



MIKE OTTO

PLANNING FOR FITNESS Dr Kim Raine says that properly planned neighbourhoods can have an impact on residences' health.

Study shows urban planning linked to physical fitness, health

TOM WAGNER
News Staff

A new study by University of Alberta researchers has found that urban planning is an important factor in determining what we eat and how much we exercise, and as a result, whether or not we'll struggle with obesity.

The *State of the Evidence Review on Urban Health and Healthy Weights* collected data from over 350 studies internationally before verifying that low income levels and neighbourhoods designed without walking in mind were often associated with poor diets and exercise regimes.

According to Dr Kim Raine, director of the U of A's Centre for Health Promotion Studies and co-author of the study, access to healthy food is often a major obstacle in lower-income neighbourhoods.

"If you live in a neighbourhood where there's little or no access to stores that provide you with inexpensive sources of healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, it's unlikely that you're going to consume those things," Raine explained. "We found that there's more access to things like fast food

restaurants in lower-income neighbourhoods, and there's less access to affordable, healthy foods."

According to Raine, another problem is that nutritious food options are often much more expensive than their fast food counterparts, a fact that he noted is readily observable even on campus.

"Sure enough, the cheapest place to buy food on campus is in the fast food restaurants, and the most expensive place is in the cafeterias," Raine said.

The problem, he explained, is further exacerbated because the poor are also much less likely than higher-income individuals to exercise in their spare time, a factor determined by both cost and the availability of free time.

"If they're having to work and then rush home and take care of their child or something, there's not a heck of a lot of time in their day to do some things for themselves," explained Dr John Spence, a U of A professor of physical education and recreation and co-author of the study.

According to Spence, this issue cannot be properly addressed by one-time fixes, but instead requires long-term programs to make sports and

recreational activities more accessible and affordable.

"For instance, getting into hockey is a really expensive thing," Spence said. "And a \$500 tax deduction that the federal government offers is not going to help people who won't be able to afford the initial \$500 to \$1000 to put their child in it."

Exercise levels are also heavily influenced by a neighbourhood's urban design. For instance, if there aren't sidewalks or walking paths, people are far more likely to drive to go about their daily errands.

"Typically, you have a more walkable neighbourhood in a denser population because they have more services to access, so you can walk to a store, you can walk to a recreation facility, that type of thing," Raine explained.

Although the causes behind the obesity problem are now quite clear to researchers, how to solve it isn't.

"We found very, very little evidence and information on the role of policy in terms of stimulating these types of things," Spence explained. "So what it showed us was that there's a real gap there and a need for more research and definitely some work to be done there."

Motion to dismiss withdrawn following letter

SAMUEL • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"There was an apology letter from Bobby Samuel on the late additions regarding some activity at DIE Board, which I think adequately rectifies the situation," Nicol said.

Chris Samuel, who represented his brother during the hearing, denied allegations that Bobby Samuel's SU presidential election campaign materials mirrored the design, content, and slogans previously used for a pamphlet that was deemed to be pre-campaigning and banned from distribution.

In his letter, Bobby Samuel clarified that Chris had, at his request, originally agreed to "plead guilty" to all pending charges at the 4 March DIE Board meeting, and said that he was not aware of his brother's altered stance until some time later.

"I apologize for these events; they were not supposed to happen like this," he concluded in his letter.

"I think that there was a lot of animosity, but I feel that my letter to Council addressed a lot of those concerns," he noted after Tuesday's meeting. "I hope that Students' Council can trust me to [continue to] work in the best interest of students."

Had it passed, the motion to



SAMBROOKS

BOBBY BLOWOVER Samuel put to rest the issues surrounding elections Tuesday.

remove Samuel from office would have led to the first formal removal of an SU executive in the organization's history. However, Council voted unanimously in favour of the motion's withdrawal.

While Samuel managed to escape any further disciplinary action, he also stressed a commitment to keep working during the last month of his term. This sentiment was echoed by Janz, who observed that the SU should be concentrating on more wide-reaching student interests.

"I hope that we all can learn a lesson

from what's happened this year and can move on and keep focusing on the bigger fish we have to fry, like the credit card issue," Janz remarked.

Although he felt that this decision marks the end of any further controversy, Janz hopes that future SU executives can learn from this example.

"I think it's a warning to future executives that no matter what happens in your term, if you mess around and Council doesn't feel that you're doing your job, even if it's the eleventh hour, you can still be held accountable for your actions."

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