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BUSAC November 16th, Report

By: Sohail Ahmed

2010



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This document is the report from the President, Sohail Ahmed to the Brock University Students Administrative Council for the November 30th, 2010 meeting.

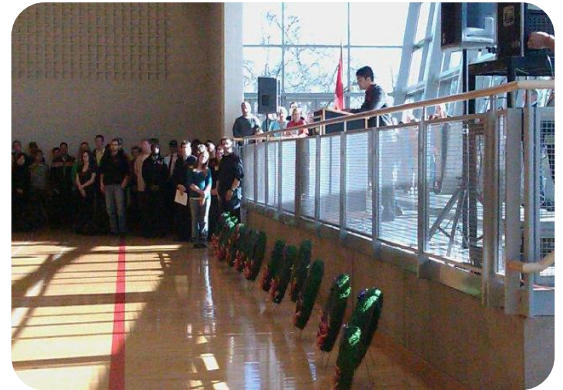
Ladies and Gentlemen

This document is my report for the November 16th and 30th meeting of the Brock University Student Administrative Council in the year 2010.

I will attempt to update you on the happenings of the Brock University Students Union for the month of November while providing information of some of the ongoing projects that BUSU has undertaken. If ever you require more information please refer to my contact information at the end of this report and get in touch with me!

Remembrance Day

Every year Brock hosts a Remembrance day ceremony to bring together students, faculty and even community members for a moment of silence. Of course it was held this year and excitingly enough, with efforts of various parties including BUSU we had “a record number of students” attend the ceremony. You may have read an article in the Press in which it was expressed that the student turnout was “disappointing”. That very well may be the persons opinion, however the fact that we had about a 30% higher turnout as compared to last year is great news. Of course the turnout is still far too low for a school our size. Efforts must continue in future years to increase awareness of the event to staff and students.



Office Clean up

We’ve created an inter-office competition to determine who has the cleanest office in BUSU! Rules were simple: 4 audits over 4 weeks. Each office is rated from 1 to 10 and the winner at the end of the month will be the person with the highest average over 4 audits. With 18 offices in the competition, things have been very competitive (especially because we post the audit ratings publically!). I’m really glad we did it as not only the office has been cleaner, I believe there was some good teambuilding. Feel free to stop by the BUSU office and view the results and to check out the BUSU Door competition results as well!

OUSA

Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance

On the weekend of November 5th, under Daud’s supervision we hosted the OUSA



General Assembly at Brock University. I won't brag too much about it or tell you that we have really set the bar for future GA's but I will tell you to read Daud's report to find out more about how it went!

On November 28th, myself and Daud will be attending the OUSA Lobby Conference in Toronto. We will be there until Thursday with a packed agenda meeting MPP's and other provincial gov't staff to talk about post secondary education issues and lobby on OUSA's priorities for the year.

CASA

The week of November 15th Daud, Chris Ventura, Luke Speers and were in Ottawa for a lobby conference! It occurs annually and typically only the VPUA and President attend. We decided to open it up to external affairs committee members this year because we thought it would be of benefit (and it really was!). The week consisted of training how to lobby, lobbying itself and a lot of debriefing. Here are some interesting stats:

- Over 3 days - 112 Meetings
 - 48 with Conservative Members of parliament
 - 47 with Liberal MP's
 - 13 NDP MP's
 - 2 Bloc
 - 1 Independent
 - 1 Civil Service



Every meeting was prepped for beforehand. We would review minutes from previous meetings that CASA has had with the member to determine what key issues would be best to raise during the meeting. Overall we had 13 "Asks" from the government that we were pushing for. The topics ranged from International student visas to grants and Student loan requirement issues.

I believe it was an effective lobby conference. In the meetings I attended, I noticed strong support for 2 key issues that will likely be changed as a result of this conference.

