

The Alberta Public Interest Research Group

Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG)  
Annual Report 2008/2009

**APIRG**

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**Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG)  
Annual Report 2009**

## **Contributions**

APIRG would like to thank the following people for their contributions to the Annual Report.

Ariel Bowering (content and design),

Lise Wilson (Working Group reports)

Patrick Law (Cover design and photos)

Michael Liu (photos)

Thanks also to Working Group members and funding recipients who summarized their activities for this report.

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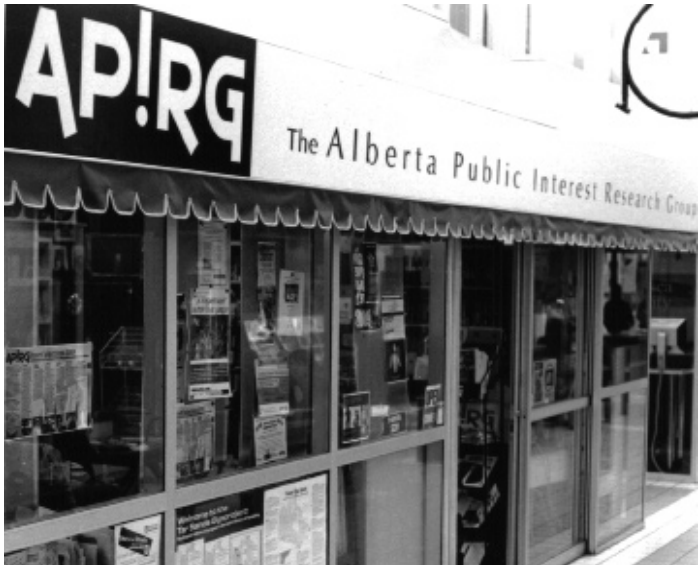
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## About APIRG

### Mission

The Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG) is a student-run, student-funded, non-profit organization dedicated to research, education, advocacy, and action in the public interest.

*APIRG exists to provide students with resources to be active citizens.*

### The Annual Report

Each year APIRG produces an annual report to highlight our successes, address our challenges, and share our stories with the community. It is intended to be a summary record of our activities over the course of the past year.



# Organizational structure

## Staff members:

*prior to September 2009*

Leah Orr, Outreach and Financial Coordinator

Ariel Bowering, Board Coordinator

Lise Wilson, Working Group Coordinator

*prior to April 2009:*

Ariel Bowering, Outreach and Board Coordinator

Lise Wilson, Working Group and Financial Coordinator

*after April 2009:*

Ariel Bowering, Office Coordinator

Lise Wilson, Working Group and Volunteer Coordinator

Jess Warren, Outreach Coordinator

## Full-year members:

Virginia Dowdell

Patrick Law

Brooke Leifso

Lee Solotki

Ian Wright

## Half-year members:

Debrah Bergin

Jackie Ferner

Ela Przybylo

Derek Warwick

Jeff Williams

## SU Representative:

Hayley Shannon

## Non-voting members:

Pete Presant

## APIRG Staff

Staff members at APIRG implement decisions made by the APIRG Board of Directors, assist volunteers and respond to the many inquiries we receive each day. They bring the skills, knowledge, institutional memory and consistency that is crucial to the effective and efficient functioning of APIRG.

APIRG staff members provide resources and support to students who are working on various projects and assignments. Staff members support student-run working groups and ensure that the granting process is equitable and transparent. Staff are also responsible for monitoring the accountability of the groups to which funding is granted.

2008-2009 was a year of change for APIRG. It marked the departure and preparation for departure of two long time staff members, Leah Orr and Lise Wilson; APIRG would like to thank these two for their long service and invaluable contributions to APIRG.

Board and staff used the opportunity presented by this time of flux to review our staffing structure. Over the course of the 2008-2009 year a restructuring committee reviewed APIRG's staffing structure and implemented changes that APIRG feels will only increase its capacity to support our members in turning their dreams and ideas into effective action. Thank you to Brooke, Virginia, Lise and Ariel for stewarding this process and to the rest of the board for its support in this important endeavour.

## Board of Directors

The APIRG Board of Directors is composed entirely of undergraduate students from the University of Alberta. Board members are in charge of overseeing all APIRG operations. Responsibilities include developing policy, setting organizational goals and priorities, reviewing funding proposals, hiring and managing staff, and assisting with community outreach and events.

With the exception of the Students' Council appointed representative, board members are elected each year in a general election that coincides with the U of A Students' Union Executive elections. In March 2009, ten students ran for nine available seats on the Board of Directors. One board member was elected in a by-election at the October Annual General Meeting.

# Statement from the Board

## 2008–2009 Board Report

The 2008-2009 APIRG board saw APIRG successfully through a time of substantial transition. With the turnover of 2/3 of APIRG staff the board focused on organizational structure and development during their term. This year was an opportunity to reflect on what APIRG had accomplished and ways in which it could take the support that it provides its membership to a new level.

As part of this process, the board supported a restructuring committee composed of board and staff members to review, revise and revamp the staffing structure. The outcome was that APIRG hired an outside bookkeeper and transformed the four existing positions into three. Our Outreach Coordinator position remains much the same while the Working Group Coordinator position has been expanded to include more volunteer coordination becoming the Working Group and Volunteer Coordinator. The Board Coordinator and Financial Coordinator positions were to some extent combined to create the Office Coordinator position with some of the Board Coordinator duties around board support being shifted to the Working Group and Volunteer Coordinator position. The board looks forward to seeing how this new structure works over the 2009-2010 year.

