



PLATFORM

# CHRIS BEASLEY

*For Vice President External*

# Table of Contents

02

Letters to  
Students

03

Land  
Acknowledgement

03

Fighting for  
Affordable  
Education

04

Fighting for a  
Safe University  
Experience

05

Fighting to become  
a University for the  
Future

06

Focusing on the  
2023 Provincial  
Election

# Letter to Students

To introduce myself, my name is Chris Beasley and I am a 5th year student in Political Science who has been involved in student governance organizations since 2018. I am a current Students' Union Councilor representing the Faculty of Arts, a position that I also held during the 2019–2020 academic year. Additionally, I have been an undergraduate representative on the General Faculties Council since 2020, currently serving in my second term. My proudest involvement in governance, however, has come through the work that I did in OASIS (the Arts Faculty Association). I began as an OASIS Councilor, became their VP Finance, and finished as the President of OASIS for the 2020–2021 academic year. I have served students in almost every corner of this university and I know that this experience will help me serve students as Vice President External of the Students' Union.

In these roles, I have always fought for students and worked to make campus better. I was an outspoken advocate throughout the academic restructuring process, fighting for Arts Students at the General Faculties Council (GFC) and discussing the priorities of Arts Students one-on-one with the Dean of Arts.

As a direct result of the work of myself and others at OASIS, the threatened departments of East Asian Studies and Women and Gender Studies remain autonomous to this day. I've built Snow Penguins in the cold and I have been at every single SU protest against the brutal government cuts that have hurt us all. I have a track record of working to make life better for the student community that I love, and I hope that I earn the confidence of students once more for this next position.

I also wish to acknowledge my relationships and my talk about my outlook on service leadership. This university is built on stolen land and the institutions of both the University and the Students' Union systematically continue to uphold racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, and colonialism. I have always felt that this instills a responsibility to elevate the perspectives that counter these institutionally maintained norms. As VP External, there will be times in which I am the only student in the room and I will be responsible for representing all groups on campus. This is a position I have been in before and one that I do not take lightly. I promise to not only engage with students during this campaign, but to continue to maintain these relationships throughout my term as Vice President External.

# Land Acknowledgement

I would like to begin my land acknowledgement by simply addressing that the University of Alberta, and The University of Alberta Students' Union occupy Indigenous land in Amiskwaciswâskahikan, on Treaty 6 territory. For time immemorial, the banks along the river valley have been known as the Pehonan, a meeting place for the Nehiyaw, the Niitsitapi, the Metis, the Nahkawiniwak, the Nakota Sioux, and the Denesuline. We also know that the University and much of the city are located on the unlawfully stolen and unceded land of the Papaschase Cree people.

On a personal note, the land has given me a lot. I spent my childhood growing up on the unceded lands of the Kanien'kehà:ka and the best times of my youth were spent outdoors and in nature. I know that neither Territorial nor Treaty acknowledgments can create material changes for the Peoples that have been harmed by the ongoing institution of colonialism. These changes can only be achieved when we all resist colonialism by acting in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. This land acknowledgement is meant to serve as my acknowledgement of my role in supporting Indigenous students and Peoples. Specifically, my responsibility towards others not only stems from my positionality as a resident of stolen land, it is also an acknowledgement that I am bound by Treaty responsibilities as well as my responsibilities to current Indigenous Peoples.

The position that I am running for is a position of power where I will need to maintain relationships with Indigenous voices and work to empower them. This has not always been done; historically the UASU and its Executive team were instrumental in many systemic colonial violences. More recently, the UASU and its Executive have simply been inadequate or resistant at times in a way that propagates and reinforces Colonial systems. Navigating how to meet my responsibilities to my relationships will be complicated but this land acknowledgment is meant to be a reference point for my commitment to do better. While not all of my platform points explicitly reference Indigenous students, I can commit that the tailored and unique needs of Indigenous students as communicated to me through consultation will always be intertwined with any advocacy that I do.



