



APSA Executive Committee Meeting
April 20, 2021 @ 20:00

1. Call to order (20:14)
2. Roll call (2 min) Garrett, Rachel, Jasmine, Amandeep, Marzena, Daniel, Alyssa, John, Jared
 - a. Regrets:
3. Additions to the agenda (1 min)
Motion: To approve the agenda. First: Amandeep. Second: Rachel

New Business:

4. In Camera Discussions - Garrett (5 mins)
Motion: To move into camera. First: Amandeep. Second: Rachel.
Motion: To move out of camera. First: Rachel. Second: Daniel
5. Tuition Increase Proposal - Garrett (30 min)
 - a. Garrett - So with the tuition increase proposal, as many of you know, it was brought up by the faculty, I'm sure a lot of you have seen the survey that was sent out to students, and things like that. This kind of came up at an awkward time in the year because Anthony and I got notified about it just as the last Executive Council was transitioning out and as you guys were transitioning in, so we were kind of in a weird spot with all of this, but we've been doing some work with it. So the last Council, right before they all transitioned out, we gave them a quick little presentation about it, and chatted about what was happening with this proposal. And so tonight, I think I'm just going to give you guys that same presentation that we gave to the old Executive Council, some of it isn't really relevant anymore, but I still think it'd be good just to get everyone, everyone up to speed. So I'll give you that. And then recently, Anthony and I were a part of a Students Union meeting with other faculty associations that were impacted by the increase in tuition and they gave us a short presentation. So I'll again, just highlight some of the things that came forward at that meeting. And then as well just talk about kind of what we're doing going forward and some future plans that we have. So March 25, Anthony and I received an email from Ken Cor with their attached tuition proposal. Unfortunately, I can't share the exact tuition proposal with you guys, but we kind of made a presentation just outlining the most important parts of it that will kind of be showing and talking about. So then March 26, we met with the executive to discuss the proposal, and then that same day, we also met with the faculty with Ken Cor, Ravina and Jill Hall, to discuss the proposal and give our insight onto it and also discuss the survey that was going to be sent out to students. On March 30, Anthony and I met with Dean Davies, and we had a discussion around increasing tuition and also some other stuff like in person classes. But it was mostly primarily focused around tuition increases. April 12, we received an email from VP external of the SU, now outgoing VP external, David Draper, regarding a meeting with the various faculties involved. This was a very fast moving situation, so we actually met the very next day. And we were given a presentation by the SU on their plan about how to go about these tuition increases. So that's kind of just a day by day of what happened, ongoing. Some of you may know, Anthony has had various meetings with media and external groups, kind of to provide insight into APSA's position on the matter. So he had a radio interview on CBC Edmonton and the Globe and Mail reached out to him as well as another CBC entity. So he's had a few kinds of interviews about the situation. Recently, we've had email contact with a couple other faculty associations, like Engineering and Business, who think it may be beneficial to take a different approach to the matter than what the Students Union has been taking. I think we're setting up a meeting in the near future to just kind of discuss what we think and how we should go about advocating for students on the matter. And then finally, the main reason I want to give you guys all this presentation, is that on Tuesday, April 27, at



