Office of the Vice President, Academic and University Affairs

Update on Executive Goals

**Goal 1: Remote Invigilation**

Successful in working with student senators as Co-Chair of the Student Senate Caucus in restricting usage of algorithmic remote invigilation softwares. I am continuing to provide representation on the UBC Learning Technology Leadership that would make considerations on whether or not the University would be replacing Proctorio and what that alternative would look like. So far, there are no suggestions on replacement of Proctorio and if/when these do come about, I will ensure student voices are heard and that the University does not employ other problematic invigilation tools that raise concerns like Proctorio did.

**Goal 2: Affordability**

I have been serving on the Student Affordability Task Force and providing robust representation on behalf of the AMS. I continue to push for a finalized Affordability Plan to be presented to the UBC Board of Governors before/at the same time as Tuition Increases are proposed. I have also made the AMS position clear to the University - if there is no finalized Affordability Plan presented to the Board of Governors for approval either before or at the same meeting as Tuition increases are proposed, I alongside other UBC Students/student groups, will be protesting the meeting.

Early on in the term, my team and I successfully advocated for allocation of the $18 Million incremental tuition revenue to address needs and challenges students face. Some of the funding we successfully got allocated was 480,000 to the UBC Meal Share Program and over $1.5 Million put towards Lecture Capture Technology/Hybrid/Transition to in-person learning.

We are also continuing to engage with conversations on Campus Vision 2050 to ensure prioritization of affordable housing of students in the update to the UBC Land Use Plan and Vancouver Campus Plan.

My team and I also made a Budget Submission to the Provost, VP Finance and Operations, and VP Students of the University before the UBC Budget process ramped up to ensure student priorities are sincerely considered and integrated into the budget before a draft budget is finalized. This included various measures to address affordability- more need based awards for international students, better allocation to support experiential education and work opportunities for students, more career services support for students, initiatives to reduce food insecurity on
campus, graduate student support to increase minimum funding for PhD students (amongst other priorities), work to enhance accessibility, and support for strategic initiatives as well.

Goal 3: Open Educational Resources (OERs) and Digital Learning Materials

My team ran a very successful and enhanced TextbookBroke campaign during which we reimbursed students for their textbook costs (picked a few winners every campaign day, up to a maximum of $500 per student). We had one student stop, engage, and raise awareness about OER and high textbook costs for every minute we were out booting and campaigning. We continue to serve on Open UBC Working Group and working with various stakeholders to increase open access at UBC.

We hosted an engaged and successful OER Champions Reception- a record number of nomination were entered with over 156 nominations submitted. We made enhancements to the reception by introducing awards and were able to have members of the UBC Executive, Board of Governors, Associate Deans, and Deans in attendance to support creation of OER and recognize the work being done to save students tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Goal 4: Indigenous Student Support

We have been pushing for the University to embed support for the Indigenous Strategic Plan within the budget in addition to the separate fund set up in support of the implementation. It is pivotal that the UBC Budget is reflective of those efforts and that the endeavour to resource the implementation of this plan and the spirit behind it isn’t limited to the Indigenous Strategic Fund.

Through our UBC Budget submission, we have also been advocating for the addition of more full time career strategists in whose remit it would be specifically to support Indigenous students in career strategy, support, and experiential education opportunities.

Goal 5: Return Back to In-Person Learning

When the rapid testing pilots were up and running on campus, we successfully advocated for the eligibility to be expanded to include all UBC students.

We successfully advocated for over $1.5 million to be allocated towards support for lecture capture technology from the incremental tuition revenue. In addition, our Budget submission for the FY 22/23 Operating Budget is also reflective of the educational and accessibility benefits students value in recorded lectures, and thus, we have pushed the University to invest in acquisition of an Enterprise Video Platform to facilitate lecture recording technology seamlessly across campus.

Our advocacy was also targeted towards ensuring that professors are accommodating students who are unable to be here for the start of term. Some results to help students in those situations
consisted of guidelines to faculty to offer technological/recorded alternatives to being present in Vancouver until those students facing delays due to travel restrictions/visa delays were being accommodated were able to get back.

Last but certainly not least, it was our advocacy that resulted in vaccination requirements in housing, a soft vaccination mandate across campus, and mask mandates as well. I also worked with student senators to drive through a Senate motion to ensure that the University had tools for compliance measures for students who fail to declare their vaccination status and go for rapid testing after several attempts to get them to comply. The language of this motion is available at senate.ubc.ca.

**Goal 6: Mental Health**

In our Budget Submission to the University for FY 22/23 Operating Budget, we have advocated for continued funding for a Black Mental Wellbeing project. With a body of 56,000 students, additions of a few more counsellors wouldn’t be the most impactful, so my team and I worked to identify gaps and one of the biggest ones is the lack of support for BIPOC students. Many don’t have access to counsellors who will be able to understand their experiences. So, we advocated for continued funding for a pilot project run by the Black Caucus, in which they connected Black students with Black counsellors. This initiative also consists of a two-year plan to develop a more complete study to provide ten free one-hour sessions of one-on-one virtual or in-person counselling per year to Black students while engaging with Black Counsellors from Vancouver and the Okanagan Valley. From October 2021 to September 2023, the project plans to deliver 50 hours each month of either virtual or in-person counselling dependent on the student's preference. We believe that this initiative will give lots of knowledge and experiences that can transcend this specific initiative and then follow to offer more mental wellbeing specific support for students from equity deserving groups.

We have also supported the development and implementation of a virtual 45-minute, interactive, and synchronous MHL workplace training to implement Mental Health Literacy milestones. The virtual training will include research-based content and practical examples of enacting foundational elements of mental health literacy to sustain healthy working environments for students.

**Goal 7: Food Insecurity on Campus**

Right in the beginning of my term in May, as mentioned previously in this update, we successfully advocated for $480,000 for the UBC Mealshare Program that gives students who are facing food insecurity $100 on their student cards. This program is anonymous and allows for stigma-free assistance from the student perspective.

We have also advocated for $555,000 - $755,000 to be put towards initiatives on campus to reduce food insecurity through our budget submission- some of these include continued funding
for Agora, Sprouts, Fooood Outlets, Acadia Hampers, Mealshare Program, and most significantly- a physical Food Hub.

**Goal 8: Safety on campus & Sexual Violence**

My team is in the midst of running a Campus Safety Audit to identify areas and hazards on campus that students see as unsafe. We plan to create a report compiling the results and advocating to the University to dedicate resources for reparations and safety enhancements of areas students identify as unsafe.

I have been in collaborative and consistent conversations with the Vice President, Students and his office in regards to the potential establishment of an Advisory Board model for the upkeep, improvements, and constant development of policy SC17, the Sexual Misconduct Policy to ensure implementation and interactions with the policy and survivors across the University are happening in a trauma informed and survivor-centric manner.