



2023-2024
AUSU Executive Workplan
Athabasca University Students' Union

Who We Are and Why We Are Here

Mission

The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) exists to serve its student membership and enhance their Athabasca University (AU) undergraduate experience. Through meaningful services, advocacy, and student leadership, AUSU embraces its student diversity while supporting an exceptional online learning experience.

Vision

The Athabasca University Students' Union has students at the heart of the organization and supports their exceptional online learning journey, while continually seeking opportunities to enhance the AU student experience, now and in the future.

Values and Guiding Principles

Students First: AUSU will keep students at the forefront of its decision-making, understanding that its primary objective is to enhance the overall undergraduate student experience at AU. AUSU is proud of the student diversity within the organization and celebrates the successes of its members. AUSU will continually strive to bring awareness and recognition of its AUSU members and adapt to their ever-changing needs.

Relevance: AUSU services are developed based on the needs of AU undergraduate students and must be relevant to those ever-changing needs. Adaptability is essential to ensure services achieve a high level of value to our members.

Accountability: AUSU will strive to be transparent and accountable in all aspects of the organization, while always respecting student dollars.

Excellence: AUSU will continually strive for a high level of integrity, quality, professionalism, and respect while holding AU to the same standard of excellence at all levels of the University.

Community: AUSU will promote and participate in developing awareness and recognition of open, online, and distance education while fostering an interactive and engaging virtual student community that connects students across borders and faculties.

Advocacy: AUSU will advocate to all levels of the university and government to ensure that undergraduate students are represented, and their voices are heard. AUSU will foster strong student leadership and promote the value of an online-distance education.

Workplan Purpose, Process, and Organization

Purpose

Executive work plans ensure that Council has the opportunity to give direction on the work that the Executive Committee (EC) does for the year. It also allows the Executive Committee and Staff to ensure that the team's plans are feasible and take into account Staff availability and organizational capacity.

Planning and Priorities

Each year, the AUSU Executive Committee submits their plans for the year to Council for discussion and approval, as well as the Indigenous Circle(IC) at AUSU for consultation. The work plans are formulated by the Executive Committee based on the AUSU Strategic Plan (a document developed every three years to guide our long-term planning), and incorporate ideas from Council that have been expressed both in informal council sessions, the April council survey, as well as key initiatives from the platforms the Executive Committee ran on when elected to their roles. Recommendations from the AUSU Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Report (2022-23) also inform the work plans.

Organization

AUSU's Strategic Plan is built around five pillars, namely Advocacy, Member Services, Student Engagement, Community Partnerships, and AUSU's Organization. The work plan has sections for each of these pillars, divided into goals, each of which has a number of associated tasks. Alongside each task, the work plan indicates the primary Executive(s) taking the lead on it, although it's important to note that the Executive Committee often collaborates and provides support for each other.

In addition to projects, a significant component of the Executives Committee's work is to represent AU students on AU and external committees. This work is included in a sixth section, which details who sits on each committee.

Representation Work

One of the major ways that AUSU ensures student voices are heard is by sitting on committees. Some of these committees are within AU, while others are connected to our external advocacy groups. Within AU committees, EC members have the opportunity to speak up on behalf of students as well as vote during the decision-making process. On the committees associated with our external advocacy groups, the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), your Executives help make decisions and guide the work being done on AUSU's behalf.

Organization	Committee	Councillor
Athabasca University	Board of Governors (BoG)	President VPFA
Athabasca University	BoG Finance and Property	N/A
Athabasca University	BoG Governance	N/A
Athabasca University	BoG Honorary Awards	N/A
Athabasca University	General Faculties Council (GFC)	President VPFA
Athabasca University	GFC Executive Committee	President
Athabasca University	GFC Student Academic Appeals Committee	VPFA
Athabasca University	GFC Academic Excellence Awards Committee	VPFA
Athabasca University	GFC Student Awards Committee	President
Athabasca University	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Council	President VPCW
Athabasca University	Faculty of Science and Technology Faculty Council	VPEX
Athabasca University	Faculty of Health Disciplines Faculty Council	VPEX
Athabasca University	Faculty of Business Faculty Council	VPFA
Athabasca University	Undergraduate Business Program Council	VPFA
Athabasca University	Integrated Learning Environment Steering Committee	President
Athabasca University	Digital Governance Council	VPFA

