



Students' Association of Olds College

2022-2023

Annual Report

*Prepared by SAOC President Celia Sutton
March 16, 2023*

Table of Contents

Message from the President	3
Executive Council	5
President	5
Positional Report	5
Work Plan	7
Vice-President, Academics	10
Positional Report	10
Work Plan	11
Insights & Recommendations	12
Vice-President, Communications	13
Positional Report	13
Work Plan	14

Message from the President

As the 2022-2023 SAOC Executive Council's term comes to a close, and I reflect on the year in review, I am honoured to present the incredible work that has been done by our organization. This year has been filled with both challenges and triumphs. We have accomplished a great deal, and I am incredibly proud of all that we have achieved together as a community.

One of our major accomplishments this year was the restructuring of our organization. We recognized the need for a more efficient and effective structure that would allow us to better serve our members. With this in mind, we adopted new governing documents and struck three working committees of the board. Our Executive Director overhauled our operations and developed new staff-led departments. These changes have enabled us to be more responsive to the needs of our members and to better focus our efforts on the issues that matter most to them.

Another focus of our work this year was on improving the SAOC's reputation, professionalism, and impact. We recognized that in order to be effective advocates for our members, we needed to have a strong and respected voice within the college community. We worked hard to build relationships with key stakeholders, and we made a concerted effort to be more visible and engaged on campus. I am pleased to say that our efforts have paid off, and the SAOC is now seen as a trusted and influential voice on campus.

We also made improvements to the student health and dental plan. We recognized the need for a more comprehensive policy, particularly in the areas of health and prescription drug coverage. We worked with our insurance provider to expand in these areas, and today, our members have access to more comprehensive and affordable coverage than ever before.

Of course, no year is without its challenges. This year, we faced a difficult incident involving one of our student clubs, which resulted in the temporary shutdown of the club. We worked closely with college administration, law enforcement, and legal counsel to address the issue and ensure that our students and community would be protected from such incidents in the future. While this represented a challenging time for many people who were involved, it also provided us with an opportunity to learn and to improve our processes for dealing with such situations. As a result of this incident, we have put in countless hours of hard work to improve our policies and procedures and ensure that our student leaders have the training, the support, and the guidance to enjoy a successful year with their student club.

Another challenge that we faced this year was the breakdown of our provincial advocacy organization, which weakened the student movement in Alberta. This was a setback for us, as it made it more difficult to advocate for the needs of our members at the provincial level. However, we learned from this obstacle too, and found ways to engage and improve as a result of it.

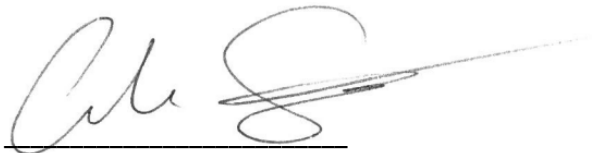
Our focus this year was mainly internal, but one thing that we did in abundance was advocacy. We advocated for a range of issues that were important to our members, including improved

security on campus, action to address the vandalism to the Pride crosswalk, new and improved academic resources for students, support for international students, and mental health and wellness supports, among other things. One of our big advocacy wins came in the form of the government's [changes to the tuition framework](#) for the 23-24 academic year and beyond. This goes to show that the student voice is important and can be a driver for change.

Looking ahead, we have ambitious plans for the future. With our strategic plan in development, we are committed to increasing services for our students, improving our approach to advocacy, and increasing our capacity for student-centric activities and events. We will continue to advocate for the needs and concerns of our members, and we will work tirelessly to ensure that their voices are represented.

In conclusion, I am incredibly proud of all that we have accomplished together this year. We have faced challenges head-on and have emerged stronger and more resilient as a result. I want to thank each and every one of you who has been a part of the SAOC for your dedication and hard work in making our organization the best that it can be. I am honored to be a part of this community, and I look forward to all that we will achieve in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Celia Sutton', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Celia Sutton

SAOC President

Executive Council

President

Positional Report

This year's focus for the SAOC has very much been about getting our organization under control in order to better serve our students going forward. Improvements to our governance & operational structures have been a major priority, and the biggest contributions that I have made as the 2022-2023 SAOC President are centered around those themes. Improving the SAOC's reputation, professionalism, and leadership has been top of mind.