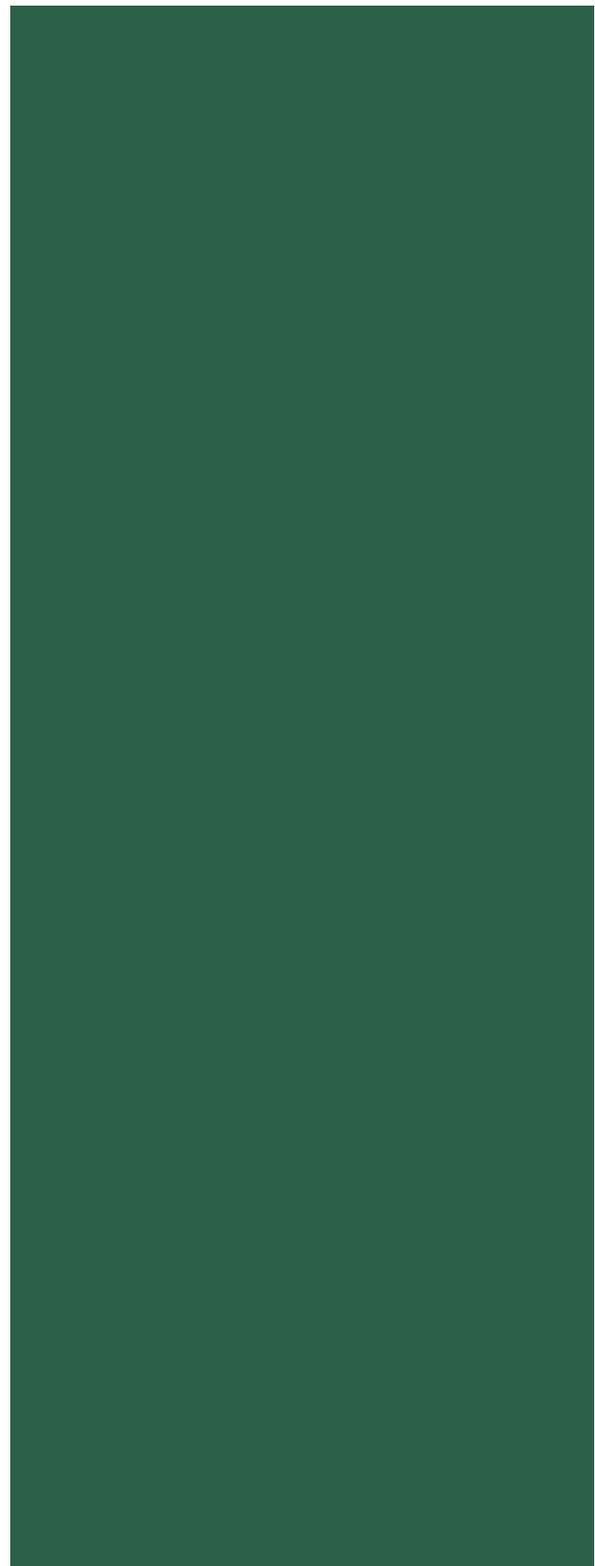
# Fighting for Affordable Education

## 1 Students need affordable education

### **What I commit to: Fighting against tuition increases.**

Tuition costs are already too high. Right now, students that are considering going to the U of A are instead choosing to leave the province, opting for Universities with cheaper tuition or higher rankings. Most people simply cannot move cities to find cheaper tuition and so every time tuition increases, it prices prospective students out of an education. I have already fought against this through my involvement on the General Faculties Council, where I sit on the Academic Planning Committee. There, I have always voted against and spoken against any tuition increases.

This is work I will continue, making the economic case to the Provincial Government that raising tuition levels is bad for our shared economy, excessively punitive on students from less privileged backgrounds, and ultimately harms the economic future of Alberta. This is true for both domestic tuition and international tuition. I have also participated in the planning and execution of protests against tuition increases before and this is something that we need to work with our provincial counterparts in the Council of Albertan University Students to go further on. What students need is an SU that will say that enough is enough: we have had our tuition raised by 21% over the last three years and if the minister approves another tuition increase then it's time to pull out all of the stops in media outreach, protests, direct action, and any pressure that we can put on provincial government to stop rising tuition.



