



JACKSON HINTON

ONCE UPON A TIME After a year-and-a-half, Klein’s promise for the most affordable PSE in Canada remains unfulfilled.

SU says *A Learning Alberta* final report doesn’t deliver

Report’s recommendations should go further in increasing affordability, critics argue

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Senior News Editor

When Premier Ralph Klein promised in February 2005 to make Alberta’s postsecondary education system the most affordable in Canada, student representatives vowed to hold him to his word, and then-minister of advanced education Dave Hancock launched the *A Learning Alberta* review to explore how this pledge could be achieved.

However, after a year and a half of extended deadlines, a ministerial change, deregulation of tuition policy and continuous debate, the *A Learning Alberta* review ended with little media attention on 5 June.

“From my standpoint, the review started off with a bang and ended with a whimper,” Liberal Official Advanced Education Critic Dave Taylor said.

Students’ Union President Sam Power credited the review for having sparked ample debate on the province’s postsecondary issues, but expressed her disappointment at its lack of concrete results.

“I’m actually very scared for where postsecondary stands right now; because, I think, in the eyes of the government and in the eyes of some of the public, they believe that the issue of affordable tuition and quality education have been solved because of this review—and that’s far from the case,” Power said.

According to Power, no headway has been made in solving the issues

that were under constant debate during the review process.

“There’s been no increased dedication of funding to institutions, nor has there been a solution to increasing tuition fees for students and solving the affordability problems,” she said.

However, Alberta’s Advanced Education Minister Denis Herard assured the recommendations raised by the review were being taken into account.

“All of that is currently being summarized and put into a report for me,” Herard explained. “Essentially, students will be very pleased with what it is we’re doing because most of the problems that were identified to us by students are being worked on.”

According to SU Vice-President (External) Dave Cournoyer, student representatives were told in a private meeting with the Minister last week to anticipate an announcement prior to the leadership changeover on a new regulated tuition policy.

However, Cournoyer remained adamant that the SU would continue to lobby to have tuition policy placed back into legislation, regardless of how appealing the new policy appears.

“There’s no accountability to Albertans that this new policy that the Minister will announce in the next couple months will stay the same in six months from now when the new premier takes over,” Cournoyer said, noting the deregulation of tuition policy allows for changes to be made to it without debate in the legislature.

Aware of students’ concerns, Herard has promoted regulated policies for their flexibility and is encouraging students to first participate in this process prior to deciding on its effectiveness.

“If you put something in regulation, then you have the ability for continuous improvement, and so if some part of this doesn’t work quite right for students, then we can change the regulation quite easily to accommodate their needs,” Herard said, adding he would be open to re-evaluating the re-legislation of tuition policy after first attempting a regulated system.

“If in the end it doesn’t appear that it’s going to result in agreement, then we can look at putting it back into legislation.”

But Cournoyer wasn’t convinced this new policy would make up for the loss of the high-energy momentum that came out of the forum a year and a half ago, nor did he expect it would fulfill the review’s founding promise of creating the most affordable postsecondary system in Canada.

“[Considering] the amount of effort that so many stakeholders put into this review and the trust they put into pursuing this review, it’s underwhelming, it’s unvisionary and disappointing,” he said. “It’s 24 pages of vague recommendations set with timelines for 2025. If Albertans were looking for a true *A Learning Alberta*, or a true best postsecondary education system in the country, this is not going to deliver on it.”

CAMPUS CRIME BEAT

Compiled by Scott Lilwall

THAT’S MY BIKE YOU’RE STEALING

On 31 August, at around 11pm, Campus Security Services received a report that someone caught two males who were attempting to steal his bike. The pair of would-be bike thieves were promptly caught and arrested by CSS members. They were charged with counts of attempted theft and assault. The two troublemakers were eventually released into the custody of the Edmonton Police Service.

DRIVE-BY PURSE SNATCHING FOILED

On 4 September, at around 8am, a truck containing three females pulled a U-turn on 87 Avenue and drove up alongside a female student. While one of the females in the truck distracted the lone woman by asking for directions around campus, one of the others grabbed the pedestrian’s purse and pulled it into the truck. The victim quickly went to the CSS office, sans purse, and reported the incident.

Campus Security Services located the suspects in the area of 109 Street a short time later at which point the EPS was called to the scene. Two female youths were arrested and charged with several offences, it was also determined that the truck had been reported stolen.


Most of the complainant’s property was recovered.

CAMPUS FIREBUGS STILL AT LARGE

CSS received a call on 5 September at around 3:30pm informing them that three males had just started a fire in the field just west of the Campus Saint-Jean.

But before CSS could apprehend the suspects, the fire starters fled and ran down into the river valley and evading capture. Upon further investigation, it appears that the budding pyromaniacs had attempted to start multiple fires in the field.

Anyone with information on the two suspects is asked to contact CSS at 492-5050.

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