The Death of the AMS?

“Institutions are slow to respond to change. The AMS belong to another era, and perhaps it is time to experiment with different models.”

About a month ago, I wrote a piece for the U.Byssey [Perspective, Feb 9] in which I argued student apathy was completely undermining our effort to achieve a decent voice. Most of my argument was based on the low vote turn-out at AMS elections (less than ten per cent) as well as the failure of both referendums to reach quorum.

In a well-constructed reply, Amit Taneja [Perspective, Mar 2] claims UBC students are not apathetic. In his view, it is not student interest that is lacking, but rather a connection between AMS leaders and the UBC community. According to him, the true strengths of UBC’s campus lie in grassroots activism. Taneja concludes “students apathy may well be the end-result of frustration born out of the leaders’ political

Believe it is wrong to conclude that “good leadership does not entail leading the pack, but recognizing the efforts of the many students who fill these positions.”

What Taneja does not acknowledge is that our student condition highly depends on external factors. If good students can not afford an education, or have to work full-time while in school, I don’t see how they could get involved in the campus community in the first place.

A central student organization is meant to pool and represent the interests of all present and future UBC students. While Taneja builds a strong argument stating students are not apathetic, we can also see the need for a strong university-level voice.

Now, under normal circumstances, if people are interested in the well-being of the campus community, there should naturally arise a strong platform where student interests are discussed and well represented as a whole.

I will argue that if students care, and if there is still less than ten per cent of people voting in elections, then the problem lies with an your. Answer, it is impossible. The best you can do is to build on the friends you have, put out a passive poster campaign, and cross your fingers.

Secondly, there is a fundamental problem in the relationship between AMS executives and AMS Council. Being elected in separate elections, AMS executives are imposed upon AMS Council, and vice-versa. This produces a huge accountability problem between the two levels, as neither body is responsible for the other's work.

The end result are AMS members looking for checks and balances, and as they swim through the AMS structure, ideals sink into an ocean of rigid by-laws.

Consequently, every year student representatives spend most of their time either in absurd personality wars or in schmoozing sessions. Meanwhile, UBC students are wondering what in the world happened to all those smiling faces on the posters.

So what? If Taneja is right, we have a university that has a strong sense of community and should allow for the debate and defense of our ideals. Arguably, the struc-
9 Years of Safewalk
24 Block Parties
67 Student Jobs
70 Years of Tutoring
THE VARSITY OUTDOOR CLUB cabin in the Whistler club area is nearing completion. The cabin containing $16,000 worth of material has been designed and built entirely by students at U.B.C. Two dormitories to be built out back will sleep ninety. When the area is complete nine other clubs will have finished cabins.

The Whistler Lodge was built by students with their own hands. Don’t let them tear it down

VOTE NO

REFERENDUM 2014

VOTE RUNS FROM JAN 27TH-30TH
For the next 4 years...

The operational deficit and capital expenditures for the Whistler Lodge will equal:

- 1.5 year’s worth of Safewalk
- 14-15 years of Tutoring
- 4.5 years of Block Party
- 12 annual student wages
- 4.5 years of club support