## 2 Students need a more more affordable and improved housing and transportation options

**What I commit to: advocating to the Municipal government to make bylaw changes allowing for housing options that are more affordable nearby campus as well as increasing funding to transit to improve students' commuting experience.**

We have a new Mayor and a new City Council, whose ideas align with a more livable and vibrant Edmonton. As a university community with a vested interest in the future of Edmonton, we need to grow our involvement as a key stakeholder in decisions around public transportation, land-use, and zoning changes, across Edmonton. We need to be speaking to Council on issues that matter to students and ensuring that the city's ongoing bylaw renewal process takes students into consideration. A big area for Advocacy here will be on zoning regulations. Changes to the Zoning Bylaw that make it easier for homeowners to convert existing basements or garages into basement suites and garage suites can increase the supply of housing within the University Area. Facilitating more "Missing Middle" development can increase housing options within core neighbourhoods as well. Finally, large-scale residential developments with student-oriented units can provide even more housing options. Now is the time to do this, the City's Zoning Bylaw Renewal process is giving us a rare opportunity to achieve big advocacy wins if we get involved.

Increasing housing options not only provides students with more choices when searching for a place to rent, but it also provides an outlet for excess demand. If a greater variety of housing options are built, students will have a greater spectrum of options when it comes to affordability. An increase to the supply of housing in the University Area will not fix affordability problems overnight. However, it will stop these problems from getting worse and reverse existing trends. Another huge part of the municipal conversation is transit. Now is a vital time to advocate for increased funding and improved frequency and coverage of transit. Transit in Edmonton is evolving drastically. The municipalities in the Edmonton Region are shifting towards a single regional transit system and Edmonton Transit Services has just completely redesigned its routes and funding priorities for transit will be set within the City's 2023-2026 Capital/Operating Budget. We need to show up and advocate for a better transit system to support students' commutes across the City. Making our voice heard at City Council positions as an active Students Union to secure the best outcomes for students on these decisions.

# 3

## Students need financial support for their education

**What I commit to: Fighting for more grants to make tuition more affordable and post-secondary education more accessible.**

Outside of tuition, we need a better granting system for students. Alberta has the worst student aid in Canada, with Albertan students graduating with the highest average amount of debt out of any province. This needs to change. We need to increase the number of non-repayable grants and loans extended to students to ensure that not a single qualifying student who applies to the U of A is ever turned away because they cannot afford higher education. High student loan debts that stops our graduates from being able to launch their own businesses post-graduation, and 4/10 recent graduates indicate that their level of debt is so high that they are delaying or giving up on attending graduate school in the near future. The debt load that the Provincial Government has left students with hurts the economic future of Alberta and it's time for the provincial government to fund students adequately, knowing that they will recoup their money when students launch their own businesses, contribute more to the economy when they buy houses or cars, and get more educated to increase the workforce capacity in our province.



# Fighting for a Safe University Experience

## 1 We need to fight sexual violence on Campus

### **What I commit to: Fighting for consistent and adequate funding to combat sexual violence on campus.**

We need additional consistent and adequate funding from the province and we need to be working with the province on the development of a provincial framework on campus sexual violence. The provincial government announced \$2.5 million spread across all campuses to survey students on the issue of sexual violence and to develop a minimum framework for all Universities on how to address and deal with it. This is not enough though. This survey will take years and students need support now, surveying people during an ongoing crisis of sexual violence is not the same as offering direct support now to stop students from being victimized. What the University of Alberta needs is funding so that the training programs that we know work, through the Sexual Assault Centre and other resources, are well funded and supported. Right now, some staff and the Sexual Assault Centre, such as the Fraternity Liason, only work as-needed and part time meaning that we need to secure funding to make these positions full time and to expand capacity. As well, these training programs and initiatives are expensive, a cost that many who want this training cannot afford and thus should be funded by provincial support.