Athabasca University	Frontline Learner Services Transformation Steering Committee	VPEX
Athabasca University	Faculty of Science and Technology Program Planning Working Group	President
Athabasca University	Student Mental Health Advisory Group	VPCW
Athabasca University	Tuition Steering Committee	President
Athabasca University	Equity Office Committee	VPCW
Canadian Alliance of Student Associations	Treasurer	VPEX
Council of Alberta University Students	Board	VPEX President
AUSU	Chair of Finance Committee	VPFA
AUSU	Chair of Awards Committee	VPFA
AUSU	Chair of Policy Committee	VPFA
AUSU	Chair of Member Engagement and Communications Committee	VPCW
AUSU	Chair of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee	VPCW

Advocacy

AUSU will support and advocate for all AU undergraduate students while representing their unique needs to the university, as well as the provincial and federal governments. Advocacy can take a number of different forms, including speaking up at committees, meeting with stakeholders to discuss key issues, collaborating with partners within and outside of AU to create change, or organizing a sustained campaign to bring attention to an issue.

Many of these priorities are ongoing and, in many cases, connect to committees the various Executives sit on.

Institutional Advocacy

Goal	Important Aspects	Councillor
Keep Education Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for no tuition increases for September 2024 Eliminate out-of-province fees Advocate for inclusion of Open Educational Resources and associated savings for students, where applicable Advocate for choice in learning resources and associated saving for students 	President President President
Improve the Student Experience with AU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how the course registration process could be improved Advocate for better communication from AU through more thorough student-facing content Continue advocating for affirming name changes at AU Advocate for an AU anti-Black racism task force to address the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Higher Education Liaise with Nuksahtowin to help support the needs of Indigenous students with IC Advocate for improvement to Accessibility Services Advocate for improvements for ProctorU and alternative assessments 	President President VPCW & President VPCW VPCW VPCW VPCW
Improve the Quality of Education at AU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for regular course updates every four years Advocate for Work Integrated Learning opportunities Advocate for tutor accountability in marking and response times Advocate for equitable course content hours Advocate for more accessible interaction between tutors and learners Advocate to AU for an EDI focus in course content Advocate for students to have access to highly skilled employment opportunities and funding streams through stakeholder engagement 	Everyone President President & VPCW VPCW VPCW VPEX
Improve Quality of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for better mental health services, 	VPCW

Offered by AU	<p>including the improvement of the Carepath mental health service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend Student Mental Health Advisory Group meetings and regional committees Advocate to AU for culturally-appropriate and trauma-informed counselling options to take into account individuals with unique identities Advocated for AU to provide students with more 	<p>VPCW</p> <p>VPCW</p>
Advocate for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at AU, as well as the Decolonization and Indigenization at the University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for courses and programming in Indigenous Languages (Call to Action 16) Advocate for AU's nursing programs to require all students to take a course dealing with Indigenous health issues, including Indigenous teachings and practices, intercultural competency, and anti-racism (Call to Action 24) 	<p>VPCW, VPEx, & President</p> <p>President & VPCW</p>

Federal Advocacy

Goal	Important Aspects	Councillor
Improve Access to Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for better access to financial aid for part-time students Advocate for the age cap on the Canada Summer Jobs program to be removed Advocate that married students should not need spousal permission to access federal financial aid and be accessed individually Advocate for better access to student financial aid for all students, especially with regards to sign-in options 	<p>President & VPEx</p> <p>President</p> <p>President</p> <p>VPEx & President</p>
Ensure AU Students' Unique Needs are Represented at our Federal Advocacy Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend and contribute to meetings at the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Attend CASA's Foundations Conference and help set the advocacy priorities for the year Advocate to Members of Parliament and Senators during CASA's Advocacy Week on Parliament Hill Advocate for students to have access to highly skilled employment opportunities and 	<p>VPEx & President</p> <p>VPEx & President</p> <p>VPEx & President</p> <p>VPEx</p>

	funding streams through stakeholder engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend CASA's Annual General Meeting Execute tasks as CASA Treasurer 	VPEX & President VPEX
Improve AUSU's Ability to Do Advocacy Well Year-After-Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an institutional consultation framework to improve inclusion of students and Council members at the institution to ensure continuity and improve voice strength Create a provincial educational systems map for both current and future VPEXs to use to plan advocacy Explore other organizations that AU students would benefit from AUSU having a relationship with 	VPEX VPEX VPEX
Advocate for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at AU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education (Call to Action 11) 	President & VPEX