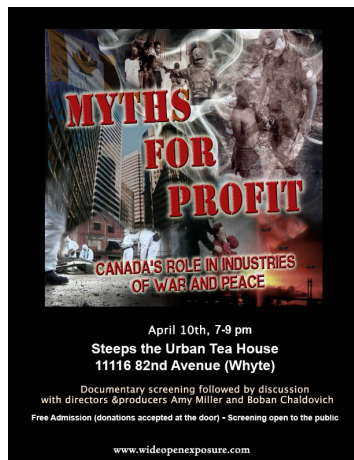
The board continued its involvement on funding committees where they reviewed funding applications from our membership as well as providing feedback and suggestions for how these processes could be further improved. Another large committee responsibility this year were the hiring committees for new staff. Board members were intimately involved in enhancing APIRG's hiring process to ensure that it recruited the most skilled staff.

While this year saw board attrition as has happened in other years, the board was still able to effectively represent APIRG's membership and on whole was a committed and dependable group. The board took the opportunity at the annual transition retreat to advise the incoming 2009-2010 board on its experience as the governing body of a not-for-profit, student-led and funded organization. The board also took the opportunity to provide suggestions for the longer term direction APIRG could take, something that has not always been possible.

APIRG provides a unique opportunity for undergraduate students at the UofA and the broader Edmonton community to build skills, share knowledge, grapple with complex issues and effect positive change in a myriad of ways. The 2008-2009 board would like to conclude by encouraging you to get involved in APIRG in whatever ways you can; whatever your passion or talent there is a need for it at APIRG.



## Highlights from 08/09



Above: Poster from “Myths for Profit”, April, 2009

### APIRG Workshop Series

APIRG focused this year on increasing capacity in groups that it supported. In this vein we hosted a monthly workshop series organized and presented by APIRG staff, Working Group members and guests. 2008-2009 workshops included:

- Stenciling and Logo Design: presented by Jay Moore
- On line collaborative communities: presented by Colin Piquette of FOLA
- Decision-Making with APIRG & SWAG: presented by Rhiannon Edwards, Kirsten Mayoh and Ariel Bowering
- Media Training: presented by Sam powers from CJSR)
- Creative Fundraising on Campus presented by Ariel Bowering (with input from Mike Gaultois of CSC)
- Recycled Holiday Cards: presented by Lise Wilson of APIRG
- Volunteer Management: presented by Lise Wilson of APIRG
- Train the Trainer: presented by Caitlin St Dennis of JHR
- Organizational Transitions: presented by Ariel Bowering of APIRG
- Avoiding Activist Burn Out: presented by Lise Wilson of APIRG
- Know Your Rights: presented by Rhiannon Edwards of SWAG
- DIY Silkscreening: presented by Ariel Bowering of APIRG

### Other Events

Once again, APIRG undertook many internal projects and events in an effort to expose U of A students to a variety of issues and causes they may not otherwise encounter. A partial list of APIRG-sponsored or supported events includes:

- September 2008 - “United in Anger: A History of The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP)” public lecture by Sarah Schulman hosted with the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and



**The Immigrant Experience in Canada:**

Karibuni is a compelling documentary that recounts the challenges of Franco-African immigrants across Canada's western provinces. Its message is powerful: immigrants encounter many difficulties when arriving in Canada, and resident Canadians can do a great deal to make the experiences of newcomers more welcoming and accepting.

Presented by  
the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations, NAARR  
www.naarr.org

Hosted by  
the Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG) and the  
African Students' Association (AFSA)  
www.apirg.org

Above: Poster from "State of Mine" launch, November, 2008

Right: Poster from "State of Mine" launch, November, 2008

Services and Exposure: Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival

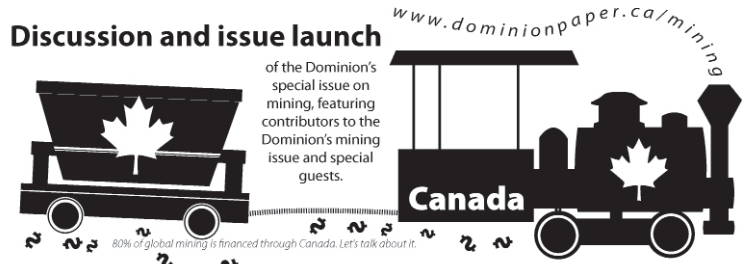
- November 2008 - "State of Mine - An investigation of Canada's extractive industries" Edmonton launch of Dominion News Cooperative magazine and editor talk

- November 2008 - "Transformative Stories: Crip and Queer Art as Activism" performance and discussion hosted with creators of "G.I.M.P. Boot Camp"

- November 2008 - "Gaping, Gawking, Staring: Living in Marked Bodies" public lecture and book signing by Eli Clare hosted with the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services and Exposure: Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival

- March 2009 - "Karibuni Documentary Screening & Workshop" presented by NAARR hosted with the African Students Association

- April 2009 - "Myths for Profit - Canada's Role in Industries of War and Peace" Edmonton film premier and director talk



**Friday, November 21st  
7:00 - 8:30 PM  
Education Building Room 106 UofA Campus**

## Project, Event and Training Fund

### Funding Objectives and Overview

In 2008/2009, \$14,500 was earmarked for the Project, Event and Training Fund. This category provides one-time funding and support to help groups and individual students to:

- Organize a speaker or speakers series with specific start and end dates.
- Organize an event or series of events with specific start and end dates.
- Undertake a project with specific start and end dates (e.g. publish a research project).
- Receive training or attend a conference if part of a larger project.



