



Student Advocate – Job Description

Title: Student Advocate
Reports To: General Manager, with accountabilities to the VP Student Affairs
Term: Full Time, In-Scope
Wage: 3863.25 \$ per month

Summary

The Student Advocate is responsible for providing confidential and informal assistance to student groups, as well as undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and prospective students with timely advice and assistance on disputes, appeals, petitions and grievances regarding both academic or non-academic matters.

The Student Advocate role is to serve the Students' Union of the University of Regina Inc. (URSU) members by protecting them against abuse, bias and other improper treatment or unfairness. The Student Advocate acts in an advisory capacity and as a source of information and referral, aids in answering individual's questions, and assists in the resolution of concerns and disputes.

The Student Advocate's focus is on ensuring justice for all members of URSU and all students represented by URSU, ensuring the success of our members in their pursuit of higher education.

Core Competencies

- Member Centric Focus
- Quality Orientation
- Time Management
- Creative and Innovative Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Equitable decision making
- Accountability and Dependability
- Research and Analysis
- Understanding of Social Justice
- Decision Making and Judgement



- Ethics and Integrity
- Planning and Organizing
- Mediating and Negotiating
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Communication
- Energy and Stress
- Empathy

Job Duties

- URSU recognizes that the Student Advocate holds a position of trust and therefore handles casework in an autonomous environment as much as possible in order to maintain a confidential, informal and respectful service for students.
- The Student Advocate reports directly to the URSU General Manager with accountabilities to the VP Student Affairs, and presents to the URSU Executive on an as needed, as requested basis.
- Formulate, manage and monitor the overall goals, direction and programs of the Student Advocate Office, including any Junior Advocates that are hired.
- Ensure that the integrity of the office is maintained through independence, fair process, neutrality, impartiality, confidentiality and timely attention to the resolution of issues while treating people with dignity and respect.
- The URSU Student Advocate is responsible for all operations of the Student Advocate Office including:
 - case management
 - file management
 - advertising and promotions - the Student Advocate will publicize the services of the Student Advocate Office using such means of communication as are available to inform the members.
- Provides information services about policies and procedures within its mandate.
- Provide impartial and confidential consultation to members of the URSU community who are aggrieved or concerned about an issue.
- Serves primarily as a mediating agent and advisor through which URSU members can resolve disputes. The Advocate will provide member-driven, member centric, student justice focused representation and mediation in areas of:
 - student loan appeals
 - financial advocacy
 - academic or disciplinary advocacy
 - tenancy issues
 - other student issues as required
- Serves as an information agent and consultant regarding the following:



- student financial services, particularly student loans
- academic or disciplinary policies and procedures
- internal University procedures
- external community agencies and resources such as the Rentalsman and collection agencies
- any other applicable policies, procedures and issues that affect students
- Assists students in interpreting University policies and procedures.
- Advises students of their rights and responsibilities and will inform them of appropriate ways to pursue their case, as well as defend them in order to ensure the most beneficial resolution possible is achieved.
- Provide assistance to students by clarifying issues and generating options for resolution by facilitating the student's assessment of the pros and cons of possible options.
- If direct action is requested by the student, obtain the students' agreement and permission before proceeding.
- If necessary, and while maintaining confidentiality, conduct appropriate informal fact-finding in order to better understand an issue from all perspectives.
- The Student Advocate may investigate decisions, the procedures and criteria used to reach decisions, the timelines of decisions and the clarity of communication of decisions to the person(s) affected.
- When appropriate, facilitate group meetings, use shuttle diplomacy, or negotiation skills to facilitate communication among parties in conflict.
- In the course of investigation and in bringing recommendations forward, the Advocate will seek to ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are observed.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, provide referrals to other resources.
- In the event that the Advocate declines further involvement with a student or withdraw from a case, s/he will provide the student or any other interested persons reasons thereof.
- Where the Student Advocate is satisfied that the requirements of the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness have been met, the Advocate has the right to terminate their involvement in the case under the direction of the executive
- Under the direction of the VP Student Affairs, administers the URSU Emergency Bursary and Mental Wellness Program.
- Produces an annual report on the Emergency Bursary and Mental Wellness Program, and performs year end tasks on the program including issuing applicants T4A forms.
- Assists with the URSU Pantry (or similar type) program.
- The Student Advocate is also encouraged to join community groups and attend meetings, which will enhance their understanding of student issues.
- The Office of the Student Advocate will normally function on a first come first serve basis except where time constraints require that cases be prioritized.
- All meetings with individual students or student groups who are seeking assistance shall be held in a private, secure setting. All names, situations and details shall be deemed confidential.



- All files will be handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information & Protection & Privacy legislation.
- The Student Advocate office is based on confidentiality. Therefore, the Student Advocate must keep information confidential and must use good judgment about when and how such information can be shared, while being mindful of maintaining professional standards that are consistent with the Saskatchewan Association Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.
- Logging of confidential recipient information in compliance with CRA requirements.
- Other duties as assigned.

Equity Statement:

We recognize and encourage applications from folks that are most frequently marginalized in employment opportunities. This includes Black, Indigenous, and people of colour, Queer people, Trans people, Disabled people, people with experience in sex work, people with experience of migration, people who have experiences of poverty and/or houselessness, people who have been incarcerated and people who have experiences of addiction.



Requirements

- Undergraduate degree in Law and Legal Studies, Social Justice, Sociology, or an equivalent related field, and/or equivalent combination of experience
- Past Experiences in student unions is an asset.
- Experience in student or member representation is an asset
- Some combination of training in mediation and/or dispute/conflict management
- Some training in research, investigation, interviewing and report writing
- A strong working knowledge of the university appeal system, student loan structures, Saskatchewan tenancy rights and other issues related to the lives of students
- Knowledge and understanding of anti oppression, decolonization and working with communities with diverse intersectional identities
- Excellent communication, presentation, critical thinking and listening skills
- Proven ability to interpret and apply pertinent legislation, statutes, jurisprudence, policies, procedures and practices that affect the lives of students
- Be able to communicate effectively with individuals at all levels within the university in defense of students.
- Exceptional problem-solving skills and be able to gather information, analyze it and help the student develop appropriate options and actions.
- Proactive and have strong collaborative and consultative skills and participate within the spirit of engagement throughout the university community.
- Knowledgeable about the university structure, culture, policies and practices.
- Excellent networking skills and be able to establish and maintain a broad spectrum of contacts throughout the university community.
- Not be risk-averse and should understand that this position may, on occasion, challenge even the highest levels of the administration in an effort to foster fair and just practices.
- Thorough understanding of what leads to conflict, the nature of conflict, and methods for resolution.
- The skills used to empower students to resolve their conflicts including: helping people learn how to deal with the matter directly if they wish to do this, serving as a communication conduit between the parties, informally bringing the parties together, bringing them together through an informal mediation process, approaching the conflict generically (especially when a student is afraid of retaliation), and when necessary advocating on behalf of the student.
- The ability to help students to determine which conflict resolution method would be appropriate for their specific situation.
- Sensitive to dealing with individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures.
- Open, objective, and must seek to understand issues from different perspectives.
- Innovative in developing options that are responsive to differing needs.
- A reputation for integrity and for dealing fairly, effectively and in a timely fashion with all students.



Work Conditions

- Typical office setting.
- Manual dexterity required to use desktop computer and peripherals.
- Interacts with public at large.
- Sitting for long periods.
- Repetitive work.
- Overtime may be required.