-International student visas (reducing the requirement of int'l students to wait 6 months

LOBBY CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE						
November 13 - 19, 2010						
SATURDAY NOV 13 Arrival Welcome to Lobby Con 2010 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm Opening Business	SUNDAY NOV 14 Training Begins 8:30am - 10:00am Parliament Tour 10:30 a.m. Government Climate 11:00 a.m. How to Lobby Effectively 12:30 pm Practice Lobbying Round 1 2:00 pm Troubleshooting 3:00 pm Practice Lobbying Round 2 5:00 pm Opening Plenary 7:30 p.m. Supper 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm Crash/Stay in for questions Free Evening	MONDAY NOV 15 Lobby Day 1 2:15 - 3:00 p.m. Question Period for members who are available (House of Commons) 6:00 pm Debrief Free Evening <small>*We almost always check the Support House before and after your meetings</small>	TUESDAY NOV 16 Lobby Day 2 2:15 - 3:00 p.m. Question Period for members who are available (House of Commons) 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm Home Coming on the Hill 8:00 pm Debrief Free Evening <small>*We almost always check the Support House before and after your meetings</small>	WEDNESDAY NOV 17 Lobby Day 3 2:15 - 3:00 p.m. Question Period for members who are available (House of Commons) 6:00 pm Debrief Free Evening	THURSDAY NOV 18 Committee Day* 9:00 am - 9:30am Committee Chair Meeting 10:00 am - 11:00am Parliamentary Committee 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm By Law Committee & Pan-Canadian Committee 2:00 pm New Federation Presentation and Discussion 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm Board Fee Structure Presentation and Discussion 8:15 pm - Karaoke Free Evening	FRIDAY NOV 19 Closing Plenary 8:45 am - 5:00 pm Presentation and Discussion Free Evening <small>*Note - you MUST be through security to enter the 3:30am</small>

Issue Briefings

Lobby Days

Committee Day & Plenary

before applying for a work permit to 4 months.) This was a growing issue for the students who were coming from overseas in January and could not apply for a work permit until the middle of summer and hence not being able to find jobs.

-An increase in In-Study allowable income for Student Loans. Currently when you get a student loan from OSAP you are “allowed” to only earn \$50 a week before it starts negatively impacting your loan amount. CASA strongly believes that this needs to change with the rising costs of education and students desire to work beyond just a few hours a week. We have made strong recommendations to change that amount to \$200. We are optimistic and in my opinion will have that changed.

A number of other issues were very well received during the conference as well. I won't list them all but if you're interested, please just ask me and I will gladly send you our lobby document!



Random Acts of Kindness

Personally it was my first year participating in RAK day. The concept is simple and I'm really glad BUSU staff took it on themselves to participate in it this year. Michelle Brasil took it on to have BUSU RAK cards created and really helped raise awareness in the office. On the day of with the lead of Michelle, Jayne, Jess and design help from Sarjis our office really enjoyed doing RAK all day. The best part of the day for me was raking leaves with the SLICE team!



BUSU holiday party

One of my all time favorite events of the year is coming up and you are invited! The BUSU Holiday party this year is going to set the bar much higher than ever before. With staff and volunteers from every division of BUSU attending- it's an event you don't want to miss! As long as you are working for or have volunteered for Isaacs, Union Station, Sub cetera South, General Brock, Brock TV, Skybar or BUSU overall such as “BUSAC or SWAT” you are invited! Tickets can be picked up at the BUSU Reception. Cocktails, food and prizes all night long! If you interested in providing input or helping plan; Kenneth is point person for decorations, Nazir for food and cleanup, Chris Green for prizing and gaming and myself for invites.



10/11
BUSU HOLIDAY PARTY

Friday Dec 3rd
Doors open at 7
At Skybar Lounge
Food and Prizes

THIS IS NOT THE TICKET
RSVP AT THE BUSU RECEPTION
OR AT RECEPTION@BUSU.NET

Free for Staff/ \$5 Volunteers/ \$10 Guests

Presidents' Ball

Photo Gallery of event: <http://www.busu.net/gallery/?path=./presBall/>

The Presidents' ball this year was amazing! The attendance, food, theme and silent auction were all a success. The night began with cocktails and we greeting the guests. There were a number of distinguished university guests that attended and as I did at the event, I'd like to personally thank them again for attending.