Since the beginning of my term, I have had the honour of being the Chair of the Executive Council and of the SBOD. I have also been the recording secretary for the Executive Council since the summer. With these roles, it has been my duty to provide agendas, minutes, supporting documents, and reports to those core groups of our organization in a timely manner so that we can conduct our business. With the support of the Executive Director, around the time that I took over the agenda preparation & recording secretary duties, we updated our meeting procedures and format to a much more professional standard. These changes have been instrumental in improving communication and ensuring that our governance practices are above-board.

While working through the process of our bylaw review, I also took the initiative to develop three working committees to engage our board members in student advocacy, provide professional development opportunities for them, and support the whole SAOC in achieving our fiduciary duties. I wrote the terms of reference for these committees, which were all approved and struck by the Board in November 2022 alongside the new bylaws.

I have the pleasure of sitting on all three active SAOC committees, and I have taken on the role of Vice-Chair for the Student Life Committee and for the Strategic Planning Committee. In February, I also wrote the terms of reference for the Executive Director Compensation Committee, and acted as the Chair and Vice-Chair of that ad-hoc committee. Throughout the year, I believe that I have contributed significantly to the inner workings of the SAOC Board of Directors, Executive Council, and various committees, laying the groundwork and taking on a support role that keeps our leaders productive in their service to our students.

I wanted to put together a working group that would help the SAOC keep informed about good opportunities, highlight some of the important areas of concern for our students, and perform some checks and balances to ensure that the SAOC is fulfilling their mandate and staying focused on the right things. I tasked the Student Life Committee with performing an annual PEST analysis and organizational impact analysis. The engagement that we've seen from our committee members has been astounding. They have done research, produced insights, and

made recommendations for the future. They are compiling a report that will become a piece of organizational history for future committees to reference in their work. I think that hours spent serving our students in this way, making informed decisions, is going to pay off in massive returns when we are able to streamline our small team and prioritize the things that matter most.

Not all of the work that I have done as an SAOC delegate has been internal to SAOC. In October, I entered the Alberta Students' Executive Council by-election and became the Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors. While ASEC is relatively dormant when it comes to advocacy these days, I have been able to obtain a lot of information and connections through my work on the board, which has been supportive to our student leaders in their work for our students. I also have increased the visibility of the SAOC by representing our students and our association while simultaneously serving for ASEC. It has been an honour to bring the voice of our small but powerful community to a much larger audience.

I also have represented the student body on a number of Olds College committees and working groups. As a representative on the Olds College Board of Governors, I have been able to keep an ear to the ground and convey important industry and institutional information to our student leaders. I sit on the Board of Governors Ownership Linkage Committee, where I can contribute to and learn from key stakeholder relationships with the college. I sit on the Olds College Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and am part of the OC Pride Organizers group. Through these committees, I am able to support and work with our marginalized groups on campus.

Since the early days of its existence, I have been part of the Student Refugee Program Local Committee, working with staff & faculty members to support our sponsored students. Through the International Student Success Network, I've been able to develop an advocacy project by collecting opportunities and challenges voiced by our staff & faculty with respect to our international students' experiences. I contribute to the Academic Scheduling Working Group, offering insights on student concerns with workspaces and classrooms. I also am frequently called upon to participate in student-facing policy & procedure reviews for the college, and have been actively engaged in the inter-departmental development of an anti-hazing policy, procedure, and training framework.

It has been a priority of mine to ensure that I am continuing to learn and develop my skills to better serve our students. Over the course of the year, I have completed governance workshops, mental health first aid training, an Indigenous awareness session, and gender-based violence awareness training. I hope to continue to seek opportunities for education and awareness for myself and my fellow student leaders in the future. Having been re-elected for a second term, I am looking forward to continuing to find new and important ways to serve the students of Olds College.

