

To: Chair and Members, Corporate Services Committee

From: Adam Fearnall, President, University Students' Council at Western University

RE: **POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS BECOMING MORE INVOLVED IN
MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT**

Background:

The University Students' Council at Western University (USC) represents 27,268 students at Western University, King's University College, Huron University College, and Brescia University College; the Fanshawe Student Union (FSU) represents 15,000 students at the London campus. Collectively, both councils represent the interests of over 42,000 students in London.

The USC, FSU, and Corporation of the City of London share similar mandates, powers of taxation, democratic legitimacy, and the need to work in partnership with other levels of government to meet the needs of constituents. The USC and FSU believe that our partnership with the City of London would be strengthened by engaging more post-secondary students in municipal government and by creating other linkages between our three councils.

We appreciate the opportunity to explore these opportunities with the Corporate Services Committee and with Civic Administration, and are confident that students can make a valuable contribution to the future of London.

Recommendations:

Appoint one post-secondary representative annually as a Non-Voting Resource Member on each of the following citizen advisory committees:

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Advisory Committee on the Environment
- Community Safety and Crime Prevention Advisory Committee
- London Diversity & Race Relations Advisory Committee
- London Advisory Committee on Heritage
- London Housing Advisory Committee
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- Creative City Committee

Students are not able to commit to the traditional 4-year term of appointment on advisory committees, which presents a barrier to their participation. Appointing students to a 1-year term

solves this issue, and opens up participation to the 42,000 post-secondary students living in the city.

We recommend that the USC and FSU work together to select the student representatives annually, with the goal of putting forward 4 Western students and 4 Fanshawe students to fill the opportunities. To ensure qualified students are selected, we propose that the selection process be conducted by a Striking/Nominating Committee comprised of representatives of the FSU and USC and city representatives if required. The Striking/Nominating Committee process could be administered by the USC's Legislative Services Department to lessen the administrative burden on the city; the FSU and USC would also take on the responsibility for promoting and recruiting potential committee members.

Expand internship and co-op opportunities available at City Hall.

London wants to retain more Western and Fanshawe students after they graduate; the USC and FSU want to expand employment opportunities for students that complement their classroom learning. An expanded internship program at City Hall would meet both objectives.

We believe an expanded internship program will retain more students in London by providing them with skills and community contacts they'll need to secure permanent jobs after graduation. Internships also keep students in London over the summer months, allowing them to integrate into the wider community and experience the city's vibrant cultural and recreational opportunities over the summertime.

Several departments within the City of London, such as the Planning, Environmental and Engineering Services and Finance Department, currently offer co-op and internship placements for post-secondary students. Some members of Council also use their budget allocations to hire students to conduct research and other projects. We recommend that the Civic Administration and members of Council do a thorough evaluation of what other opportunities exist within the city to expand co-ops and internships.

Engage the USC and FSU in the economic development strategy of the city.

In 2010 the USC developed BizInc, a business incubator serving students at Western. The USC engaged the FSU and the LEDC as early partners, and the partners have grown the initiative significantly over the past few years – 148 student start-up projects have been supported, \$250,000 in gross revenues have been generated, and 79 jobs have been created and counting. The USC and FSU have access to a brain trust of talented students on campus and we know how to work with and motivate young leaders; we are very excited about the future potential of BizInc, but we also recognize the power in collaborating with the other economic development activities going on in the city. We believe students' success as entrepreneurs will lead to jobs and economic growth for all Londoners, and we stand ready to play a significant leadership role in economic development.

Hold a Council meeting at Fanshawe or Western annually; allow USC and FSU to host a Council meeting at City Hall.

Bringing the City Council to the FSU or USC council chambers and the FSU and USC councils to City Council chambers once a year would signify the important governance role our three councils play in London, and would also raise awareness of city decisions in the eyes of post-secondary students.

The University Students' Council has the capacity to live stream meetings and will soon have the ability to conduct electronic voting. We are confident that we would be able to work with the City Clerk to meet all requirements necessary to hold a meeting at Western.

Include representatives of the USC and FSU when the City of London receives foreign delegations, and include USC and FSU representatives in relevant trade missions.

When London is looking to sell itself to the world we believe there is great value in engaging student representatives. Including students demonstrates to delegations that the city is in touch with the creative and highly skilled talent that will be necessary to maintain and grow London as a world-class city. Including student leadership also signals to students that London values and respects the role they play within London, and that their interests are taken into account when decisions are made that affect their future.