancement		Shawna Wasylyshyn
Academic Affairs		Shawna Wasylyshyn
AU General Faculties Council	Kim Newsome and Shawna Wasylyshyn	
Academic Excellence Awards Committee		Kim Newsome
Academic Learning Environment Committee		Kim Newsome
Executive Committee		Shawna Wasylyshyn
Student Academic Appeals Committee		Shawna Wasylyshyn
Student Awards Committee		Kim Newsome
ERP Service Advisory Group		Brandon Simmons
E-text Advisory Committee		Shawna Wasylyshyn
Faculty of Health Disciplines Faculty Council		Shawna Wasylyshyn
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Council	Kim Newsome and Brandon Simmons	
Faculty of Science and Technology Faculty Council		Brandon Simmons
ICT Governance Committee		Brandon Simmons
Middle States Accreditation Standards Committee		Shawna Wasylyshyn
Pedagogy and Research Service Advisory Group		Julian Teterenko
Student Experience Team		Kim Newsome
Student Relationship Management Project	Shawna Wasylyshyn and Brandon Simmons	

AUSU Standing Committees		
AUSU Awards Committee	AUSU Finance Committee	AUSU Member Engagement and Communications Committee
Scott Jacobsen (Chair)	Kim Newsome (Chair)	Julian Teterenko (Chair)
Robin Bleich	Robin Bleich	Kim Newsome
Kim Newsome	Andrew Gray	Scott Jacobsen
Amanda Lipinski	Scott Jacobsen	Amanda Lipinski
Shawna Wasylyshyn	Julian Teterenko	Jody Waddle
Sarah Cornett (staff)	Sarah Cornett (staff)	Sarah Cornett (staff)
Donette Kingyens (staff)		Donette Kingyens (staff)

AUSU Ad-Hoc Committees		
Executive Compensation Review Committee	Forensic Audit Recommendation Committee	AUSU Joint Council/Voice Action Plan Committee
Phillip Kirkbride	Carolyn Van Voorst (Chair)	Sarah Cornett (staff)
Kim Newsome	Philip Kirkbride	Karl Low
Tamra Ross	Kim Newsome	Scott Jacobsen
Brandon Simmons	Pierre Plamondon	Bonita Arbeau
Scott Jacobsen	Brandon Simmons	Lyle Harvey
Sarah Cornett (staff)		Carla Knipe
		Alex Pappas
		Lisa Sinclair

Advocacy

Advocacy is AUSU's number one priority. AUSU councillors dedicate a lot of time each year on advocacy efforts to benefit the undergraduate students of AU and to improve post-secondary education in Canada.

During 2015/2016, AUSU executives attended over 20 meetings with AU faculty and executives, including the President, Vice Presidents, the Registrar, and the Deans of all four undergraduate Faculties. AUSU Executives also attended over 50 meetings of various AU committees, including Board of Governors, General Faculties Council, and various Faculty Associations. See page 16 for a complete list of AU committees that AUSU sits on.

Some of the important topics AUSU discussed with the University include adherence to service standards, student choice for e-texts or physical textbooks, e-text cost savings sharing, improved communications with AU students, and reversal of the retroactive changes that were implemented in the LPN to BN program. You can read more about AUSU's individual advocacy efforts on our website [here](#).

In addition, AUSU executives attended over 30 committee meetings with the Canadian Alliance of Students' Association (CASA), travelled to various CASA conferences across Canada, and participated in CASA's Advocacy Week during which they met with various MP's and Senators on Parliament Hill to advocate for affordable and accessible post-secondary education in Canada. You can read more about the February 2016 advocacy week [here](#).



Pictured Above: AUSU President Shawna Wasylyshyn (far right) and CASA delegates with MP Kelley McCauley



Pictured Above: (former) AUSU VPEX Brandon Simmons, Minister of Advanced Education Marlin Schmidt, and President Shawna Wasylyshyn.

AUSU also met with Marlin Schmidt, the Minister of Advanced Education, on numerous occasions to advocate for improved funding and sustainability for Athabasca University. AUSU invited the Minister to attend the 2016 AU convocation to learn more about the impact AU has on the lives of students and staff alike as Canada's only open, online University. During these meetings, the Minister assured AUSU that the government is dedicated to the success of Athabasca University and will work to ensure it is sustainable in the long-term. You can read more AU's meetings with Minister Schmidt online [here](#).

AUSU continues to devote significant efforts to advocating on behalf of its members in an effort to make the student experience as positive as possible. If you have any ideas for advocacy topics, please contact ausu@ausu.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

AUSU has the lowest student union membership fees in the province of Alberta at a flat rate of only \$3 per credit and no additional fees. It is common at other institutions in Alberta to pay anywhere from \$5 to \$30 per credit, with flat rates per semester instead of per credit, and additional mandatory fees. AUSU keeps our cost low to help keep tuition and fees affordable for our members.

Awards Report

The Awards Committee was exceptionally busy during the 2015/2016 fiscal year. I feel genuine surprise and excitement from it.

I took on the role of the chair part way through the year, but was a highly active member of the committee even prior to that. In September, 2016, we launched two new bursaries - the Health Care Bursary and the Single Parent Bursary. I am proud to have instigated the idea for the Single Parent Bursary and to see it get approved by council.

