

# 2024

## Report to the COMMUNITY



# OVERVIEW

## THIS REPORT

This report aims to inform students and the campus community on the progress and changes completed by the SU over the 2023-2024 academic year.

Want more information? You can check out our website or reach out to one of our student executives – they're always happy to speak with students! You can find their contact information on our website.

## STRATEGIC & ANNUAL OPERATING PLANS

The Students' Union is guided by a strategic plan which is reviewed and renewed every three years. This plan illustrates the Vision, Mission, and Values of the SU and guides the allocation of resources towards student priorities. The 79th executives drafted, and the Students' Legislative Council (the SU's elected highest governing body) approved the strategic plan for the SU for 2022-2025.

Each year, the SLC also approves an annual operating plan which is developed by the executives to direct their work for their term. The 81st executive created their plan for 2023 - 2024 with goals divided into three key priorities: *strengthen the organization, engage with students, and prioritize advocacy.*

The SU continues to be a model for student associations across the country in terms of governance policy and practice (including transparency and accountability to students), management of our spaces on campus, staffing, and financial sustainability.

# STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATION



## LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The Students' Legislative Council (SLC) has made some important changes to the Union Bylaw that included updates to its composition, executive offices, and committee administration.

1. The SU Constitution was incorporated into the Union Bylaw, making the Union Bylaw a "one-stop-reference" document students can consult for all information on SU governance processes and operations.
2. Streamlined SU Executive offices by redistributing the Vice President Student Life and Vice President Operations and Finance portfolios to form the newly established Vice President Internal position.
3. A Faculty Representative position for the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape is established on SLC.
4. SLC members are now protected from liability due to discharging their official duties honestly, responsibly, and in good faith for the benefit of the SU.
5. The Review Board and the Tribunal have been restructured as independent and arms-length standing committees of the SLC. A new Terms of Reference was developed for these committees and their applicable general procedures were updated to align with the SU's new governance framework.

# GENERAL ELECTION



**VOTER  
TURN OUT WAS  
3,764  
STUDENTS**

82nd Executives  
(Left to Right)

Ermia Rezaei-Afsah  
President

Jessie Dinh  
VP Academic

Naomie Bakana  
VP Internal

Mateusz Salmassi  
VP External

## 2024 GENERAL ELECTION

The 82nd SLC was elected in the SU General Election in March 2024.

There were 33 candidates for 28 positions with three positions left vacant.

The General Election ballot also contained a referendum question regarding the proposed incorporation of the SU Constitution into the SU Union Bylaw, and the subsequent rescindment of the SU Constitution. The referendum passed with 92.8% of the students voting in favour.



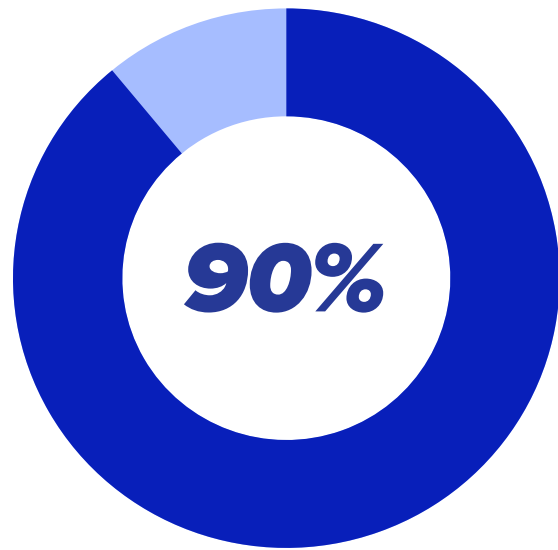
# FINANCES

UCalgary students continue to enjoy some of the lowest student association fees in the country while at the same time they benefit from the large number of businesses, programs, and services offered by their SU. This is possible through the strong financial stewardship of student money by the SU.

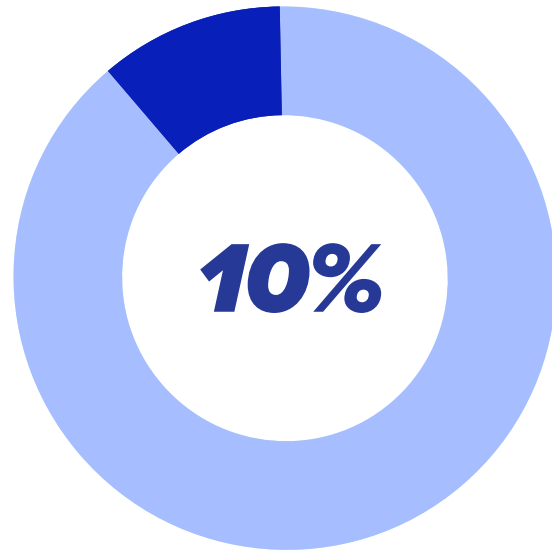
Each year the SLC approves an annual operating budget of nearly \$13 million. No extra-budgetary expenditures were proposed or approved during the 2023-24 year.

