September 24th, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

As the President of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) of UBC Vancouver, I write to you today to express my strong opposition on behalf of all 50,000 UBC-Vancouver students to the suggested terms within the proposed Policy #34 – Appointment and Extension of Appointment of Administrative Vice-Presidents.

Board & Senate Policy #18 – Appointment of Designated Senior Academic states that representatives of Students from either the Okanagan or Vancouver campus are “elected by and from the students”. In the proposed Policy #34, students are selected by either the Vancouver or Okanagan Senate and the Senate “shall seek nominations for the Alma Mater Society, Graduate Student Society, and the UBC Student Union Okanagan, as well as from other bodies and individuals it deems appropriate, including from the Senate itself or a committee of the Senate.”

Students selected by and approved by Senate are not representatives of students. The mentality of student representation consisting of placing any student on a committee for the sake of fair composition as a part of the process is tokenistic and inadequate; everywhere else in the University community, such as through the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SEOT) Committee, the Orientations Steering Committee, and even the recent Presidential Search Committee, student representation is selected by and named as a representative of the AMS, the body vested as the voice of students through democratic processes by students themselves. Only students selected by and from the organization that represents the interests of students are representative of students. The implementation of Policy #34, would create inconsistency in the manner in which student representation is sought and from where students are drawn. It is not true representation of students if the students who sit on these committees are not chosen by students themselves.

Taking from best practice elsewhere in British Columbia at our sister institutions (such as the University of Victoria, Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Simon Fraser University), the Student Societies are named as the body that selects and appoints students to Presidential, and Academic and Administrative Vice-Presidential selection committees. At the University of Victoria, Policies GV0305 – Procedures for the Appointment and Reappointment of the Vice-President Academic and Provost, GV0320 – Procedures for the Appointment of the Vice-President, External Relations, GV0300 – Procedures for the Search, Appointment, or Reappointment of the President and Vice-Chancellor, and GV0310 – Procedures for the Appointment and Re-Appointment of the Vice-President, Research require an undergraduate student to be selected by the University of Victoria Students’ Society, and a graduate to be selected by the
Graduate Students’ Society. At Kwantlen, Senate Policy HR20 — Search Advisory, Appointment and Re-Appointment of Senior Academic Administrator Positions Procedures requires one student appointed by the Kwantlen Student Association. At Simon Fraser University, Policy B 10.06 — Presidential Search Committee, and Policy GP 29 — Search Committees for Vice-Presidents and Associate Vice-Presidents require one student jointly selected by the Simon Fraser Student Society and Graduate Student Society.

Overall, the practice of having the student society select and appoint a student is a common practice in British Columbia, and raises into question why the proposed Policy #34 selects Senate as the body to select students to sit on appointment committees for Administrative Vice-Presidents.

Finally, there is a clear difference between consultations occurring with students and consultation occurring with Senate. Senate cannot claim that consultation with its membership is consultation with the constituencies from where its members come. Senate cannot be consulting itself and call that meaningful representation, as outlined in Policy #34, and as such, the University should be seeking representatives directly from said constituency groups, like the AMS, that are the voice of these groups.

I strongly encourage University Counsel to reconsider its’ proposal to appoint students via Senate on an otherwise strong and straightforward policy. Should there be any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to me at president@ams.ubc.ca

Respectfully submitted,

Tanner Bokor

President

Alma Mater Society (AMS) of UBC Vancouver