Reports from previous years have noted the growth of AUSU's awards and bursaries program. This trend has continued into the present. There have been efforts from other committees, from the council, and from AUSU at large to engage and communicate with the AUSU membership, who we represent.

With the awards program, we have a distinct impetus to represent students with a number of awards and bursaries targeted to specific issues students may face as they pursue their online education, at their own pace, in their own way, through electronic means. As one AU slogan says, "Open. Online. Everywhere." Indeed.

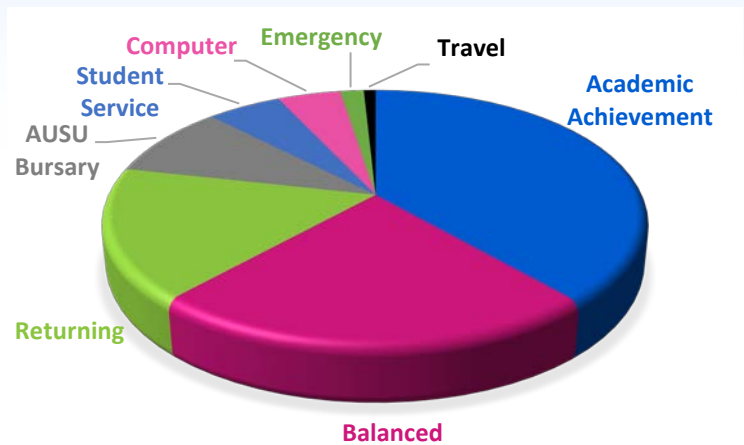
AUSU's awards and bursaries fall into two categories.

First, the financial based bursaries are there to help students in financial need, which could be general in the case of the AUSU bursary, or based on a specific need, such as a computer, health care, expenses as a single parent, or travel. AUSU will seriously consider all applications for these bursaries and work hard to provide the finances to support students in need.

Second, the merit based awards are there to awards merit and competencies in certain areas, such as academic achievement, being a balanced student, returning to studies after an educational hiatus, or showing service as a student in some way. The selection for these awards is not always easy – believe me, we received a huge number of applications throughout the year. Merit based awards are bi-annual: May and November.

For our cyclical awards, we received 139 applications in November 2015, and 196 applications in May 2016. In addition to this, we received 28 applications for our year-round bursaries, for a total of 363 applications in the 2015/2016 fiscal year.

363 Applications Received



For the merit based awards, we gave out \$4,000 for each award (Academic Achievement Award, Balanced Student Award, Returning Student Award, and Student Services Award). For the financial based bursaries, we gave out \$10,000 for the AUSU Bursary, \$4,243.99 for the Computer Bursary, \$1,140 for the Emergency Bursary, and \$1,771.77 for the Travel Bursary. In total, we provided \$33,155.76 in 2015/2016.

That's a fantastic accomplishment, and I was proud to be a part of it. For anyone interested in AUSU's awards or bursaries, I highly recommend checking out the full descriptions and requirements [here](#).

If you have ideas for new awards or bursaries, AUSU would love to hear from you at ausu@ausu.org.

Scott Jacobsen
Awards Committee Chair

AUSU Services

Since Athabasca University is an online institution and our members are spread out all over Canada and the world, AUSU's services are all designed to meet the needs of distance learners.

AUSU carefully evaluated our services in 2015/2016 to ensure we were making the best use of our membership dollars by adhering to the priorities of our membership. We decided to re-allocate some of our funds to improve the services that our members identified as most popular, and phase out services that were not being used. According to our [2016 AUSU Services Survey](#), the most popular AUSU services are awards and bursaries, as well as advocacy. To address this, AUSU has started offering additional awards and bursaries, and we have made significant strides in our advocacy efforts. To offset these costs, we discontinued two of the least popular services, the Student Calendar and Smart Draw, as these were each being used by less than 1% of the membership. We have also made a commitment to improving The Voice Magazine as an important service and means of communication between AU students.

Our current services have been very successful. They are outlined below, and can be accessed on our website [here](#).

Awards and Bursaries - *NEW BURSARIES!



AUSU continues to bring a variety of awards and bursaries to our membership, with over \$50,000 in available funds. Recognizing that our members indicated a preference for their membership dollars to go towards more awards and bursaries, we launched a new Single Parent Bursary, as well as a Health Care Bursary to help students in need fund a personal health plan. In honor of outgoing AU President Peter MacKinnon, we also offered a one time "Peter MacKinnon Student Services Award" in fall 2016. In 2015/2016, AUSU received 359 applications, and gave out over \$33,000 in awards and bursaries.

Mobile App

AUSU's mobile app continues to be a very popular service with a thriving campus community! The free app, which launched in late 2015, allows students to stay on top of their studies, get quick access to services and resources available to them, track events and deadlines, and connect with other students on the campus wall. There are currently over 3800 registered users, and during 2015/2016, there were over 10,000 posts and responses, and over 700 social connections made.



