



PRESS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' COUNCIL

27 March 2019

Special Council Meeting Recap

The University Students' Council (USC) met on Wednesday, March 27, 2019, for a special meeting of council to present the USC Financial Plan. Council received one presentation and passed two motions unanimously.

President Mitchell Pratt framed the discussion for the budget, commenting on the rationale of the proposed financial changes and the outlined advocacy efforts since the introduction of the Student Choice Initiative on January 17th. Pratt distinguished ancillary fees from tuition and how ancillary fees factor into the development of the USC budget, "Never in the history of the organization have we had to adapt to such an overarching policy and process changes due to a mandate from the provincial government."

Secretary Treasurer, Andreea Bejan, began the Financial Plan presentation by providing a timeline of the budget to date for councillors to keep in mind and outlined the budget process that followed. She emphasized the distinction between corporate oversight, as provided by the USC Board of Directors, and Council oversight over the USC executive and the collection of fees.

Bylaw 1, as referenced by Bejan, stipulates that the Board is focused on "Land, Labour, and Law", as pertaining to the corporate budget, which ensures responsible spending. Council aligns with the USC Executive Budget, which Bejan provided a high-level summary of and detailed in her presentation to Council. Councillors were provided with detailed documents ahead of the meeting to ensure they were fully prepared for discussion.

Bejan revealed the changes necessary to consider when building a financial plan, "The USC had to modify fee categories based on the services we provide to students" said Bejan, "We redistributed costs within various fees, using full-cost accounting of our fees, ensuring we fall in line with the provincial government's mandate and distinguishing between optional and mandatory fees."

Council went on to approve a fee schedule with 20 different fees, 13 of which are considered optional. Optional fees will include things like student life, clubs administration, student initiative grants, and government advocacy. Important to note is the distinction between optional fees that the USC administers and those fees that are transferred out to different entities to be operated independently; those fees transferred out include the Gazette, Radio Western, Community Legal Services, and the Marching Band.

Bejan revealed two new measures to ensure accountability which will include approving two budgets, that are typically not presented to Council. The first is the Student Programs Officer's Programming Budget and the second is the Orientation Budget. Both of these budgets will be presented and approved at Summer Council which will guide spending for the upcoming year.

Patrick Morris, Education President and Chair of the USC's Governance and Finance Committee spoke in favour of the motion, "The process involved in building the budget and fee schedule was, I believe, fairly intensive, and I felt the executive was exhaustive in the process and ensuring the proper steps were taken" said Councillor Morris, "President Pratt, raised the point of the vagueness of the information given to councils by the government in regards to the Student Choice initiative. Personally, I thought the process was rushed by the Provincial Government, and our executive more than surpassed my expectations with such a thorough and response, in a timely manner."

The 2018-2019 USC Executive appreciates the discussion present at tonight's council meeting and looks forward to a productive year ahead. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3rd at 7:00pm.

The University Students' Council (USC) is a student-led organization that exists to advocate for and represent the over 30,000 undergraduate students at Western University. Our mission is to enhance the education experience and quality of life for all undergraduates at Western University and our vision is that students have the power to change the world.

To enhance the educational experience and quality of life for all undergraduates at Western University

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