Second Ternary Report
Office of the Vice-President, External Affairs

2014-2015

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Vice-President, External Affairs
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Dear Colleagues,

It’s a little hard for me to believe that we are past the halfway point of our time together. These past six months have definitely been an adventure; we have come across trials and tribulations, but we seem to only be growing and learning from all the challenges we face. I’m so excited to be working with all the new councilors who have joined us in September, and would like to take this opportunity to thank the councilors that worked with us during the summer and who will not be returning for this academic year. Through this report, I hope to shed some light on the intimate functions of the VP External portfolio, and I wish to invite you to ask questions if you would like elaboration on any of the provided projects and accomplishments.

Looking forward to hearing your thoughts, feel free to contact me at vpexternal@ams.ubc.ca.

Kind regards,

Bahareh Jokar
AMS Vice-President External Affairs
Student Union Development Summit (SUDS) 2014

I am happy to report that SUDS 2014 was a wonderful success for the AMS. From our records, SUDS 2014 was the largest SUDS that we have ever hosted, with upwards of 80 delegates from 25 Canadian post-secondary institutions. Our focus with this year SUDS was to create a program platform that allowed for a nice combination of casual and formal presentations. AMS executives in relation to their respective portfolios facilitated the casual programs where anyone interested in discussing the best practices related to a specific subject would participate. Whereas the formal presentations included presenters from Elections Canada, SASC, City of Vancouver, Reconciliation Canada, etc. We were very happy with the general feedback we received after SUDS, and I will be working with the SUDS coordinator in compiling an overview and transition package for next year’s team.

Conference of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)

The Union of BC Municipalities is an annual conference hosted by the province with membership including the representatives from all the municipalities across BC. This was a wonderful opportunity for the AMS to connect with elected representatives and advocate for issues like post secondary funding, and public transit support. I had the pleasure of also presenting along side the City of Vancouver staff and the Elections Canada on the topic of voter engagement; my presentation focused on youth voter engagement, and the role of student unions promoting the civic process. I would highly recommend that the AMS continue its participation at the UBCM.

GetOnBoard BC

I recently assumed the position of Chair of the board for GetOnBoard BC. We are currently working on responding to the Mayors’ Council on Regional Transportation, while addressing the needs of the individual parties who use public transit. We are in the midst of programming one small scale event for term one with our partners, and one large scale event in term 2 tying in to the Public transit referendum held by the province around March.

Alliance of BC Students

I was recently elected the vice-chair of the Alliance of BC Students, which I am very excited to delve into. The vice-chair is tasked with leading the campaign function of the organization. The ABCS has been meeting frequently to work out details around the organizations internal and external strategy. Our primary campaign for this term is around the upcoming municipal elections, where we are launching into a
non-partisan information driven Get Out The Vote campaign. Additionally, the ABCS sent in its response to the whitepaper submission and made a presentation to the financial subcommittee.

**Municipal Elections**

Our efforts around the upcoming municipal elections have included working with the City of Vancouver in setting up registration stations for students to pre-register for voting. We held a very successful *Pop-Up City Hall* with the City of Vancouver, where we had a fire truck come onto campus to raise awareness around municipal elections, and how people can learn more about candidates and where they can vote. In addition to our work with the City of Vancouver, we will be collaborating with Samara, which is a non-partisan charitable organization that works to improve political participation in Canada. Our hope is to host a series of “democracy talks” across campus to foster a greater sense of engagement in the civic process.

**Responding to Tuition and Housing Fee Increase**

The topics of accessibility and affordability of education falls under the line of work my office address’ in its collaboration with the Alliance of BC Students and our provincial lobbying efforts. We have been working closely with the Office of the Vice-President Academic in response to the university administrations proposed fee increases; and will be continuing our efforts in advocating the provincial government for greater funding for post-secondary institutions.

**U-Pass BC Program and Compass Transition**

The Office of the VP External is still the primary point of contact for students coming into the SUB with any U-Pass related inquiries; the number of inquiries fluctuate dependent on the time during the term, but we see major spikes during the first few weeks of school. A great deal of time and energy is spent on addressing the needs of UBC Okanagan students who are studying on the Vancouver campus; we work closely with Enrolment Services to ensure that that these student are access the appropriate fees, and that they have access to all appropriate resources.

We are still in contact with Translink, and are awaiting further instruction on more around when we will be launching into the Compass Program.