AMS Submission to Board of Governors regarding the proposed tuition structure for the Graduate Certificate in Orientation and Mobility

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, GSS, International Students’ Association and Education Students’ Association on February 6th, 2014. Student representatives were invited to engage in a discussion regarding the same with the Faculty of Education in the presence of the Director of the VP Students’ Office on February 14, 2014. This submission outlines the student response to and concerns with the proposed tuition and the consultation process.

Overall, the AMS supports the outlined tuition proposal. The AMS was pleased with the clear concern for student costs in the meeting with the Faculty, which is also demonstrated by the fact that the program will be, even with the government grant, a loss for the Faculty. The AMS is pleased that there was more budgetary information provided in the meeting with the Faculty, however, as with all new programs, the AMS would like to see a line-by-line breakdown of specific financial allocations that justify any costs above existing programs.

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 Education for their openness to dialogue, however are disappointed with the lack of time for gathering feedback from various student groups.

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, GSS, ISA and ESA 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 Education and by extension, all Faculties in the future to provide a detailed breakdown that includes clear financial allocations. The AMS believe that this would serve as a more comprehensive and concrete rationale than the broad overview made available.

On behalf of UBC students we are grateful to the University for including student input through various points in the process. The AMS strongly encourages the University to act on the above-mentioned recommendations and continue to consult with the AMS, GSS and ISA on the process, in order to enhance and improve future consultation processes.

Sincerely,

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