



## EXECUTIVE MIDTERM REPORT

Vice President External's Office

May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 – November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Samuel Johannson**

Hello! My name is Samuel Johannson, and I've had the honour of serving as your Students' Association Vice President External since May 1<sup>st</sup>. I'm currently a student in the Bachelor of Arts Political Science University transfer diploma. This first half of the term has been a blast, and I'm proud to share with you the work I've been doing. I'll get into more detail below, but some obvious highlights have been the Mayoral Candidates forum we hosted early this year, doubling the number of student discounts available in Red Deer area businesses, and the work we've been doing in advocating to our provincial government.

### **Mayoral Candidates Forum**

As part of my work goal to increase student participation in Municipal politics ahead of the October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, municipal elections I worked with the membership engagement manager to conduct a get out the vote campaign. Social media posts with information about when and where to vote were circulated via social media. We also sought to get a polling station on Campus for the election, but we were unfortunately unsuccessful.

Additionally, we held a forum for mayoral candidates for the City of Red Deer. Working with my team we held an incredibly successful Mayoral forum, with the top four candidates for Mayor in attendance, Cindy Jeffries, Gareth Scott, Victor Doerksen, and Lawrence Lee. Candidates fielded a wide range of questions (all submitted by students) on everything from the Environment to Property taxes, Reconciliation efforts, and much more. This was an invaluable opportunity for students to get involved in Municipal elections and helped ensure that our elected officials at all levels consider the needs and interests of students. I'd also like to thank the many volunteers who were essential to making sure that the Forum was a success, before, during, and after the event.

For future get out the vote campaigns I'd recommend that future campaigns begin earlier and do classroom visits and tables to promote participation in elections.

### **Student Discounts**

During the summer, building on the work of past Vice President Externals, I set out to increase the number of discounts available to students in the Red Deer area, with the goal that these discounts will help students access goods and services more affordably. My initial goal was to add five new businesses to the list. After creating a list of almost every business within the city, and even some in surrounding communities, I emailed hundreds of businesses. We ended up more than doubling the number of student discounts from 14 to 32. This involved speaking with business owners and managers over several weeks to get them on board, and working with the Membership Engagement department to get the word out about these discounts. Work is continuing on this front to spread awareness of these discounts to students. On this, feel free to



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tell as many people as you can about our wonderful discounts, available at pubs, grocery stores, bowling lanes and golf simulators, restaurants, and various other businesses. You can find the full list of discounts at [sardp.ca/wellness/financial-wellness](http://sardp.ca/wellness/financial-wellness)

### **Alberta Students' Executive Council**

The Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC) is our provincial lobby group. Working with 13 other Students' Association's from across Alberta we lobby the provincial government on issues of key importance to students. This year ASEC's three main advocacy goals are: 1) Increasing governmental funding to post-secondaries to support key student services and keep tuition increases low. 2) Increasing governmental funding for mental health services on post-secondary campuses. 3) Addressing food insecurity amongst students.

ASEC's Leadership conference was held in June. We had a chance to meet our fellow student leaders from across the province, sharing ideas and information between one another. The conference featured a number of presentations from various groups, including a presentation from the Ministry of Advanced Education on the work being done at the Ministry, the structure of the Ministry and the Alberta Tuition Framework, where we had the opportunity to ask questions about a variety of topics, including but not limited to: The Alberta Tuition Framework, funding of post-secondary institutions, and food insecurity amongst students.

Also, during ASEC's Leadership Conference I was elected to serve a one-year term on the ASEC Board of Directors. Since then, my duties on the Board have included attending monthly Board meetings, representing the Board at events, and serving as the Chair of ASEC's Advocacy Committee, where representatives from ASEC's member organizations discuss changes, improvements, and additions to ASEC's policy stances.

ASEC also held its Advocacy conference in July, where we did training to help us prepare to advocate to government. After this training, ASEC members went to various events at the Calgary Stampede, hosted by lobbyists, law firms, and politicians to speak with our elected officials. These introductions helped to facilitate future advocacy efforts.