Student Lifeline Health & Wellness Program



AUSU's Student Lifeline is a comprehensive student assistance and wellness resource provided free for AUSU members. Members can access it anytime they need confidential support maintaining a healthy balance between school, work, and everyday life. It provides 24/7 support, private consultations, counselling (*up to 3 sessions, by video, phone, or in person across Canada, by video*), as well as hundreds of online resources! In 2015/2016, there were 910 visits to the Lifeline site, and over 500 resources used, including 57 individual counselling cases. The most commonly accessed resource topics were personal issues, mental health issues, couples issues, financial planning, and health habits.

lynda.com



AUSU continues to provide our members with free membership to Lynda.com, which is a \$375 value. Lynda.com offers premium on-line video training on a wide variety of skills useful to AU students, including Microsoft Office and Adobe software, business and career skills, digital editing programs, programming languages, and much more. Lynda.com features over 190,000 training videos. In 2015/2016, AUSU members viewed over 22,000 videos and logged over 1,500 hours of viewing time!

Online Course Evaluations

AUSU launched online course evaluations for all AU undergraduate courses (over 850 courses!). The evaluations can be easily accessed on our website, and although they are completely anonymous, they allow students to see all the feedback submitted for each course! AUSU monitors feedback to bring back to Athabasca University to ensure that both student concerns and praise are heard!



Advocacy



The most important service AUSU provides its membership is advocacy. AUSU represents members individually to the university itself, and has seats on over 20 AU Boards and Committees to ensure great representation and advocate for a quality education for all AUSU members. AUSU also represents AUSU members externally, at both a provincial and national level, and travelled to Ottawa for Advocacy Week with the Canadian Alliance of Students' Associations to advocate for post-secondary education on parliament Hill.

Eyewear Discounts *NEW

In September 2016, AUSU teamed up with FYiDoctors to provide eyewear discounts to our members! FYiDoctors has over 300 locations across Canada, which makes it a good fit for our membership since it is spread out all over the country! The discounts provide brand name frames starting at \$200 (single vision, retail value \$350) or \$300 for progressives (retail value \$450). Members can also get everyday value packages with glasses starting at \$159 for one pair of \$279 for two pair, as well as discounts on lens, coating upgrades, non-prescription sunglasses, and contact lenses.



Career Resources



Finding a job can be a struggle for students especially if they are not sure where to start. AUSU has a careers resources page on the AUSU website. This page offers links to online resources such as resume building and preparing for interviews. It links to various job fair organizations across Canada, as well as provides links to provincial and national job search engines.

AUSU Communications and Engagement

AUSU has worked hard over the past 2 years to ramp up our communications and member engagement. With such a widespread membership, virtual communications are AUSU's only real means of connecting with our membership. With this in mind, AUSU greatly improved our social media communications and newsletters, sent welcome emails to all new students, engaged with members on our mobile app, held contests to encourage more member engagement, obtained a text line, and continually researched other means of connecting with our members.

Social Media



AUSU recognized a need to increase our communications to the membership to ensure transparency and member awareness of resources available to them and AUSU initiatives. Along with hiring a new Communications and Member Services Coordinator, AUSU developed a new and improved social media communication strategy and made significant efforts to increase posts to AUSU Twitter and Facebook, as well as the campus feed in the Mobile App and AU Facebook forum. During the 2015/2016 year, we saw a significant increase in our post reach and member engagement.

The Voice Magazine

The Voice Magazine is the official publication of the students of Athabasca University, and is full of articles created by students and guest writers to share news, ideas, opinions and valuable insights. Student writers have gone on to be professional editors and published authors, including for Maclean's Magazine. In 2016 AUSU also formed an ad-hoc Joint Council/Voice Action Plan Committee to come up with a plan for improving The Voice Magazine and increasing readership.



AUSU Website



Since our members access our services primarily online, AUSU's website is the most important platform to provide information about AUSU. AUSU has a mobile-friendly website that is always kept up to date on our services, events, meetings, finances, news, council members, and more. We also recently added in social media sharing buttons for our news stories and executive blog, and added the ability to comment on articles we post, which AUSU ensures are addressed promptly. The website includes online awards applications, instant chat to message AUSU staff during business hours, plus AUSU's latest tweets, and polls to engage our members.

Welcome Email

AUSU recognizes that one of the biggest challenges for AU students is finding out about all of the services and resources available to them. To help address this challenge, AUSU sends welcome emails to all new members twice a month. This welcome email outlines who AUSU is, what services and resources we offer, our social media sites, methods for connecting with other students. In 2015/2016, AUSU sent out almost 8,000 welcome emails to new AU students. We always see a sharp increase in traffic to our website when a new welcome email is sent, so we know the email is useful to getting word out about AUSU!



Grad Cards

AUSU loves to celebrate our members' successes, and we appreciate that graduating from university is an extraordinary accomplishment. To recognize the efforts of undergraduate students at AU, AUSU mails out cards to the graduates of every AU undergraduate program and certificate to offer our congratulations. In 2015/2016, AUSU mailed out over 900 cards to graduates and gave away even more during the June 2016 convocation. We have even seen the card featured in some pictures on social media from excited graduates!



Contests



In an effort to engage with our membership, AUSU ran a very successful #igo2AU contest in Fall 2016. The grand prize for the contest was a free undergraduate course at Athabasca University. The contest offered students up to 5 different possible entries by getting engaged with AUSU on social media, our website, meetings, mobile app, and more. The contest was a huge success with over 775 entries. AUSU set a series of goals that were successfully met as a result of the contest, including a significant increase in followers and engagement on social media, over 450 new mobile app accounts, and a large increase in traffic to our website and course evaluations.