Provincial Advocacy

Goal	Important Aspects	Councillor
Improve Access to Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for better access to financial aid for part-time students 	President
Ensure AU Students' Unique Needs are Represented at our Provincial Advocacy Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend and contribute to meetings at the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) Attend CAUS' Changeover Conference and collaborate with other student leaders to set advocacy priorities for the year Sit on assigned CAUS committees Advocate to Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Minister of Advanced Education on emerging issues impacting AU learners throughout the year Advocate for AU students' needs at the Provincial Legislature during CAUS' Advocacy Week Advocate for students to have access to highly skilled employment opportunities and 	VPEX & President VPEX & President President & VPEX VPEX & President VPEX VPEX

	<p>funding streams through stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend CAUS' Counterparts Conferences to collaborate on ongoing advocacy and for professional development Attend CAUS' Strategic Planning Conference 	<p>Everyone</p> <p>President & VPEX</p>
Ensure Alberta voters are empowered to vote in the 2023 Provincial Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute a Get Out the Vote campaign for Alberta AU students Collaborate with other CAUS members for a general GOTV Campaign 	<p>VPEX & President</p> <p>VPEX & President</p>
Improve AUSU's Ability to Do Advocacy Well Year After Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an institutional consultation framework to Improve the inclusion of students and Council members at institution to ensure continuity and improve voice strength Create a provincial educational systems map for both current and future VPEXs to use to plan advocacy Explore other organizations that AU students would benefit from AUSU having a relationship with Liaise with Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) VP Counterparts regarding portfolios 	<p>VPEX</p> <p>VPEX</p> <p>VPEX</p> <p>VPCW</p>
Advocate for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at AU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate that the provincial government provide the necessary funding to AU to educate faculty on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into courses (Call to Action 62.ii) 	<p>President & VPEX</p>

Member Services

AUSU will create awareness of all its services and student resources, while continuing to seek feedback from its student membership in order to maintain relevancy and meet the ever-changing needs of AU students.

This year, students and Council have asked for more workshops, which will invest in our students and empower them to succeed academically and professionally. This pillar focuses on this work, and also evaluates current services and explores new ideas.

Project	Details	Councillor
Investigate Possible New Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study and report on member services other student unions in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada offer to their students AUSU Awards Night Looking into student healthcare options 	President President & VPCW Everyone
Evaluate and Modify Existing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with MECC to evaluate and explore services for AUSU members LinkedIn Learning Look into options to expand AUSU's Virtual Food Assistance Program to a greater number of students, as well as those in Northern and remote communities 	VPCW VPFA VPCW
Organize Workshops and Educational Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run a series of workshops with external partners (i.e. AU), to invest in our students Research Week Run a program-specific career development workshop 	President & VPCW President President
Creation of New Executive Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look into the creation of a VP Indigenous Affairs and Academics 	Everyone

Student Engagement

AUSU will cultivate a collaborative environment that fosters a high level of student engagement. Within this environment, AU undergraduate students should feel supported and aware of all services offered by AUSU, and the value they bring to their online learning experience.

This year the Executive Committee will continue to maintain and solidify ways of connecting with students that have been established (i.e. the podcast, student social events), as well as

working with the Staff to ensure that students have access to the information and support they need.

Project	Details	Councillor
Student Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Executive Director to develop the AUSU Annual Survey Investigate the needs of AUSU International Students Work with the EDI Committee and Member Engagement Committee Obtain input about AUSU's EDI policies from the EDI Committee. 	President VPCW VPCW VPCW
Convocation Gift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select and order a graduation gift for convocation 2024 	Everyone
Community Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan AUSU Welcome Week Liaise with Social Media/Communications Staff on a regular basis Be active on AUSU social media platforms Attend and host (as needed) AUSUnights Include AU faculty, staff, and researchers in AUSUnights events 	VPCW VPCW VPCW VPCW VPCW
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development/Updating Social Media Strategic Plan 	Everyone
Engage with and Support Students in Secure Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather information from AUSU Survey for students in secure environments Refine AUSU Welcome Letter/Awards If needed 	VPCW VPCW

Community Partnerships

AUSU will strive to create partnerships internally and externally from AU, that seeks mutual benefit and enhancement of the AU student experience.

Students have a desire to be more closely connected with faculty and programs at AU, our community partnerships focus is building into and supporting communities of our students.

Additionally, AUSU will seek to build ongoing partnerships with AU to provide programming and special events for students. This falls within both the community partnerships and member services categories and is detailed in the member services section of the work plan.

