

Executive Report: September 25, 2015 – October 23, 2015



UWSA

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG
STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Executive Report
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UWSA Executives:

President Peyton Veitch, Vice-President External Affairs Kevin Settee
Vice-President Internal Affairs Emily Epp, Vice-President Student Affairs Jesse Blackman

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Executive Summary

With the midpoint of our terms as directors almost upon us, it is high time to reflect on the progress we have made to date in addition to steadying ourselves for the work that remains unfinished.

In less than six months, we have accomplished what many boards would have been more than satisfied with in the course of a year. We have reduced health insurance costs for international students and opened up the Work-Study program eligibility to include them, we have nearly secured all of the funds required to proceed with a capital expansion of our daycare, we have substantially improved the provision of mental health services on campus, we have opened a beautiful new retail space in Lockhart Hall and refurbished the adjacent study space. Perhaps most importantly, we proved that students on this campus are not apathetic and helped contribute to what may have been record-breaking levels of youth voter turnout.

The outcome of the federal election offers both new opportunities and challenges for our movement. After ten years of Conservative rule, voters overwhelmingly rejected a Harper government that failed to act on missing and murdered indigenous women, mounting student debt, climate change, and rising job insecurity. Furthermore, they rejected a party that ran what was the most openly racist and xenophobic campaign in modern Canadian history. As a movement committed to equity and inclusion, we have work to do in healing the scars of division left behind by this election.

While our new federal government has promised a number of changes that can undo some of the damage inflicted over the past ten years, it is up to social movements like ours to hold them accountable. The only guarantee that promises regarding increased investment in youth jobs, student grants, an inquiry in to missing and murdered women, implementing TRC recommendations and more will be kept by this new government is if continual pressure from below leaves them with no other option.

In the months to come, I'm confident that we will make continued progress in improving our services, connecting more students to the work of their union, and advocating for a more accessible system of post secondary education. As we approach a provincial election in Spring 2016, we will redouble our efforts in pressing the Manitoba government to begin phasing out Manitoba Student Loans entirely in favour of non-repayable grants, in addition to fighting for other student priorities including affordable childcare and a living wage. While these goals may seem lofty and almost unreachable, remember the words of Nelson Mandela: "It always seems impossible, until it is done."

In solidarity,

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Your UWSA executive team,

Peyton Veitch, President
Kevin Settee, Vice-President External Affairs
Emily Epp, Vice-President Internal Affairs
Jesse Blackman, Vice-President Student Affairs

Internal

The Internal section is dedicated to the work of the organization done by either UWSA staff, volunteers, Directors and/or Executive Directors that affects the day-to-day business of the UWSA.

Internal Committees

The UWSA Board of Directors maintains four regularly meeting subcommittees: Finance and Operations Committee (major financial decision-making body, health plan and service decision-making), Student Life Committee (events, student groups, student funding requests), Campaigns and External Relations Committee (lobbying/political decision-making body), and Executive Committee (managerial committee). Additionally, the UWSA holds quarterly Bylaws and Policy Committee Meetings where bylaws and policies are reviewed. Meeting notices are posted on campus and online. Please visit theuwsa.ca or email uwsa@theuwsa.ca for information, open session minutes, etc.

Internal Meetings

September 25: Finance and Operations Committee meeting
September 28: VPIA met with the President to review the Daycare Expansion Proposal
September 28: President attended an ASC meeting.
September 28: Executive attended UWSA Consent Culture meeting.
September 28: VPEA attended DivestUW meeting.
September 29: VPSA attended Senate Appeals Committee
September 29: Executive Committee meeting
September 29: VPEA held DivestUW meeting.
September 29: Executive team met for a project check-in
September 30: UWSA Board of Directors meeting
September 30-October 1: VPIA and General Manager conducted interviews for the Chief Elections Commissioner.
September 30: VPSA met with VP Academic and the Chair of Rhetoric, Writing, and Commutations to discuss writing tutoring and Student Evaluations of Teaching.
October 2: Executive Committee Meeting
October 5: VPIA met with Retail Manager to check-in about the Good Food Box
October 5: SnoWeek planning meeting with Exec, GM, Communications Coordinator and Events Coordinator
October 5: VPSA attended Anti-Oppression Training
October 5: President, VPIA, and VPSA attended Board of Regents

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October 5: VPEA and VPIA met with CKUW to discuss collaborating on new projects and events. Student Run Marathon, Executive having a radio show etc.