Newsletters

AUSU recently took strides to improving communications with our membership, including sending out more frequent newsletters. We understand how important it is for our members to stay informed about AUSU's initiatives, meetings, services, and events! In 2015/2016, AUSU sent out 37 newsletters and special editions to an average of 24,800 students per newsletter. The newsletters had an average open rate of 30% and over 10,000 clicks on links we provided to increase the members' awareness of events, services, and current AUSU initiatives.



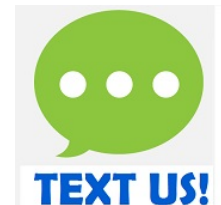
Executive Blog



AUSU's executives write a monthly executive blog to keep our membership up to date on what is currently going on with AU and AUSU. Topics in 2015/2016 included updates on AUSU's advocacy efforts with AU and the government, the Fort McMurray fires, the Alberta tuition review, bylaws, elections, the AU financial situation, and more!

Texting

AUSU values and encourages member feedback, so we obtained a new text line in Fall 2016 as a new way for members to reach out to us (780-900-0908). We have started posting questions to our membership to get feedback by text on various important topics, such as whether or not members would travel for AUSU Meet & Greet. Stay tuned for many more opportunities to text AUSU in the future!



AUSU is always looking for new ways to engage with our membership, so stay tuned for new opportunities in the coming year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donette Kingyens".

Donette Kingyens
Communications and Member Services Coordinator

Important to Know

Finances are an important part of any annual report and the following pages provide some useful information to our members and stakeholders.

The charts immediately below provide a summary of the investments and a breakdown of expenses for the fiscal year from October 1, 2015 through to September 30, 2016. The following pages contain the audit report and the audited financial statements for the same 2015/2016 fiscal year. The last document in the finances section shows the budget AUSU is currently working with for the 2016/2017 fiscal year.

For commentary on finances, please see the report from the Vice President of Finance and Administration, Kim Newsome on page 8. Monthly financial reports are posted at www.ausu.org and any questions can be directed to vpfa@ausu.org or executivedirector@ausu.org.



Sarah Cornett
Executive Director

Investment Summary

2013/2014 Fiscal Year End

SHORT TERM AND FIXED INCOME

\$197,635 24.23% Short Term Notes/Cash
\$309,494 37.95% Fixed Income Mutual Funds

EQUITY

\$160,970 19.74% Canadian Equity
\$147,467 18.08% Non-Canadian Equity
\$815,566

2014/2015 Fiscal Year End

SHORT TERM AND FIXED INCOME

\$20,380 2.52% Short Term Notes/Cash
\$425,380 52.61% Fixed Income Mutual Funds

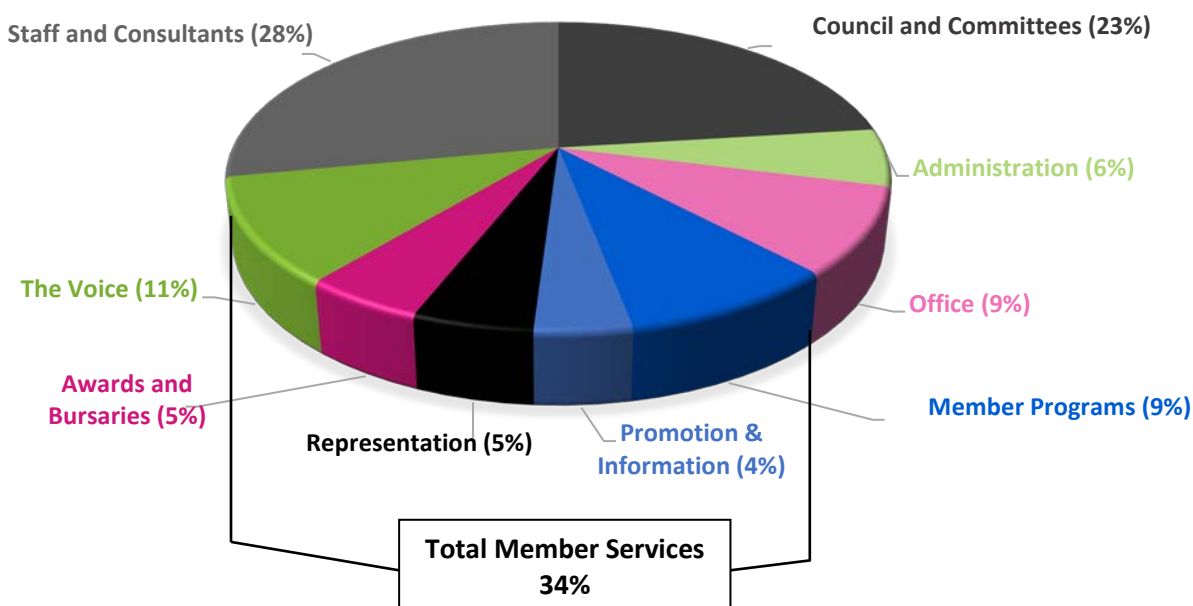
EQUITY

\$186,567 23.07% Canadian Equity
\$176,295 21.80% Non-Canadian Equity
\$808,622

\$60,000 *Withdrawal*
\$3,210 *Fees*
\$3,210 *Contributions*
\$56,236 *Net Change in Portfolio*

Breakdown of Expenses

(2015/2016 Fiscal Year)



Audited Financial Reports 2015/2016



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February 1, 2017
Edmonton, Alberta

