

UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT UPDATE



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INTRODUCTION

The University Affairs department is the voice of political advocacy for undergraduate students. The Students' Union works with the Cities of Waterloo and Brantford as well as the provincial & federal governments to improve quality and access to post-secondary education.

The University Affairs department conducts its provincial advocacy alongside the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), a respected stakeholder in the post-secondary sector. OUSA is comprised of eight different member schools, each of which is a leader in post-secondary education in Ontario. Through OUSA, the Students' Union develops evidence-based policy and works with key provincial politicians to implement it.

Current priorities for the University Affairs department includes increasing the awareness of accessible resources, enhanced mental health and student supports, and increasing the transparency of the department to our students.

MEET THE TEAM



Julia Pereira

Vice President: University Affairs / suvpua@wlu.ca

My name is Julia Pereira and I am the Vice President: University Affairs and OUSA (Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance) President. I recently graduated this summer with an Honours BA in Political Science and Communication Studies. Over the past few years, I've held a variety of positions within the Students' Union including as an Orientation Week Icebreaker, an Outreach Committee volunteer, Governance Coordinator, and as a Director of the Board. My role as VP UA engages with policy and advocacy at all levels of government: municipal, provincial, and federal. OUSA as an organization supports evidence-based, student-driven policies that we lobby at provincial level. I am eager to serve the Laurier community and represent students and their needs.



Owen Bourrie

Associate Vice President: University Affairs (Waterloo) / suavpuaw@wlu.ca

My name is Owen Bourrie and I am the Associate Vice President: University Affairs on the Waterloo campus. For the past two years, I have been involved in the governance side of the organization with the Board of Directors and have just completed my term as Chair of the Board and Chief Governance Officer. It was through these position that I learned about my passion for, as well as the importance of student advocacy. I am grateful for this new opportunity as it will allow for me to continue to advocate for students and make meaningful change in our community. My main goal for this year is to increase the awareness of the University Affairs department, as well as connect with students to learn about what is affecting them and how we can help. I am looking forward to continuing to serve the Laurier community in my new role!



Brook Snider

Associate Vice President: University Affairs (Brantford) / suavpuab@wlu.ca

My name is Brook Snider, and I am the Associate Vice President: University Affairs for the Brantford campus. I am extremely excited to be returning to the role as the AVP: UAB and I cannot wait to see what this year has in store for the University Affairs Department. My role in the University Affairs department began in 2017 as a volunteer for the SRAC and Outreach committees. From that point, I have continued my passion for advocacy within the department. My favourite part about the University Affairs department is the ability to make meaningful change both within Laurier, the Brantford community, and post-secondary education as a whole. I am continually inspired by our passionate volunteers who continue to bring about change through our advocacy efforts. This year, I hope to expand the University Affairs department by hosting engaging events which attract our students. I cannot wait to see what this year brings, and I am looking forward to being back on campus with the rest of our students.

COMMON HOUSING CONCERNS



FAQ: Do I need to pay my rent during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: From the Ontario Government: "Tenants who can pay their rent must do so, to the best of their abilities. Landlords are entitled to collect compensation from a tenant for each day that an eviction order is not enforced. However, tenants who are asked to self-isolate or who can't work may have difficulty paying their rent. Tenants who are having challenges paying rent should speak with their landlords about possibly deferring their rent or other payment arrangements. Visit our website for a letter template that you can use to send to your landlord to help you come to a fair agreement.

FAQ: Can my landlord charge me a fee for late payments?

A: Under the Residential Tenancies Act, landlords cannot charge fees or penalties for late rent payments.

FAQ: Can tenants assign or sublet their lease without notifying their landlord?

A: If a tenant assigns or sublets their unit without their landlord's consent, it is an unauthorized assignment or sublet.

FAQ: What assistance is available for tenants?

A: If you need financial help you can:

- Contact your local service manager
- Apply for COVID-19 emergency assistance
- Access federal government programs'
- Another helpful resource is CLEO: They have FAQ's about how COVID-19 is impacting housing issues.

FAQ: Is Laurier offering any financial assistance?

A: We would recommend looking into the COVID-19 Emergency Fund to see if they may be able to support you. You may send any questions you have on the fund to coronavirusquestions@wlu.ca. You can also apply for EI, the CERB, or the CESB mentioned later in this newsletter.

FAQ: Who can provide advice for landlord-tenant issues here at Laurier?

A: If you would like non-legal advice, please contact the Student Rights Advisory Committee (SRAC) on the Waterloo campus at studentrights@wlu.ca or on the Brantford campus at lbstudentrights@wlu.ca

COVID-19 RELATED FUNDING

6-Month Interest-Free Moratorium

What has changed?

- From March 30th until September 30, 2020, graduates will not need to make payment on their OSAP loan and will not be charged interest.

What this means for graduates?