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9:30am the faculty is planning a Town Hall for all pharmacy students where they can come and discuss the tuition increase, so I just want to make sure everyone is informed so we can all have a good discussion with the faculty then. So, as you all know, there've been a lot of budget cuts by the government towards the UofA over the last years. They received an 11% cut to provincial funding in the Government of Alberta's 2020 budget. I think over the next three years, they were going to decrease the budget 7% every year, for a total of 21%. So this is supposed to not have anything to do with the faculty's tuition increase, and I can get to why that is in a moment. The grant decreased by \$60 million, almost one half of the total \$126 million cut to the post secondary sector in this year's budget, we had planned for the cut to be about 10%, this was 11%. So it's slightly over what we expected. Again, we brought these kinds of budget cuts up, before we knew the full scope of this tuition increase. So I just want to say again, that these budget cuts are supposed to have nothing to do with the increase in tuition. In a budget Town Hall that Dean Davies had last year, he said that there would be \$7.8 million cuts from 2017/18 to 2022/23. So it's quite a bit of money, but again, this is supposed to, in theory, not have an effect on the tuition increase that we have. So now moving into the tuition increase, this is considered to be an exceptional tuition increase. And the whole goal of it is to improve the quality of the faculty of pharmacy, so improve the quality of education that students are getting. So what the faculty is doing is they're going to send a probe or send a proposal to the Government of Alberta, in the spring proposing a 35% increase in tuition, starting the fall of 2022. So tuition will cost \$17,910 per year, which brings the UofA to median of its comparables. So right now, we are on the low end, we are actually one of the cheapest that you can get to or cheapest faculties that you can go to that is not provincially subsidized, whereas some other faculties are provincially subsidized, which is why their tuition is so low. So putting us up will be kind of on par with everywhere else. I don't think that's necessarily a reason for us to say this is okay, because I think the Faculty of Pharmacy should pride themselves on providing a cheaper education than everywhere else. But just so that we know this isn't going to put us astronomically higher than anywhere else in Canada. So the tuition increase will not affect current students entering the program in 2021. So the class of 2025 will not be affected, they will be grandfathered in along with the rest of us. So this tuition increase really has no impact on anyone currently in the program or anyone being admitted next year. Just those entering in the fall of 2022. So the class of 2026 they would be the first class to experience this increase. So the whole point of this proposal, I guess is they talked about revenue reinvestment strategies. So they want to put this money towards bettering the program and reinvesting it in the faculty. So this involves, like program resources program and structures and faculty program delivery improvements and a primary care pharmacy clinic. I won't go through too much of this, as you guys saw that a lot of these options were in the survey to rank how you felt about them and how important you felt they were. So, these are kind of the main areas that they're focusing on and moving forward, they did the student consultation via the survey. Some points that we made to the faculty about changing the survey were that we proposed that they include the fact that it's a 35% increase, ranking, the reinvestment initiatives, adding a question where we can describe things, and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the proposal. So this is kind of what we were told the survey was going to be. One thing that kind of surprised us is we were not aware that the tuition increase survey was going to come at the end of a 20 minute long survey with other things. So when I say we helped design the survey, we helped design the three questions that were tailored towards the tuition increase but we had no idea that this was going to come at the end of a survey that was all about the faculty. So we were kind of disappointed in that context. So, some things that we also brought up with the faculty is how, with this new college model, I know, we're still a faculty, but then we get taxed to the college.



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So one thing we have brought up countless times with the faculty and with the Students Union is, we want more understanding on how this taxation model works. Because and, frankly, we haven't gotten an answer from anyone, I don't think anyone truly knows how it works yet. Because if they're increasing tuition for us, we don't want that just to mean that the faculty is taxed more and sending more money to the college, we want that money, if we're paying more, we want that money to stay within the faculty. And so that's kind of been a big campaign point of Anthony and I is if this does go through, we want that money to be reduced, redistributed within the faculty, and not going towards other things. Another thing we brought up with the faculty is a huge priority of us advocating for the college model was maintaining faculty status, and keeping our Student Services team, we really value them. And so we were wondering if with this increase in tuition, if it would be a possibility for us to keep the Student Service team but again, we haven't really got an answer on that. Because again, with the college model, they kind of just pushed it through. No one really knows if the ramifications that this is going to have. So talking with Ravina and others, no one really knows yet what specifically is going to happen to the Student Services team. Does anyone have any questions?

- b. Rachel - So I thought I saw that there was a social media post, I think on Facebook, from the Students Union, and I thought it said it was a 44% increase. I'm just wondering, like, why it is different?
- c. Garrett - I don't know, it might depend on how they are depicting the numbers. I'm not totally sure how they are, but it could. I'm not sure if the University is just taking into account our tuition, but then there's mandatory fees on top of it. I don't know if the Faculty is trying to make it look smaller and then the Students Union is trying to make it look bigger. Yeah, I'm not totally sure. But that's kind of the only answer that I have. Okay, good. Amandeep, did you have a question?
- d. Amandeep - I was just wondering, do you know if these other schools that charge around the same amount that we want to start increasing tuition to, do they offer these kinds of programs? Is their 'added value' those programs? And that's why we want to increase it to that level?
- e. Garrett - I'm not totally sure, but this was something that was kind of brought up at our last Executive meeting, is that I think UBC has a primary care clinic that they run through the faculty and so I think that's kind of what the UofA is basing this on. I know there are a couple other faculties or schools that use a program that tracks your progress throughout your entire degree. So it starts tracking you within the first year and you put all of your like assignments and stuff through it. Then it can tell you kind of what areas you're struggling in and what areas you're growing in, and things like that. It tracks you throughout the entire four years of your program. I know, that was something that was brought up by Ken Cor, and he said that other faculties are using it, and they think that that might be beneficial. So specifically, I'm not sure. But I do know that there are like other faculties do have other initiatives that they have to kind of have the 'added value'. If by us increasing this tuition to the mean value, will it put our quality of education way above everyone else? I'm not not totally sure how that will pan out. Any other questions?
- f. Garrett - So when meeting with the SU, we were given a presentation. We met with Joel, who is the current SU president, and Rowan, who is the current incoming VP external. There's been a lot of discussion around this topic, because meeting with the SU, their first and primary goal is just to stop these tuition increases at all costs. Whereas when we met with all of these other faculty associations, it felt like there weren't many faculty associations who kind of held the same interest or same kind of determination that the Students Union did. I think there were a lot of other faculties that were taking a more conservative approach.