I'm always happy to chat about the work happening at ASEC, so if you'd like to know more feel free to reach out! Email me at [savpx@rdpolytech.ca](mailto:savpx@rdpolytech.ca)

### **Advocacy Efforts**

Since May our team has been meeting with our elected officials, including Minister of Advanced Education Myles McDougall. During these meetings our team has been highlighting issues of importance to students, offering the student perspective on post-secondary issues, and ensuring student voices are heard. We have also met with our local MLAs and MPs, in addition to members of the official opposition in Alberta. We've been able to discuss topics including institutional funding and the cost of tuition. One large item we've been able to support is RDP's proposal for a new Healthtech Centre for Applied Learning and Innovation, which, if approved,



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would add nine new programs in the health sector, create thousands of new spaces for students, add practicum opportunities for students, and be a primary care clinic on campus, which aligns with our advocacy objective of increasing access to primary care on campus.

We plan to continue these meetings during the year to continue advocating for our members to government, including in the near future where I'll be heading to Edmonton along with our fellow ASEC members for three days of advocacy at the Legislature.

### Advocacy Ad-Hoc Committee

It turns out that I'm not chairing one Advocacy Committee, I'm chairing two. Our brand new Association Advocacy Ad-Hoc Committee has the goal of speaking to two thousand students by the middle of February to help inform future advocacy efforts by collecting feedback from our members on their experiences as students, and how the Students' Association can improve them. This Committee has only just begun its work in the past month, but I'm looking forward to what we will be able to achieve. I've personally began speaking with students, and concerns I've been hearing range from the cost of textbooks, the availability of parking, and issues surrounding class schedules.

Hopefully during the upcoming year, a member of our Advocacy Committee will have a chance to hear your concerns and feedback!

### Perspectives

RDP's annual perspective speaker series was another project completed in these last few months. Nationally syndicated columnist Andrew Coyne came to campus to speak about his new book, the Crisis of Canadian Democracy. We planned the free student session that occurs prior to the paid evening session. With the help of the membership engagement team, we marketed the student session via posters around the school and via social media. The session itself was a success, with Mr. Coyne speaking about his book and his career, and fielding questions from the audience. This event would not have been possible or nearly as successful as it was without the help of the membership engagement team, our volunteers who helped set up the event, and the support from members of the Perspectives committee.

### Other Work

#### Campus Store Advisory Committee

Another internal committee I sit on in my role is the Campus Store Advisory Committee. This committee oversees the operations of the Campus Store and discusses any issues or concerns with the availability of course materials and textbooks. I represent the student perspective on this committee and bring any concerns regarding the campus store to the committee.



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### Alumni Association Board

I also represent the Students' Association on the Board of the Alumni Association. This involves attending quarterly meetings where the Board receives reports from the Board's Chair and Treasurer, discusses matters relating to the operations of the Alumni Association, and approves the annual budget.

### Orange Shirt Day Presentation

I spoke briefly to congratulate the winner of a contest to create a design to be put on orange shirts for orange shirt day. These shirts were sold at the lift leading up to the National Day of Truth and reconciliation.

### Indigenous Canada Course

I and the other executives completed a training course during the summer delivered online through the University of Alberta that detailed the history, culture, and traditions of indigenous peoples across Canada. This course provided a greater understanding of both past and present challenges facing Indigenous peoples in Canada.

### Trades Completion Breakfast

The Students' Association hosts trades completion breakfasts to congratulate those completing trades programs. I spoke at one of these breakfasts to congratulate the students completing their programs, wishing them the best of luck going forward.

### Partnership with Red Deer Rebels

We worked with the Red Deer Rebels to have a student ticket promotion for their October 18<sup>th</sup> game against the Spokane Chiefs. I worked with the membership engagement manager to promote the game via social media and posters around the school. Students could get discounted tickets which came with a free drink voucher at Bo's bar and stage. Additionally, \$5 from each ticket was donated to the Emergency Student Food Bank, raising \$145 for the food bank.

### Open House Interview

I gave a brief radio interview with Big 105.5 at RDP's open house to help boost student recruitment while promoting the work the Association does around campus, including our student supports and our membership engagement activities.