This report provides a summary of my activities from March to May 2014.

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1 Introduction

I’m very excited to be able to continue in this role for the next year. So far, much of my time in the recent months has been spent doing staff hiring and training. I obviously did not have to transition anyone into the role, so I have also continued work on the many on-going projects in the office, as you will see in the report below. The first section outlines my goals for the year, and the remainder of the report speaks to my activities in the last 3 months. A few highlights of the recent months have included all the amazing people I’ve been able to hire, spending three days on executive retreat getting to know each other better and doing strategic planning, and most recently attending graduation ceremonies for the many students I (no longer) represent.

2 Goals for the Year

This section speaks only to the goals I have this year. Obviously I have begun work on many of these already, please find that information in the later sections.

2.1 Aboriginal student engagement

Goal: to better engage with aboriginal students and have a better understanding of their needs

This year we will continue to have an aboriginal students’ commissioner. We hope to engage regularly meet with leaders of first nations student associations and the associations of programs that address indigenous issues. We hope to run a survey of Aboriginal students on campus, in consultation with these groups. The commissioner will also work on improving AMS internal structures, such as creating an AMS document on indigenous (specifically Musqueam) protocol for the AMS and its subsidiaries. We hope to support student initiatives as well, such as the plan for the Pow Wow.

2.2 Housing contract

Goal: To create structures and procedures (perhaps within the Housing Contract itself) that will better protect students’ rights in housing and better communicate to them their rights and housing procedures

This is a project to improve how well the rights of students in residence are protected. An initial conversation with the head of Student Housing and Hospitality has occurred, and the project will be picked up by the incoming campus development commissioner as it is an area of interest for her.

2.3 Equity/Task Force on Intersectional Gender-Based Violence and Aboriginal Stereotypes Follow-up/Orientations

Goal: To work closely with the University on improving equity and inclusion at UBC through the implementation of the Task Force’s report

This year, given the events of last year, will be a large part of this portfolio. Given that the University’s official response from Stephen Toope only came out last week, it is hard to gauge exactly what this will look like. It may take the form of an implementation committee, or of efforts by different units to implement, and depending on the implementation, our response will be different.

2.4 WE Standings

Goal: To have Withdrawals under Exceptional circumstances implemented at UBC.

WEs are a mechanism to lessen the impact of family crises and health problems on students academic careers by acknowledging that certain withdrawals were under these circumstances, directly on their transcripts. They have been implemented elsewhere very successfully, and given the climate on campus and a clear
openness to this idea by key university administrators, I believe it is very feasible to have this accepted by Senate by the end of the year.

2.5 Acadia Park & C+CP Consultations

*Goal: To continue to advocate to the University on the recommendations set out in the Acadia Park Needs Assessment Report*

In section 7.2 I lay out what has been done to date. The goal is vague, but my promise is to keep working on this issue until the Acadia Residents are satisfied with the result, whatever that may look like. Conversations around consultation processes have been promising, but we are still cautious.

2.6 Tuition Consultation on New Programs

*Goal: To work with the university to improve consultation processes for new program tuition.*

Please see my previous ternary report for background/history. The processes have not been ideal this year for consultation (short time frame, not enough information, etc), and we will be working with the VPS office this year to ensure that processes are better in the future so that real engagement with students can happen.

2.7 Vantage College

*Goal: To engage with Vantage College Students, and ensure the students are having an excellence academic experience*

There are many concerns around the social and academic experiences of the new Vantage College students. This year, my international students’ commissioner will work with Vantage College students to ensure their concerns are heard, and we will work with the university to implement changes to improve their social and academic experiences.

2.8 Engagement with students

*Goal: To better engage on academic and university issues with the VP Academics and Students at Large*

This will be accomplished in two main ways. I hope to engage more regularly with the VP Academics of the constituencies, and to be more fully engaged with the issues they are working to address. We will be holding a lobbying/working with the university session over the summer, to help them perform their jobs even better. I also hope to implement an idea that EduCom has had for a while: holding an ‘academic forum’ for students at large to engage with the VPAUA office more.