October 6: VPSA attended Senate Appeals Committee

October 6: VPIA met with a student to go over the UWSA budget

October 6: VPEA attended ICR Community Engagement in EG Hall.

October 7: VPSA attended Healthy Campus Adversary Committee subcommittee meeting

October 7: Executive Committee Meeting

October 9: Roll Call follow-up meeting with Executive team, GM and Events Coordinator

October 13: VPSA attended Senate Appeals Committee

October 13: Health Plan Deficit meeting with VPIA, Pres, GM, and Business Manager

October 16: Health Plan Deficit follow-up meeting with VPIA, Pres, and Business Manager

October 19: VPEA and President attended Military De-brief with students in the Hive.

October 20: President and VPIA attended the UWSA Daycare AGM.

October 20: VPSA attended Senate Appeals Committee

October 20: VPIA, VPSA, and GM attended the Annual General Meeting of the Daycare Management Committee

External Meetings

September 28: VPIA attended the Board of Regents Finance Committee meeting

September 29: VPEA met with Peoples Social Forum Committee on potential on hosting events in UWSA spaces.

September 30: Executive team attended Senate

October 1: President met with VP Academic and AVP Finance to discuss International Students Consultation.

October 2: VPIA attended a student appeals meeting

October 2: President attended a Fun Class general meeting.

October 2: President met with Director of Security Services to discuss renewal of the security contract.

October 5: President attended a meeting regarding a review of the Provost/VP Academic.

October 5: VPIA and VPEA met with CKUW to discuss ongoing relationship

October 5: VPIA, VPSA, and President attended UW Board of Regents.

October 6: VPEA met with students to discuss ICR Focus Group consultation.

October 7: Pres, VPEA, VPSA participated in Take Back the Night

October 8: VPIA attended the Advisory Committee on Sexual Misconduct Committee meeting

October 8: President attended a meeting w/ Dr. Trimbee, VP HR and Director of Security to discuss security services' response to the military recruiters protest.

October 8: VPEA met with Elder Myra Laramie to develop ICR Focus Group Questions.

October 9: President attended a meeting w/ United Way.

October 9: VPIA and VPEA attended the Consent Culture Committee Meeting

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October 9: VPEA met with UIC Chair Jim Silver to discuss ICR Course Content Criteria

October 13: President attended a meeting of Senate Executive.

October 13: President attended a Mouseland Press Board meeting.

October 14: President attended a Divestment Oversight Committee meeting.

October 15: President met with AVP Finance and Senior Advisor to President re budget consultation.

October 19: President attended a UWCRC meeting.

October 19: VPEA met with Executive Director of The Winnipeg Boldness Project to discuss collaborating on work and future projects including Merchants Corner Development.

October 20: UWSA conducted Indigenous Requirement Advisory Committee Focus Groups.

October 21, Exec team attended the State of UW Address given by Dr. Trimbee

October 22: VPIA attended the Integrated Academic and Research Plan meeting

October 22: Exec team attended Senate

October 22: President attended a Health & Safety investigation meeting.

October 22: VPIA attended UN Safe Cities meeting

October 23: President and VPEA met with UMSE President to discuss ICR.

Services

The UWSA provides many services to both students and community members, ranging from our Bike Lab to our health plan. Below is a summary of the developments of our services.

Food Bank:

The Foodbank continues to receive a high volume of registrations every week. The number of registered student clients continues to climb, as more and more students struggle to make ends meet. The program is running smoothly, but can always use more volunteers.

Good Food Box

The Good Food Box Facebook group is gaining some traction, and we have roughly 10 student signed of to receive boxes. We are investigating ways to promote this service more effectively so students can take advantage of it.

Health Plan

The blackout period for the health plan is over! Everything is up and running. Roughly 2830 opted out of the health plan, and we currently have 4902 students and dependents registered for the health plan.

ISIC

The ISIC printer is happily in the main Office, where the Office Administrator can print cards, and explain how it related to the Health Plan.

