

PLATFORM
PACKAGE



KATIE FOR VP STUDENT LIFE

TABLE OF

CONTENTS

1	Treaty Statement What Does VP Student Life Do?
2	Letter to Students
3	1.0 Hold the University Accountable on Sexual Misconduct Prevention
5	2.0 The Student Experience
9	3.0 Advocate for Residents

Treaty Statement

I want to begin by acknowledging the University of Alberta and our Students' Union is located on Treaty 6 Territory. The lands we occupy are the lands of the Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Métis, Blackfoot, and Nakota Sioux, specifically the ancestral space of the Papaschase Cree. As a non-Indigenous person, I recognize the effects of the ongoing colonial occupation have had and continue to have on these peoples.

Reconciliation must be an ongoing process. The Nations on Treaty 6 lands are our family, friends, faculty, staff, students, and peers. We honour the nation-to-nation treaty relationships and aspire for our learning, research, teaching, and governance to acknowledge and work towards the decolonization of Indigenous knowledge and traditions.

What Does VP Student Life Do?

The Vice President Student Life's portfolio covers:

- **Mental Health**
 - Addressing this in residence and for all students with the SU mental health supports
- **Sexual Violence**
 - Helping to create a safe campus for all students and to empower victims
- **Residence**
 - Advocating for all residences on a variety of issues and empowering resident associations
- **Events and Programming**
 - Help direct Students' Union events such as Week of Welcome, Dodgefest etc.
- **Health and Dental Plan**
 - Work with VP Operation and Finance to ensure students are receiving the best coverage



Hello,

My name is Katie Kidd, I'm a fourth year Secondary Education student, and I am proud to be running to be your next Vice President Student Life.

For those who do not know me, I grew up in Calgary with my mum and sister who, I am proud to say, will be a U of A student next year! As my mum likes to say, the first day of kindergarten I came home and announced I wanted to be a teacher. I've worked pretty hard to make that dream come true. I have spent the past seven years working and volunteering with children, particularly children with disabilities and children affected by cancer. This has shaped my view of the need for equity and making sure my platform is built around providing the support that all students need.

The past four years, I have spent fully involved on campus in student life. I lived in residence for two years, worked on campus for four years and have spent my time involved in various student groups. During my first few years on campus, I knew the struggles students faced such as experiences of sexual misconduct, difficulties accessing proper mental health support or, not knowing where to bring meal plan concerns, but I felt that I didn't know how to help. This is what drew me to student governance. Since becoming the education councillor I have worked to represent students on: tuition, mandatory non-instructional fees, scholarships and bursaries, sexual violence, experiential learning, climate change, and student poverty. Beyond that I sit on six different committees including the Health and Dental Plan, and the PAW Centre. One of the loftiest goals I had when I ran for council was to ensure students on unpaid work experience semesters had a specific bursary for them. I succeed by ensuring that there will be a new bursary of 15,000 from the Students' Union.

Throughout the platform you will see how hard I have worked to ensure all aspects of student life are covered. I am committed to addressing sexual misconduct, mental health, residence, student with dependents, and fun things like ResFest. Every student should feel that their Students' Union is working for their best interest. Throughout this campaign, I am committed to earning your trust. To find out more visit KatieforVPstudentlife.com and on March 4 and 5 vote for Katie Kidd to be your next Vice President Student Life.

1.0

Hold the University Accountable on Sexual Misconduct Prevention

1.1 Hire the Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator

WHAT

In January 2016, the report “Review of the University of Alberta’s Response to Sexual Assault” was proposed to the Dean of Students office. Out of the 38 recommendations with the highest priority given to the need to hire a Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator. Despite student protests in 2018, this role has not been filled. The University of Alberta is the only U15 member, the group of research universities, without a Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator, and there is still no timeline to launch this vital student support role. The University’s delay in hiring a coordinator is unacceptable when all other comparable universities have found methods to provide this essential service. This is an urgently needed position that has been bogged down in unnecessary bureaucratic delays.

HOW

I will advocate for a Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator to be hired as quickly as possible. If delays continue, I will lead student action.

1.2 Call for a Provincial Inquiry into Sexual Misconduct on Alberta Campuses

WHAT

There is a culture of apathy around sexual misconduct on campus. We need to look no further than the University’s unwillingness to hire a Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator as an example of this attitude. This has created a culture of shame and forced silence. This attitude needs to be examined in depth to determine the cause and solution. It is important to note that sexual misconduct has been proven to be even more prevalent with Indigenous Women. It is no longer enough to simply fill the position,

we must examine the culture of universities in this province to find solutions. It is time to look into the systemic barriers that have allowed this disgraceful delay to occur, as we cannot rely on universities alone to resolve this systemic issue. Attitudes towards sexual misconduct exist at most universities and we must acknowledge it as well work to end it. I am calling on the Alberta Government to establish an inquiry into this culture around sexual misconduct and to support victims.