**Above:** APIRG funding and in-kind services supported "Mental Health Awareness Week," a week of events presented by Medical Students for Mental Health Awareness to present the patient's view on important mental health issues to students, 2009.



# Financial Summary

## Year end summary

2008/2009 was APIRG's seventh full year of operations on campus. We approved just under \$17,000 in direct grants to student events, activities and projects, many of which are described elsewhere in this report. APIRG funds also supported student initiatives through our publications, resource library, events and educational workshops.

As with many non-profit organizations, APIRG's biggest annual expense is staffing costs (\$92,955), which includes both salaries and benefits. These costs enable us to provide a high level of services to students and to maintain a fair, competitive, and unionized work environment.

The majority of APIRG's revenue comes from a dedicated fee collected on our behalf by the University of Alberta Students' Union. The fee was supported by a majority of students in a 2001 referendum, and amounted to \$6.12 from full-time students and \$3.04 from part-time students in 2008/2009. Any students who did not wish to pay the fee for financial or ideological reasons had the opportunity to opt out and receive a full refund. Last year less than 20 students took advantage of the opt out program despite campus-wide advertising.

In terms of other revenue, community and events revenue remained marginal because of the focus on smaller, free events rather than larger events with admission fees. APIRG also took advantage of on campus grants more so than in years past.

APIRG began the year projecting a small deficit. Due to a lower than usual number of funding applications, frugal spending and a focus on low cost training events we finished the fiscal year with an excess of revenue over expenditures of \$17,744 which will flow into our cumulative unrestricted balance.

As required by our agreement with the Students' Union to have our financial statements audited annually, APIRG had the financial

statements audited by Doyle & Company chartered accounting firm. The 2008/2009 audit verified that our financial statements (presented in this report in their entirety) are in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

If you have any questions about APIRG's finances that go beyond the scope of this report, you are welcome to make an appointment with APIRG's Office Coordinator. Our books are open to the public and we welcome your feedback about our spending priorities. We are accountable to you!

*For more information, please see the complete audited financial statements found in the appendix section of the annual report.*

– Ariel Bowering, Office Coordinator



## Working groups

### What are working groups?

*Working Groups (WGs) are collectives of student and community members who work together on an issue. WGs may focus on research, events, actions, publications, and other diverse activities. They tend to have long-term goals with activities and membership that continue beyond the current academic year. WGs are required to hold regular meetings and must maintain a membership that includes U of A undergrads.*

### Working Group Coordinator Report

Our focus at APIRG over the 08- 09 year has been to foster Working Groups and other members to hone their leadership and organizational skills. We offered a monthly workshop series geared specifically toward supporting aspects of groups' needs that have been perceived as relevant and/or requested by groups and individuals over the years. Building capacity is as important to us as providing our groups with free buttons, events listings and photocopying! This year our board members got on board with the funding round subcommittee three times! Other exciting news includes the restructuring of the Working Group Coordinator position to include more general Volunteer Management and APIRG Board support. The Working Group Coordinator will hand over many administrative tasks to the Office Coord and take on more Volunteer Management tasks and have time freed up for further creativity and availability to attend WG meetings, events and offer more one- on- one support.

The year-end wrap-up included hiring a new Working Group & Volunteer Coordinator to replace our long-time staff person (Lise Wilson) who is moving out of the country. Other successes for this year include; two new working groups, greater overall communication with working groups, regular presence of working group members in the APIRG office, and steady use of our support and services, bringing our skilled working group members on board as facilitators of workshops offered by APIRG, and the witnessing of the many successes of working groups that have been on board for a number of years!

### Challenges

Some challenges seem to be perpetual while others develop as a result of changing technologies and social trends. As with past years, recruiting and retention of new members remained a challenge for many groups.

A somewhat new issue was around increased use of online communication technologies. Working Groups made greater use of list-serves, web space, social networking tools and other technologies. Finding improved ways to provide



**Above:** APIRG Working Group Campus Sustainability Coalition has been undertaking an ongoing pilot project in partnership with the UofA called Deliberative Democracy on Climate Change, 2009.

### Comments from Working Groups

“Once again, the support of the APIRG office has been instrumental in our huge undertakings this past year. We have used the APIRG office for meeting space, mail delivery, storage, photocopying, and button-making. We have taken advantage of at least two APIRG tabling opportunities, and we attended the “How to be an APIRG Ambassador” meeting that was useful in learning more about the CSC’s role as an APIRG working group, and also about how the CSC’s central tenet to be a hub for other groups on campus can result in mutually beneficial working relationships for all parties involved. ”

### – Campus Sustainability Coalition

“We wholly appreciate the support we received from the friendly APIRG staff. The Working Group Coordinator, Lise Wilson, was helpful and supportive as usual. SWAG will miss her! We are also grateful for the flexibility demonstrated by the Board in accommodating our changing funding needs. As well, we have made ample use of APIRG’s photocopying services for our Know Your Rights booklet as well as other informational pamphlets, and we appreciate having this type of access.”

### – Student Worker Action Group

e-services that were sustainable for APIRG and user friendly and accessible to Working Group members presented a learning opportunity as APIRG strove to improve, amongst other things, email lists, event listings and visibility on our website.