**OUR STUDENTS  
PAY THE LOWEST  
SU FEES IN THE  
COUNTRY**

## REVENUE SOURCES



**+90%**  
of our revenue comes  
from SU businesses.

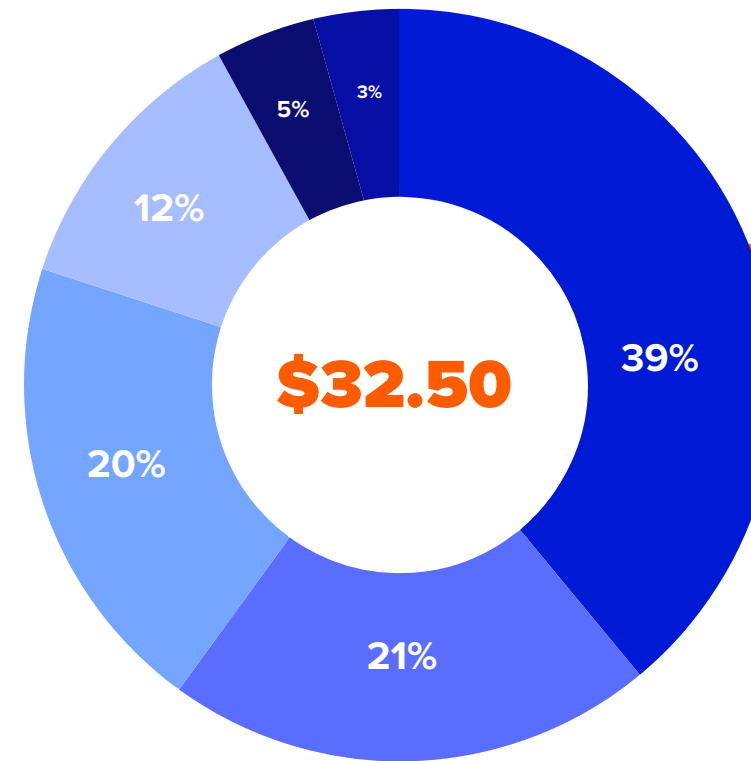
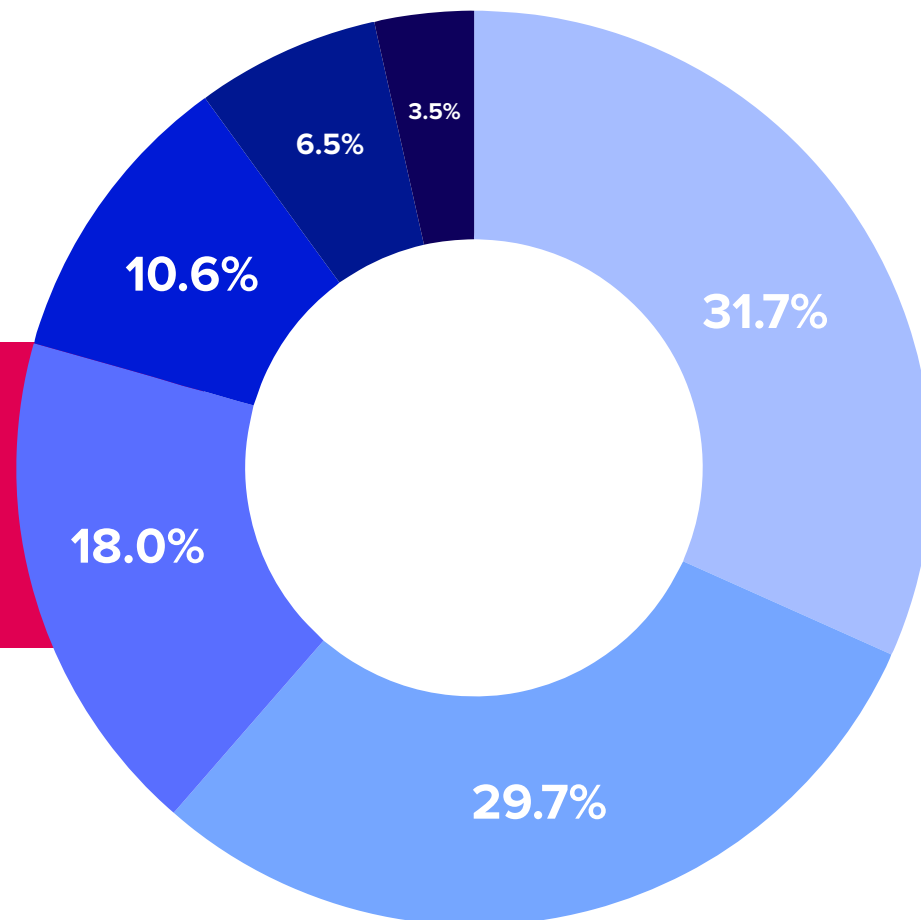