HOW

I will gain support from the Vice President External and the Council of Alberta University Students to lobby the provincial government to create this inquiry

1.3 Create a Landscape Survey for Sexual Misconduct during Work Experience Semesters

WHAT

Sexual misconduct can occur anywhere and can happen to anyone. Anecdotally, we know that this is occurring during students' work experience semesters. At this time, there is no data to quantify the magnitude of the problem. While on work experience, students are not protected by the University's sexual violence policies. This can be isolating for students and create pressure for them not to come forward as they might not know their rights. Worries about the impact on grades, final evaluations, or overall concern for their pre-professional reputation can cause survivors to fear coming forward. To protect all students involved in work experiences, we need to gain a base understanding of the scope of this issue.

HOW

In partnership with the Students' Union, I will create and distribute an anonymous survey to students who have participated in a work experience semester that will document stories and occurrence rates of instances of sexual misconduct.

2.0

The Student Experience

2.1 Finalize Work on the University's Student Caregiver Policy.

WHAT

Student caregivers are a group with a unique set of needs as they take care of a child or dependent adult while also attending university. These students fight everyday against what can feel like insurmountable odds to better their lives with an education, while juggling the demands of dependent families. The Student's Union has worked to represent these students and ensure that they are being fully represented at all levels of the University. The Office of the Students is creating a policy for Student caregivers. This policy will be the first step in ensuring campus is friendly and accommodating to students caregivers. Being a caregiver is difficult enough without systematic barriers in place that hinder individual wellbeing and representation throughout the University. This policy is nearing completion, and it is crucial that this policy is fully enacted swiftly.

HOW

I will work to ensure that the Student Caregivers Policy is completed and implemented. I will work with student caregivers to manage any concerns that arise once the policy is in effect.

2.2 Create a Drop-In Rate for the Students' Union and Community Early Learning Centre

WHAT

One of the most common requests by student caregivers is the need for an affordable drop-in rate at campus daycares. These spaces are often the most accessible childcare options for student caregivers and yet not meeting their needs. Creating a drop-in rate will allow student caregivers to have flexibility in their childcare options. Being a university student is

unpredictable and childcare needs can change quickly. To ease the difficulties of being a student caregiver, we must implement a daily drop-in rate.

now
I will partner with the Students' Union and Community Early Learning Centre's to create a sustainable, responsive model for this program.

2.3 Finalize Work to Provide Free Menstrual Product on Campus

what
In 2019, President Bhatnagar launched a program to provide free menstrual products to the student body. These were placed at InfoLink booths and various Faculty Association offices. Having access to affordable menstrual products is an additional, costly expense that comes with being a university student. No one should be worried about where they will find a menstrual product when they desperately need one. The Students' Union needs to continue its excellent work in providing these products to students. Unfortunately, this program does not have a sustainable funding model to ensure menstrual products are available to all.

now
I will develop a sustainable, long-term funding model to ensure the Free Menstrual Product Initiative becomes a permanent student support program. This model will allow for the installation of dispensers in all SUB bathrooms for greater accessibility. I will also ensure that there is funding set aside for Augustana campus and Campus St. Jean.

2.4 Improve Students' Union Advertising to Campus St. Jean

what
Students attending Campus St. Jean have historically felt separated from the North Campus due to a variety of challenges. The limited Students' Union advertising on this campus only increases the reality of this isolation worse. Oftentimes, advertising is rarely on Campus St. Jean and translated into French. These same posters and other advertisement mediums are

all over North Campus, and are updated regularly to ensure students are aware of what their Students' Union offers. By ensuring our advertisement is available to Campus St. Jean, these students can feel more connected to their Students' Union.

HOW

I will expand Students' Union advertising to Campus St. Jean by installing more SUTVs. I will also ensure that SU event posters are translated into French and displayed at the same time as on North Campus. In order to help them feel better connected to their Students' Union, students at CSJ deserve access to the same advertisements offered at main campus, and the proper translations of these advertisements into French- many student's first language. As such, expanding on-campus advertising is a simple way for the Students' Union to reach an important demographic of University of Alberta students.

2.5 Diversify Students' Union Wellness Supports

WHAT

Accessing mental health support on campus is surrounded by stigma and bureaucratic barriers. This can be further aggravated when students feel that services do not meet their cultural needs. Our wellness supports need to reflect the diversity of our student population. It will allow them to access supportive listeners who can relate to their lived experiences through engaging with inclusive support systems. If students see themselves reflected in the mental health supports we provide, it will help ease the stigma that surrounds accessing these services. This will allow more students to receive the help that they need at the quality they deserve. Put simply, our wellness supports should reflect the student population that it serves.

HOW

- I will work with the Peer Support Centre to facilitate the recruitment of supportive listeners who speak Mandarin and Cantonese, as well as encourage them to focus on the recruitment of students of colour, international students, and Aboriginal supportive listeners. I will work with Aboriginal elders and other knowledge keepers to facilitate the

creation of a program with traditional knowledge at the Peer Support Centre.

- I will create a Mental Health Strategic Plan to guide the Students' Union Wellness Supports for the next three and five years. I will consult a variety of campus stakeholders to ensure that many student populations' needs are met within the plan. I will partner with the VP External to include a plan to guide asks for mental health funding from the University, provincial and federal government.