Further, APIRG initiated use of interactive PDFs for group reports that had some kinks to be worked out. The final notable challenge for the year was the ability of APIRG staff or board members to attend all Working Group events.

## Goals for 2009/2010

- Address challenges by fine tuning our access to support and services processes
- Offer more training and workshops for groups, especially in response to requests
- Provide Working Groups with more support to access CSL as community partners and support with writing grant proposals and applications for this program
- Support Working Groups in their quest for other sources of funding
- Continue to support working groups with promotion, recruiting and retention, finding creative ways to outreach online, on campus and in related communities
- Promote Working Group members as ambassadors for APIRG
- Raise general student awareness on campus about our Working Groups through campus tour, Week of Welcome, CJSR spots, classroom talks, etc.
- Continue to assist networking and collaborations between Working Groups and other like-minded campus and community organizations
- Continue to provide the funding, support and services that keep our Working Groups functioning at optimal levels



## Active Working Group Year End Report Summaries - A Selection of 2008–2009

### Active Working Groups in 2008-2009

- Active Citizens Television (ACTV)
- Campus Sustainability Coalition (CSC)
- Friends of the Lubicon Alberta (FOLA)
- Journalists for Human Rights (JHR)
- Legal Activist Collective (LAC)
- The Olive Reading Series
- Student Worker Action Group (SWAG)
- Transit Riders' Union of Edmonton (TRUE)
- U of A Council of Canadians
- U of A Women's Centre Collective

### New Groups in 2008-2009

- Greenpeace on Campus (January 2009)
- SparkEd (January 2009)

### Groups that Dissolved in 2008-2009

- Campus Community Garden (now a collaboration)
- Campus Community for Public Healthcare (CCPH)

### Campus Sustainability Coalition

[www.csc.ualberta.ca](http://www.csc.ualberta.ca)

Our mission is to transform the University of Alberta into a participating member of a sustainable society. Through a partnership among students, faculty, staff, and community members, we are promoting excellence and leadership in education, innovation, and stewardship to achieve economic, social, and environmental sustainability to ensure the health and well-being of present and future generations, both locally and globally. Only by achieving sustainable operations and teachings will the University of Alberta become a world leader and model of a global citizen.

#### *Vision Statement*

Within one generation of 2008, the University of Alberta will have achieved an environmentally benign culture of management and teaching while leading the globe in research that not only advances the sciences but answers important questions to drive the realization of a sustainable society.

*Successes* We have played an integral part in the establishment of an Office of Sustainability here at the U of A, and we are proud that one of our founding members, Dr. Colin Soskolne, has been appointed as Academic Coordinator in the Office. We have successfully completed the Paper Cut pilot project at the School of Public Health, and have received much positive feedback from the administrations involved. One example was a recent email from the John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre regarding their successful switch to sustainable paper types and actions. We have successfully

obtained funding support for a number of our projects. We have begun taking on Community Service Learning (CSL) students. We have developed some strong working relationships with many other groups on campus. We began holding near-monthly CSC general meetings, to which all members were invited.

### Friends of the Lubicon Alberta (FOLA)

[www.fola.ecope.ca](http://www.fola.ecope.ca)

In the 2008-2009 year Friends of the Lubicon Alberta continued to educate students and the wider public about the plight of the Lubicon and support the Lubicon in actions to defend their right to self-determination. Our work with other organizations has substantially increased, which is both instrumental in education of more people about the Lubicon and in putting more and more pressure on the federal government to resolve the land claim dispute and the provincial government to stop the interim exploitation of Lubicon resources that is causing substantial detriment to the Lubicon community.

*Activity highlights* In June/July 2008 FOLA assisted Amnesty International in shooting its documentary of the Lubicon Lake Nation. The film is entitled "Our Land, My People: The Struggle of the Lubicon Cree." Copies of the documentary are available in the APIRG resource library.

Fall 2008 was a quiet time, yet productive, time for FOLA, as we only had a very few active members. During this time the website was redone to make it more user friendly. Forum was also re-created to be able to facilitate more users, and we Upped the level of collaboration with other organizations, both within Canada and in Europe.

*Successes* January – March 2009 was a time of active and successful member recruitment, ongoing tabling/public education, weekly meetings, new-member training, and screenings of the new Amnesty documentary. In total we screened the Lubicon documentary 4 times on campus (screenings always included discussion and Q&A). The largest of these events was in mid-January and had over 40 people in attendance. FOLA also organized and held screenings for other audiences off campus. One event was a lunch-time presentation on the Lubicon for the Alberta Federation of labour at their Human Rights Conference. Another event was in coordination with World Water Week organized by the Council of Canadians – Edmonton branch. FOLA helped with the planning of this week as well.

## Greenpeace on Campus

Greenpeace on Campus is made up of a coalition of environmentalists and humanitarians. The purpose of our group is to share information, facilitate discussion, and build support about Greenpeace initiatives on campus, and in local and global settings. Our goal is to support the development of an engaged and knowledgeable student community by offering information and opportunities to help students become active and informed about environmental issues in our community, region, nation, and globe.