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- g. Jared - I see where the SU perspective is coming from, but obviously, from my perspective, this doesn't affect us, right? But I think looking long term, we don't want to have the future students look up and think that the Executives did nothing for them. So I think, where the faculty wants to put the money is awesome, but I see where I guess he's coming from, like, just for future students. I know that this was a lot of concern that I heard from other people, that if tuition was \$18k, I wouldn't be able to afford that. I think that's something for us to consider as an Executive council, how we want to go about doing it, because it's not gonna affect anybody in our classes. Just for the future generations coming in, is that gonna affect class sizes? How many people can actually get into pharmacy?
- h. Daniel - Also, I think a lot of people like myself, going into pharmacy, you kind of factor in, how much you're going to make afterwards, too, right. So, say, if you're paying 30% more tuition, are you going to see like, 30% increasing income? I know that proportion is outrageously off, right? Jared was sort of saying, the decision that vouch for kind of reflects what future students experience. And I think that's important to keep in mind too. Like, for example, I think there needs to be a little bit more research about what kind of programs are the standard in universities and institutions that pay a lot more and the taxation that you mentioned earlier was great. And what about our job security? For example, there are a lot of international pharmacists coming in, which kind of dilutes our base pay. We're seeing lower and lower rates and in a shortage, you settle for whatever you can get. Is that something you want to do for a degree that you would pay around \$68,000 for? I don't know.
- i. Garrett - I just want to quickly talk about Jared and Daniel's point. The faculty did also say that when the degree turned from a BSc to a PharmD, there was not an increase in tuition. They're kind of using this as a way to say "this is why we're doing it, is because now we're a PharmD", not that I necessarily agree with that. But there is a larger clinical aspect in our degree now. They've doubled the amount of rotations that we have, they've doubled the amount of skills lab that we have, in our degree, things like that, which do cost money. The other thing is, I don't want anyone to think that we support the faculty in increasing tuition. What I learned at the SU meeting, is that as student associations, it is in our SU policy, that in times of tuition increases, we must oppose any and all tuition increases that are to happen. I think that our primary goal shouldn't be attacking the University or the Faculty, because I think that could do more harm than good. I think if we take a more collaborative approach, and try to work together to come to a solution, that it would be best.
- j. Amandeep - About the international students, they actually did just implement something different in Alberta. I have some international students that work with me and before, a lot of people would come here, rather than other provinces, because you didn't have to do a \$14,000 transfer course, but now you do. Maybe that's more of an incentive for international students to go to a different province or that makes it more of a level playing field, but I'm not sure. I just wanted to let you know that that was a thing.
- k. Daniel - Yes, I remember seeing that too, thanks.
- l. Jared - So just to confirm, we have to side with the SU on this. And then the level of how much we have to side is up to us. But did they tell you how far we have to go with them?
- m. Garrett - So this is such a gray area in that, they didn't say. They said that policy states we have to side with the SU and then we have to oppose tuition increases. However, they also said, there are ways to go against what the SU is saying if you have your general council vote and if they support going against the SU policy you can. I'm trying to learn from others right now about what to do. This weekend coming up, we had planned on having a meeting with us, engineering and business. I know the engineering President really knows the ins and outs of SU policy, so I think that would be a good opportunity for me to ask questions. This meeting that we're going to have with them is not us going against the SU. We've made it