3.0 Advocate for Residents

3.1 Design a Meal Plan Feedback System

WHAT

The current meal plan has been disliked by residents since it was first proposed in 2018. Residents have numerous issues with the plan, including: the price, not being able to leave the dining area; the lack of options of where to eat, and the food quality. While student protests have been held in the past, Residence Services has continually ignored the wants of residents. To continue driving the movement forward, Residence Services needs to understand the reality of the food services behind these claims.

HOW

I will work with various residence associations to create a streamlined way for residents to send feedback regarding the quality food and the meal plan structure. This will allow us to provide hard evidence of the meal plan dissatisfaction to Residence Services and help improve value for money when they renegotiate the contract with Aramark.

3.2 Lead Mental Health Campaign in Residences

WHAT

Being a university student can be stressful and overwhelming. Living away from home, and living in residence can aggravate those stressors. While there have been numerous efforts to normalize mental health struggles, we can still do more. It is common to feel lonely and homesick. Residence programming needs to ensure that it is going beyond surface-level events to address these concerns. As well, we must ensure we are educating residents about how to seek help when in distress.

Oftentimes residents feel lonely or homesick without meaningful programming throughout the school year. Despite being surrounded by

other residents, it is common to feel alone. Residency programming should target these feelings throughout the school year, not just the beginning of the university experience.

Residents are not always prepared to access further mental health services when needed. We need to focus residents on recognizing the signs and symptoms of mental distress and what services they can access. This is especially important to first year students who may not be aware of the services offered on campus and in Edmonton.

HOW

- I will work with various Residence Associations, the Residence Education and Learning Team, and the Social Services Support worker to create two mental health initiatives throughout residence. The first one will work to create meaningful year-long programming throughout residence to combat feelings of loneliness and homesickness. The second one will create more knowledge about the symptoms of mental health issues and where to access help.
- I will work with the Council of Residence Associations to ensure the Peer Support Centre's third party mental health training is provided to student leaders during their summer training and offered to all residences throughout the school year.

3.3 Launch the Return of Resfest

WHAT

University can be a stressful and lonely experience. Events help students connect with others and shake off accumulated stress. This past year, the Vice-President Student Life organized the return of Resfest, a night of concerts. Unfortunately, a breakout of norovirus led to the event being cancelled. As a result, all the artists still have a contractual obligation to perform here. This event was on track to be extremely successful and should be continued as a highlight of the year for students.

How
 I will work with the Students' Union's contacts and the Resident Associations to offer this event again. After the event, I will work to solidify the relationships with the artists management to ensure the Students' Union can continue to offer concerts with these artists.

3.4 Advocate for the Use of Sustainable Practices in Residence and Beyond

What
 For decades, scientists have been warning that the earth's rising temperature would lead to severe, irreversible change to life as we know it. Working to combat climate change can no longer be restricted to one area of university life. I believe it is important to take a two-pronged approach when dealing with necessary climate action -- push for large sweeping reform while also focusing on smaller tangible, impactful actions. The time to act on climate change was decades ago. Now we must push for widespread, meaningful action.

- How*
- I will work with Residence Services to ensure that paper towels are 100% recycled post-consumer and chlorine-free and also that all cleaning products are phosphate-free and biodegradable. Once this is achieved, I will work to pressure the entire University to commit to these same goals.
 - I will work with Residence Services to monitor waste generation and diversion rates. I will ask them to create a plan to improve recycling and composting throughout each floor of every residence. This will include an education campaign around individual composting.
 - I will work with Residence Services to provide drying racks in laundry rooms to provide alternatives to electric dryers.
 - I will work with Residence Services to ensure that the contract renewal for dining services will have a clause that bans the selling of all single use plastics. Once this is accomplished, I will use it to drive momentum to ban all single use plastics on campus.

3.5 Addressing Student Poverty utilizing Residence

WHAT

The realities of extreme poverty are a seldom discussed issue that students face. The rising price of tuition, rent, textbooks and other costs of being a student can be financially overwhelming. Trying to balance these costs can lead students to having to couch surf, sleep in cars or use homeless shelters. While the Students' Union provides numerous services for these students, such as the food bank and collection of the ACCESS fund, the University needs to match this commitment. Residence Services has taken the initial step of creating the Safe House Program, however anecdotal evidence suggests knowledge of this program is limited. Residence Services needs to expand their programming to help some of the University's most vulnerable students.

HOW

- I will work with Residence Services to promote awareness of the Safe House Program to ensure that students who need emergency residency are empowered to receive it.
- I will work to lower the rate of the Commuter Study Hostel. The current price for one night is \$35, which can be too high for a student desperately seeking shelter. Together with Residence Services, we will create a lower rate for students who have recently used the ACCESS fund.
- I will work with Residence Services to create a program for subsidized housing in residence. There are high availability rates in almost every residence. Those empty rooms could be offered at a lower rate to students who desperately need low cost accommodations. This could be life-altering for students who are in financial need and cannot meet the rising cost of residency in Edmonton.



Vote on March 4 + 5