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Dear Colleagues,

As my first few months as President of the AMS draw to a close, I have been privileged to say that this has been an enriching and eye-opening experience. Since March, I have been working through the transition process of welcoming a new set of Executives to the Society, while I also continue to grapple with the scope and ongoing duties of my role. I will, however, say that what has made me truly excited to be serving this year is the opportunity to work alongside so many passionate and dedicated individuals. My executive team, coupled with the inclusion of Daniel Levangie as the Societies’ new Executive Director, are committed to the core to support the work of the Society, and ultimately, find creative and beneficial solutions to support our members.

With transition coming to a close, I have been spending my time working towards placing a critical eye over the AMS, challenging our ways of working, developing a long term vision, and preparing the Society for its’ future post-move in to the New SUB in January 2015. This process will be continuing right the way through to my departure from the Society in May, but I feel it important ensure that this Society is above par, not just to the level of quality of our building, but to our highest expectations of what the AMS can and should be. As this work continues, I look forward to engaging with Councillors, students, and the wider UBC community to ensure we have a healthy future for our student society.

This report encompasses most areas of my office’s activities to date, including an overview of my goals while in office. Should you have any other questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at president@ams.ubc.ca

Respectfully submitted,

Tanner Bokor
105th President
Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver
1  Year Goals

As stated above, my goals while in office are long-term in nature, and my focus will be on setting a direction for the AMS to follow post-New SUB. These goals are expansive and adaptive, which include the creation of a 15-year strategic plan for the Society, reviewing our internal structure and operations, creating a more accessible and transparent AMS, upgrading our critical infrastructure to the 21st Century, and building new methods and new outlets for meaningful student engagement outside and within the Society.

1.1  AMS 2030

AMS 2030 is an idea piggy backed off of a process started by my predecessor, Caroline Wong. Caroline believed that the Society lacked a vision and a general direction, and at the latter half of her term, called together a Vision Taskforce to begin the working of re-focusing the AMS towards the future. Like Caroline, I agree that a long term vision is essential for the Societies continued growth and to match the needs of our members, however, I feel that the Society also needs a review of its’ values, mission statement, and strategic framework. With this said, I asked Council in March to strike the AMS 2030 Taskforce to begin this work, and it is ongoing. The end goal is to take a document, modeled after UBC’s Place and Promise, to Council, undergraduate societies, and ultimately to students directly at referendum and ensure that it is permeated throughout the Society.

1.2  Access, Engage, Ignite & Invest

What may seem like buzzwords, these four words describe the bulk of where my energies are being focused as President of the AMS. At Executive Retreat, I presented the Executive three strategies (Access, Engage, and Ignite) that encompass different principles and programs to help overall bolster the work of the Society. As it would happen, the Executive found many of their goals aligning directly with these principles, and are incorporating there projects within these strategies. To shy away from the buzzwords, the purpose of these now four strategies is as follows:

Access AMS: To build an open AMS that is transparent and accountable to its members, with opportunities for meaningful, accessible public participation, made possible through innovation, technology and collaboration.

Engage AMS: To build a culture of inclusiveness and ownership amongst AMS members, where there is a constant exchange of information and ideas.

Ignite AMS: To build a more streamlined and integrated AMS, building formal ties to all areas of student life at UBC, fostering student involvement and participation.
Invest AMS: To build an innovative and leading-edge student society using technology to supplement current functions, engage members, and improve access.

Each strategy has a staggered implementation, and in my term, elements of each of these strategies will be implemented. While there will be an ongoing process to delve deeper into the meat of these strategies, this is where we are working from. Associated with each of these items are clear deliverables that will enhance the accessibility, transparency, and efficiency of the Society.

1.3 Internal Review

Related to both AMS 2030 and the Four Strategies, I am beginning the process of reviewing the internal workings of the AMS. As many will know, the AMS has grown into a vast organization that employees roughly 700 individuals, and offers numerous services to our members, including the network of close to 400 clubs and our varying consistencies. With this, however, have come some challenges: as a growing organization, are we easy to navigate for our members? Are we being efficient? Are we maximizing our ability to collaborate between groups? Are we communicating well enough both internally and externally? These are all questions that I will be investigating this year, leading to a full governance review of the AMS. Included in this will be a review of the AMS's decision making structure, our policies and code of procedures, our executive roles, and our internal programs. This will be compiled into a report that will be submitted to Council as recommendations, for Council to review and implement as necessary.