Moreover, specific attention needs to be paid to the needs of Campus Saint-Jean. We know that tailored sexual assault prevention programs are effective, the results of previous Alberta-wide initiatives have shown that provincial information campaigns, such as the #Ibelieveyou campaign, have been incredibly successful and further expansion on these is needed. Ultimately though, this is a long-term and systemic problem that cannot be addressed by small one-time funding to survey on a problem we already know is happening and continues to victimize our friends and loved ones. It is time for the Provincial Government to adopt the recommendations from the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) to ensure that we can fight this with the solutions we are already asking the province for, this includes the funding necessary for integration with the wider community, and government support for campus sexual violence services.

## 2 We need to fight the mental health epidemic on campus

**What I commit to: Advocate to the provincial government to create funding for mental health services tied to the number of students on campus.**

Mental health support requires consistent and adequate funding that the province has yet to provide us with. A few years ago, the University of Lethbridge was granted \$147 per full-time learner equivalent (FLE) to address student needs and this resulted in increased capacity for counselors and resources. The key piece to understand here is that for tailored mental health resources to be available for students, we need consistent and adequate funding enveloped by the provincial government to this specific need. You can't hire long term staff that you expect to retain for years with a grant that runs out in the short term and you can't fight the long term trend of worsening mental health without long term funding.

If elected, I will push the provincial government to allocate an amount to each University pegged to their FLE's. We must up the amount of our mental health grant by working with the provincial government to develop a funding formula that increases the funding to all universities in the Province. We need a funding formula pegged to student enrollment that works to create long-term resiliency in our communities for a crisis that requires long-term solutions. Portions of this funding should also be dedicated at the University or Provincial level for culturally supportive care for Indigenous and International Students.

This funding should also be split by campus to ensure that Augustana and Campus Saint-Jean students have access to these services, especially given that Augustana has no full-time counselor at this moment and Campus Saint-Jean requires funding to develop French language mental health resources and programming to support La Centrale and the Campus Saint-Jean residence.

### **3 We need to address an influx of vulnerable people to our campus**

**What I commit to: Advocating to the municipal and provincial governments for sustainable solutions to support vulnerable Edmontonians and enhance community supports.**

We are a community of almost 40,000 people nestled in the heart of one of Canada's largest cities which means that we are shaped by Edmonton, by Alberta, and our leaders at the municipal and provincial level. Following the gentrification of the downtown core and ongoing movement of those without shelter away from the Ice District and towards Whyte Avenue and the University of Alberta, we need to support those who are using the warm and safe spaces on our campus and in the University LRT station to ensure that they are well supported to avoid points of friction that may otherwise arrive. We need to push the city to house all of the homeless, knowing that no one sleeps in the LRT unless the city has failed to house them. We need to push the city to build a safe consumption site near Whyte Avenue, knowing that people don't use our university campus as a place to consume substances unless they don't have access to better options, and we need to improve city support for those who are in distress and need desperate help. It is a sad truth that people act in desperation and thefts of laptops or valuables are examples of people who have failed to have their needs provided for by our community.

If elected, I will work with campus stakeholders to ensure that we can find sustainable solutions to this unsustainable situation where campus has become a shelter and consumption site for those with nowhere else to go. We also need the city to fund needle disposals around the University LRT station, knowing that this enables those who use to dispose of their sharps safely.

This funding will likely come from the City of Edmonton's transit budget which will then require funding allocations in the City's 2023-2026 capital budget. I recognize that much of these initiatives would hinge on provincial funding to support the city in receiving these goals. Adding our voice to the voices of the Mayor's office and city council is how we ensure that the provincial government supports what Edmontonians need.