**+10%**  
of our revenue is  
from Student Fees.

**UCALGARY  
STUDENTS HAVE  
NOT HAD AN  
INCREASE IN THE  
SU OPERATING  
FEE SINCE 1995**

- ▲ **\$2,653,909.07**  
*MacEwan Student Centre Lease Revenue*
- ▲ **\$2,488,539.86**  
*MacEwan Conference & Event Centre*
- ▲ **\$1,510,454.95**  
*MacHall/Ballroom Concerts*
- ▲ **\$884,076.19**  
*Stör*
- ▲ **\$542,299.90**  
*The Den & Black Lounge*
- ▲ **\$292,970.45**  
*Bound & Copied*

## SU BUSINESS REVENUE SOURCES



## SU STUDENT FEE BREAK DOWN

- ▲ **\$12.76**  
*Business Operations*  
This money is invested into our businesses which turn around and bring in revenue used to fund the vast majority of our operations.
- ▲ **\$6.75**  
*Administration and Accounting*  
This makes sure we have a financial team that keeps our finances balanced and our funds accounted for.
- ▲ **\$6.36**  
*Building Maintenance*  
As building managers we make sure that Mac Hall is looking its best and working for students.
- ▲ **\$3.96**  
*Programs & Services*  
This includes funding for student Clubs, the Q Centre, SU Campus Food Bank and a variety of on-campus events.
- ▲ **\$1.64**  
*Marketing and Communications*  
Marketing and Communications spreads the word about what the SU is doing, promotes programs and services for students and works to strengthen the campus community.
- ▲ **\$1.03**  
*Student Government & Non-Partisan Advocacy*  
Student government keeps us accountable to students through elections, governance, policies and procedures. Our non-partisan advocacy ensures that students are at the table for decisions that impact them.

# FUNDING FOR CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT

**The SU approved funding allocations for 13 projects, totaling almost \$2.5 million, that benefit students through the Quality Money program. These include:**

- 1.** Renewing the International Student Financial Need Bursary, which assists international students who are experiencing financial difficulties due to unforeseen circumstances and have no available options for securing short-term funds, and where failure to address the situation could lead to an ongoing deteriorating financial situation that could disrupt the ability to meet basic needs.
- 2.** Expanding the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) program. OSCE-GPT is a medical education program where the computer is the patient.
- 3.** Renovating the Black Lounge to create a contemporary social, lounge, and study space where students can gather, connect, relax, and study.
- 4.** Establishing a subsidized food market where students can access affordable ingredients to make meals and snacks that meet their cultural and dietary needs.
- 5.** Establishing a dedicated locker room space for both the women's basketball team and the women's volleyball team.
- 6.** Translating the floorplans for all buildings on the Main Campus, Spy Hill and Foothills Campus and implementing them into the Google Indoor Maps platform.
- 7.** Creating a Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Prevention and Education Initiative which will incorporate consent education, equip students with the skills and tools needed to support themselves and others after experiencing SGBV, and enhance awareness of services, supports, and options for addressing SGBV from an intersectional and community engaged lens.
- 8.** Supporting students of equity-deserving groups over the next two years through the PURE Summer Research Studentship program, including creating an Undergraduate Research Engagement Liaison position to work with and support marginalized students in finding research opportunities.
- 9.** Establishing an annual award of ten scholarships to eligible Black undergraduate students over a ten-year period. The selection criteria will prioritize candidates who demonstrate on-campus and community leadership, academic achievement, and Black community engagement.
- 10.** Establishing a Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation Scholarship to recognize and support the academic pursuits of students dedicated to the field of community rehabilitation and alleviate financial barriers associated with tuition.
- 11.** Ensuring access to menstrual products on Foothills Campus by putting baskets in high traffic bathrooms where people who menstruate can get easy access to period products when they need them, helping them in situations that can be uncomfortable or stigmatizing.
- 12.** Providing a filling, nutritious, stigma-free, and accessible hot meal option at a heavily subsidized cost to the campus community in a dignified way through the Students' Union Den and Black Lounge during weekday operating hours in the Fall and Winter semesters.
- 13.** Democratizing AI at UCalgary by integrating AI tools into the university's educational landscape effectively, including curation and maintenance of an AI Tools resource library, faculty-specific crash courses for students, access to premium AI tools through Libraries and Cultural Resources, and the establishment of the AI Student Innovation Fund.
- 14.** Reducing financial barriers for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and Undergraduate Research by providing financial relief to offset costs related to challenges such as childcare, relocation or transportation, equipment, training, materials and supplies and professional attire.



