



Calgary Medical Students Association

1st Bilby Town Hall

May 18, 2022





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Introduction

The CMSA had our first Bilby class town hall on May 18, 2022. There were many concerns brought up to the executive independently. However, we wanted to get a better idea of what was affected the class as a whole. The town hall was hosted in Theatre 4. A survey was distributed to the class in the week prior to the event. Approximately 45 students attended the townhall.

The notes from the town hall are presented below. Student comments are in grey.

Questions from the survey are in “quotations”, before the discussion that occurred, for context.





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Academics: Fail Rates

“Rates of failing/academic difficulties in our class vs previous years”

“Fail rates of our class compared to previous years and how we are addressing it”

- Fail rates indicate the first attempt at a final exam, not rewrites. The CMSA won't get Course 3 fail rates till October.
- The following are the pass/fail rates for the Bilbies from the April 28th Meeting Minutes:
 - 100% of the class passed Population Health final exam on first attempt with no rewrites
 - 94% of the class passed Course 1 final exam on first attempt
 - 98% of the class passed Course 2 final exam on first attempt; 96% for the Echidnas
 - We are comparable to past years according to UME
 - Bilbies did a little better than the Echidnas in Course 2

How are we doing compared to other pre-COVID classes

- The UME is not providing comparisons to other classes.

“The fail rate, including large numbers of students from previous years who have already seen exams writing the same exams again and pulling up averages”

- There is a rule in place that states exam writers can only change the exam 5% per year. Awaiting a response from UME about this issue.

Academics: The MPL and Mark Release Timing

“Lack of transparency regarding evaluation (does anyone actually understand the MPL and it's justification for use)”

- Set passing threshold is based on how previous years have done and the difficulty of the course. The MPL is based on how well the class does. The passing mark is lower than the MPL.
- Other medical schools have set MPLs. The VP academics have sent an email to Dr. Desy (UME) on why we have transient MPLs and how do we take into account medical students from different years and student's different backgrounds before medical school.

Marks take too long to come out, especially compared to UofA.

- The history of mark release: marks used to be released the day of but there was a complaint that there isn't a review process to see if the questions are fair, thus UME changed it to the 2-week review process. UME does not want to go back due to already listening to student's feedback.





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Surveys

- It is encouraged that students fill out surveys released by the CMSA, so the CMSA has the numbers to back them up when talking to the UME and AMA.
- UME will give us money for graduation if a high percentage of UME surveys are filled out. Details:
https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/4/Policies/C/CMSA%20Funding%20Support%20November30_2021.pdf
- Additionally, the UME only responds well to constructive feedback so keep that in mind when filling out surveys.
 - Students have concerns with the ability of surveys to actually enact change.

Academics: Exam Content

“Course content not aligning with exams. Being told to ‘know the big picture’, and then being tested on minutia on exams”

- Sophia’s post exam surveys make a difference.
- Questions that test more random facts are reflections of the licencing exams.
- When this concern is brought up to the UME they insist that RIME is the solution.

Students appreciated Dr. Rizkallah’s review sessions that reflected exam questions and summarized the week’s course content.

- It is up to discretion of Course Chair to make review sessions
- However, provide this feedback in UME surveys.

Academics: Two-Strike Rule

“Two strike rule for exams- such high pressure if one unsuccessful exam. If competency is proven and there’s a pass, why have it?”

- Other schools have less punitive fail policies.
- The UME says it prepares us for residency better but the CMSA is doubtful. Additionally, the UME says this won’t be an issue with RIME.
 - The solution doesn’t impact us, how do we move forward now.





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- A path forward is using surveys with many responses to send a message to the UME.
 - Some students disagreed.

Mistreatment Policy

“Consideration of submitting a formal third-party complaint to the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) due to UME’s lack of mistreatment policy (the website the Student Handbook redirects to is a dead link)”

- 49 complaints sent in the last year across programs in the faculty.
- UME is put in a difficult position if the student wants to stay anonymous when putting in a complaint, because the UME says it can’t corroborate the information.
- UME says RIME is a solution because there will be less preceptors and they will be hand-picked. Preceptors will be chosen based off positive feedback.

CMSA Transparency

Could we have high level updates in the newsletter to say we are aware of the issue and working on it.

- CMSA is working with IT on putting pertinent committee meetings updates on Osler where it states the weather.

Is the CMSA budget is publicly available and can people outside of the CMSA vote on it.

- Will add the budget to the quarterly update.
- The CMSA has a meeting targeted around the budget where council votes on it.
- CFMS budget is discussed at the AGM and all students are welcome.

Looking at the February meeting minutes there was a proposed CMSA fee increase

- The fee increase was voted on by the council and it is only for the Baby Animals
- Half of the budget is funded by the CMSA fee, with additional revenue coming from sponsors, partnerships, etc





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ACTION ITEMS

VP Communication

- *Student Concern:* CMSA transparency
 - *Action Item:* adding CMSA meeting minutes to the newsletter; having more detailed updates in the meeting minutes

VP Academics

- *Student Concern:* Academics
 - *Action Items:* sending emails to get info about the following
 - Grade/failure rate comparisons to pre-COVID classes
 - Impact of repeating students/students with different backgrounds on MPL calculation
 - *UME Response:* “there is no data to suggest that a student who previous wrote a version of our exam would do better or increase the passing threshold – There is more than one version of all exams and students don’t write the same exams year to year.”
 - Why UofC has decided to go with a 2-fail policy and a transient calculated MPL
 - *UME Response:* “UofC has had this policy for a very long time – if a student is unsatisfactory in more than one course, it is a signal that a large portion of objectives from the year has not been achieved and the process of rewriting an exam is not enough to define competency.”
 - *UME Response:* “UofC’s technique, the hofstee compromise to calculate MPLs incorporates setting criterion referenced minimum and maximum thresholds and then plotting the actual performance of the class to find the actual cut point. It is a well-researched, well-known method of setting pass thresholds that we have built a strong validity argument for”





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VP Finance

- *Student Concern:* CMSA transparency
 - *Action Item:* share budget details and quarterly updates at Townhalls

VP External Provincial and National

- *Student Concern:* CMSA transparency
 - *Action Item:* working with VP Finance to share budget details
 - *Action Item:* started making committee wide reports that go in the meeting minutes and quarterly reports
- *Student Concern:* Surveys
 - *Action Item:* ensuring surveys are used appropriately and most efficiently so as to not overwhelm the class

President

- *Student Concern:* CMSA transparency
 - *Action Item:* trying to establish meeting minute highlights on Osler



**For more information on topics discussed during the town hall
or any CMSA matters, email us at**

CMSA.StudentGov@gmail.com

**If you would like to contact a specific member of the CMSA,
the emails are listed below:**

President	Jusnoor Aujla	jusnoor.aujla@ucalgary.ca
VP Academics	Kathy Fu	Kathy.fu@ucalgary.ca
	Mohamed Bondok	Mohamed.bondok@ucalgary.ca
VP Events	Rudra Patel	rudra.patel@ucalgary.ca
VP External (National)	Bimbola Oyewunmi	oyebimbola.oyewunmi@ucalgary.ca
VP External (Provincial)	Chaim Katz	chaim.katz@ucalgary.ca
VP Finance	Omer Mansoor	mohammad.mansoor@ucalgary.ca
VP SAW	Alex Stephenson	alexandra.stephen1@ucalgary.ca
VP EDI	Amira Kalifa	amira.kalifa@ucalgary.ca
VP Global Health	Sarika Haque	sarika.haque@ucalgary.ca
VP Communications	Rafa Abbas	rafa.abbas@ucalgary.ca

