Thursday, May 21st 2020

During the final week of March, undergraduate students voted in the University of Saskatchewan Students’ Union election for the 2020-2021 executive in the midst of moving to online learning and adapting to the changes brought on by COVID-19. In April the executive continued to advocate on behalf of students to ensure they were receiving support while finishing their classes and for some, their degrees. Our Executive team released an open letter to the University of Saskatchewan in regards to the concerns and asks that students had expressed during the final weeks of the winter term. These requests included:

- No tuition increase for the 2020/2021 academic year.
- That all students be given a pass/fail option.
- Reimbursing students for forced withdrawals of classes they would have otherwise been able to complete before the closure of the university.
- Extension of tuition deadlines for Spring, Summer, and Fall terms to account for financial hardships that students may face due to loss of employment opportunities.
- Waiving late payment fees on tuition for Spring, Summer, and Fall terms.

We're pleased the university recognized our call to not increase tuition for the upcoming year and we will continue to work hard and advocate on behalf of students.

On the first of May we welcomed and began transitioning the newly elected executive who came into office. The student body has elected 2 returning executives as well as a new Vice-President of Student affairs and Vice-President of Academic. We are happy to introduce the following:

- Autumn LaRose-Smith (President), from the SUNTEP Program in the College of Education, made history by becoming the first Indigenous woman to be elected in the President’s role and will be the 6th Indigenous President of the USSU. She previously had been elected as Vice President of Student Affairs for the USSU during the 2019-2020 term, through a byelection held in October. She has served as the President of the SUNTEP Student Representative Council as well as multiple student groups. She currently sits as a member on the Ness Creek Cultural and Recreational Society Board, and is a National Ambassador of Hope with We Matter.

- Jamie Bell (Vice President of Operations and Finance) is no stranger to university governance. The Edwards’ School of Business Student was the incumbent VP Operations and Finance serving in the 2019-2020 USSU Executive Team where he worked diligently alongside our many campus groups to ensure success of their
respective organizations. He was successfully elected for a second term with one other candidate in the running and is dedicated to supporting students on and off campus.

- Kiefer Roberts (Vice President Academic Affairs-Elect) is a member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and comes from Stanley Mission, located in Northern Saskatchewan. The Political Studies Major was successfully elected by students, running unopposed. He brings a wealth of knowledge having served as a Member of Students’ Council representing the Indigenous Community in the 2017-2018 Academic year, and, again in 2019-2020.

- Jory McKay (Vice President Student Affairs) ran in an election that saw three candidates vying for the position, and was successfully elected into this role. Jory has been an effective advocate in his previous job as USSU Pride Centre Coordinator for 2 years and also sits as a board member for the Saskatoon Pride festival. He is dedicated to building a safe, accessible, and inclusive community and looks forward to working on sustainability initiatives on campus.

The new executives are getting used to their roles while staying up to date with changes regarding COVID-19 from all levels of government and the University of Saskatchewan. We recognize that these changes affect our entire community and beyond, signifying the importance of community, collaboration and adaptation. We are in the process of working on our strategic direction for the upcoming year and are excited to begin working with those on and off campus!

With respect, excitement, and kind regards,
Jamie Bell
Kiefer Roberts
Jory Mckay
Autumn LaRose-SMith