Work Plan

Objective	Measurable(s)	Timeline	Risks
Advocate for improved security on campus in campus parking lots by installing cameras and implementing additional lighting to outdoor areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct three surveys -Gain support of two campus communities (not including SAOC) -Three meetings or presentations held with the college to discuss the project 	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -May need to involve Town of Olds for certain parking lots/outdoor areas -Financial barriers
Create two work plans for review & selection by the SBOD to make improvements to The Crossing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Present work plan to SBOD by end of March -One work plan deemed acceptable with or without amendments, and approved by the SBOD 	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scheduling, timing delays -Differences in opinions -Supply chain issues
Facilitate the creation of at least two new student clubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Minimum of thirteen active clubs 	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of interest from student body -Lack of interest from staff advisors -Strike or further pandemic-related shutdowns
Advocate for the implementation of an exam repository system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct three surveys -Present project to students at one of the Town Hall events -Two meetings held with the college faculty and/or leadership to discuss the project 	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faculty pushback -Goal may be superseded by another idea to eliminate formal examinations altogether
Envision the creation of the "OC Trading Zone."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meetings held with at least three individual campus communities -Present project to students at one of the Town Hall events -Prototype set up, with trading systems, rules, and profiles in place 	March 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of administrative support -Online privacy & safety

This work plan was approved by the SBOD and implemented into the President's portfolio on August 23, 2022. All of these goals and projects with progress to date were presented to the student body at large at the first SAOC Town Hall on December 6.

Goal 1: Security on Campus. I was able to complete two out of three measurables of this project. Throughout the year, I had five meetings with Olds College department representatives including the Head of Health & Safety and Chief of Human Resources. I gained the support of Michael Keeling-Barrand, the former Head of Security prior to his resignation, and the support of OC Pride (formerly the Gay-Straight Alliance).

Despite active efforts to collaborate, including two meetings with the Olds College Human Resources department to refine the final survey, I was not able to meet my goal of circulating three surveys because HR was concerned that the insights from the survey responses would expose security & safety concerns that they were not prepared to address. They red-lighted the final survey intended to be distributed to the entire campus community and effectively stopped the project from moving forward.

In the end, I circulated two surveys: one to the student body and another to the OC Pride organizers. The insights captured in these surveys were very directional. Clear themes emerged from the responses, which identified important flaws to the safety & security systems on campus. Drone Club President Russell Milk contributed valuable information to this project through aerial imagery which captured nighttime illumination on campus to expose areas in need of supplemental outdoor lighting. I look forward to continuing to advocate for improved safety and security on campus.

Goal 2: Create two work plans for review & selection by the SBOD to make improvements to The Crossing. The original timeline for this goal was to present at AGM, but this was changed to the end of March when the new bylaws adopted in November 2022 removed the requirement to host an AGM. Clarifications to our structure have created a conflict with the approval route, as The Crossing's operations are not within the scope of the SBOD, but a presentation on the plans for the future will be delivered for the board's information nonetheless.

Regardless of changes to the approval route, The Crossing Development Initiative has been a longstanding working group of staff and EC members. Changes to The Crossing management interrupted the plan at about the halfway point but ultimately resulted in an improved approach. The first priority that the CDI identified was the need for a new bartop which was accomplished prior to the start of the 2022-2023 academic year. In January, another interruption came in the form of differences of opinions, where the first work plan pitch was poorly received by the CDI.

The CDI working group has met eight times this year and was the first (informal) committee struck by this year's Executive Council. Areas of focus have included: blending the image of the SAOC with The Crossing, improving day-to-day workflow and large event capacity, and creating consistency by refining a visible and recognizable brand. Many conclusions have been drawn to determine the path forward.

Goal 3: Facilitate the creation of two new Student Clubs. In April 2022, a number of new student clubs were on the radar for creation. Ideas from the student body and staff/faculty members included an equestrian club and a communications club. By September 2023, this work plan goal was completed when two new student clubs were founded: the Marketing Club and the Sports Management Club. There is currently another club founding in the works, an International Students Club.

Goal 4: Advocate for the implementation of an exam repository system. In the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year, I conducted extensive research into the development and administration of an exam repository system. I networked with student leaders at University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge Students' Unions to inquire about their experiences with managing an exam repository at their institutions. I developed and distributed the first student survey just ahead of fall term finals, and compiled a report with the insights from our student body. The second student survey is currently in circulation for the winter term, and data will be compiled when the survey closes on March 20.

