



Executive Committee
2015/2016

AMS Council Cohesion

1 INTRODUCTION

This proposal has been drafted by the Executive Committee of the AMS Student Society of UBC Vancouver in effort to optimize the effect, visibility, and functioning of this Society's Board of Directors aka AMS Council, with respect to the operations and work of the Society in general. In this proposal, we will target the various aspects of Council's role within the Society, the target outcomes that we hope to achieve with Council in the coming year, and the specific steps we will employ to operationalize on those target outcomes.

1.1 BACKGROUND

AMS Council is the highest form of representation for the approximately 51,000 students¹ who attend UBC Vancouver. Councilors who sit on this board volunteer their time for the betterment of the student body. In a larger sense, Council is the highest decision making body in the AMS. The productivity of this Council varies with different operational attitudes. Since this body plays a key role in student representation and student life, it is imperative that it remain an effective representation of the student body. There are a number of ways this can be accomplished and/or maintained, and they have been outlined in further sections of this proposal.

Additionally, this Council plays a large role in efficient organization development for the Society. Its work affects the structure of the Society, which in turn, affects the work of Council. Historically, Council has existed as the cornerstone of the Society, in the 100 years of its operation. It has always been comprised of representatives who have been duly elected by different sections of the UBC Vancouver student body.

1.2 VALUE

Why do we talk about cohesion? And, why is cohesion important for all of these elements? The answer is simple: If Council is segmented, it is less able to advocate for the various sections of the student body. Furthermore, projects brought forward to Council do not make progress. Often, this affects the work and function of different parts of the Society, thereby compromising on the service and experience we provide to our students.

2 TARGET OUTCOMES

In order to move forward with the items that have been set out in this proposal, we recommend the following target outcomes:

- AMS Council should implement a 4 hour maximum meeting time.

¹ Headcount as of November 1st, reported by UBC Planning and Institutional Research (PAIR). <http://www.pair.ubc.ca/statistics/profile/UBCV%20factsheet.pdf>

- Reports to Council should be submitted online, prior to the meeting, leaving time for questions during the actual meeting.
- Councilors should be well informed during the project proposal process.
- Council should be supporting the initiatives of the different constituencies that represent the student body.
- Through this process we aim to empower councilors and show them greater appreciation for their service to the student body.
- There should be enhanced engagement with students-at-large.
- There should be improved Council ownership of the Society.
- And, with respect to the campus community, there needs to be increased councilor visibility/profile.

3 ACTION ITEMS

In order to achieve the outcomes that have been mentioned above, we believe that the following action items be employed:

3.1 MEETINGS

- The immediate reactivation and deployment of the eScribe boardroom software system.
- The creation of an online reporting system and the setting out of expectations to follow such procedure to optimize Council's efficiency.
- The consultation of Council on *all* big projects/initiatives/changes progressing through the following steps:
 1. Initial Council consultation;
 2. Referral and consultation to the relevant committee;
 3. Final Council presentation and approval.
- Regular briefings from the AMS Secretariat.
- Regulation for the proper usage of the Omnibus voting style.
- The proper employment of the role of Agenda Committee with respect to setting the agenda for the meetings of Council.
- The establishment of an email voting system for specific motions and/or items.

3.2 COUNCIL EMPOWERMENT

- The development of a Council mentorship program for new councilors.
- An overhaul of the Council handbook provided to councilors.
- A website feature specifically dedicated to Council.
- Improved professional development events:
 - The annual Student Union Development Summit (SUDS).
 - The assignment of point persons from the executive to the different constituencies.
- The establishment of a "Councilor of the Month" program.
- Specific perks allocated to members of AMS Council.
- The establishment of an "AMS Monthly Update" vlog series.

3.3 ENHANCED MEMBER-AT-LARGE ENGAGEMENT

- As always with the AMS, Members-At-Large will be welcome to participate in the various committees of Council that are open to them
- Such members are also welcome to be a part of the AMS culture by attending the regular meetings of Council, its committees, or by visiting the offices of the members of the Executive.
- In order to further enhance the visibility of these available opportunities, there will be a more persistent and broader effort to advertise these resources in the channels that the AMS uses (i.e social media, signage, ads, etc)

4 TIMELINE

We envision the above the action items taking place throughout the timeline mentioned below. Some of the items addressed above are placed in the timeline below. Below, the timeline outlines the general tone and theme of the period being described. Barring the few items mentioned, no specific actions items have been assigned to a time in order to provide more flexibility in the implementation of this proposal:

4.1 SUMMER

Summer provides a great time for the AMS to lay out the plans for the oncoming year with respect to Councilor training, committee logistics, fall planning etc. Like other parts of the Society, the Executive and Council will work together during this period to set the tone and adjust to Council's "style" for the rest of the year, with the aim to make meetings more expeditious, productive, informative, and generally appealing for member's to participate in. This effort will start with Council retreat and will continue on with the different events held during the summer. The Student Union Development Summit which will take place in August will be a large part of Councilor development, networking, and exposure to the work and visibility of the Society on a broader front.

4.2 FALL

Starting in September, the AMS will get a lot busier when the first term rolls around, but this is a good thing. As always, it provides Council with the opportunity to get our student members interested in the work of Council and the Society in general. The new AMS Student Nest and Council Chambers will be a great resource in providing Councilors with a space that they can call their own, and therefore be more involved with the daily functioning of the Society. The starting of the new academic year would be a great time for AMS Councilors and the Executive to work together to make the Society's business more productive and transparent to those working within the Society and our membership. This would help foster a closer and more open working relationship with the daily functioning parts of the Society and Council itself. During this time and the summer preceding, Councilors are encouraged to speak to members of the Executive and/or employees of the Society on different things they would like to see from the AMS, in order to enhance the student experience on campus. Specific to Executive portfolios, Councilors and other committee members are encouraged to speak to the relevant executive on the different files that they are interested in (i.e. government lobbying, clubs relations, open education resources, financial and accounting procedures, etc.)

4.3 SPRING

Spring would be another great opportunity for the Society to take a look at the lessons learned from the last few months and amend its business styles to suit its needs. It would also be a good time for Council and the Executive to take a look at the AMS's outreach efforts and evaluate its effectiveness with engaging the rest of students on campus. This time should not take a second step to the enthusiasm of the first term; winter is just as good an opportunity for the AMS to get students excited about their Society. Events like free coffee for students at fun information booths organized by the AMS might be an excellent way to start in such an effort. In addition to the evaluation mentioned above, this would be a good time for Council and the Executive to prepare to handover the torch over to the next year, and make that process as smooth as possible, so that we can build on the strengths of the current year and identify the areas that need improvement for the next.

5 GET INVOLVED

In order for this proposal to perform effectively, councilors and members-at-large to engage with the Executive on the various action items set out here, and vice-versa. Following a presentation to Council on the items outlined in this document, both the President and the VP External would be happy to meet with any member of council or otherwise to discuss this and share ideas on how to move forward and improve upon the vision described in this proposal. For more information about this proposal, and to provide suggestions regarding this proposal and its particulars, contact AMS President Aaron Bailey at president@ams.ubc.ca or AMS VP External at vpexternal@ams.ubc.ca. You can meet with any member of the executive in the offices on the 3rd floor of the Nest.

6 APPENDIX

- The Office of Planning and Institutional Research at UBC performs a headcount of students enrolled on the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses. The following link displays the detailed count by categories at UBC. <http://www.pair.ubc.ca/statistics/profile/UBCV%20factsheet.pdf>