AMS Submission to Board of Governors regarding the proposed tuition structure Bachelor of Media Studies Program

Dear UBC Board of Governors,

This submission is being made on behalf of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) of UBC Vancouver in response to the request for feedback from the Vice-President Students’ Office sent to the AMS and the AUS on January 17, 2014. Student representatives were invited to engage in a discussion regarding the same with the Faculty of Arts in the presence of the Director of the VP Students’ Office on January 28, 2014. This submission outlines the student response to and concerns with the proposed tuition and the consultation process.

Overall, the AMS will not extend its full support to the outlined proposal until we receive a detailed budget breakdown for the additional $55.00/credit (domestic) and $66.00/credit (international) above the Bachelor of Arts. The cost is greater than the current Bachelor of Arts program at UBC Vancouver; and while we recognize that the nature of this program demands a higher financial investment into learning resources, the AMS would like to see a line-by-line breakdown of specific financial allocations that justify the benefits of program aspects like smaller classes, co-op and community connections, and specialized advising services.

That said, there are also significant concerns with the process in which this consultation was carried out. Our largest concern as student representatives is the extremely short timeframe in which the tuition consultation process was conducted. We commend the Faculty of Arts for their openness to dialogue, however are disappointed with the lack of time for gathering feedback from various student groups. The AMS would also like to note the lack of attention to financial assistance for prospective students in the proposal. As students advocating for students, we would like to see concrete measures that will be taken to ensure equal opportunities for students who require financial aid in order to access the Bachelor of Media Studies program.

In the future, we recommend the University to amend its new program tuition consultation guidelines and take proactive measures to involve students in the consultation process for at
least 30 days rather than the provided two weeks for this item. This would enable the AMS and AUS to discuss the proposal with a more diverse range of students in greater detail without feeling rushed into decisions, and ensure proper accountability to students at large when developing new programs.

The AMS would also strongly encourage the Faculty of Arts and by extension, all Faculties in the future to provide a detailed breakdown that includes clear financial allocations. The AMS and the AUS believe that this would serve as a more comprehensive and concrete rationale than the broad overview made available.

The AMS, on behalf of UBC students is grateful to the University and the Faculty of Arts for including student input through various points in the process. The AMS strongly encourages the University to acts on the above-mentioned recommendations in order to enhance and improve future consultation processes.

Sincerely,

Caroline Wong
President
Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver
president@ams.ubc.ca