# ENGAGE STUDENTS



**The SU devotes significant resources each year to ensuring that undergraduate students have the best possible experience on campus. We offer a wide range of services, programs, and scholarships, host events, provide student leadership development opportunities, and support student initiatives.**

**For the full list of everything we do for students, visit our website.**

## WELCOME WEEK

September marked the return of fall orientation activities, including the Dinos' Kickoff Tailgate party at McMahon Stadium, and a two-day Welcome Fair event in Mac Hall. Welcome Fair filled the north and south courtyards with a variety of sponsors and our own tables highlighting SU services and businesses.

## CLUBS

The SU provides supports for student-led activities on campus through our clubs system. Clubs who register with the SU have complimentary access to space, funding, and various other kinds of assistance throughout the year. For more information on what we provide to student clubs, and a complete listing of all our clubs, visit our website. This year there were 320 active clubs recognized and supported by the SU.



## TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Since 1984, the SU has recognized outstanding teaching at the University of Calgary with the Teaching Excellence Awards (TEA). TEA are the only teaching awards on campus where students determine the nominees and winners. This year, 1,022 students submitted online nominations and the SU honoured 34 instructors and teaching assistants for their commitment to student success. The full list of award winners is available on our website.

## STRESSLESS WEEK

At the end of every fall term, the SU organizes drop-in activities to help students combat stress. This year we offered several activities including DIY aromatherapy products, bracelet making and extra Pet Therapy sessions. We also handed out 200 Study Snack packs to students who were studying on campus during the exam period.



## SEX WEEK

In February, we participated in Sex and Gender Wellness Week, in collaboration with the Womens Resource Centre and SU Wellness Centre. Various on-campus groups hosted 15 events, including four events hosted by us. We also handed out cotton candy at the Sex Week Carnival, where students were encouraged to learn more about resources available on and off campus to support their sexual wellbeing and health.

## Q CENTRE

The SU's Q Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity strives to create a safe, comfortable, and open space for LGBTQ2SIA+ students. The Q Centre coordinators and volunteers raise awareness about community issues by promoting diversity and organizing educational activities and events. They also offer peer support, direct clients to community resources, and award the Q Centre Pride Scholarship to undergraduate students who have made significant contributions to the LGBTQ2SIA+ community on campus.



## WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS

Wellness Wednesdays are a series of monthly events focused on wellbeing. In October, we hosted an SU Super Stack Food Drive, which raised more than \$300 and collected four carts full of food and hygiene products for the SU Campus Food Bank. In January, we hosted a Volunteer Fair with 14 volunteer agencies in attendance. Approximately 200 students attended the event. In April, we held our last "SU Living Room" movie screening event, and 299 students attended throughout the day.

## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

This symposium is designed to encourage and celebrate undergraduate research across faculties. Each year students are encouraged to submit their projects to compete for awards in various categories. 32 winners were selected and \$27,750 in prizes and scholarships were awarded.

## REFUGEE STUDENT PROGRAM

Working with the World University Service of Canada and the University of Calgary, the SU sponsors two refugee students to come and study here each year. Not only do we offer financial support, we also assist these students in becoming acclimated to ensure they will be successful. This year, we received one Somali student and one South Sudanese student, both of whom were living in a refugee camp in Kenya.