*Activity Highlights* The group organized movie screenings, lectures, and advocacy weeks spread information and informed students about issues concerning the environment and human rights. Our goal was to give students the information needed to help them become more engaged, so we used these events to inform students and inspire them to become more involved. Training/Action camps gave people the skills, knowledge, and training needed to tackle environmental issues in Alberta. Tabling was used to increase volunteer support and engage students in becoming and active and informed citizens. All of our events were successful, because we saw any attendance as progress as our groups mandate is to educate students. Our monthly group meetings were informal which helped make it less intimidating for students to come out. The executive team worked really well together and we were good at distributing the workload and we were effective at communicating. We used the button maker for some of our events.

*Challenges* In order to maintain our health and optimal activity, we need to acquire more committed and active volunteers. We would like help with developing campaign strategies and with knowledge concerning volunteer management.

*Future Plans* We want to have a concrete game plan and thought out campaigns by this upcoming September, and we want to distribute tasks/workload more effectively to our volunteers. Also we want to increase communication with APIRG, Greenpeace Alberta, and Student Group Services. We want to developing stronger relationships with the connections we made this year in the Edmonton activist community and we hope to strategize more at the end of this year with APIRG, concerning our direction for next year

## Legal Activist Collective

[www.apirg.org/wg/lac.php](http://www.apirg.org/wg/lac.php)

This organization is a resource for student and community based research, education and social activism. They provide administrative, informational and technological resources to

assist groups to transform social concern into effective action. The goal of LAC is to engage people in the discussion of our Western Justice system and offer thoughtful counter voices. I think that this was accomplished this year.

*Successes* This was an exciting year for LAC. We started immediately with Clubs Fair the second week of the academic year and finished at the end of March. There were 30 plus people who were interested in our group's activities. The first meeting saw 10 people express interest in organizing the year's events. This group remained constant throughout the year, which can be seen as an improvement from last year. Last year there were only four key organizers.

*Activity Highlights* There were three events in the fall and two in the winter that we organized for law students and the community. In conjunction with the Environmental Law Students Association, Linda Duncan came to speak about governance related to environmental issues and the ways to strengthen enforcement of current legislation. In addition, four candidates from four political parties representing four different Edmonton area ridings answered questions from students in advance of Election Day.

Two panel discussions were hosted in the winter term. In January, the topic was national security laws and their impact on the civil rights of Canadians. The topic was addressed from both the perspective of the judiciary and a legal practitioner. In February, the topic was how to be a feminist and a lawyer.

*Challenges* We were hoping to have co-sponsored two events with other organizations in March, both were cancelled by the sponsoring organizations. One was a conference dealing with mental health issues and the law.

## The Olive

[www.apirg.org/wg/olive.php](http://www.apirg.org/wg/olive.php)

The Olive Reading Series provides a much-appreciated venue for poetry in Edmonton, functioning as a staple of Edmonton's cultural milieu. It has been in existence for seven years on the second Tuesday of every month for an evening of intense poetry, politics and discussion. From its inception, the Olive Reading Series has come to be recognized as a unique and stimulating venue by both new and experienced poets at which to present work. The Olive's primary focus is to conduct a reading series that unites undergrads, grads, faculty, poets and non-poets from the community in an atmosphere of artistic expression and community-building. To help develop this goal, the Olive regularly welcomes in participants from the University of Alberta, as well as readers

from Edmonton and surrounding areas, to present, listen to, and celebrate poetry. We invite experienced and new poets in to present readings of their work, and we provide a valuable safe reading environment for emerging writers. It provides a non-judgmental and non-discriminatory means of becoming involved in Edmonton's thriving poetry scene.

#### *Activity Highlights*

We saw a huge increase in awareness of The Olive's poetry events. We had full houses for many of our events, with increased participation in our Open Mic from new writers and students. We found that more and more people were interested in coming out and seeing how The Olive's guest readers use their work as a means to engage with political, economic, environmental and social issues in today's society.

#### *Future Plans*

The Olive Reading Series is not active over the summer (we are connected to the U of A, so we follow the U of A's schedule). In terms of next year, we already have a fantastic lineup of poets booked from across Canada; some really engaging performers who will do a superb job of presenting a variety of current issues to attentive audiences.

We're continuing to streamline the way in which we deal with our finances (one financial person, one bank card) to make it easier for both The Olive's financial contact and for APIRG itself when reviewing our year-end report. This year's adjustments were a great step in that direction, and we plan to continue applying those skills in the future.

## **SparkEd**

We believe that a key source of progress on issues of social and environmental justice is the engagement of adolescent community members - particularly those in at-risk or inner-city schools, which do not always have adequate tools and resources to integrate these issues into educational frameworks. Junior High is a critical time in the development of students as active, socially minded citizens. These three years are when many students first become aware of, and curious about, the issues faced by their local communities, and by the world. We believe that it is critical that this curiosity be developed, and that students are taught not only about the scope and background of these issues, but also about what they can do about them. SparkEd is an alternative Junior High School leadership program focusing on experiential education (learning by doing) in two main pillars. The first is issue education (educating oneself and others about issues of social and environmental justice, through the preparation of presentations on these issues for

classmates and/or the school at large). The second is active education (gaining the tools and skills to organize around these issues at the grassroots level, through the organization and execution of projects that actively involve students in their communities). The use of University of Alberta students as the facilitators of these programs help to facilitate connections meaningful and long-lasting connections between the U of A campus community, and interested student members of the community.

*Activity Highlights* Currently, SparkEd is run as a component of leadership classes in five at-risk and inner-city junior high schools in the Edmonton area. The group's main objective was to run the SparkEducation alternative leadership program, with programs throughout September of 2008 until April of 2009.

