Promoting collaborative dispute resolution

AMS Ombuds Office
Annual Report to Council

2014 — 2015
Role of the Ombudsperson

- **Main Role**
  - Receive, address, and investigate complaints related to the Alma Mater Society
    - This may be related to any of the society’s clubs, resource groups, constituencies, services, businesses, staff, executive, and council

- **Other Roles**
  - Mediation & Conflict Management
  - Confidant
  - Information
  - Resources
Values & Ethics

- Core values of the AMS
  - Honesty, Effectiveness, Accountability, Respect, and Teamwork

- IOA Code of Ethics
  - Independence
  - Neutrality & Impartiality
  - Confidentiality
  - Informality
Data Comparison
Visitors to the AMS Ombuds Office

![Bar chart showing visitor numbers for each month from June to May for 2014/15 and 2013/14.]
Personal reflections

**Good**
- Helping people
- Feels good to provide information, make someone’s day, etc.
- Working with passionate student leaders
- Feeling motivated by awesome coworkers, visitors to the office, etc.

**Bad**
- Stressful job
- Overworked during BDS
- Communication with external groups was not cohesive
- Hard to provide bad news
- No one to debrief with on a regular basis
- Feeling outnumbered/intimidated at times
Cases this year

- Major cases/issues
  - Student Court
  - BDS
  - Opting in/out of AMS Student Fees
  - Relationships between constituents and their constituencies
    - HR Practices
    - Active Listening Skills Workshops
  - Constituency Fee Referendums
    - VSEUS
    - KUS
- Other:
  - Voter Media
  - Wrestling Club
  - Expulsion from SUB Case
Student Court?

- A few student inquiries in October/November
  - Does it exist?
  - How do we get a case heard in court?

Recommendations:

- Governance review is vital
  - Takes a long time to mobilize
  - Hard to fill positions
Boycott Divestment Sanctions

- Definition of neutrality from the Ombuds perspective:
  - Key ethical principal
  - Even-handed treatment of all visitors
  - No personal interest in the outcome of a situation
  - No favoritism
  - Strive to be fair and objective

- Follow the governing documents of the society

- March 4th council meeting
  - Recommended a ‘no’ to the wording of the question because it was not a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question because it contained an answer in and of itself
AMS Student Fees

- 2 Groups:
  - 65+ category of students
  - AMS Members who want to OPT OUT of particular fees

- Recommendations:
  - Better communication between AMS/UBC, more up to date information, make opt out/in process fully online, training
Constituent/Constituency Relations

- Sometimes misunderstandings on both sides...it happens!
- Situations get out of hand
  - Rumors
  - Defamation

- Recommendations:
  - Active Listening Workshops
  - Ask questions early on
  - Mediation
    - AN OMBUDSPERSON CAN HELP!! 😊
Fee Referendums

- A governance review of this is VITAL!

- VSEUS
  - Long process

- KUS
  - KUS/MYM coordinator has good intentions and has dedicated years towards finding a ‘hub’ for KIN students
  - Small constituency, sometimes feels intimidated
  - Misinformation, misguidance
  - Out of control, malicious, defamatory media/blogging
    - Attacking the people and not the main issues involved!
Other

Voter Media

Need for clearer code

- Identity of the Editor: make it more explicit that their identity is not necessarily confidential
- Ethics: Expand on what defines libel, and what kinds of posts are offensive or a violation of personal privacy
  - Perhaps include that their posts must adhere to the Respectful Environment policy in order to participate in voter media
New Ombudsperson...hopefully soon!
The end