Category	Activities	Councillor
Ensure there is a Self-Sustaining Indigenous Circle at AUSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Indigenous student engagement • Connect and engage with Indigenous Organizations • Develop a consultation and governance framework for working with Indigenous communities • Develop access to leadership positions for Indigenous Circle Members 	<p>Everyone</p> <p>Everyone</p> <p>Everyone</p> <p>Everyone</p>
Support Indigenous Students at AUSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan Indigenous Week with input from EC and IC • Research Indigenous VP role with EC and IC input • Follow up on AU Indigenous student funding with VPFA and IC • Follow up on tuition advocacy for Indigenous students with EC and IC • Advocate for fee abolishment for Indigenous students with IC • Liaise with and offer support to the Indigenous Student Circle • Liaise with Nukshahtowin to help support the needs of Indigenous students • Research supporting Indigenous students on First Nation communities and residential school survivors with IC • Research way to involve IC on a provincial level 	<p>VPCW</p> <p>Everyone</p> <p>VPCW & VPFA</p> <p>VPCW</p> <p>VPCW, President & VPFA</p> <p>VPCW</p> <p>VPCW</p> <p>VPCW & President</p> <p>VPCW, President, & VPEX</p>
Support Racialized Students at AUSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan Asian Heritage Month with input from the EDI Committee • Plan Black History Month with input from the EDI Committee 	<p>VPCW</p> <p>VPCW</p> <p>VPCW</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help AUSU Staff promote events and initiatives for racialized students <p>Advocate for an AU anti-racism task force to address the Scarborough Charter</p>	VPCW
Support Disabled Students, Neurodiverse Students, Chronically Ill Students, and Students with Accessibility Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend disability, universal design, and accessibility related courses and training Liaise with Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) Executive regarding accessibility in the organization Create Accessibility and Accommodations presentation for Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) Create Accessibility and Accommodations presentation for AUSUnights Refine AUSU Accessibility And Accommodations document Liaise with Accessibility Services to ensure that student accessibility needs are being addressed Advocate for staff increases at Accessibility Services, including advocacy for student career opportunities within the department Advocate for a streamlined online portal that connects students, instructors, Accessibility Services, and the Exam Unit, and provides training for instructors Advocate for universal design in AU courses, as well as disability content, and disability-affirming language 	VPCW VPCW VPCW VPCW VPCW VPCW VPCW & President VPCW VPCW
2SLGBTQIA+ Student Supports and Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan AUSU June Pride Month and work with AUSU Staff for Changeover Pride Moderate the AUSU 2SLGBTQIA+ Discord Server Continue creating AUSU Pride Community Centre Advocate to AU to create a virtual Pride Centre Continue advocating for affirming name changes at AU 	VPCW VPCW VPCW VPCW VPCW
Resource Gathering of Employment and Student Funding Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate to AU to email student employment opportunities (research 	VPEX

	assistant, internal remote employee positions)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and consolidate regional level employment networking events for students 	VPEX
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and consolidate regional level funding opportunities for students (start-up funding, undergraduate research funding opportunities, grants, scholarships) 	VPEX
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate to faculty to improve access to reference letters for support of student opportunities 	VPEX

Organization

AUSU will strive to be an organization of significance, with undergraduate students' needs always being at the forefront of its decision-making. AUSU's strong foundation makes it a leader amongst its fellow student organizations.

We will ensure that AUSU is run in a way that is efficient, transparent, and reflects a commitment to excellence, this includes ensuring best practices are followed in policies and processes.

Category	Activities	Councillor
Internal Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine AUSU's Accessibility and Accommodations Processes document 	VPCW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine the AUSU 2023-34 EDI Goals and Recommendations with input from the EDI Committee and IC 	VPCW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine AUSU Policies for Members-at-Large on AUSU Committees 	VPCW
Financial Well-Being of AUSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with Council and stakeholders regarding budgetary needs 	VPFA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 	VPFA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for annual audit 	VPFA
Improve Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform the Executive Director's Annual Review 	Everyone

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AUSU Strategic Plan 2024 • Liaise with AUSU EDI Audit • Research EDI professional development training for AUSU • Refine VPCW portfolio over the 3rd year of position and the “VPCW Day in the Life” document • Rewrite transitional Executive Committee documents • Finish editing AUSU Style Guide • Contribute Exec Blogs during AUSU events 	President VPCW VPCW VPCW Everyone VPCW VPCW
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