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VICE PRESIDENT EXTERNAL AFFAIRS – JONATHAN HENDERSON

Again, it has been an honour and privilege to work on behalf of our University of Winnipeg (U of W) student family. I have been so humbled to have done so much for our community and students. I have led through my Anishinaabe worldview and 7 sacred teachings, and this has allowed me to have success in building healthy relationships throughout my tenure as Vice President External Affairs (VPEA). Treating others with those teachings from the heart of love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility, and truth.

This year started with our first annual Truth and Reconciliation Week. This is included events to raise awareness and education of the Residential School System, its impact and legacy. We also provided over 300 orange shirts directly to our students. We also encouraged students to march from the Forks to St. John's Park where a pow-wow was organized for the community.

I have always advocated and supported for rallies and protests that are important and support our students such as the Orange Shirt Day, Black Lives Matter, Against Islamophobia, MMWIG2S, and Justice 4 Eisha Hudson.

Advocating against Bill 33 has always been a big part of my portfolio. It has been a privilege to build good respectful relationships with all parties, including the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills, and Immigration (at the time) Wayne Ewasko, NDP member Jamie Moses, and Liberal party leader Dougald Lamont. Working along with the Canadian Federation of Students, we were successful in having student fees removed from Bill 33. Currently we are preparing for consultations with the current Minister Jon Reyes.

One initiative I have been very proud to advocate support for was the Migiziwazison Sacred Fire, located on the east side of the Legislative grounds. This fire was lit when the initial graves were found in a number of former residential schools in British Columbia. This fire has continued on throughout a harsh winter, and the goal is to stay lit until all residential school sites are searched for graves, and our lost children are allowed the proper ceremonies to honour their spirits. The fire is also a place for survivors to go heal, share, and offer prayers to the sacred fire.

Health Care for All has been a campaign I am proud to be part of. Advocating on behalf of International student for free health care, especially a hot topic during the pandemic.

My most humbling experience as leader was the Unsheltered Relatives Initiative. Raising over \$5,000 towards hot meals and beverages to our unsheltered relatives on the streets of Winnipeg was such a humbling experience for our student volunteers. To provide a small kind gesture really means the world to some that really struggling in life. To see that joy from something simple as hot meal, helps you realize how blessed we are in our academic journeys.

Remember people go to bed and pray to be where we are as current students. Remember becoming educated is a blessing.

We also, as a team, worked to ensure all student group funding requests were accommodated to some extent, and if we were unable to help, we provided the proper channels that can.

Currently I am so excited about the new partnerships and initiatives I am currently working on such as:

*Vida Living* – an organization aimed at providing students with affordable housing. Purchased 543 Spence, across from the U of W, with the plans of renovating that apartment for students.

*Treaty 1 Land Development* – made great connections from an invite to see the plans for the Kapyong Barracks on Route 90. There are very exciting partnership opportunities, I will continue to help promote the U of W as a leader for these opportunities.

*Justice 4 Eisha Hudson* – Working with the U of W administration, we have raised \$5,500 towards a scholarship/endowment fund. The goal is to raise a minimum \$10,000. Working with the parents of Eisha Hudson, we will be going public to raise the rest of the funds. This will be a very excited project to see finished soon.

*CKUW Radio* – I will be starting a radio show/podcast called “Engaged” focused on hyping up student engagement, highlighting student group, events, and community news. This show will also feature music reflecting our student groups each episode.

*U of W Daycare* – I will continue to work with the daycare on Indigenizing the playground/ outdoor areas at the daycare.

*Student Indigenous Advisory Circle* – we are continuing to fill all positions up for this circle, we currently have three members. This circle will work with the board to ensure Indigenous ideas, concepts, and input is honoured/respected within the UWSA.

In closing, again it has been a privilege and honour to work for the UWSA and our student family. Wish you blessings and love in all your academic journeys.

Miigwetch,  
Jonathan Henderson, 2020-2022 VPEA