Office of the Vice-President, External Affairs
Second Ternary Report of the Vice-President, External Affairs 2015/16

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2 INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

My Fellow Councilors, Executives, and Student Members,

It is my pleasure to provide you with a report from the Office of Vice-President, External Affairs from May 2015 to present day. These last few months of executing the role of the Vice-President, External Affairs have been truly unique and rewarding in terms of the returns we have gained as a portfolio, and a Society. We have been working diligently to continue upon the work commenced in the summer and have pushed ahead for the international and federal expansion of the external portfolio.

The work outlined in this report is the product of the tireless efforts of not the staff in the VPX office and other members related to the external portfolio. Firstly, I would like to thank my Associate VP Kathleen Simpson for her hard work and dedication to the projects this office carries out, especially during the last Federal Election campaign. I would also like to thank Jade Scrymgeour and Jael Lumba, the Advcom Vice-Chair and Transit & U-Pass Commissioner respectively, for the work they have done in this portfolio.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the work of Robin Asgari, Chair of the University & External Relations Committee towards the projects in the external portfolio. Robin has been of great support, not only to myself, but to the mandate of this office in excess of what he is required to in his capacities as Councilor.

With the aforementioned, I appreciate your interest in the work of my portfolio and welcome your suggestions and participation. Should you wish to contact myself or a member of my office, please do not hesitate to contact me at vpeexternal@ams.ubc.ca or 604.822.2050. If you wish to speak to me in person, I can reached at my office (Rm. 3524) at the AMS Student Nest.

Sincerely,

Jude Crasta
Vice-President, External Affairs
3 Hiring

3.1 Vice-Chair, External Advocacy Commission

I am pleased to report to Council that after much review, I have decided to appoint Jade Scrymgueor as Advcom Vice-Chair. Jade brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge relating to the portfolio, and has been a great addition to the team, especially during the height of the Federal Elections campaign. Jade will be working on a lot of the future projects that this office will be engaging in the next couple of months. If anyone would like to contact her, you may do so at advcomvc@ams.ubc.ca.

4 Projects

4.1 Champion the Vote (2015 Federal Elections Campaign)

As most of you may know, the external portfolio was heavily engaged in the Federal Elections that took place this year. As outlined in a report to be presented to Council, we chose to run a non-partisan voter engagement campaign surrounding the Federal Elections that would:

1. Bring an official polling station to the Old SUB to make voting accessible to students.
2. Make information a lot easier to access whether it’s about candidates, parties, voting procedures, etc.
3. Be fun and engaging to get students interested about the process.

While the official numbers regarding to UBC specifically have yet to be reported back to us, we did generally see immense success with the campaign. We were able to secure national broadcasting spots with Global News with Tom Clark, a national spot on CBC News with Asha Tomlinson, and two radio appearances on On The Coast with Stephen Quinn at CBC Radio. This led to a high degree of notoriety for the Society and for the campaign efforts surrounding the election.

We were happy to see that the voter turnout for Vancouver-Quadra had risen to 68.5% which was the national average. Furthermore, the pilot project held during October 5-8 saw over 4000 students cast their ballot, 3750 of whom were from across Canada. This degree of success was as unprecedented as this program, and we hope to see more of it in the future.

4.2 Broadway-UBC, It’s Time.

With a new, progressive government in place at the Federal level, things are looking a lot better for the extension of the Broadway Subway project to UBC. We have very strong advocates for the extension of the Line in the Members of the Parliament for this riding and the riding immediately adjacent to ours. The question of having the Line extended comes from a question of funding from the Provincial Government, and to what point it would continue along the sector. My office is actively working extremely hard on getting all the stakeholders around the same table to either commit or negotiate the particulars to make this a reality. Indications from meetings with certain
Members of the Legislative Assembly lead us to believe that we may see further liberty granted to post-secondary institutions around borrowing. I will report back to Council with timely updates on what is happening with the project, and will give Council all the information needed should we be forced to make any formal decisions to that effect.

4.3 International Expansion of the Portfolio

This report was typed on the eve of my team’s travel to Cambridge, MA where we will be joining student representatives from across the world at the Ivy Leadership Summit. The Ivy Leadership Summit (ILS) is an annual two-day conference hosted by the Ivy Council to bring together students from the eight Ivy League universities along with leaders from the business, government, academic, and humanitarian sectors. The conference is usually held in November and its location is rotated each year through the campuses of the Ivy League. The theme of this year’s conference is “Global Leadership and Cooperation”.