The results of the first student survey were shared with Debbie Thompson, the Olds College Vice President of Academic & Student Experience, during a meeting to discuss the process of implementing an exam repository. I later met with Olds College Faculty Association President Peter Johnston-Berresford to obtain support to distribute the final survey to faculty for insights on where some of the pain points will be with an exam repository.

While this marks the completion of the measurables for this work plan goal, I have been invited to deliver a presentation to the faculty at large pending the close of the faculty survey, to address the key concerns and opportunities with this project. I will be continuing to work toward developing a pilot version of the exam repository to implement for the 23-24 academic year.

Goal 5: Envision the creation of the OC Trading Zone. This project manifested from one of the pillars of my election campaign in March 2022. In the beginning of my term, I spent some time researching trading networks, platforms, privacy & security considerations, etc. With our website overhaul over the summer, I considered setting up the zone as an online group that lived within the SAOC website. I chose instead to activate a local network on an existing trading platform.

I set up a Facebook group entitled [Bunz Trading Zone Olds](#) which was intended to complement the [Bunz](#) app. I developed a grassroots pitch to take to some campus stakeholders for their feedback. I presented the project to the department heads for Broncos Athletics and Residence Services, and to the International Students Coordinator. All three responded positively and came on board to execute a marketing strategy to activate the trading zone. This marked the completion of this work plan goal.

Emily Giugovaz of Residence Services, in particular, was very interested in pursuing this project further and becoming a full-on partner in establishing this network in the campus community. Residence Services and SAOC will be collaborating extensively going forward to develop a marketing strategy and get the Bunz Trading Zone active and thriving in Olds.

Vice-President, Academics

Positional Report

This year we had come to the positions with great ideas but soon realized we couldn't accomplish them until we got our organization sorted from the ground up. I set out with the others on the team to rebuild the organization from the ground up. This was something we felt was necessary to build the organization, its exposure, and its effectiveness.

As VP Academics, I was elected to the position of Vice Chair for the Academic Council, which I chaired twice. This gave me great insight into the workings of the academic processes of the college, as well as help to build some relationships with some of the leadership. This led to being invited to sit on five committees for the college, helping to make change for the benefit of students from within. This also helped me to advance with my advocacy goals.

I had the pleasure of representing SAOC at ASEC. It was a good opportunity to not only advocate to the province but just as importantly, to contact those holding the same positions at other schools and consult them on issues and ideas.

Within the organization, I sat on three committees: the Bylaw & Policy Review Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the Executive Director Compensation Committee. These were a great opportunity to further the organization and shape it for future years. Within these committees, we developed a strong foundation for the future that would allow growth and continuity.

As VP Academics, the main aspect of the position is representing students primarily in academic concerns, appeals, integrity, and advocacy. There were several incidents that I represented students in, primarily in appeals, but also in larger incidents that involve the whole class, as well as a whole program. With this, I was able to help the students gain an opportunity to be successful in their program. I am involved in revising the appeals process with the Deans as well as the Office of the Registrar to streamline the process, as well as make it more understandable and accessible for students.

Work Plan

My objectives when developing my plan was to create and advocate. I feel my goals reflected this and I am happy with the outcomes.

Goal One: Create a space for students and faculty to attend to their spiritual needs. I saw some students in the past going to their car to pray. I thought this was a huge problem, especially with the school promoting international students' enrolment. I set out to create a Multi Faith Room that would allow students to pray or meditate in a monitored, clean, accommodating space. We had a space to use so with the purchase of some basic items and the contribution of a Buddha from the Monks, I was able to assemble this space for students.

Goal Two: Review and rewrite the bylaws as needed. I knew from some discovery that the bylaws were outdated and very counter intuitive. I set out to have them reviewed by a third-party advisor, and push for changes that were suggested. As the review was completed, it became apparent that they would have to be completely rewritten. We did this. With the new bylaws a new set of policies have to be completed, and this work is underway.