SafeWalk

The SafeWalk Coordinator has successfully recruited volunteers and is able to provide the service. An e-mail has been sent to many instructors who have evening courses encouraging them to pass along information about SafeWalk to their students.

Student Support Program

Similar to the Foodbank, the Student Support Program has been very busy over the past couple months. The start of September has seen students being forced to choose between rent, tuition/books, and groceries. The program has slowed down somewhat since September, but still remains a valuable resource for students in need.

Bike Lab

The Bike Lab Office will be relocating to the former Petrified Sole location. The space will be shared by the Bike Lab and EcoPIA, and will serve as a hub for environmental activism, and environmentally minded folks.

Discussions are ongoing regarding a possible Spring 2016 relocation of the lab, related to the construction of Leatherdale Hall. Bike lab staff and users have been consulted on the possible impacts of such a move.

Lobbying

International Students

The UWSA is working with the University to hold a consultation session in mid-November with international students. The purpose of the session is for international students to identify gaps in services, what can be done to improve retention, and what changes can be made to allow more students from abroad to choose the U of W. The UWSA President has been working closely with the UWSA International Student Co-Directors on this initiative.

Student Charter

UW Senior Executive has discussed the latest revision of the Charter this month. We are hoping to meet with the Registrar soon in order to discuss their feedback and move the document forward.

Budget Consultation

We are working with the Office of the VP Finance and Institutional Analysis to develop a mechanism for students to provide input in to the budget development process at the University of Winnipeg. This will likely include both a survey and in-person consultation sessions where students can identify budget priorities that matter most to them.

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UW Alternative Budget

MOFA (The Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations) and CFSMB are partnering on an initiative to create alternative budgets designed by students, staff and faculty at Manitoba Universities. The UWSA has reached out to faculty and staff unions on campus to establish an alternative budget working group at the U of W. The first meeting is scheduled for October 29.

Spence Cycling Light

A working group involving Bike Lab & ECOPIA has been struck to develop a strategy for lobbying the city on adding a cycling light to Spence Street.

Student Residence Winter Break Fee

The UWSA was successful in preventing the imposition of a new \$150.00 per student “winter break fee” for students staying in residence from late December to early January. Neither adequate consultation nor notice was provided prior to the decision being communicated, so the proposal was scrapped.

Federal Election Day Academic Amnesty

We were successful in securing academic accommodation on Election Day for students needing extra time to vote. Senate passed a motion requiring instructors to not deduct participation marks and make alternative arrangements for test taking and the submission of assignments for students who did not have enough time between classes and made the request at least a week prior to October 19. An email was circulated to all students informing them of this.

Campaign Organizer Hiring:

The UWSA hired Lenard Monkman as Campaign Organizer to help promote and carry out political and student campaigns and activities.

Refugees: UWSA continues to meet with different organizations to support opportunities for solidarity. Potential opportunity to work with WUSC and No One is Illegal to increase levy for WUSC Student Refugee Program to help bring more refugees to study at the U of W.

Projects

Indigenous Credit Requirement: UWSA and IRAC conducted the Indigenous Credit Requirement Focus Group with Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars from across Manitoba. 10 questions were asked to experts and 20 students conducted research. A follow up report is to be created and disseminated to UWSA Board and Indigenous Requirement Advisory Committee. Community engagement session was held and well attended by faculty and staff of U of W. UWASC co-president sat on panel to answer questions. Senate discussed IRAC Course Content Criteria.

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Merchants Corner Satellite Office: New consultations were conducted Urban Circle Training Centre and the Aboriginal Education Directorate. A meeting has been set with the Manitoba Student Aid to discuss sharing space to help students with bursaries, scholarship and financial assistance. A final consultation document will be produced pending consultations.

Housing Registry: The housing registry project is still on hold until further notice.

U-Pass:

We are waiting on Winnipeg Transit to send us the draft agreement. We expect to receive it in about a month from now.

Divestment:

The Divestment Risk Assessment Oversight Committee met for the second time on Tuesday, October 14. A number of UWSA-proposed changes to the risk assessment's terms of reference were accepted by members of the committee, and additional experts were suggested. The committee will be reconvening in November.

