

Representation Executive Council (REC) Statement on Cannabis

With cannabis legalization beginning October 17, 2018, and public consumption laws left to municipal governments, the Students' Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) is disappointed to see that Calgary City Council passed a law prohibiting a person from smoking, vaping, or consuming cannabis in any public place.

We do not believe there is an equitable process for the public to apply for an exemption from the Calgary City Council bylaws, as we have yet to see a filed designated cannabis area be voted on by City Council.

SAMRU's primary concern is around student safety. We fear that Calgary City Council's decision prohibiting public consumption areas encourages stigma. Our worry with continued stigmatization is that students may be anxious to discuss this with their doctors, or that they may not have an opportunity to understand potential risks associated with using cannabis. Creating policy through the lens of abstinence does not protect our communities.

SAMRU believes Calgary City Council should be pursuing a harm reduction approach, encouraging education of the public on cannabis while also designating an area on campus for safe consumption. Diminishing social stigma around cannabis and providing safe areas for those who choose to use it allows us the opportunity to have a conversation with students on potential risks. We believe in utilizing Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Guidelines. We strongly believe that education empowers people to make better decisions.

SAMRU believes Mount Royal University should apply for and be granted an exemption from Calgary City bylaws to allow for a designated cannabis area so that we can promote harm reduction on campus, as we do with alcohol. We will continue to pursue our advocacy work in this area with the City and with MRU.

- 30 -

***The Students' Association** is a non-profit organization, independent from Mount Royal University, which exists to enhance the academic experience provided by MRU. We serve students to help them succeed!*

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