Goal Three: Advocate for Open Education Resources. This advocacy goal was centered on the use of OERs in program development. This would help reduce the cost of books for students and the overall cost of education. There were several consultations done with faculty and staff concerning the present use as well as the opportunities for future use. The school is very open to the idea and is striving to incorporate their use in classes. The issues lay with the lack of Canadian content. The school is looking at the possible development of these for use outside of the class as there have been multiple developed for use within the present programing.

Goal Four: OC Talks. My goal in this was to create an event that would look like a Human Library, but that was more of an intimate space. I worked with the Health and Wellness department extensively in the development and promotion of the event. It was a slight success, though I feel it will be better in future events. It was set up to be a one on one conversation with people that have experienced various difficulties and obstacles in life and how they are overcoming them. This hopefully will help others see they are not alone in their trials, and there are others they can talk to about them.

Goal Five: Create opportunities for students and staff to sell their wares. This was intended to advocate to the school to allow students to have pop-up stalls that would allow them to sell various items on campus. It involved approaching the school admin for permission and locations for this.

Insights & Recommendations

There is still much work to be done in regards to the development of a concise policy package. This will help with the understanding of stance papers as well as the furtherance of the organization. The SAOC has great potential on campus to expand and be further involved in the school. This is something the school admin has expressed a desire to assist with, so it would take only a well thought out and objective approach to accomplish great things in the future. The willingness of the school to address the appeals process will greatly help students with their concerns, and help them to be administered in the future.

Vice-President, Communications

Positional Report

As the Vice President of Communications for the SAOC, I was responsible for creating and implementing communication strategies that would enhance student experience, promote a sense of community, and foster engagement among students. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, my role became even more crucial in helping to rebuild a sense of community after the extended period of isolation and remote learning.

One of my key contributions to the SAOC was designing and managing the social media platforms to ensure they were up-to-date with the latest information and events taking place within the college. This helped to keep students informed about upcoming events, final exam schedules, and other relevant information relating to their academic and social lives on campus. I also ensured that the social media accounts were active, engaging and informative, which helped to foster a strong sense of community amongst the student body.

Another significant contribution I made was the creation of monthly and bi-weekly newsletters with updates on anything student life related, with relevant information on upcoming events, and opportunities for involvement. This helped to ensure that students were always up-to-date with the latest news and developments on campus. This newsletter served as a valuable tool for students who may not have regularly accessed social media channels, as well as providing an opportunity to showcase various clubs, teams and student-led initiatives, thus contributing to the development of strong and positive relationships between students.

Additionally, I worked closely with various Olds College departments to develop collaborative campaigns and events. This work aimed at strengthening relationships between the college, local businesses, and the wider community. We also launched an initiative to promote mental health events, to help students who were struggling with mental health issues. These events served as a means to foster community spirit while promoting physical and mental well-being among students. Furthermore, I was part of the team that organized several on-campus events, such as karaoke nights, sport watch parties, and guest speakers. These events provided students with opportunities to meet each other, form connections, and create memories.

I also worked towards fostering inclusiveness and diversity on campus. I played a crucial role in promoting various cultural events to celebrate and appreciate different cultures' uniqueness, offering students the chance to learn more about their peers' cultures, as well as promoting various Olds College GSA events & updates to foster inclusivity in the student community.

In conclusion, as the Vice President of Communications, I focused on building a stronger community at Olds College by contributing to the student experience through effective communication strategies. Through initiatives like social media, newsletters and collaborative campaigns, I helped to promote a positive campus culture that prioritized student engagement,

well-being, and a shared sense of belonging. Together with the efforts of other SAOC members, SAOC & OC committees we created an environment that helped to support students throughout the year, and enabled them to thrive both academically and socially.