It will be at this Global Roundtable that we will be working to expand this Society’s outreach with the top institutions across the planet. Increasing our profile in this sector contributes to the viability of the mandate of our Society in a larger, global context. It allows us gain a lot of political leverage with organizations and entities that we network with, and brings our Society into a new arena of community membership i.e. International. Further projects will be undertaken by my office in the next couple of months to further this national and international expansion; we are currently on track to seeing a massive increase in Society visibility and presence, in many cases, more than the last decade combined.

4.4 Federal Expansion of the Portfolio

In the wake of the 2015 Federal Election, we have created very strong federal bonds and have promoted a strong front for the Society federally. This has occurred through the work committed as part of Champion the Vote, and through the cordial relationships we had maintained with all riding candidates prior to the release of the results of the Federal Elections.

As we speak, the external portfolio has a strong ally and representative in the Hon. Joyce Murray, the Member of Parliament for Vancouver-Quadra. Her seniority within the Liberal Party of Canada and her distinguished career make her a genuine advocate for the needs and interests of our students, her constituents. Furthermore, we have an extremely strong friendship with the Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould, Member of Parliament for Vancouver-Granville, a member of the Queen’s Privy Council of Canada, and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

In addition to her, and her Chief of Staff Lea Mackenzie, being dear friends of the VP External, she is an exemplary leader whose distinguished and unique background makes her the perfect individual to represent this newly created riding adjacent to UBC’s, one which a significant portion of our students reside in. As Regional Chief of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations and a provincial Crown prosecutor, she has demonstrated that her years of service can be put to use to represent our location in a way that few others can. I am extremely confident that we will maintain strong working and friendly ties with her for years to come.
The 42nd Parliament of Canada shall officially commence on December 3, 2015 with the Speech from the throne to be held the following day. In addition to tax and immigration reform, the Government of the Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, is expected to keep to its campaign promise of announcing an expansion of the spending by the Federal Government on civil and social infrastructure. Included in this expansion shall be that for transit expansion and improvement across the country.

Once the Government has had the opportunity to settle in to a more routine schedule and has had the chance to breathe after outlining its legislative agenda for the year, the external portfolio shall be seeking a meeting with the Hon. Marc Garneau, the Member of Parliament for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, a member of the Queen’s Privy Council of Canada, and the Minister of Transport. Meeting with him will provide us with valuable outreach and networking for the transit and transportation goals of the AMS that benefit our student members. We shall be seeking a similar meeting with the Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, the Member of Parliament for Edmonton Mill Woods, a member of the Queen’s Privy Council of Canada, and the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities. These two meetings will help us lay out the needs for federal investment, along with that from other branches of government, for projects like the Broadway Subway.

5 MEETINGS & PRESENTATIONS

As part of my duties as VP External, I conduct meetings with a variety of leaders from different levels of government, non-profit organizations, university leaders, and other student associations. So far I have had meetings with Members of Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Members of the Provincial Cabinet, the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and with a host of government staff under various Federal and Provincial authorities. These all serve to increase the portfolio and Society profile, and have been carried out under specific projects, like the ones mentioned above.

I had the opportunity to attend the Union of BC Municipalities Convention with Robin Asgari, an event that served a lot of political reward to the AMS and resulted in the creation of very close ties with Municipal and Provincial leaders. A full report of this activity will be submitted to Council in the near future. We also had the opportunity to present to the BC Standing Committee on Finance & Government Services on the FY 2016 Budget. This was a very successful advocacy event, and we are sure to seem some positive results soon from this activity.

Additionally, the external portfolio presented to the Special Committee to Review the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in October, and had an immensely positive response from the members of the committee, across party lines. The report of that presentation can be found in a recent submission to Council.

Since these activities have taken place, we have fostered extremely close relationships with the Hon. Andrew Wilkinson, Minister of Advanced Education, and with Mrs. Kathy Corrigan, the Opposition Critic for Advanced Education. This healthy relationship will serve to benefit the Society in the future on projects that we choose to venture on in the Provincial level. In fact, on more than
one occasion, the Minister made a point to declare his close relationship with myself and remark about the frequency of contact we maintain with each other.

6 SUMMARY

This report outlines the progress of the work done so far by my office and includes the outlook and efforts for the next few months. We have accomplished so many excellent achievements and are excited for the months to come. I am always available to discuss more about my portfolio to any member of Council or our Society.

If you have any further questions about this report or about any function within my office, please do not hesitate to contact me at vpexternal@ams.ubc.ca or 604.822.2050.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jude Crasta
Vice-President, External Affairs
AMS Student Society of UBC Vancouver