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Athabasca University Students' Union

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Athabasca University Students' Union, which comprise the statement of financial position as at September 30, 2016 and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flow for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Athabasca University Students' Union as at September 30, 2016 and the results of its operations and its cash flow for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Kingston Ross Pasnak LLP
Chartered Professional Accountants

Statement of Financial Position

September 30, 2016

	2016	2015
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 243,097	\$ 199,409
Restricted cash (Note 4)	5,003	120,370
Marketable securities (Note 5)	806,221	815,676
Accounts receivable	57,446	91,349
Prepaid expenses	9,832	2,586
	1,121,599	1,229,390
EQUIPMENT (Note 6)	4,958	13,575
INTANGIBLE ASSET	-	8,167
	\$ 1,126,557	\$ 1,251,132
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 27,855	\$ 70,498
Employee benefits payable	-	2,630
Deferred student fees	89,226	91,842
Student health care benefits payable (Note 4)	5,003	119,820
	122,084	284,790
LEASE COMMITMENT (Note 7)		
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	974,730	741,850
Internally restricted (Note 8)	24,785	202,751
Invested in equipment and intangible assets	4,958	21,741
	1,004,473	966,342
	\$ 1,126,557	\$ 1,251,132

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD



Director



Director

Statement of Operations**For the Year Ended September 30, 2016**

	(Unaudited) Budget 2016	Total 2016	Total 2015
REVENUE			
Student fees (<i>Note 10</i>)	\$ 607,000	\$ 624,114	\$ 611,268
Student Health Care Benefits	-	18,794	3,149
Merchandise	880	359	580
Advertising and promotion	-	-	2,880
	607,880	643,267	617,877
EXPENSES			
Staff wages and benefits	238,500	218,087	280,350
Council wages and benefits	170,800	151,178	104,832
Online and technology services	62,312	54,423	52,712
Rental	57,000	53,715	55,378
Awards	52,000	34,422	38,952
Representation	43,000	32,581	28,782
Professional fees	28,980	30,813	51,211
Events and programs	35,900	26,064	19,396
Office	12,250	11,316	14,308
Teleconference meetings	12,500	8,736	2,600
Amortization of intangible assets	9,000	8,167	49,000
Investment fees	11,500	6,357	8,300
Administration	5,700	4,830	8,878
Student handbook	4,200	4,326	16,774
Advertising and promotion	2,900	3,102	3,165
Amortization of tangible assets	4,850	2,194	4,286
Newsletter	1,737	1,737	-
Insurance	2,500	1,281	1,020
Interest and bank charges	824	1,036	1,027
	756,453	654,365	740,971
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS			
	(148,573)	(11,098)	(123,094)
OTHER INCOME (EXPENSES)			
Unrealized gains (losses) on investments	15,000		
Dividend income	-	15,655	13,064
Interest income	-	11,280	4,223
Unrealized foreign exchange gain	-	-	37
Loss on disposal of equipment	-	(7,210)	
Loss on disposal of investments	-	(9,670)	(1,540)
	15,000	49,229	(583)
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES			
	\$ (133,573)	\$ 38,131	\$ (123,677)

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended September 30, 2016

	Unrestricted	Internally Restricted	Invested in equipment and intangible assets	2016	2015
NET ASSETS –					
BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$ 741,850	\$ 202,751	\$ 21,741	\$ 966,342	\$ 1,090,019
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	55,702	-	(17,571)	38,131	(123,677)
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(788)	-	788	-	-
Approved transfers of restricted funds (Note 8)	150,052	(150,052)	-	-	-
Approved use of restricted funds (Note 10)	27,914	(27,914)	-	-	-
NET ASSETS – END OF YEAR	\$ 974,730	\$ 24,785	\$ 4,958	\$ 1,004,473	\$ 966,342

Statement of Cash Flow

Year Ended September 30, 2016

	2016	2015
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Cash receipts	\$ 674,554	\$ 587,026
Cash paid to suppliers and employees	(810,300)	(525,171)
Interest paid	(1,038)	(1,028)
Cash flow from operating activities	(136,784)	60,827
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of equipment	(788)	-
Dividend income	15,655	13,064
Interest income	11,280	4,223
Purchase of marketable securities	(717,145)	(1,877,375)
Proceeds of disposal of marketable securities	756,103	1,817,165
Cash flow used by investing activities	65,105	(42,923)
DECREASE (INCREASE) IN CASH	(71,679)	17,904
CASH - BEGINNING OF YEAR	319,779	301,875
CASH - END OF YEAR	\$ 248,100	\$ 319,779
CASH CONSISTS OF:		
Cash	\$ 243,097	\$ 199,409
Restricted cash	5,003	120,370
	\$ 248,100	\$ 319,779

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended September 30, 2016

1. AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

On March 18, 2004, Athabasca University Students' Union ("AUSU") was incorporated under the Post-Secondary Learning Act. AUSU is administered by a board of directors and its principal purpose is to provide for the administration of the affairs of the Athabasca University undergraduate students, including the development and management of student institutions, the development and implementation of a system of student governing principles, the promotion of the general welfare of Athabasca University undergraduate students and the furtherance of the values inherent in an open University as well as of life-long learning. AUSU is a non-profit organization under the Income Tax Act (Canada) and, as such, is not liable for payment of income taxes.

2. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

AUSU receives substantially all of its revenue from Athabasca University as legislated under the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act section 95(2)e that provides for the "maintenance of the association by the levy of membership fees on its members." Should Athabasca University substantially change its dealings with AUSU subsequent to legislative changes permitting such, management is of the opinion that continued viable operations would be doubtful.

3. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of presentation

The financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNFO). Significant accounting policies observed in the preparation of the financial statements are summarized below.

Marketable Securities

Common and preferred shares and American Depository Receipts traded on active markets are carried at fair value. All other marketable securities are carried at amortized cost.

Equipment

Equipment is amortized on a straight line basis over estimated useful lives at the following rates:

Furniture and equipment	Ten years
Computer equipment	Three years

Intangible assets

The software license was amortized on a straight-line basis over the three year life of the license.

Deferred student fees

The AUSU records student fees at the beginning of a course's progression. Some of the fees received prior to year end relate to courses which commence in the next fiscal year. These fees are classified as deferred and recognized as revenue one month subsequent to the start of the course to which the fees relate.

(continues)

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended September 30, 2016

3. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES *(continued)*

Revenue recognition

Student fee revenue is recognized one month subsequent to the start of the course to which the fees relate once funds from the students have been received by Athabasca University and collection by AUSU is reasonably assured.

Student Health Care Benefits revenue is recognized when earned and collection is reasonably assured.

Investment earnings are recognized as revenue when earned and collection is reasonably assured.

Advertising and promotion revenue is recognized with the completion of the activity to which the revenue relates and collection is reasonably assured.

Merchandise sales are recognized when the goods are transferred to the customer at which time collection is reasonably assured.

The Voice income is recognized when the goods or services are performed or transferred to the customer at which time collection is reasonably assured.

Financial instruments

All financial instruments are initially measured at fair value, and, unless otherwise noted, the AUSU subsequently measures its financial instruments at amortized cost.

Not-for-Profit Financial Statement Presentation

The AUSU presents net assets invested in equipment and intangibles as a separate category of internally restricted net assets.

Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period. Such estimates include the collectibility of accounts receivable, estimated useful lives of equipment, deferral of student fees and student health care benefits payable. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

4. RESTRICTED CASH AND STUDENT HEALTH CARE BENEFIT PLAN

During the year, the AUSU offered a health care plan on an optional basis to students and their family members and then subsequently cancelled the plan August 31, 2016.

After repayment of the unused fees to the plan members, any residual amounts, whereby the plan members cannot be contacted, will be recognized as revenue and used for student bursaries.

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended September 30, 2016

5. MARKETABLE SECURITIES

	2016	2015
Canada Government Bonds (bearing interest at 1.15% to 4.40%)	\$ 251,310	\$ 196,228
Canadian Common Stock	186,567	160,462
Canadian Corporate Bonds & Debentures (bearing interest at 2.75% to 11.77%)	174,069	111,016
US Common Stock	160,761	119,853
Canada Treasury Bills (bearing interest at 0.47%)	17,979	200,546
American Depository Receipts	15,535	27,571
	\$ 806,221	\$ 815,676

Foreign marketable securities are shown in Canadian dollars.

6. EQUIPMENT

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	2016 Net book value	2015 Net book value
Furniture and equipment	\$ 15,182	\$ 11,038	\$ 4,144	\$ 13,225
Computer equipment	11,440	10,626	814	350
	\$ 26,622	\$ 21,664	\$ 4,958	\$ 13,575

7. LEASE COMMITMENT

AUSU leases premises under a long term lease that expires on March 31, 2017. Under the lease, AUSU is required to pay base rent and a proportionate share of utilities, property taxes, maintenance and other related costs for the leased premises. Future minimum lease payments total \$11,044.

8. RESTRICTIONS ON NET ASSETS

AUSU internally restricts net assets for the purpose of student development, special projects, infrastructure and research. These internally restricted amounts are not available for other purposes without approval of the Council.

Council resolved from review of past years' resolutions that the balance of the internally restricted net assets as of September 30, 2016 totalled \$24,786 and transferred the remaining internally restricted net assets balance of \$150,052 to unrestricted net assets.

During the year, expenditures approved by Council totaled \$27,914 (2015 - \$50,548).

9. COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Some of the comparative figures have been reclassified to conform to the current year's presentation.

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended September 30, 2016

10. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year, AUSU received \$624,114 (2015 - \$611,268) related to student fees and \$41,310 (2015 - \$207,050) related to student health care benefits from Athabasca University. Recorded in accounts receivable is \$56,913 (2015 - \$62,096) for student fees and \$nil (2015 - \$26,328) for student health care benefits due from Athabasca University for the month of September 2016. The parties are related through their connection to the Athabasca University students. There was no requirement for an allowance as at September 30, 2016 (2015 - nil).

AUSU provided \$3,589 (2015 - \$781) in tuition payments to cover the enrolment fee for one undergraduate Athabasca University course per councilor or executive officer as per the AUSU compensation guidelines.

11. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

AUSU is exposed to various risks through its financial instruments. The following analysis provides information about AUSU's risk exposure and concentration as of September 30, 2016. Unless otherwise noted, AUSU's risk exposure has not changed from the prior year.