### CAMPUS FOOD BANK

The SU's Campus Food Bank (CFB) provides seven-day emergency hampers to campus community members. They also advocate on food security issues for students and offer on and off campus resources for students who need additional support. SU volunteers perform client intakes, pack food hampers, and assist with general food bank operations. During the school year, the CFB was staffed by three part-time student coordinators and 35 volunteers. In eight months they packed 693 hampers and fed over 1,100 people. The CFB raised over \$90,000 to support its clients.

### FINES FOR FOOD

In the winter semester, we partnered with UCalgary's Parking and Transportation Services for the annual Fines for Food program. This program encourages the campus community to pay their outstanding parking tickets in early February, promising that half of the revenue would be redirected to the SU Campus Food Bank. Through this program, we collected \$10,322.75 for the SU Campus Food Bank.

### VOLUNTEER TAX PROGRAM

The SU Volunteer Tax Program (VTP) provides free tax filing services by professional student volunteers who are trained to Canada Revenue Agency standards. The program is staffed by two part-time coordinators and 68 volunteers, who completed 712 returns this year. All available spots were filled early this season, and coordinators continued to serve inquiries by referring them to outside services.



# VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Since 1993, the SU's Volunteer Services has provided volunteer opportunities and social services to students and other members of the campus community. Not only do we operate as a volunteer centre, connecting students with volunteer prospects both on and off campus, we also run our own volunteer programs that students can get involved with. This year we ran six programs, supported by 183 volunteers who completed 6,517 hours of service.

The SU continues to effectively represent students and advocate for their needs to the university and across all levels of government. As students continue to face the challenges brought on by increasing tuition, difficulties finding safe and affordable housing, and skyrocketing cost of living, advocacy efforts to give students a voice have been pivotal. Our efforts continue to be effective in advocating for students at the University of Calgary and have resulted in huge successes on multiple issues over the past year.



# PRIORITIZE ADVOCACY





## TUITION AND FEES

Students at the University of Calgary continue to feel the impacts of enduring the fastest and largest tuition increases in Alberta's history. A Students' Union survey taken in 2023 found that 66% of respondents expressed concern regarding their ability to pay tuition and fees for the upcoming academic year. Most respondents also expressed doubt that the quality of their education would match the cost.

The elected officials of the SU engaged with university leadership during the tuition and fee consultation process, working collaboratively to share their concerns and student feedback on the proposed increases. The University's preliminary proposal consisted of a 2% increase to domestic tuition, a 10% proposed increase to international tuition, and a 2% increase to all mandatory fees.

Consistent efforts by SU elected officials resulted in historic wins for students including:

- Dropping international student tuition increases (for the first time in history) from 10% to 6%.
- Commitments to establish two student advisory groups: one focused on affordability support and the other on improving international student support and services.
- Commitments to more transparent reporting of Mandatory Non-instructional Fees.
- Commitments to a review of Wellness Services, advising, quality of meal plans, and investment in Wi-Fi, classrooms, and IT stability.

## HOUSING

Housing has continued to be an important issue this year. The SU worked diligently to advocate for students and achieved success on multiple fronts to support students impacted by the housing crisis.

For the second consecutive year, UCalgary residences were completely full, leaving many students scrambling for alternatives. At the same time, vacancy rates in Calgary hit their lowest in nearly a decade, and prices increased rapidly. This left many students in tenuous living situations.

The SU put a call to action out for all Calgarians with a spare room or rental to consider renting to a student and posting it on the SU's housing partner's website. Calgarians showed up for students and played a key role in helping many students find a safe place to live. The immense support from Calgarians coming together to support students when they needed it most was powerful, but efforts can't stop there in the pursuit of safe and affordable housing for all students.

The SU also brought advocacy efforts to City Council, urging councillors to pass housing affordability recommendations in the fall. Students made their voices heard loud and clear joining hundreds

of others rallying for housing affordability in front of City Hall. VP External Mateusz Salmassi and students spoke at the September public hearing expressing that the strategy is essential for students and Calgarians alike. The SU advocacy team also spoke to City Councillors to express the need to pass all 33 housing recommendations and emphasize the significant impact that the housing crisis is having on students.

On September 16th, the city's proposed housing strategy was successfully passed in full, with additional amendments made to prioritize student housing and explore landlord licensing. This includes \$25 million set aside by the city specifically for student housing downtown. This was a huge win for students. Following the September public hearing, the SU called on City Council to finish what they started by passing R-CG Upzoning at the April public hearing. The consistent efforts made by the advocacy team and allied Students' Unions ensured student voices continued to be heard by City Council at the Rezoning for Housing public hearing. The SU diligently informed students on the issue, delivered more than 250 postcards to Ward 7 City Councillor Terry Wong, and spoke at the public hearing about why the issue impacts students. The motion was passed on May 14th.