Work Plan

Objective	Measurable(s)	Timeline	Risks
To host 2 events per month and have 1 town hall per semester.	Target - 2 events held per month; 1 town hall held per semester Measurable - # of events held per month on average; attendees & questions asked at town halls	December 16, 2023	Budget, actual student engagement
Strengthen our relationship with the town and local businesses.	Target - Attend at least 2 monthly Olds meetings Measurable - # of meetings attended; connections within town	March 31, 2023	Town/businesses not wanting to collaborate
Bring awareness/engagement to clubs	Target - Have 4 inactive clubs start up again.	December 16, 2023	-No registrations from potential club leaders.
Target - Create a group or club of 15 international students. Mesurable - # of international students enrolled in group/club	Target - 2 events held per month; 1 town hall held per semester Measurable - # of events held per month on average; attendees & questions asked at town halls	December 16, 2023	Budget, actual student engagement
Personal Wellbeing and Mental Health	Target- Create 1 safe space for students and staff to talk about mental health matters. Measurable - Was a safe space created beyond baseline?	March 31, 2023	

*This work plan was approved by the SBOD and implemented into the VPC portfolio on August 23, 2022. All of these goals and projects with progress to date were presented to the student body at large at the first SAOC Town Hall on December 6, 2022.

Goal 1: Engagement

To achieve this goal, I focused on creating a robust communications strategy that would allow us to reach out and engage with our members more effectively. This involved revamping our social media channels, creating a new monthly newsletter, and hosting a series of events and workshops that were designed to foster better engagement between students and faculty. I often meet with the Student Life Manager and Crossing Manager to discuss ways to increase participation in extracurricular activities and promote student involvement in the college community. Ultimately, our efforts paid off, and we saw a significant increase in student engagement and participation throughout the year. It was an incredibly rewarding experience to see students become more involved and invested in their academic lives and student experience.

Goal 2: Town-Gown Relations

This goal focused on improving the relationship between the town and the college by enhancing Town-Gown Relations. In particular, I have been dedicating significant effort to meeting with local businesses and outsourcing student discounts and opportunities within the community. By doing so, I have strengthened the bonds between the college and the town by fostering a sense of mutual benefit and partnership between both entities. I firmly believe that this relationship is essential for creating a thriving community and that through collaboration and cooperation, we can make this goal a reality. I am excited to see the continuous work being done by the college and town towards this objective in the coming years, as I believe that there is still much that can be accomplished together.

Goal 3: Clubs

Most of my work dealt with promoting club events and activities. To achieve this objective, I worked on creating effective communication strategies that help to boost the visibility of various SAOC club events across all media platforms. To maximize the effectiveness of these strategies, I attended Club Presidents' meetings, where I provided feedback on the club events' communication and marketing and discussed ways to improve their visibility. Through these efforts, we have increased the number of attendees at club events and encouraged more individuals to join various clubs, which was seen during Club Night in September; this has helped to strengthen the sense of community within our association.

Goal 4: International Students

This goal was created to aid international students by promoting various events and workshops that were organized for them. My efforts aimed to ensure that International Students have a smooth transition into the college community and that their stay in Canada is pleasant. I worked closely with the International Student Coordinator, and together we brainstormed ideas on ways to help International Students and figure out their biggest struggles. The aim was to ensure international students feel welcomed and supported throughout their program. Throughout the year the International Students Coordinator and I found that engagement from

international students was very low so we shifted years to trying to find out other ways to boost their engagement and learn more about the struggles they have, like the lack of transportation to the airport and bigger cities; together we created forms and spreadsheets dedicated to help those students who struggled to find transportation.

Goal 5: Personal Wellbeing & Mental Health

This goal was created to create a safe space and bring awareness to Mental Health matters; this was done by promoting mental health awareness events conducted by Health and Wellness (H&W) and creating awareness within the student body. We collaborated on multiple events like the human library, OC Mental Health Day and bringing in guest speaker Chris Beaudry to raise awareness about the importance of good mental health and the resources available for students facing mental health issues. Through various communication channels such as posters, social media, and newsletters, we spread the word about these events and their impact on the well-being of the students. By working closely with H&W, we were able to create an environment of support and care for students struggling with mental health issues. These events weren't too successful as student engagement with these type of events were very low, but they created an increase in awareness of mental health issues by both the student body and staff; this has been visible in the rise in mental health events and initiatives done by the college like the new Courage to Act Committee dedicated to combating gender based violence and create a new policy to end that which I took part of.