*Successes* Two bottle drives (one organized in October 2008 and the other in March 2009) helped our group to cover immediate costs and achieve long-term financial solvency. Recruitment of volunteer mentors to run the programs took place throughout the year, with particular emphasis in September and January/February. A year-end volunteer appreciation party in April rewarded our volunteers. We witnessed increased youth education about social issues; increased youth awareness of the appropriate tools for self-education about, and the initiation of action on, these issues and an increased 'footprint' of inner-city youth in their communities using hands on experience to make a positive difference.

This being our first operational year, there were obviously many learning experiences, but the curriculum and administrative structure set up to run the program largely held up to the task. The summer will be spent making refinements, so that when the new executive takes over in September, the overall health of the group will have increased even more.

## **SWAG**

[www.swag.apirg.org](http://www.swag.apirg.org)

SWAG is a working group supported by the Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG) that organizes around issues that affect students and workers alike. SWAG seeks to foster a culture and practice of student-worker solidarity on the University of Alberta campus. We organize students as workers, not as students. After all, even those students that don't work to put themselves through school are still workers in training. Students have much more in common with most workers, especially those that work at the UofA, than most may like to think.

*Challenges* After a year of ambitious plans and making some progress, SWAG fell seriously short on our recruitment goals. Nevertheless, we pulled together a few important events

#### *Activity Highlights*

**Know Your Rights campaign and Booklet** – In the summer of 2008 we got help from Kirsten Mayoh and Black Cat Press to reformat and print more copies of our successful Know Your Rights booklet. We have started distributing the booklet and hope to circulate even more.

**Workshops** – The hard work we put in during the Winter 2008 semester in putting together Know Your Rights workshops paid off this year. We are now able to offer on-demand, flexible workshops focused on labour rights, based primarily in the Alberta Employment Standards Code, as well as on tenants' rights.

**Films for the Student Worker** - We presented a film and facilitated a discussion every second Monday of the Fall semester at the International Centre.

**Sex Trade Workers Unite!** – In cooperation with the Women's Committee of the Edmonton IWW, we hosted an event as part of the Edmonton May Week Labour Arts Festival. Called "One Big Union For ALL Workers," the event was an opportunity to engage in discussion over the need for and polemics surrounding self-organization of workers in the sex industry. We hosted Maxine Doogan, founder and president of the Erotic Service Providers Union (ESPU) of San Francisco, who delivered a rousing presentation and engaged in a stimulating question and answer session.

**SWAG's website** - We appreciate having our own domain, and feel this is very important for our group. Last year we transformed the former, bulky format into one much more streamlined and easy for us to update by ourselves. We occasionally receive comments and questions from individuals and student groups around North America who are impressed by our site.

*Future Plans* Though our membership has seriously dwindled as members graduate and move away and recruitment efforts have yet to yield many results, SWAG is not ready to give up without a fight. We will continue to work towards the long-term continuation of our Working Group, aiming to leave a lasting mark on the consciousness of students at the University of Alberta. Summer and Fall plans include: Know Your Rights booklet: 2nd Edition. We plan to update and put out a new edition of the booklet (printed by Black Cat Press) in time for the Fall 2009 semester.

## **Transit Riders' Union of Edmonton**

[www.true.apirg.org](http://www.true.apirg.org)

"Be a part of the solution – We need your voice!"  
The Transit Riders' Union of Edmonton (TRUE) was established in April of 2007. Our mission is for citizens, especially those dependent on public transportation, to get involved by sharing their ideas so that we can all develop a serviceable transit system for everyone. TRUE is currently formed of ETS and DATS riders who are researching and developing strategies to improve the quality of public transit in Edmonton, AB. TRUE wishes to champion an effective movement and provide a unified voice for efficient affordable public transit. We have been making a difference simply by providing public transportation users in this city with the opportunity to express their concerns and articulate their unique experiences.

*Activity Highlights* Include: Documentary Project (May / June 2008) ~ currently in post-production ~, Late Night Transit Campaign (June 10, 2008 – Presentation to TPW Committee), Canadian Urban Transit Association Youth Summit: August 21-25, 2008 (Vancouver), Transit Challenge: Nov 17-23, 2008, Transit Challenge Wrap-up (CBC) November 24, 2008, Metro Edmonton In Transit column (Mondays, Promotional PowerPoint, TRUE Late Night Update presentation: Feb 2, 2009, Youth Environmental Professionals presentation: April 8, 2009, Meeting with Transportation Manager Bob Boutilier: April 9, 2009, Edmonton Earth Day: April 26, 2009.