I spoke at the event about what Presidents' ball is and the significance of it. It's a demonstration of one of the unique characteristics of our university. It showcases the relationship that exists between the University and BUSU administration as well as BUSU and its stakeholders (undergraduate students). It's not only a showcase of how well our relationship is but in fact a reminder that we are a role model to many other universities across the country in terms of the working relationship the three parties have developed. If you don't believe me, I can show you many examples of how other universities have attempted to learn from us to try and develop the same relationship at their university! Be proud badgers!

Last but not least I would like to thank everyone who donated to the Silent auction! The response from students was great in raising awareness and funds for Red Cross Pakistan Relief Fund. Also a big thank you to the local St Catharine's Red Cross office for sending Naomi Diestelkamp to our event to speak about where the funds raised will be going and an insight about what Red cross is doing to help. Thank you to all the companies and friends who donated gifts for the silent auction to help raise **nearly \$2000!**

Velocity/Accelerator

As BUSU considers an expansion of creating an incubator for undergraduate businesses, we are continually studying best practices and exploring different models. In the first week of November, myself and Sebastian did a tour of Velocity (residence pre incubator) and Accelerator (a business tech incubator) at Waterloo University. (Shout out to Reemah for giving us the tour!). The tour was extremely beneficial and we made a few key contacts whom we have setup future meetings with. We kept detailed notes from the trip and will be using it to make better decisions for our project. We will be touring other incubators in the near future as well as going back to Waterloo to view the Communitech Hub (their newest incubator).



SJC Update

The Student Justice Center has two major updates! First off, it has appointed new 8 new members to its

advisory committee. The reason this was done is so that the approval of the initial documents that are currently being worked on such as the Advisory committee by-law would get more student input as compared to just myself and Carol's input (as the only initial students on their). I'm also happy to report that after many revisions the first bylaw which outlines the responsibilities of the SJC Advisory committee is nearly complete. When completed and voted on by SJCAC it will be sent to either the Board or BUSAC for final approval.

The SJC Budget 10/11 has officially been passed as well by the SJCAC. It is currently on its way to the Board of Directors for approval before becoming a public document.

Environmental Initiatives

To keep you merely posted on this as a follow up from my last report, I am happy to say that this initiative has received response from students. Students did respond with initiatives (both Environmental and general student initiatives for Brock) and we are working with them to provide advice, resources and funds to them! I will update you as the initiatives take a more concrete form.

Building Expansion

As you will be able to recall from previous reports and from reports from the VPFA, I am referring to the expansion of the BUSU Alumni centre building. This project has been put to priority status and a number of meetings regarding planning and consultation have been held in November. A general projection of the size and style of the building seems to be coming to a conclusion. An express of interest in the building has been clear to us by the University and they have been helping us quite a bit to date in terms of speeding up the process and providing advice. Sebastian Prins has been meeting with managers in the BUSU office as the first stage of consultation. We are planning to present to the university 3 different proposals in terms of size/locations this coming week.



Welland Transit

I want to provide some context around the issue before I get into the most recent updates. The issue we were having in plain language is that last year we had 16 routes between Welland and Brock University and this year we only have 8. Last year 8 of the buses were funded by BUSU and 8 funded by SAC (Niagara student council). This year in 2010 however SAC decided to pull out the 8 that they were funding. Now this has had drastic decrease in transit service which didn't only affect Niagara collage students but of course Brock students. In one case the decrease in routes has let to a 4 hour gap between buses.



Niagara College **Student
Administrative Council**
student life defined

While we received many concerns, emails and phone calls we were attempting our best to find solutions to this problem. Welland city council was approached, Transit authorities were sought for advice, our internal budgets were reviewed etc. After a few months of back and forth email, Sebastian scored a meeting last week with SAC to bring the issue back to surface. Him and myself knew that we needed a solution for the coming semester or else we would be making some drastic changes that would end up taxing SAC students for the Welland bus. Sure enough with a bit of strategizing with the SAC president and General Manager, we had a created a plan the near future is looking bright. I expect there to be 6 additional routes for Welland transit by January.

Topics I will not be reporting on:

Volunteers

SLIC

Renovations

CUPE

Brock Outdoors

Fall Preview Day

Office Door decoration competition

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Links

www.busu.net	www.busu.net/busac	www.brocktv.ca
BUSU Youtube Homepage	SWAT Facebook page	www.Sohail.ca