



PRESS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' COUNCIL

31 January 2019

January Council Meeting Recap

The University Students' Council (USC) met on Wednesday, January 30, 2019, for the first meeting of council since the Winter Break. Council received two presentations, held five elections and passed eight motions.

Council received a presentation on Western University's Operating & Endowment Fund Investments by Lynn Logan (Vice President Operations & Finance), Martin Bélanger (Director of Investments), and Tom Keenleyside (Associate Director of Investments). Presenters discussed engagement, responsible investing - under the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investing - and the structure of Western's investment portfolio. Keenleyside emphasized that 46% of the university's investment portfolio funds are allocated to student awards. Bélanger discussed the implementation of a working group on responsible investing, which examines the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investing to better integrate these factors into their investing practices.

Western believes that engagement is superior to divestment in affecting changes. Presenters echoed the sentiment that all of their investment information is available for Western community members, subject to confidentiality, by emailing mbelang7@uwo.ca. Councillor Magliocco, FIMS President, inquired as to which channel constituents were able to voice concerns about environmental, social, and corporate governance investments (ESG), which are managed by external investment managers to Western; Logan reiterated that herself or Bélanger would be more than willing to answer any questions from the campus community.

Council received a Clubs System Presentation from Student Programs Officer, Carina Gabriele, to discuss the restructuring of the clubs system which will result in the clubs system transferring to the Secretary-Treasurer portfolio. Gabriele indicated that this shift "aims to improve the clubs system by prioritizing accountability of the Clubs Governance Committee to Council and restructuring of clubs coordinators to ensure proper governance support to our club members."

Among items in the consent agenda was the motion to approve the OUSA Policy and Procedure. Councillor Teja vocalized that, "this policy is extremely important considering the current political situation with the Ford cuts. Ensuring any student is able to directly affect the policy stances that we collectively bring forward to the Ford Government is part of the USC's commitment to engage all students in our advocacy efforts."

Councillor Stebbing was elected to the Secretary Treasurer hiring panel; FIMS President, Ariana Magliocco, was elected to the Communication Officer hiring panel; and Councillors Rocchese and Marginean were elected to the Student Awards Committee; and Councillors Raja and Denezis were successfully elected to the hiring panel for the Speaker of Council. Six Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) General Assembly Delegates were also elected. Vice President Chang was “pleased to a variety of well-rounded candidates, many of who represent differing Western student experiences”. Although results of the delegation will not be announced until Thursday, the USC is confident that Western’s delegation at this year’s GA will effectively represent our constituents at OUSA.

The motion to support Residence Student Staff was introduced by President Pratt and seconded by Councillor Barroso. Pratt deferred his speaking rights to Tristan Baker-Scala, a Residence Don at Delaware Hall who spoke about ongoing challenges in the residence workplace culture. Baker-Scala said that “Residence Staff members are among the most caring and dedicated student leaders on campus and we do this job to support the thousands of students who live in residence buildings as a critical component of Western’s ‘best student experience’ but we face significant challenges and pressures in our workplace that ultimately limits our ability to provide the best support possible to students in need”. Among the issues vocalized to council include mental health support for student leaders, work-school-life balance, cost of living, performance appraisals, and compensation. Councillors debated the language of the motion in depth and ultimately passed an amended motion, concluding that the University Students’ Council formally supports Residence Staff members’ right to unionize and efforts to seek equitable treatment and compensation, additional wellness supports for student leaders, and a focus on work-school-life balance.

The USC Executive appreciates the discussion present at tonight’s council meeting and looks forward to a productive second semester. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 27th 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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