**STUDENT JOBS**

Student jobs have continued to be one of the SU's top advocacy priorities. Since the cancellation of the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) in 2019 the SU has advocated that a student jobs program of some type be returned in its place. Currently, there are two province-wide job programs, Jobs Now and Alberta at Work, both of which students do not qualify for. During the summer, youth unemployment was double the provincial average, pushing many students further into debt and unable to make ends meet. With increased tuition and cost of living, many students need full-time work in the summer to support themselves and afford tuition.

The SU advocacy team met with multiple government officials expressing the importance of reimplementing a temporary jobs program that supports students and helps connect them to employers. Students deserve to

have the financial stability of a full-time job during the summer to set them up for success during the academic year. Unfortunately, no action has yet been taken by the provincial government to connect students to employers through a jobs program, but the issue has been made higher profile.

Despite these challenges, the Students' Union continues to step up, through the Students' Union's Program for Education Related Work (SUPERWork). SUPERWork is a SU program that provides a \$1,000 wage subsidy award to University of Calgary undergraduate students who earn less than a competitive wage at a summer employment position related to their degree. This allows students to make valuable connections in a career related to their area of study while lessening the financial pressure that often comes with taking a lower-paying position.



**STUDENT REPRESENTATION**

Having students at decision-making tables is incredibly important to make sure that student voices are valued and taken into consideration by the university and at all levels of government when making decisions. The SU's elected representatives delivered on this priority by expanding the different roles they undertook to advocate for students.

The SU faculty representatives made sure Haskayne students will amplify their voices by securing a voting seat on the Haskayne Faculty Council. Student representatives had not had a vote on the council since 2015 and worked extremely hard to make sure that students were afforded the opportunity.

VP External Mateusz Salmassi was also elected Director of Advocacy for the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. Through this role, he elevated the advocacy work of the SU by collaborating with other student associations across Canada to fight for student needs federally.



SU President Shaziah Jinnah Morsette was elected as chair of the Calgary Student Alliance (CSA) at the beginning of her term, representing 120,000 post-secondary students on municipal issues in Calgary. The role allowed her to amplify the voices of post-secondary students in Calgary, by collaborating towards common goals and bringing attention to the challenges students in Calgary are facing.

**PRIORITIZING STUDENT WELLNESS**

The University has finally recognized term break as a time for students to prioritize mental health and well-being free of academic assessments. The SU succeeded in securing this thanks to the consistent efforts of SU President Shaziah Jinnah Morsette fighting to make sure that student mental health is prioritized. Even though the 2018-19 calendar recognized that term breaks were critical aspects of student well-being and mental health, the SU heard from many students that it didn't feel like a break with so many assignments still due. We are overjoyed to have the university commit to respecting students' need for time to rest and take care of their well-being during term break, free of academic assessments.

# 81 STUDENTS' LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



## **BACK ROW** (Left to Right)

Sirraj Shah (Arts), Ben Shi (Science), Chaten Jessel (Medicine), Daniel Fine (Arts), Colton Channon (Nursing), Elsa Stokes (Werklund), Naomie Bakana (Arts)

## **FRONT ROW** (Left to Right)

Erica Peng (Science), Jessie Dinh (Kinesiology), Nancy Ngo (Veterinary Medicine), Mateusz Salmassi (Vice President External), Sandra Amin (Vice President Academic), Shaziah Jinnah Morsette (President), Ermia Rezaei-Afsah (Vice President Student Life), Abhari Limbu (Schulich School of Engineering), Seniru Ruwanpura (Schulich School of Engineering), Eyerusalem Tadese (Science), Angelica Uy (Cumming School of Medicine)

## **NOT SHOWN IN PHOTO**

Safaa Al-Khaz'Aly (Law), Fardeen Islam (Schulich School of Engineering), MD Asif Khan (Haskayne School of Business), Jessica Klaassen (Social Work), Arlington Antonio Santiago (Vice President Operations and Finance), Hari Singh (Haskayne School of Business), Tanner Neigel (Arts)



STRESS

AIRBORNE STUDENT

STUDENT

STUDENTS SU

AIRBORNE STUDENT

STUDENTS SU

STUDENTS SU

STUDENTS SU

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CHRONICLE OF DECEMBER