- The principle and interest on all OSAP loans will remain the same as the March rate until the beginning of October.
- After September 30, 2020, graduates will be required to resume making loan payments.
- If you choose to continue making payments on your OSAP loan between March 30th and September 30, 2020, you must manually request to do so through NSLSC. Payments made during this period will go entirely towards their loan principle.

Resource: [Click here for more information on current OSAP changes.](#)

COVID-19 and Canada Student Grant Amounts

What is set to change?

- Pending government approval, new measures are set to take place on August 1st, 2020 and will be available to students for 1 year.
- The maximum amount of Canada Student Grants will be doubled.
- The Canada Student Grant for full-time students will increase up to a maximum of \$6,000 and the grant for part-time studies to \$3,600.
- The Canada Student Grants for students with permanent disabilities will be doubled.
- For the 2020 to 2021 school year, the weekly maximum loan limit will increase from \$210 to \$350, which could potentially result in a \$11,900 Canadian Student Loan.

Resource: [Click here for more information on Canada Student Grants.](#)

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

The CERB is a taxable benefit that provides \$2,000 a month, up to a total of four months, for workers who lose income as a result of COVID-19.

To qualify, you must meet all of the following conditions:

1. Live in Canada and are at least 15 years of age
2. Stopped working because of COVID-19 or are eligible for EI regular or sickness benefits
3. Have not voluntarily quit your job
4. Had income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the start of your application.

Resources:

Click [here](#) to access additional information.

Click [here](#) for a step-by-step process on how to apply.

Click [here](#) for FAQ's about the CERB.

Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB)

The Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) provides financial support to post-secondary students, and recent post-secondary and high school graduates who are unable to find work due to COVID-19. This benefit is for students who do not qualify for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) or Employment Insurance.

From May to August 2020, the CESB provides a payment to eligible students of \$1,250 for each four-week period OR \$2,000 for each four-week period if you have dependants or a disability.

To qualify, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- You did not apply, receive, nor qualify for the CERB or EI benefits for the same eligibility period
- You are one of the following:
 - Canadian citizen
 - Registered Indian
 - Permanent resident
 - Protected person
- You are studying in Canada or abroad
- One of the following applies:
 - You are enrolled in a post-secondary educational program (at least 12 weeks in duration) that leads to a degree, diploma, or certificate
 - You completed or ended your post-secondary studies in December 2019 or later
 - You have applied for a post-secondary educational program that starts before February 1, 2021
- One of the following applies:
 - You are unable to work due to COVID-19
 - You are looking for, but cannot find work due to COVID-19
 - You are currently working during COVID-19, but your income is \$1,000 or less (before taxes) during the 4-week period which you are applying for

Resources:

Click [here](#) to access additional information.

Click [here](#) for a step-by-step process on how to apply.



CREDIT/WITHDRAW

What is the Credit/Withdraw Option?

COVID-19 has brought significant challenges to academia and it's affects on students. Transitioning to remote learning part-way through the semester was certainly not ideal. Laurier understands that some students may face significant challenges which impact a student's ability to complete the term remotely, and with the level of attention and focus you would normally present in a physical learning environment.

The university has decided to offer undergraduate and graduate students the option to convert final winter 2020 course letter grades to either a "credit" or "withdraw" format, without requiring a petition.



The Credit/Withdraw Process

Students are instructed to log into LORIS to view their final grades. If your grade is passing, students will be given a time-limited opportunity to have their grade noted on their transcript as CR (credit), or WD (withdrawn) rather than a letter grade. Students who choose the withdraw will receive no credit for the course, and will therefore need to make this up in a future term.

Once applied, the CR/WD grade will be recorded permanently on your transcript. However, the letter grade assigned by your instructor will be stored in your internal student record and can be retrieved upon request to provide to other postsecondary institutions if required. For common questions about the credit/withdraw process, click [here](#).

Hiring

The University Affairs Department is hiring dedicated individuals who are passionate about advocacy and post-secondary education. The University Affairs department currently oversees two committees within the Students Union:



Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee is tasked with creating relationships with students, developing a fluent two-way dialogue, and acting as representatives for the University Affairs department at the student level. We run educational campaigns to inform students about issues they may encounter in their time as a university student. The Outreach Committee is currently hiring representatives for both the Brantford and Waterloo campuses.

The Brantford Outreach Committee is currently hiring:

- (1) Coordinator
- (1) Executive
- (10) General Volunteers

The Waterloo Outreach Committee is currently hiring:

- (1) Coordinator
- (5) Executives

Student Rights Advisory Committee

The Student Rights Advisory Committee exists to provide students with information about their rights when it comes to landlord-tenant issues. While in no way does this committee provide legal representation, it can help to inform you about your options in order to make difficult situations easier to navigate. The Student Rights Advisory Committee is currently hiring representatives for both the Brantford and Waterloo campuses.

The Brantford Student Rights Advisory Committee is currently hiring:

- (1) Coordinator
- (2) Executive
- (10) General Volunteers

The Waterloo Student Rights Advisory Committee is currently hiring:

- (2) Executive