## 4 We need safety in Edmonton for Students

**What I commit to: Advocating to the municipal government to immediately provide cell service, internet access, and similar investments in the University LRT station.**

Everyone using and accessing transit services deserves to feel safe. A rise in Islamophobic, anti-Asian, anti-Black, homophobic, and gendered attacks has shown that we need to push the city to make bylaw changes that would make transit safer. We need the city's anti-racism initiatives to work for our community to avoid the kinds of attacks that we have seen on International Students and other members of our community. We know that students are scared and that some of their families fear for their safety. Outside of initiatives and support to ensure that we avoid pushing people to the brink of society, we need to also work on effective and fast-acting policy solutions to this problem. We know that increasing the presence of EPS and UAPS is a reactionary tool; these officers only arrive after an event takes place. We also know that increasing the presence of policing or increasing our reliance on policing also presents risks of police brutality or discrimination that would harm our Black, Indigenous, queer, and neurodivergent friends and community members.

There are fast acting responses that are well suited to this situation however, and an increase in crisis intervention response teams allows us to get quick and effective resolutions to ongoing situations. An increase in the supply of rapid response teams would also decrease response times, enabling students to get support quickly. Security can be achieved through multiple tools though and we need to focus on what works. This includes providing cell service and internet reception in the University LRT station and exploring the tools at our disposal to make sure that no one fears for their safety in the city we live in, especially on public transit.

# Fighting to become a University for the Future

## 1 We need to fight for policy changes for International Students

**What I commit to: Advocating to the provincial government for more provincial paths to permanent residency, advocacy to the federal government to enable International Students to do co-ops or internships on their study visas, and advocacy to decrease the consequences for International Students who need to drop out of full-time courses.**

We need better and more accessible paths to permanent residency for International Students. It's time to welcome International Students into Alberta's communities by implementing streams to permanent residency through the Alberta government that would enable recent graduates with full-time employment offers to seamlessly apply to become permanent residents. The goal would be to achieve a stream with a simple application process; however what may be more realistic is a pilot program like Nova Scotia's Study and Stay initiative.

It's time to secure wins on this point, and this is especially critical given that Alberta is no longer the youngest province and needs to combat ongoing brain drain. It's time to acknowledge that the International Students we have today will be the drivers of tomorrow's Albertan economy. We need to have clearer paths to permanent residency for International Students and solutions to the policy problems that International Students face.

This also includes making policy changes to allow International Students to enroll in co-op programs without a specific work permit, allowing those that are here on a study visa to more easily engage in experiential learning.

Currently, International Students must maintain full time student status to be eligible for the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) after graduation, which helps International Students achieve Permanent Residence. Maintaining full time student status is not always sustainable, and International students need more flexibility to ensure their success. We need to ask the federal government to simplify and clarify the permit application process and paths to permanent residency so that bureaucracy doesn't prevent talented students or graduates from staying in Alberta and Canada. We also need to expand the hours that International Students are allowed to work on or off campus to ensure that students who want to enrich their education through work or support themselves may do so. To sum up, my priority if elected is straight forward: we need to ensure that International Students come to Alberta and can stay in Alberta. All of these policy changes that govern International Students are also important given that prospective International Students often choose which provinces or jurisdictions to do their schooling based on the employment and permanent residency opportunities that are available to them post graduation.

## 2 We must push for a renewed focus on attraction and retention of International Students

**What I commit to: Advocating to the provincial and federal governments to attract more International Students and to create financial services for International Students at risk of not being able to complete their studies because of unforeseen circumstances.**

International Students are the drivers of a growing university and an interconnected world economy. The university needs provincial and federal funding to be able to attract and retain International Students, particularly when the U of A no longer has lower tuition rates to incentivise prospective students. This looks like creating grants for International Students who have already been admitted but who can no longer continue their studies because of devaluation in their home country's currency or similar issues. No student who is academically qualified and has started their degree in Canada should have to stop it because there is no funding for them going forward. Moreover, any needs based grants created need to be dispersed based on the individual students' reported income, not how much their family makes as we know that this does not always translate to the money that students have. All of this will be done in partnership with the International Students' Association as well as the federal advocacy body for International Students. This includes, but is not limited to, ingraining this advocacy body for International Students in the Canadian Alliance of Students' Associations and empowering them to self-advocate to support these priorities and others. If elected, I commit to supporting the advocacy and growth of this organization to be able to fight in conjunction with CASA and the UASU for the priorities of International Students.