*Successes* Include witnessing an increased knowledge on the shortfalls of transit in Edmonton, increased knowledge of terminology related to transit planning field, for instance, bikeability, walkability, multi-modal, corridor, etc., the acquisition of presentation skills pertaining to transit initiatives on a local, provincial, and federal level, and access to a variety of resourced offered to transit riders and advocated alike. IN terms of APIRG resources, we accessed the computers, fax, copier, printer, cutter, button-maker and regular meeting space at the office, and we attended the Transition workshop

*Challenges* Encouraging people to be self starters and allowing people to create their own initiative. This seemed overwhelming due to a lack of skills. As a result we have decided to have a proposal-like outline document to details the goals and responsibilities of new opportunities which come up. Currently there are two such examples: Experience

Report Captain and Shadow Report Captain; the latter details the history of the report as used by our group. The group needs more volunteers to tackle projects. The group needs more directors to lead projects-our student base has diminished over the year and as such it may be necessary to seek other more appropriate funding opportunities in the fall. Our group needs more recruitment support beyond sending out notices on mail lists

*Future Plans* Complete editing of Documentary Project. Recruit and train new members. Create a Second edition of Shadow Report on Growth Strategy. The group's mandate has not changed, however, we have become more aware of transit movements on a global level. We realize the necessity in promoting public transit use simultaneously while discouraging auto dependence. Future projects may encompass elements pertaining to the two above points

## U of A Council of Canadians

[www.uofacoc.ca](http://www.uofacoc.ca)

The mandate of the group is to promote Canadian Sovereignty in reaction to pressures to integrate with the United States and a move towards globalization; to reclaim a local and global commons and to create a civil society movement including participatory democracy. We believe that a local and global commons refers to a community either local or global in nature in which resources and other measures essential to a dignified human life are held, in common, as unassailable rights. Our goals are: to promote awareness of issues of general, historical and current natures relating to, or in pursuance of our mandate, and to represent the Council of Canadians to the student body, and through creative means, engage students and the general public with their communities, governments, and current affairs.

*Successes* All the year's activities provided much needed exposure, media coverage and networking on issues of climate change, refugees, and water issues. We collaborated with Greenpeace on Campus to facilitate more attendance at events. We witness increased awareness and public participation on water issues as well as media coverage of issues. We have a limited number of active members, but we're continuing to engage new people in discussion and awareness of the group. Water week especially brought us a lot of good exposure. The group has moved from a research base to a direct action focus. This is due to the new members and executives.

*Future plans* Continuing the strategic alliance with Greenpeace and the co-organizing on Tar Sands awareness. Forming a Water Action group to provide awareness about

water issues in Alberta. The Council of Canadians on Campus has plans to organize activities that will draw attention of the University community and Greater Edmonton Community to several serious issues including the implementation of the TILMA agreement between Alberta and BC, the destruction the Alberta Tar sands are causing in Northern Alberta, as well as their serious contribution to climate change and releasing of toxins into the local environment.

## The University Of Alberta Women's Centre

[www.ualberta.ca/~uawcc/](http://www.ualberta.ca/~uawcc/)

Location: SUB 4-16

The Women's Centre is dedicated to the goal of reasserting its' position on campus as a safe and constructive space for activism, learning and community building. The Centre believes that the best way to do this is through outreach, so that volunteers and students on campus become aware of the resources and information the Women's Centre offers. In order to increase the awareness of the Women's Centre, we hope to use the resources APIRG can offer to advertise through mediums such as posters, and the Event/Volunteer list serve. We plan to hold monthly meetings for women across campus, which may require organizational support. Also, we hope to hold a thematic event each semester, in order to commemorate the Montreal Massacre in December and raise awareness of Women's Day in March. In this case, we may need funding to facilitate these events. Overall, the Women's Centre stresses the importance that this year is about gaining awareness and volunteer participation.

### Activity Highlights

September: campaign against re-election of Stephen Harper  
October: Pro-choice rally against Life chain  
November: pro-choice postcard project (CSL student project)  
February: centre open house  
March: FACC speaker night, joint event with the Health Promotion Graduate Students' Association + Feminist poetry jam at Remedy Café  
April: Volunteer appreciation dinner  
Winter semester: menstrual pad making workshops to create reusable pads, joint project with Students International Health Association who will be taking the pads to distribute them in Tanzania

*Successes* We have had so many new volunteers who didn't know that the Women's Centre existed but were really happy to find a feminist organization on campus. We also made lots of contacts in the Edmonton community, for example the Traveling Tickle Trunk, SIHA, the Health Promotion Graduate Students Association, Dinah Bear. A new pro-choice group, Voices for Choices, was recently formed and we provided support to them as well. We feel that this is a good start for our big project next year of doing a referendum and getting the centre financial independence.

# Appendix

Complete Financial Statements

Footnotes

**Alberta Public Interest Research Group**  
**Financial Statements**  
**April 30, 2009**

# Alberta Public Interest Research Group

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## AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Members of the  
**Alberta Public Interest Research Group**

We have audited the statement of financial position of Alberta Public Interest Research Group as at April 30, 2009, and the statements of change in net assets, operations and cash flow for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In common with many not-for-profit organizations, Alberta Public Interest Research Group derives revenue from other sources, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our verification was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the Alberta Public Interest Research Group and we were not able to determine whether adjustments might be necessary to current assets, net assets, revenues and excess of revenue over expenditures.

In our opinion, the statements of change in net assets and operations present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the society as at April 30, 2009 and the results of operations of the company for the year then ended, in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

August 5, 2009  
Edmonton, Alberta

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doyle &amp; Company".