Credit risk

Credit risk arises from the potential that a counter party will fail to perform its obligations. The AUSU is exposed to credit risk from the Athabasca University as effectively all of the AUSU accounts receivable are from the Athabasca University. AUSU is economically dependent upon the Athabasca University (Note 2) for the majority of its revenues and is protected by provincial legislation which mitigates this risk.

Currency risk

Currency risk is the risk to AUSU's earnings that arise from fluctuations of foreign exchange rates and the degree of volatility of these rates. AUSU is exposed to foreign currency exchange risk on marketable securities denominated in U.S. dollars. AUSU does not use derivative instruments to reduce its exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that the value of a financial instrument might be adversely affected by a change in the interest rates. In seeking to minimize the risks from interest rate fluctuations, AUSU manages exposure through its normal operating and financing activities. AUSU is exposed to interest rate risk primarily through its investment in marketable securities.

Other price risk

Other price risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices (other than those arising from interest rate risk or currency risk), whether those changes are caused by factors specific to the individual financial instrument or its issuer, or factors affecting all similar financial instruments traded in the market. AUSU is exposed to other price risk through its investment in quoted shares. Risk has increased in the year due to greater investment in quoted shares.

Budget 2015/2016

REVENUE	
Student Fees	\$600,000
Net Investment Gain (loss)	\$15,000
Other	\$300
Sales	\$0
TOTAL REVENUE	\$615,300

EXPENSES	
Service Fees	
Bank Fees	\$750
Investment Fees	\$11,500.00
Payroll Processing Fees	\$950
Total Service Fees Expense	\$13,200

Admin Expenses	
Elections Expenses	\$5,500
Insurance Expenses	\$1,500
Postage and Courier	\$2,000
Telephone and Internet	\$4,830
Other Admin.	\$500
Total Admin Expenses	\$ 14,330

Meeting Expenses	
Executive and Staff Meetings	\$1,000
Teleconference Meetings	\$1,500
Council Retreat	\$12,000
Other Meetings	\$ 2,000
Total Meeting Expenses	\$16,500

Office Expenses	
Office Supplies and Furniture	\$2,000
Rent and Office Parking	\$49,000
Total Office Expenses	\$49,200

Computer Expenses	
Computer Maintenance	\$1,500
Councillors Software	\$500
Office Software	\$3,800
Office Hardware	\$1,000
Councillor Hardware	\$2,000
Total Computer Expenses	\$8,800

Professional Development	
Staff Professional Development	\$4,000
Council Professional Development	\$1,000
Reference Materials	\$500
Total Professional Development	\$5,500

Staff Salaries and Benefits

Staff Salaries	\$144,000
Staff EI	\$3,803
Staff CPP	\$6,610
Temporary Staff Fees	\$0
Staff Benefits	\$9,402
Staff Appreciation	\$1,500

Total Councillor Salaries & Benefits	\$169,800.00
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Councillor Honoraria and Benefits

Executive Honoraria	\$103,744
Councillor Honoraria	\$18,000
Committee Honoraria	\$2,000
Councillor CPP	\$5,600
Executive Benefits	\$8,216

Total Salaries and Benefits	\$137,560
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Professional Fees

Accountant	\$18,500
Bookkeeper	\$2,805
Lawyer and other Para-legal fees	\$8,000
Staffing Fees	\$0

Total Professional Fees	\$29,305
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Promotional

Gifts and Donations	\$1,000
Website (Maintenance and Upgrades)	\$5,500
Convocation	\$7000
Contests (Incl Postage)	\$1,500

Informational/Promotional Publications

Grad Letters (Incl Postage)

Merchandise (Incl Postage)

Newsletter (Incl E-postage)

Planner/Calendar (Incl Postage)

Sub-Total Merch/Info & Promo Publications	\$7,000
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Total Promotional	\$22,000
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Voice

All Voice Expenses	\$75,000
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Total Voice	\$75,000
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Representation Expenses

Retrospective Changes Advocacy	\$10,000
Internal Advocacy (AU)	\$1,000
External Advocacy (Non-AU)	\$2,000
Membership Fees (CASA)	\$16,320
Delegate Travel (CASA)	\$18,000
Delegate Fees (CASA)	\$0

Total Representation Expenses	\$40,000.00
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Budget 2015/2016 cont...

Awards and Bursaries

Emergency Bursary	\$6,000
Computer Bursary	\$4,800
Travel Bursary	\$4,000

Sub-Total Year-Round Bursaries \$14,800

AUSU Bursary	\$10,000
Returning Student Award	\$4,000
Student Services Award	\$4,000
Academic Achievement Award	\$4,000
Balanced Student Award	\$4,000

Sub-Total Bi-Annual Awards & Bursaries \$26,000

Health Bursary (incl expenses)	\$18,800
Other Awards and Bursaries	\$9,200

Sub-Total Other Awards and Bursaries \$28,000

Total Awards \$68,800

Member Programs

Smart Draw	\$0
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Lynda.com (see intangible amortization)	\$30,769
Mobile App	\$9,975
Student Lifeline	\$25,000
Other Member Programs	\$0

Total Member Programs \$65,744

TOTAL EXPENSE \$720,373

TOTAL INCOME \$615,300

REVENUE OVER EXPENSES -\$105,073

AMORTIZATION

Amortization – Tangible (computers, etc.)	\$4,500
Amortization – Intangible (lynda license)	\$0

Total Amortization \$4,500

REVENUE OVER EXPENSES

Incl. Amortization -\$109,573

AUSU FINANCIALS



DID YOU KNOW?