## 3 We must secure Provincial support for employment opportunities

**What I commit to: advocating for increased supports for students taking part in employment opportunities and increased diversity in the employment opportunities available to students.**

The Province has outlined a goal for universities to have every program be connected with work integrated learning opportunities, co-op, or internship opportunities and while this is a great benefit to students, it needs to be accompanied by support. Growth of the opportunities available can only be done sustainably if it is accompanied by growth in the support services that make these opportunities accessible. We cannot expect to increase the number of students who will be on co-op or work terms without securing supports like mental health resources, anti-harassment reporting pathways and others.

Right now, if we continue to rapidly grow our employment offerings without growing the resources we provide, we are creating a gap between the supportive resources we need and the ones we have. Instead of waiting until this problem develops, we need up-front funding now to make sure that employment is meaningfully accessible, not just an option. We also need to diversify the jobs available, moving away from the province's one dimensional understanding of what employment is to a vision that enables diversity of employment options.

Students should be equally able to take a job in the oil sands as they are in a Indigenous community, queer supportive space, French language workplace, or where ever they feel comfortable. All of this ensures that the growth in experiential learning that we all want to see is accessible for students.

## 4 We must push the Provincial and Federal Governments to fund Maskwa House

**What I commit to: Keeping the pressure on the federal and provincial governments to recognize this as a student need.**

Let's keep fighting for this. We need to keep the pressure on so First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students to have a gathering place on campus dedicated to them. In 2017 the University tabled Maskwa house indefinitely but we need this built. The steps to ensure that this is possible involve finding approximately \$20 million in funding, likely from the Federal Government with a cost matching agreement from the province to provide seed funding for a university investment.

I will fight for Maskwa house to ensure that it isn't relegated to the backburner and that we keep pushing for this. I hope dearly that I am the VP external who is able to get the funding for Maskwa house but the current financial situation of the University, the province and the federal government may make this impossible. If this becomes the case, I will continue to advocate regardless because this project will only come to fruition if students continue to take up space and demand it, ensuring that it doesn't become yet another broken promise.

## **5 We need the University to become a leader in micro-credentialing**

### **What I commit to: Working with the provincial government and the University administration to increase micro-credentialing options.**

We live in a province with an economy reliant on carbon intensive industry during a time where the skills valuable in our economy are changing faster than ever before. We cannot afford to be a province with a post-secondary system that doesn't allow for adaptation, lifelong learners, and people re-skilling as they switch career paths. The U of A has the opportunity to become the provincial name for micro-credentialing and skill building. We have the money, resources, and brand to become the go-to name for upskilling and reskilling in the province. We know that we can do this, particularly with a move into online or asynchronous programs modeled after the University's current Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) options and we know that we can do this better than our comparators at Athabasca, MacEwan, Nait/Sait, and the University of Calgary.

We need provincial funding to get there now, as the demand for these opportunities and services increase. We should be diversifying our revenue streams away from traditional tuition revenue to night classes in business, finance, green energy, and management credentialing among other potential course offerings. Not only will this provide increased revenue for the university but it will also provide options to current students looking to get accredited in AI learning or similar certificates.

The benefit to the average student comes by diversifying the universities revenue streams. By developing this, we position the University to take a step towards the future of education and grow so that it reclaims its formerly held positions in international and Canadian rankings. I intend to work with the provincial government and the University to secure funding for any and all changes that allow us to build towards a better Alberta.

## **6** We need funding and support for Campus Saint-Jean

### **What I commit to: advocating to secure a long-term sustainable source of funding for Campus Saint-Jean.**

It is time for the Province to properly fund Campus Saint-Jean (CSJ), empowering our French language campus to continue to provide French education in Western Canada. We know that this is a net benefit to the entire province and that we need to make up for the chronic underfunding that has plagued CSJ. With the announcement of infrastructure funding from the Federal and Provincial government announced in Budget 2022 and in the wake of CSJ's underfunding having been mentioned at the French language Federal Leaders debate, we have the momentum we need to secure further support for CSJ. We need to advocate to develop a sustainable funding plan for CSJ that is not a simple band-aid fix to crumbling infrastructure. We need further commitments from the Province and Federal government that problems outside of critical infrastructure needs also receive the care and attention that they need.

