Thursday, September 10th 2020

As the crisp air rolls in, and school sales begin, the executive has been hard at work preparing for the new year! Over the course of the summer we have made significant changes to our operations and are excited for what's to come. Due to COVID-19 and complications with the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) we sadly had to lay off the majority of our staff. Our senior managers worked very hard to advocate for changes in the legislation which we were ultimately successful, however new complications have developed, resulting in having to continue the layoffs until campus is able to open again. The executive has also been hard at work developing a strategic direction that outlines our goals for our term and areas that we consider needing work. Through this work we have transformed The Path Forward into a guide that maps our values and intentions as we strive for a better student experience. The executive was successful in our advocacy efforts for a tuition freeze and reduction in University fees which we saw happen with the recreation and athletic fees. We have also been in the process of developing an Anti-Racist MOU with the university's Presidents’ Executive Committee after the release of our Black Lives Matter and Anti-Racist statement. Throughout the summer we worked closely with the City of Saskatoon and University of Saskatchewan to negotiate the Upass, which now allows for students to opt-in to the program. We have also hired two new centre coordinators, Tasnim Jaisee our Women's Centre Coordinator, and Rene Clarke our Pride Centre Coordinator to work alongside Jerin Islam, our Help Centre Coordinator. We look forward to working with these amazing student leaders to provide programming and grow our community in a virtual setting. The USSU has also chosen to continue EmpowerMe for the 2020-2021 term, this will provide a 24/7, 365 days a year counselling and mental health service which is free for undergraduate students. In addition, the executive has been working closely with student leaders across Canada in terms of our federal advocacy efforts within the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU). We are dedicated to working with and for students and have been working hard from home to do so.

In the most recent weeks we have also been hard at work on Welcome Week initiatives hosted by the USSU and with the university to ensure students have a positive experience. Staying connected during these times is important for a successful university experience and we must be inventive to do so!

With respect,
Jamie Bell
Kiefer Roberts
Jory Mckay
Autumn LaRose-Smith