DivestUW held a BBQ, Brainstorm and Bike blender event to talk about actions and future events to grow campaign. Slick and Slide event was held in the Richardson Garden to raise awareness on oil spills and encourage the U of W to take the plunge and divest from fossil fuels.

Daycare Expansion:

This month, the UW Board of Regents formally approved the University's share of the project costs and the UWCRC has officially agreed to act as developer/project manager. The initiative was also announced at the UWSA Daycare's AGM. We are now awaiting word on whether or not the Province will contribute funding towards the project. Confirmation that our Family Choices Building Fund grant application was received on time came this month.

Bulman Student Centre Room Set-up:

The former Pet Sole space is beginning to come to life. EcoPIA and Bike Lab are moving in, they're welcoming Fun Class, and key cards are being made. ISA has welcomed Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications Student Group in their space and the pairing seems to be working well.

Lockhart Renovations and index:

We have run into some issues with the plumber hooking up the coffee machines, which has left us unable to serve coffee thus far. We expect the problem to be resolved within the month.

The lease agreement outlining the terms of our tenancy in Lockhart Hall has been signed and finalized.

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Federal Election 2015:

The election was a major focus for this reporting period. The UWSA hosted a number of events to engage students in the electoral process including an **Experts & Ideas Panel**, a **Winnipeg Centre All Candidates Debate** (co-hosted with UWFA and the Alumni Association) which attracted 200 attendees, a **Trivia Night** (co-hosted with CFSMB) and an **Election Night Party** at the Goodwill (resulting in the venue's busiest evening since their opening day). With Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO), the UWSA also opened up the HIVE for weekly "**Politix Brainstorm**" events, primarily with federal candidates.

The UWSA worked with Elections Canada and the Aboriginal Students' Council in promoting voter registration on campus. Elections Canada tabled on two occasions and also coordinated with the Housing Office to ensure that students living in residence had access to the identification required to cast their ballots.

With CFS & CFSMB, the UWSA assisted in the promotion of the "It's No Secret" campaign on campus. The purpose of the campaign was to make student issues election issues and increase youth voter turnout. On both grounds, the campaign was a success and thousands of students were exposed to the campaign in some form at the University of Winnipeg.

Photo Club:

Renovations on the Photo Club darkroom are set to begin soon. Photo Club's membership is growing and new faces are a common sight at their Monday meetings.

Gym Buddies:

This project is showing a lot of potential. Many students would like to use the gym.

Writing Centre Tutoring:

VSPA made over a dozen classroom presentations to Academic Writing Classes about the existence and function of tutoring to try and spur greater usage of tutoring.

Solidarity & Events

Take Back the Night:

Members of the executive attended the 2015 Take Back the Night March to oppose gendered violence in our communities.

Residents' Thanksgiving Dinner:

President attended on behalf of UWSA on October 6th.

Public Policy Forum Dinner:

President, VPSA, and board members attended on October 8.

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David Suzuki Event:

President attended on behalf of UWSA on October 15th at the Met.

International Student Culture Day:

President attended and brought greetings on behalf of the UWSA on October 22.

Meet Me at the Belltower:

President and BoD Chair attended “Meet me at the Belltower Welcomes the Muslim Community” on October 23.

Village with no Borders:

VPEA provided support in securing Thunderbird House to host a discussion with Harsha Walia on border imperialism and colonialism.

AYO PolitixBS:

UWSA hosted AYO to hold Politix BrainStorms in the HIVE. Students were encouraged to engage with Politicians from Winnipeg Centre. RFO and Don Woodstock engaged with students.

Winnipeg Indigenous Rock the Vote:

VPEA and UWASC Female Co-President partnered with WIRTV to host a couple of voter registration clinics.

Unis'tot'en Solidarity:

UWSA showed solidarity with Unistotem Camp in British Columbia by helping to fundraise to send Indigenous Land Defenders from Manitoba to Unistoten Territory with camping equipment, winter gear and monetary funds.

Media

The Manitoban, “UMSU Moves Forward with Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign”, September 29, 2015

CTV News, “Winnipeg Groups Working to Ensure Voters Know New Rules”, October 6, 2015

The Uniter, various articles regarding LBW Travel Company, Military Recruiters, State of the UW Address, comment piece by President, etc.

CKUW, appearances regarding federal election, security response to military protest.