

Report of the President

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Student Commons

Project Status

The Student Commons project is moving along well, though issues with costing have delayed the project slightly. Staff and I have been meeting with UofT staff to review costing reports and negotiate parts of the renovations that will be covered by the project budget and parts that will be covered by the University as deferred maintenance.

Press Release

UofT communications has been working with us to draft an official press release announcing the commencement of the project and the hiring of the Architect. We will share it with the Board once it is published.

Online Clubs Funding Applications

I have been working with Alessia Rodriguez, Vice-President Campus Life and UTSU Staff for the last couple months to implement a database and online application system for clubs funding through working with FluidReview, a Canadian survey and data management company. The system will help reduce paperwork and speed up funding decisions. It will also improve our current clubs listing on the website.

Real Food Real Jobs

On March 1st I had an initial meeting with a group called “Real Food Real Jobs” which is a coalition of students, faculty, and foodworkers at UofT started by UNITE-HERE Local 75. After a follow up meeting with this group, I am putting forward a motion to endorse their call to action.

Meetings

Meeting with the Provost

On February 24th, Jasmine Denike, Vice-President External and I attended a meeting with the Provost and other student society leaders to discuss a proposed policy that would create a complaints process for disputes regarding student unions and student societies. The administration wants to have the policy implemented by the end of the governance year, though there are many issues, such as the extent that Simcoe Hall staff will be involved in the process, which are still being heavily debated between the Provost and student societies.

Meeting with the Vice-Provost, Students

On February 25th, Jasmine Denike, Alessia Rodriguez and I met with the Vice-Provost, Students. The main topics of discussion were deficiencies with the Advisory Report on Sexual Violence and the potential for an admin-funded accessible computer lab.

EngSoc–UTSU Joint Executive Meeting

On March 8th, other executives and I met with officers from EngSoc per the Associate Membership Agreement. We discussed logistics for implementing the contract and how to transition the new executives for next year.

Various Professors – Sexual Violence Committee

Over the past month, I have been meeting with some of the faculty members who were on the Sexual Violence Advisory Committee to discuss possible next steps after the publishing of the report.

Events

Wab Kinew

February 24th – ASSU Hosted, and UTSU collaborated on funding and promotion. Wab Kinew, a prominent activist, professor, and now candidate for provincial office talked about the Truth and Reconciliation commission and how education can play a role in decolonization.

Black History Month Open Mic

February 29th – VP Equity Sania Khan ran this event in the Cat's Eye in the Victoria College Goldring Center. It was very successful and gave an opportunity for participants to share their stories and experiences in fighting anti-black racism.

Screening of “The Hunting Ground”

March 8th – VP External Jasmine Wong Denike ran this event in collaboration with ICSS and students from the Faculty of Social Work. The event screened the documentary “The Hunting Ground” about sexual violence at American Universities and featured a panel afterwards with Vice-Provost, Students Sandy Welsh; Ramona Alaggia, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Work; Celia Wandio, founder of the UofT student coalition against sexual violence; and TA and activist Ellie Adekur.

USW 1998 Rally

March 9th – I spoke at a rally of the USW 1998 unit bargaining for casual A/V workers at UofT.

The Read

March 19th – UTSU collaborated on and helped set up this event, which was run by Ondiek Odour from ASSU. It was very successful, filling the OISE auditorium for a live taping of “The Read,” a podcast about hip hop and pop culture.

Black Lives Matter Action and Tent City

March 20th – Abdullah Shhipar from ASSU helped me in providing supplies on behalf of UTSU for the initial rally, which started the Black Lives Matter Tent City at the Toronto Police Services Headquarters. Throughout the week, UTSU Executives have been supporting the occupation by providing supplies and personal financial donations.

Provincial and Federal Budgets

Both the Provincial and Federal budgets were released in the past month. Vice-President External, Jasmine Wong Denike has been researching these announcements for UTSU and incorporating them into transition plans for lobbying.