



Executive Committee
2015/2016

University Relations

1. INTRODUCTION

The Alma Mater Society has been around since the university began, celebrating its centennial alongside UBC Vancouver this year. Through this time, the AMS and the university have worked together in different ways, with different issues arising and partnerships being built throughout. Though the VP Academic & University Affairs primarily liaises with the university, the executive committee acknowledges that all members of the team work with the university in different capacities. As such, one of the projects the 2015-2016 AMS Executive Committee is 'University Relations', which will set out a clear vision for the AMS's relationship with the university for the coming year.

1. BACKGROUND

- Relationship with the university administration

Historically, there are many areas in which the AMS has worked with the university, including fees, student consultation, academic initiatives, student programming, campus life and animation, athletics, and much more. The AMS has not had a systematic approach surrounding working with the university administration for quite awhile.

- Relationship with Board of Governors and UBC Vancouver Senate

Both the Board of Governors and Senate have student representatives who sit on them, and who are also represented at AMS Council. In the last few years, student representatives of both bodies have been quite involved in the AMS, and the executive has used their expertise to ensure that students are well represented, and that student leaders are on the same page. There is often also crossover between the AMS executive and Senate, with both the VP Academic & University Affairs and President sitting on Senate this year.

- Reflection on the past few years

In the last few years, the AMS has faced some issues in terms of university relations.

Sports Review

From 2011-2014 the university conducted a review of varsity sports teams, eventually moving some teams from varsity status to competitive clubs.¹ The AMS remains involved in the support of these groups. The AMS also handles the athletics fee that the university applies to students, further complicating this process.

¹ Results of Sports Review, <http://news.ubc.ca/2014/02/28/sport-review/>

Orientations

Following the Taskforce on Gender Based Violence and Aboriginal Stereotypes², the VP Students office worked with the Orientations Steering Committee to set standards and guidelines for first year orientations. Though the general aims of the taskforce recommendations and steps carried out were agreed upon by the AMS³, the university did not consult undergraduate societies properly, issuing event guidelines and Building Respectful & Inclusive Community (BRIC) Training for all student leaders. Since September 2014, the AMS and undergraduate society presidents have been working to ensure that this years orientation event guidelines and equity considerations are done in a way to positively make change to campus orientation events, as well as campus culture more generally.

International Tuition and Housing Increases

In October 2015, the university administration gathered student leaders from the AMS and GSS to announce and begin consultations on increases of 10% to international student tuition for May 2015, and 20% to 8-month housing contracts beginning in September 2015. As per policy 71⁴, there would be a 30-day consultation with students. With many meetings, including undergraduate societies, the International Students' Association and the Residence Hall Association, the AMS provided submissions and presentations to the Board of Governors in December and February⁵, but both increases passed. Throughout, the AMS and other student groups were involved in the discussion of allocation of this revenue should the increases pass, and remain involved in discussions surrounding the annual increase of \$2.5 million to investments to student mental health and wellbeing. The university has now begun discussions for program-by-program reviews of international tuition, for which the AMS has created a process.

2. VALUE

Looking back on the past year, the AMS executive and council were not equipped to deal with the many issues that arose in terms of university relations. There is a need now, more than ever, for the AMS to have a systematic approach to collaborate with the university administration and the many decision-making bodies on this campus to ensure that the AMS becomes a proactive, relevant stakeholder. In order to be effective, the executive must be on the same page and hold clear priorities in terms of dealing with the university. The AMS needs to reclaim relevance in the

² Taskforce on Gender Based Violence and Aboriginal Stereotypes (2014), <http://vpstudents.ubc.ca/files/2014/03/IGBVAS-Recommendations-for-Community-Consultation2.pdf>

³ AMS Submission Re: Taskforce on Intersectional Gender-Based Violence and Aboriginal Stereotypes Report, <http://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/AMS-Submission-on-Task-Force.pdf>

⁴ Policy 71 (June 2005), <http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2010/08/policy71.pdf>
If you would like to see the new draft policy for Policy 71, please contact Jenna Omassi at vpacademic@ams.ubc.ca.

⁵ AMS Submission to the Board of Governors on Housing Increases (2015), <http://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/AMS-and-RHA-Submission-to-Board-of-Governors-regarding-Proposed-Housing-Increase.pdf>

eyes of the university community, which can be done by having processes in place to deal with issues that arise, as well as having a clear and effective way of consulting students.