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really clear in our emails that anything and everything we do is going to be completely transparent with the Students Union. It is more so just to bounce ideas off of each other, figure out ways that we can kind of work with our respective faculties, and then possibly go to the SU and tell them what we thought up. As of right now, we are siding with the SU. We're just wanting to make sure that we try to do this in a collaborative way. So first thing, an exceptional tuition increase is an increase in tuition that is more than inflation. Right now we have 7% increases for the next two years, and an exceptional tuition goes beyond that 7%. Now that I say that, that SU may have taken these extra percentages into consideration when they presented a 44% increase. Exceptional increases are allowed to be unlimited, but they have a special process. There is a clause saying that it only applies to new students, which I kind of already mentioned. So it used to be that, if they were going to do an exceptional increase, the Student Association had to approve it. The last one that was attempted was in 2014, by the Law faculty, and it got shot down. The new government changed the law in 2019, to say that consent of the Student Association is no longer required. However, the faculty must consult the students, and the Minister of Advanced Education can veto exceptional tuition increases proposals. So really, this is on the Minister. The Students Union approach right now has been to try and show the Minister why he should not propose these. Another thing that the SU wanted to talk about was the affordability of school. Alberta students have the most loans, and the least grants out of any province, but I think what the SU is trying to get across is that the feasibility of it for students really isn't there. Even if in other provinces they're paying a lot more money, the amount of grants that those students are getting are also quite higher which offsets that tuition. So there are two criteria that need to be met in order for the Minister to approve these increases. The first being that there's consultation with the students which needs to be meaningful, inclusive and substantive and where student input is considered and addressed. There needs to be proof that the faculty took in students input and put it into their proposal. The second criteria is that there must be program quality improvement. So if the Minister is convinced that the proposal will improve the quality of the program in a way that justifies the increase, that can be approved. Now, there I'm not sure what justifies how much quality improvement there must be. But I do think that this is kind of where we want to make sure that the faculty is following these rules and that we're advocating for students in both of these sections: that students are being consulted, and that there will be meaningful program quality improvement. I think our faculty was really lucky in terms of consultation, because by the time we had the meeting with the SU, that survey had already been sent out to us, whereas when we went to that other meeting, there were lots of other faculties that had just heard about it that week. I think that our faculty has really taken a proactive attempt at consulting students. The faculty is planning a Town Hall for next week. Anthony and I emailed the faculty saying that we didn't think enough consultation had gone into the process with just a survey and they emailed back saying that they agreed and that they were already planning a Town Hall. So this was something that they were planning on doing already without us having to ask. So with the increase, it must be intended to increase the quality of the program, not just raise revenue, and the quality increase must justify the tuition increase. I'm just going to open the floor to anyone else, if they have more insight that they want to give?

- n. Rachel - I'm just wondering, after the Town Hall, what do we do next?
- o. Garrett - Yeah, I'm not really sure. That might be a time that we reach out to the Student Union, and just ask them where we should go from here. The SU recently had a press conference and asked all faculty association Presidents to attend to speak out about the increases. The only members that attended were just the Graduates Students Association, and the Law Students Association. Ever since that press conference, I haven't really heard



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from the SU so we will just reach out to them. I think another meaningful thing we can do is, attend the town hall, see what students are saying and then maybe a week after, reach out to the faculty. I can possibly meet with Ken Cor and Ravina and whoever else is drafting up this proposal, and just asked to see it and read through it and make sure that students that talked at the Town Hall had their inputs taken into consideration for the proposal. I don't think that we can necessarily block the Faculty from sending this proposal, and with the current government that's in power and the current political climate, I find it, it's, I find it to be a very tough battle to try and just stop this completely. I think that right now, we can just keep talking with the SU, seeing how we can support them, and how we can ensure that the faculty is taking students perfect perspectives into consideration and just trying to advocate for the students.