1.4 Infrastructure Investment

In 2015, the AMS will be celebrating its’ 100th anniversary. Similarly, we will also be celebrating (hopefully) the conclusion of construction of the SUB (now Nest.) That said, some of our internal functions and systems are not serving the needs of our members or our employees in ways that make sense in 21st Century terms. The AMS should be investing in its’ own internal infrastructure, including IT systems, to ensure we have an efficient, accessible, and user-friendly experience for our clubs and overall, our members. With this, I have been working on developing a technology strategy (now known as Invest AMS) that will address current deficiencies in processes, and recommend areas of investment to help improve said processes. These will include looking into our financial handling, our club management, board management, communications systems, polling and statistics capability, data-collection methods, and internal task management. With these tools in place, it will supplement existing work, and take the Society in a new and innovative direction.

1.5 Student Engagement & Support

Each year, the Society continually points to student engagement and communications being one of the top challenges within the AMS. Given our new Communications Strategy and a wonderful Communications Department taking us through a rebranding process and helping us reach our target audience, I feel we’re heading in the right direction when it comes to the flow of information.
coming out of the AMS. However, information should not just be flowing in one direction. Student leaders are elected to represent the interests of students, and also make decisions on their behalf, but there must always be continuous dialogue between the two parties to ensure we make informed decisions with the best possible reflection of the interests of our student body. As such, I am working, through Engage AMS to develop two-way feedback mechanisms, including town halls, live streamed Q&A’s, an AMS column in local media outlets, and hopefully, more activity on our video channels for information purposes. Part of this is also looking at how we engage with other student populations within UBC. While the AMS is the central student society at UBC, groups like Greek life, Rez Life, Rec, and Athletics are still outside our umbrella with very ad hoc relationships being built between executive years. Instead of continuing this trend, I want to build organizational relationships that last longer than an executive term. As part of this, I’m reviewing the potential creation of a Community Advisory Panel to bring in these voices, as well as develop an internal leadership program modeled after a successful system currently used at the University of Calgary Students Union.

1.6 Equity Services Review

This is an issue very near and dear to my heart. After an incident that occurred at this years’ Block Party with an attendee committing an act of cultural appropriation, the Society announced a review of Equity Services and programs to ensure that we are adequately serving the needs of our members and subsidiary organizations. As part of this review, I am looking at the re-instatement of a hybrid professional and student-led Equity Office within the AMS, modeled after the SASC, to provide optional equity services and training to all AMS clubs. Included in this is also a review of our support to constituency groups for orientations and event functions, in collaboration with the University as we work together on the implementation of several recommendations from the Taskforce on Intersectional Gender-based Violence and Aboriginal Stereotypes. There will also be a review done of Student Court, to ensure that we have a mechanism to address issues of misconduct within the Society, but with a focus on a proactive and client-driven approach.

1.7 Vancouver-Okanagan Partnership

When UBC-O was founded, the UBC - Students Union Okanagan was created to serve as the official voice of students at UBC-O. Over the years, the AMS has had sparse relations with the SUO, which is a missed opportunity and disservice to students at both campuses. Both campuses represent UBC students overall, all students societies’ at UBC, including the GSS, should be working together to advance the interests of students. I am proposing the creation of a strategic partnership agreement between the AMS, GSS, and SUO to enshrine a culture of collaboration, connect students from both campuses, and allow UBC students to speak for the first time in their history as one voice, one institution. This will require significant negotiation with the SUO and GSS, but I feel it is extremely important for the AMS to be looking to create this essential partnership.
2 Committees

Day-to-day in my office encompasses so many different facets and duties, and while some are so miniscule that they need not be mentioned here, it is important to mention my participation with a few committees that I have been sitting as a member of.

2.1 Legislative Procedures Committee

As an ex-officio member, I have been attending a few meetings to discuss code changes ranging from Conflict of Interest policies, to new job descriptions, to amendments with the construction of the Council agenda. I've also been putting forward a committee appointments policy to ease with appointing students to AMS and external-affiliated committees.