Beyond the inner functioning of the AMS, if strategies are clear, the executive can ensure that there is transparency for councillors and that Council can be involved in an efficient and effective way. As advocates for the student body at UBC Vancouver, the AMS has a duty to remain proactive surrounding student issues, which can only happen if university relations across the executive remains a priority throughout the year.

2. TARGET OUTCOMES & ACTION ITEMS

1. EFFECTIVE AND STRATEGIC REPRESENTATION OF STUDENTS

- Look into and re-work policies about how subsidiaries of the AMS can express their opinions and take positions.
Jenna (May 2015-August 2015)
- Develop a yearly strategic plan for all elected student leaders across campus.
Aaron & Jenna (June 2015-August 2015)

2. OPEN AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- Identify key communications priorities, bringing forward a collaborative effort with UBC communications.
Jenna (June 2015)
- Work with AMS Communications to ensure intentional communications with students surrounding key priorities.
Jenna (July 2015)

3. PARTNERSHIPS WITH GSS, UNDERGRADUATE SOCIETIES, AND STUDENT GROUPS

- Ensure systematic All President's meetings, setting a plan for the year.
Aaron (June 2015-April 2016)
- Ensure systematic VP Academic Caucus meetings, setting a plan for the year.
Jenna (June 2015-April 2016)
- Work with the GSS as a main stakeholder and partner.
Aaron (June 2015-April 2016)
- Support the Residence Hall Association & the International Students' Association.
Aaron & Jenna (August 2015-April 2016)

4. SUPPORTING UNIVERSITY INITIATIVES

- Use VP Academic Caucus, Student Senate Caucus, and the Education Committee to support the university's academic initiatives.
Jenna (June 2015-April 2016)
- Support orientation changes and equity pieces, as well as the work of the Orientation Steering Committee.
Jenna & Ava (June 2015-September 2015)
- Create and use an existing database of interested students to engage in university initiatives.
Jenna & Jude (September 2015-April 2016)
- Continue to be a part of the discussions surrounding investments in Student Mental Health & Wellbeing.
Jenna (June 2015-April 2016)
- Support athletics and larger university events.
Aaron & Ava (July 2015-April 2016)
- Support the new Arts and Culture District.
Ava (September 2015-April 2016)

5. ENSURING CLEAR PROCEDURES FOR CONSULTATION OF STUDENTS

- Put in place systems and protocols for engaging non-elected students.
Jenna & Jude (June 2015-September 2015)
- Set out and carry out process for 2016 program-by-program tuition increases.
Jenna (May 2015-January 2016)
- Streamline process of consultation of students for tuition, policies and other major decisions on campus.
Jenna (June 2015-April 2016)

6. STREAMLINING FEE PROCESSES WITH UBC

- Collaborate with UBC on systems upgrades.
Mateusz (August 2015-April 2016)
- Look over all MoUs, contracts and agreements with the university.
Mateusz & Jenna (June 2015-August 2015)
- Set up process for reporting on agreements with the university.
Mateusz & Jenna (June 2015-October 2015)

3. GET INVOLVED

Following a presentation to Council on this project proposal, please contact AMS VP Academic & University Affairs Jenna Omassi at vpacademic@ams.ubc.ca with any questions, concerns or comments. You can also find the executive offices on the third floor of the AMS Student Nest and drop by to give any feedback. As a councillor, you can also be involved in university relations by sitting on the AMS Education Committee (EduCom) or the University & External Relations Committee (UNECORN).

4. APPENDIX

- AMS Submission to the Board of Governors on Housing Increases (2015), <http://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/AMS-and-RHA-Submission-to-Board-of-Governors-regarding-Proposed-Housing-Increase.pdf>
- Policy 71 (June 2005), <http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2010/08/policy71.pdf>
If you would like to see the new draft policy for Policy 71, please contact Jenna Omassi at vpacademic@ams.ubc.ca.
- Phases of tuition consultation (2015-2016),
If you would like to see the plan for AMS strategy regarding upcoming tuition increases and consultation, please contact Jenna Omassi at vpacademic@ams.ubc.ca.
- Taskforce on Gender Based Violence and Aboriginal Stereotypes (2014), <http://vpstudents.ubc.ca/files/2014/03/IGBVAS-Recommendations-for-Community-Consultation2.pdf>
- Sports Review Results (2014), <http://www.athleticsandrecreation.ubc.ca/sport-review/process/sport-model/>