- p. Amandeep - Are these proposals negotiable? Or is it that it passes or doesn't?
- q. Garrett - I'm not totally sure if it's really negotiable or not, because they send them to the Minister, and then the Minister approves them or not. I haven't heard anything that states that the Minister could ask for changes. I think I did hear someone say that the Minister can put stipulations on the tuition increases, when we were discussing the possibilities of making sure that these increases stay within their respective faculties.
- r. Alyssa - I was just wondering, how did they come up with that specific like number to increase tuition to? Is there a possibility of them submitting a proposal with a lower increase?
- s. Garrett - I'm not totally sure where they got that number from. But, I mean, there's always the possibility of advocating to the faculty for a lower increase. I don't know if it would work, and I guess it's up to the Minister as it's their final say. Another thing that I wanted to say quickly is that Anthony and I received the results of the survey that was sent out to students. And overwhelmingly the top two options that students valued were, number one, bursaries and scholarships, more financial support for students, and number two was the primary care clinic proposal that students had given. So taking that into consideration, knowing that we've seen the results, I also think that that's something that we can advocate for if this is what students want to see with this proposal. Another big thing that's been coming up in all of these meetings is how this increase is going to impact marginalized communities and how this may further worsen diversity within the faculty. A constant theme that we've been bringing up with the faculty is that we need to ensure that there is ample amount of support for marginalized communities and things like that. I think we can advocate that the increase is going to have an impact on the diversity of faculties involved. We need to advocate for these financial supports for marginalized communities and students value that.
- t. Amandeep - To add, one of my friends was mentioning that the cap for student loans for pharmacy students is less than Medicine and Dentistry students. If it goes through there should be a discussion with Student Aid because it wouldn't be affordable with student loans at that point.
- u. Garrett - I would agree and I think it's capped at \$100k. I don't think it's feasible to cap at that with this increase. I agree that is something we could bring up and also something we can bring up at the Town Hall.
- v. Daniel - I have a quick question about the Primary Care Network. What is that in the university pharmacy setting?
- w. Garrett - The faculty has tried to do this before, back in 2018 but it didn't get passed. They want to create a pharmacy, not necessarily at the University but somewhere Downtown in the inner city. They can use it as an exemplar that pharmacy provides the best patient care and an ample amount of clinical services and shows what pharmacists can do to their full scope of practice. We would have learning opportunities for students to go and have



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professors that specialize in certain areas help out at the clinic. Talking with Dean Davies about this, the dream would be to have an interdisciplinary clinic where you see many different healthcare students in teams to provide services, however right now we are looking at pharmacy. Another reason, which is not the primary reason, is that it gives a source of revenue to the faculty. A lot of other faculties do this, Dentistry has a clinic and have people come in. Students do work on them and they have a source of revenue coming in. This would be an opportunity for us to have a source of revenue and do what we want with the money. Right now, we pay tuition and that tuition goes to University not the Faculty. The University just hands out to faculty. If we have this source of revenue, we have more autonomy about things we do.

- x. John - I might have missed this, but is one of the justifications to the tuition increase so that they can open the clinic? Where is the money coming from?
- y. Garrett - With this tuition increase, the stipulation is that it must go to improve the quality of education that pharmacy students receive. It's not supposed to be because of cuts and because we need more money, but the tuition increase is supposed to go towards improving the education of students. One of the ways that they think they can improve the education of students is in this way. The UBC has done this and that is why they put in the survey. We were talking about it because it ranked second in the list of what students wanted right after financial support and bursaries. Does anyone have anything else they want to say?
- z. John - With the budget cuts, do they just by chance get covered by an increase in tuition? Is it supposed to reverse that?
- aa. Garrett - Technically legislation says that the tuition increase has to improve the quality of education that students are getting and that the improvement has to correlate with the amount of money that they are increasing by. It has to have meaning and correlate with the money. I don't know if there are some undertones because of these budget reductions that are kind of pushing the faculties to do this.
- bb. Amandeep - To piggyback on what John said, if this is proposed for 2022, all the cuts and services that will be gone we'll notice this upcoming year. Will they end up being brought back and will that be the improvement of learning or of services? I know our faculty has given us things that they are going to do but from the sounds of it, it sounds like other faculties haven't had that transparency with their students.
- cc. Garrett - I don't know if I have an answer for that or about how our budget is going to be affected. However, Dean Davies has assured me that we are sitting okay for our next year coming up and nothing should be cut in this upcoming year. I'll meet with engineering and business societies this weekend and chat about how we can support the SU as well as advocate for students and make sure faculties are accountable to students. We'll make sure that going forward we keep in communication with the faculty and make sure they are listening to students.

6. COFA External Advocacy Requirements - Garrett (10 min)

- a. Garrett - As many of you that attended the meeting know, the SU has proposed a bylaw and I'm not sure if it got passed. They were passing a bylaw that required faculty associations to report all external advocacy that they did, to them. Now, talking with Anthony, I'm not totally sure how it applies to us. I don't know if what we do with RxA and ACP is considered advocacy by SU definition so there is still a lot of gray. I just wanted to put it on everyone's radar that it is something that could be happening. We'll have to keep updated and ensure that if it goes through, we check the requirements and make sure that this is something that we're doing. At the meeting it didn't seem like they were trying to control us. It seemed like their intentions were well with this. It did seem like they had some various issues over the



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past year with external advocacy going against the SU and that's where their minds are at. They want to make sure that people aren't doing something that negatively reflects on the SU. I just wanted to bring it up for those not at the COFA meeting.

7. Additions to the Agenda

8. Adjournment (21:11)

Motion: To adjourn. First: Jared. Second: Amandeep.