This involves working in partnership with AUFSJ (the CSJ campus association), CSJ Admin, ACFA, along with key stakeholders in the province to ensure that the province and federal government don't continue to neglect their responsibilities towards education in both of Canada's official languages.

# Focusing on the 2023 Provincial Election

## 1 We need to make post secondary education an election issue

**What I commit to: Working to talk to all Albertans about the cuts post-secondary has faced and how this affects every Albertan.**

In the lead-up to the next provincial election, we need to be talking to average voting Albertans and telling them what we already know: cutting education and raising tuition hurts Alberta's future. We need to be meeting with all major parties and attending their policy conventions to ensure that post secondary priorities are reflected in all platforms and that students can vote based on who will best support their education. We should be a topic of discussion at provincial debates and we should be well represented in party platforms. The Minister and the Premier have not been listening to us, they have shown themselves to be insulated to critique and unwilling to change when approached by students. Elections increase accountability of politicians, and we can take advantage of this.

Especially in an election year, we need to broaden who we target when speaking to Albertans, we must show everyone in this province that they have a stake in what is happening in the post secondary sector. When we know that over a quarter of Albertans are employed by someone with a degree from the University of Alberta, we know that the quality of our education then directly impacts the quality of our provincial economy.

This also includes messaging to Albertans about the ongoing brain drain of talented youth who are leaving our province for other jurisdictions that treat post-secondary better. The loss of our brightest is something we should all be worried about. We need to be getting on talk shows, in the media, and in front of Albertans. This is an Albertan election issue and we need to be working with CAUS, staff associations, and other stakeholders to get this message across to Albertans. The emphasis needs to be on raising the profile of this issue and drawing attention to it so that parents of future students and those who care about the economic future of our province realize how damaging the 170 million dollars worth of cuts to the U of A have been and vote for better post-secondary policy.

## 2 We need to get Students out to vote

**What I commit to: running a huge Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaign, bringing back the collection of pledges to vote, and securing a minimum of 5,000 pledges.**

There has never been a more important time than now to get students out to vote and to show the provincial government that students are active and involved. Politicians don't listen to us if they believe that doing the right thing won't reward them with support and votes which means that we need to clearly tie our advocacy to our ability to mobilize students. It's time to return to some of the Get Out The Vote (GOTV) strategies that we used in years prior and implement a voter pledge list, volunteer presence, and a huge social media campaign. Voting is exciting and one of my largest priorities will be to ensure that we secure at least 5,000 student pledges to vote to show not only the province but all levels of government that students are watching what policy decisions are being made by their governments.

## 3 We need to plan better protests

**What I commit to: planning more effective and larger demonstrations against the provincial governments' damaging policies on post secondary**

We need to get community stakeholders more involved. We need, at minimum commitments of support from the Edmonton Student Alliance and CAUS for future protests and we need to look into who else we can reach for solidarity. At the first Students Not Silent protest by the UASU in 2019, we were joined by the Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU) and they single handedly brought an additional 100-150 students to our cause. If we reach out to other Students Unions in Edmonton then we also need to be reaching out to their Academic and Non-Academic Staff Associations.

These unions are similarly aligned to our message of stopping the cuts. Moreover, there are community options that are available too; the Concordia Faculty Strike was joined on the picket line by the Ironworkers Union and the Teamsters Union. We know that Albertans are all in this together and this is key to pushing the province to do better. We also need to prioritize a better act-recruit-train cycle, where every action that we host is accompanied by active recruitment and training of new volunteers and students who want to help get involved in further demonstrations and advocacy. These together, allow us to plan and implement more effective demonstrations and protests that are larger, garner more media attention, and push the province to do what is right for students.