AUSU's budget, monthly financial statements and balance sheets for both AUSU and The Voice are now posted online.

Check them out at AUSU.org under "Governance".

What's Ahead for AUSU?

This annual report should provide a good sense of AUSU's mandate and the work that goes on from year to year. AUSU accomplished a lot in 2015/2016, and there is much more to do.

Advocacy in its many forms will always be AUSU's priority. This includes advocacy for individual members with Athabasca University, and advocacy on behalf of the membership as a whole, both with the university and beyond to external stakeholders such as the provincial and national governments. In the challenging financial times that Alberta and Canada are experiencing, this role is even more vital. AUSU will continue to seek out advocacy priorities from our members, and continue to build solid ties to the provincial government at the ministerial level and all faculties and executive offices at Athabasca University. AUSU also has all the tools and resources CASA provides to facilitate our advocacy work.

Member services will continue to be monitored for effectiveness and uptake by our members to ensure we put the membership resources to the best use in providing services that they want and need. Ideas for new services are always encouraged and will be considered based on available resources and member needs moving forward. AUSU will also strive to maintain excellent communications, transparency, and engagement with our members with a dedicated communications strategy.

The administration of an organization like AUSU, which relies heavily on volunteer resources and is funded almost exclusively by member dues, constantly needs to be streamlined and improved. The council will also continue to institute best practices for governance, policy, procedures, and member communications.

As you will be able to see from the goals AUSU has set for the upcoming year, AUSU will continue to work hard on behalf of the membership to provide advocacy and services, and to ensure that AUSU operates with a streamlined set of bylaws and policies, knowledgeable staff and council, and the AUSU mandate in the forefront of all of our actions.

AUSU 2016/2017 Goals

Note: The goals list was approved by council on September 13, 2016.

Advocacy

- Investigate opportunities for provincial advocacy, including, but not limited to:
 1. Having a minimum of one AUSU Executive attend the Alberta Government Student Leadership Conference in person.
- Continue a high level of participation and visibility as members of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) by:
 1. Participating as elected and voting members of CASA committees as possible.
 2. Ensuring a minimum of 1 AUSU Executive attends each CASA conference in person.
- Attend regular meetings with AUSU stakeholders as identified in the AUSU Stakeholders spreadsheet at a frequency determined by AUSU Executive and each stakeholder. Use these meetings to advance AUSU advocacy priorities and to strengthen relationships with our stakeholders.

Services

- Successfully introduce and implement new AUSU awards, including, but not limited to, the AUSU Health and Dental Plan Bursary and the AUSU Single Parents Bursary; and evaluate their success by July 31, 2017 and make any necessary improvements/changes.
- Contribute staff and council time resources to the AUSU Joint Voice/Council Action Plan Committee, and work collaboratively with The Voice Magazine to develop a procedure to review and reassess the agreed upon action plan in ways that include, but are not limited to:
 - Inviting The Voice Magazine to meet with Council to discuss the successes and challenges at regular intervals.
 - Making recommendations to The Voice Magazine on potential ideas where AUSU can help with the identified challenges.
- Review utilization reports and feedback from membership for AUSU services twice annually, in order to ensure consideration of member value when investigating contract renewal and effectiveness of promotion; for services including, but not limited to:
 - Student Lifeline.
 - AU Students' Mobile App.
 - AUSU Awards.
 - Lynda.com.
 - The Voice Magazine.

Communications

- Continue proactive communication with new members through the maintenance and distribution of a welcome message highlighting AUSU services.
- Implement the Council approved AUSU Social Media Strategy.
- Facilitate consistent communication from AUSU to our membership through newsletters sent at least once a month.
- Conduct a minimum of one membership survey annually, and incorporate results into Council goals, advocacy and internal management as applicable.
- Utilize our communication channels to relay AUSU Council work, AUSU Member services, and AU news to our membership. These channels include, but are not limited to, the AUSU website, AU Students' App, Social Media and The Voice Magazine.
- Investigate how to better facilitate member discussions for easier and more robust member consultation.

Governance

- Undergo and successfully adopt a comprehensive Bylaw review and amendment prior to March 31, 2017.
- Conduct a successful by-election to replenish seats on AUSU Council, followed by a full orientation of new Councillors.

- Complete all policy review and revision as prescribed in policy 1.01 and as otherwise deemed necessary by Council.
- Implement a permanent, consistent method of performing executive compensation review by following the recommendation of the Executive Compensation Review Committee for a Compensation Review Process as adopted by AUSU Council on March 10, 2016.
- Provide consistent opportunities for AUSU Council to have informal discussions, where brainstorming and idea sharing are encouraged.

Internal Management

- Facilitate the relocation of AUSU office, with an aim of significant financial savings and minimal disruption to the regular AUSU operations; prior to the end of our current lease agreement, which terminates on March 31, 2017.
- Investigate an increase in AUSU membership fees, determine the impact this would have on the AUSU annual budget and on enrollment at AU. Perform member consultation on the topic and investigate with AU the necessary steps to implement an increase. Provide a recommendation for the 2017/2018 AUSU Goals list on how to perform an increase if it is determined one is needed.



AUSU

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STUDENTS' UNION

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