

Candidate Statement for Cameron Stephen

Position: President

Hello everyone, my name is Cameron Stephen and I will be running for the position of President within the Student Union Society in the upcoming 2017/2018 elections. I have been attending UFV since the Fall semester of 2011 but began to pursue a Bachelor of Science with a Major in Biology in the Winter semester of 2014.

During my time at UFV I have spent much of my time volunteering with clubs and SUS in addition to also working for SUS. This has helped to give me an insight into how the university and SUS works, and what can be improved on. This has led me to notice that the idea of what SUS should be and what it is differs. I intend to put SUS on a path to more closely align with the views of the student population on campus. Working more towards fighting for and advocating for the rights of our students and supporting the various student groups on campus in any way we can.

I have helped to run a team in numerous regards from both a volunteer basis through my time as Vice-President and Secretary of eSports Valley helping to plan and run events over the past few years. In addition, I have worked for SUS in a leadership position for many years working as a manager and supervisor within their Food Services department. I believe that this experience will help me to lead the SUS as a capable President.

Outlined below are several projects I wish to help work towards should I be elected as the President of the Student Union Society.

Exiting CASA:

First and foremost, CASA (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations) is put simply a federal advocacy group comprised of many Student Unions across the country. While at first glance this might sound like a good idea and while it does contribute some good at a federal level our goal first and foremost should be the students on our own campus.

Putting our time, money and efforts into pushing for advocacy on the UFV campus and in our local area should be our priority. This would not be the first time we have left a larger advocacy group either, as SUS has left the ABCS (Alliance of British Columbia Students) a provincial lobbying group because it was found to not be beneficial with the resources being put towards it. I am of a similar opinion with our involvement in CASA.

Currently we participate in four conferences throughout the year with two in Ottawa and the other two hosted by the various universities involved with CASA, with the budget for the 2015/2016 year being \$37,715 split across two budget lines, and as of the 3rd Quarterly Report \$25,272.04 has been spent. My goal with exiting CASA would be to put the money into advocacy efforts on campus and into other forms of student engagement. The time saved would also be put towards making a bigger push for advocacy on our campus.

Open Education:

For starters, what is Open Education? It is put simply a method of removing the barriers that may make it difficult to obtain an education. One of the largest barriers present to today's students is the cost of tuition and textbooks.

In my time, here at UFV I have already participated in a couple of classes that use a free textbook and my learning has not suffered. If elected as President I would make a hard push from SUS to push UFV towards using more open education resources, such as textbooks that do not cost students an arm and leg after the cost of an already rising tuition.

Pride Center/Women's Center:

SUS currently has two rooms dedicated to becoming a Pride Center and a Women's Center. However, both centers tend to sit empty for much of the day. This is rather unfortunate as they exist to provide students on this campus a place to go. One of my goals regarding these centers will be an increased advertising presence making sure that students on campus know that these centers exist.

In addition, considering how to get these centers fully operational. Right now, they are open but their full function is being determined via working groups. Continued work with these groups is key and determining whether a staff member needs to be hired by SUS to run these centers will also be looked at.

Board Reform:

The current board structure for SUS could use some updating. While overall the main premise behind the current board is all well and good it also fails to represent every student properly. For example, the current board allows for a single College of Arts representative. However, for UFV the College of Arts is split into the Humanities (includes English, History, Modern Languages for example) and the Social Sciences (includes Criminology, Geography and Psychology for example) and those are only a few of the groups included under a singular student.

My goal with board reform will be to look at various seats and seeing whether they should be split to encompass a larger interest group or if multiple seats should be given to these positions due to number of students that this seat would encompass.

Also, looking at the inclusion of representatives at large. Students outside of the three executives to work for the benefit of all students rather than representing a specific academic background.

Students First:

Finally, one of my larger goals that drives me is the idea that SUS should be about students first. The motto is 'For students by students' but it often feels as if many students are left in the dark. Becoming an executive of SUS means being selfless and a

willingness to fight for students on all avenues. It should not be about working to make oneself better for the future and creating a resume for when they graduate UFV.

Fighting for the rights of students should be the number one priority of SUS even if it means disagreeing with UFV and fighting an uphill battle to push for positive change. That is the point of being an executive of SUS. My goal as President is to create a SUS that truly follows this idea, one that fights for students and doesn't give up due to difficulties that it might face.

We're all in this together and we should all be working together to create a better university experience for everyone. The motto 'for students by students' is something I hope to make true once again for the students at UFV.

If the above is a direction you would like to see SUS move towards then I ask for your vote so that I can work for you all as President of SUS.