2.2 Budget Committee

I have a fairly limited role here, but I have attended one meeting to go over the initial construction of the budget. The preliminary budget will be forwarded to Council by June 11th, due to some challenges with needing to find a new committee chair, but I am hopeful that with a new chair being appointed at the next Council meeting, we will continue to delve into ensuring we have a fiscally responsible but appropriately funded budget for the next fiscal.

2.3 Executive Committee

As the chair of the Executive Committee, I’ve been working with the other members of the Executive to chart our year goals and look at the macro day-to-day of the Society. We have been meeting on a regular schedule, and held our Executive retreat earlier in the month. So far, these meetings have been productive, advancing many of the Executive’s goals that are tied to the Four Strategies.

2.4 Extraordinary Hiring Committee

I had the opportunity as a member of Extraordinary Hiring to interview candidates for the Ombudsperson and Speaker of Council roles. I’m happy to say that we are recommending to Council to appoint Camellia Rizi and Abdul Alnaar to be appointed as the Ombudsperson and Speaker of Council respectively. Both candidates demonstrated exceptional skill and will work well within the Society.

2.5 University Neighbourhoods Association

As the AMS’s director the University Neighbourhoods Association, I have been attending regular monthly meetings, and occasional committee meetings related to the needs of the residents’ of UBC. These meetings have provided an interesting prospective on issues ranging from land-use to
community services, and I am continuing to work towards building a greater degree of cooperation between the AMS and the UNA.

2.6 Alliance of BC Students

While I do not serve as a representative of the AMS on the Alliance of BC Students Board, I am currently serving as its’ Financial Officer, with a term ending at the end of the month. I have been working towards solidifying a fee proposal to ensure the Society can meet its’ essential functions, and have developed financial policies to ensure transparency and financial prudence for future ABCS Boards to consider. Lastly, I have been working on creating a draft budget for the Alliance, but given the Society lacks funding, this exercise has mostly been imaginative in nature.

3 Student Staff

Once in office, I inherited all of the staff members that Caroline had hired in her term. Currently, the office only has the Assistant to the President as an active position, with Saarah Gazi serving as my permanent EA. However, as Saarah has departed for the summer, I have hired Manjot Sidhu to serve as a temporary employee until Saarah’s return. The Assistant to the President assists me in most administrative functions, including management of my calendar, and has played a fantastic role in the transition process to ensure I’m fully up to speed on the work that Caroline had ongoing. Given the increased workload my office is taking on this year, and because of the transition to the new facility, I am proposing to Budget Committee to allow me to hire an Executive Projects Assistant to assist me in project-related functions, including meeting a quorate AGM in October, finishing the Four Strategies, and other projects that come up from time to time.

4 Miscellaneous

4.1 Meetings

I spend much of my time in meetings. That includes meetings with staff, executives, university officials, and the like. A full calendar of my meetings is available upon requests for those interested. As it stands, I currently have standing meetings with each executive, the Executive Director, General Manager, Communications Manager, and then the AVP C+CP, VP Students, and President.

4.2 UBC Presidential Transition

Earlier in my term, it was announced that Dr. Arvind Gupta will be taking the reins as the 13th President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of British Columbia. The AMS released a statement congratulating Dr. Gupta on the date of his announcement, and also thanked Professor Dr. Steven Toope for his dedication and service to the university. I had sent a private letter to Dr. Gupta congratulating him again and expressing our interest for a meeting, and has scheduled a meeting
for later this week to speak in detail. We are hoping to establish a close relationship with the incoming President, and ensure that he views us as a partner on the many important issues that impact UBC students, and the broader university community.

4.3 Media

In my role as Spokesman for the AMS, I have done four radio interviews, five newspaper interviews, and one television interview on ranging topics since I entered a few months ago. These topics have included the transition of UBC Presidents, the New SUB, and an incident that occurred at Block Party related to an aboriginal headdress being worn by an attendee. A summary of each media statement is available by contacting our Communications Manager.

4.4 Hours

In this term, I have asked all executives, and ultimately all members of staff to start banking their hours electronically through our electronic payroll system. A summary of these hours are available upon request by contacting the payroll department. My hours have been consistently tracking at 100 hours per week, including weekends, to complete the tasks of the office. I will be taking a vacation at the end of July, and will be returning in time for the Student Union Development Summit in mid-August.