Chartered Accountants

## Alberta Public Interest Research Group

### Statement of Financial Position

As at April 30, 2009

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
<b>Financial Assets</b>		
Cash	118,163	102,328
Investments (Note 3)	53,573	52,276
Accounts receivable	540	3,516
Prepaid expenses	5,895	1,865
	<b>178,171</b>	<b>159,985</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	8,343	7,901
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted net assets	157,281	143,265
Internally restricted net assets	12,547	8,819
	<b>169,828</b>	<b>152,084</b>
	<b>178,171</b>	<b>159,985</b>

**Approved by the Board of Directors:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Director

\_\_\_\_\_ Director

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## Alberta Public Interest Research Group

### Statement of Change in Net Assets

For the year ended April 30, 2009

	Internally Restricted	Unrestricted	2009	2008
	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Balance, beginning of year</b>	<b>8,819</b>	<b>143,265</b>	<b>152,084</b>	141,406
Excess of revenue over expenditures	-	17,744	17,744	10,678
Funds committed during the year	16,907	(16,907)	-	-
Funds paid out during the year	(10,859)	10,859	-	-
Inter fund transfer	(2,320)	2,320	-	-
<b>Balance, end of year</b>	<b>12,547</b>	<b>157,281</b>	<b>169,828</b>	152,084

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

# Alberta Public Interest Research Group

## Statement of Operations

For the year ended April 30, 2009

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Student fees	160,484	156,594
Community and events revenue	6,156	283
Interest revenue	1,459	1,281
Office and retail revenue	973	1,367
Grants	2,328	-
Other revenue	1,761	2,042
	<b>173,161</b>	<b>161,567</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Board expenses	2,018	1,717
Contract work and honoraria	5,307	1,459
Direct grants	9,395	27,406
Elections	1,622	2,072
Insurance	2,441	1,000
Library	273	555
Office	10,447	13,514
Professional fees	7,273	5,414
Programming	6,322	2,198
Promotion and outreach	3,222	4,654
Rent	11,331	7,618
Telecommunications	2,811	2,405
Wages and employee benefits	92,955	80,877
	<b>155,417</b>	<b>150,889</b>
<b>Excess of Revenue over Expenditures</b>	<b>17,744</b>	<b>10,678</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## Alberta Public Interest Research Group

### Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended April 30, 2009

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
<b>Operating Activities</b>		
Cash received from funding agencies and other income	176,137	159,852
Cash paid to suppliers and employees	(159,005)	(148,018)
	17,132	11,834
<b>Investing Activities</b>		
Increase in investments	(1,297)	(1,129)
<b>Increase (Decrease) in Cash During the Year</b>	15,835	10,705
<b>CASH - Beginning of year</b>	102,328	91,623
<b>CASH - End of year</b>	118,163	102,328

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

# Alberta Public Interest Research Group

## Notes to the Financial Statements

April 30, 2009

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### 1. Purpose of the Organization

Alberta Public Interest Research Group (Group) is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act. The Alberta Public Research Interest Group supports work on public interest issues through research, education, and action initiatives of the students of the University of Alberta as well as those of the greater University and the Alberta communities.

### 2. Significant Accounting Policies

#### (a) Fund Accounting

The board has approved an Inter-Disbursement Fund Policy to maintain a sustainable organization. This fund is used to pay the operating expenses of the organization from the start of the fiscal year (May 1) until the funding from the University of Alberta Students' Union is received in October.

The board also internally restricts funds for conferences and training, projects and events, and a working group fund.

- (i) The conference and training fund provides one-time funding and support to help students attend conferences or training sessions. The funds may cover registration or transportation costs.
- (ii) The project and event fund provides one-time funding and support to help groups and individual students to organize events or undertake a project.
- (iii) The working group fund provides funding and resources to a wide variety of working groups that are focusing on local and global issues.

#### (b) Capital Assets

Capital assets are recorded as expenditures in the period they are acquired. Capital assets are reported at cost except for donated assets, which are reported at estimated fair value when acquired. No amortization is recorded because the capital assets are expensed in the period acquired.

#### (c) Revenue Recognition

Alberta Public Interest Research Group follows the deferral method of accounting for revenue. Restricted revenues are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted revenues are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

#### (d) Financial Instruments

The financial instruments of Alberta Public Interest Research Group consist of cash, investments, accounts receivable, and accounts payable. Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the Group is not exposed to significant interest or foreign currency risks arising from these financial instruments. The fair value of these financial instruments approximates their carrying values, unless otherwise noted.

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The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## Alberta Public Interest Research Group

### Notes to the Financial Statements

April 30, 2009

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**2. Significant Accounting Policies - continued**

**(e) Measurement Uncertainty**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

**(f) Donated Services**

The Alberta Public Interest Research Group benefits greatly from donated services in the form of volunteer work for various activities. The value of donated services is not recognized in these financial statements because of the difficulty of measurement.

**3. Investments**

Investments represent Canadian Term Deposits purchased at cost from Servus Credit Union with a maturity date of October 13, 2009 and annual interest rate range of 0.00% to 2.30%.

**4. Library**

The Group operates an in-house library that has books, periodicals, cassette tapes, VHS tapes, DVDs, and CD's available for members. These items may be borrowed from the library for a certain period of time.

Library materials have been expensed in the year purchased over the years which is consistent with their policy.

## Notes



## Notes

### Volunteer at APIRG!

We at APIRG would like to thank all our volunteers for their dedication and hard work during the 2008–2009 year.

APIRG and its working groups are always looking for new volunteers and participants. Many positions are available for people of all backgrounds and experiences. Whether you have hours or a few minutes a week, APIRG has opportunities for you. We're always looking for help with:

- Board participation
- University and community outreach
- Staffing the APIRG resource centre
- APIRG office support
- Media and technical support
- Arts and graphics support
- Skill sharing

Let us know what drives your passions!

Phone 780.492.0614 or email [apirg@ualberta.ca](mailto:apirg@ualberta.ca).