2.9 Exam Database

*Goal: To have the Exam Database up and fully operational, used and with a full plan for its sustainability.*

The database itself will be up and running by the fall. We will be running testing over the summer with students. We will continue to work closely with the Project Manager to ensure that there is a full plan for how we will continue to populate the database once it is up and running, and have a defined relationship with the University on the ownership of the database itself and responsibility for maintaining it.

2.10 Midterm Evaluations of Teaching (MEoT)

*Goal: To expand on the pilot in all Faculties, and work for wide adoption in Arts.*

There is still strong support for this initiative from the constituency VP Academics, and we will continue to work with them to implement these further. Our strategy last year did not work as well as hoped and we will be shifting our focus to working with Dean’s offices. We will be especially focusing on Arts given the strong uptake in the past and the strong existing support from the Dean’s office.
2.11 Policy 73 (Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities)

Goal: To incorporate mental health into Policy 73, and improve the policy overall to better work for students’ needs.

Policy 73 is up for review this year, and this past year the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioner worked on a report examining similar policies at similar universities in Canada and abroad. We will work with the university to incorporate the best practices from other institutions into our own policy. We have also run a survey of students with disabilities on campus, and will be analysing this data soon in order to use this information in the review as well.

2.12 Academic Experience Survey and Report 2014 & 2015 (and institutionalize it)

Goal: To successfully run the 2014 and 2015 Academic Experience Surveys and institutionalize the survey (aka remove the majority of the work outside the VPAUA office) before the 2015 Survey.

We will write a full report by the end of July, and by hiring a student with experience in statistics we hope to free up Daniel’s and my time to work on lobbying for issues identified. We will continue to explore options for institutionalizing the survey and this decision will likely come to council, since it will likely involve a contract. I hope to have a decision made by January 2015, in time for implementation with the 2015 survey.

3 Hiring

Much of my time in the last few months has been spent hiring. I am pleased to have hired the following staff members onto my team. Note that the Aboriginal Student’s Commissioner, Spencer Lindsay, was hired until the end of August, and that position will be re-hired for then.

3.1 Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioner

Lina Castro is the new MHWB commissioner. She started on May 1st and has been transitioning and learning her position. She will be finishing up our report on Academic Accommodations for the Policy 73 review, and afterwards will begin researching and writing a report on WEs (Withdrawals under Exceptional circumstances).

3.2 Equity Commissioner

The new Equity Commissioner is Margareta Dovgal and she began May 1st. She will be shared between my office and the VP Admin office and work on both internal and external equity matters.

3.3 Campus Development Commissioner

The campus development commissioner will be Natalya Kautz. She is on exchange in France currently and will begin June 16th. The current CDC, Brittany Jang, will continue in her position until then.

3.4 International Students’ Commissioner

Ayush Datta will be our international students’ commissioner beginning July 15th. He is beginning later because he is back home in India until then. The position will be vacant until then.

3.5 AVP Academic and University Affairs

Daniel Munro has been hired as the new AVP AUA. He also began May 1st, and after transitioning, has begun work on projects within the office.
Committee Updates and Work

4.1 AMS Committees

4.1.1 Education Committee
The Education Committee has met a few times in the last few months. One topic of conversation was the Middle Eastern Studies Initiative, which was brought forward to Council as a policy. Several University administrators have also consulted the Committee on several topics surrounding Flexible Learning. More detail of the issues and topics discussed can be found in the minutes of the committee.

4.1.2 Budget Committee
Until the Bylaw changes took effect, I was still the chair of the Budget Committee, but the committee did not meet at that time.

4.1.3 University and External Relations Committee
The University and External Relations Committee has only met once since I took office at the end of February, and I was unfortunately unable to attend the time that worked best for the committee. The committee will soon be finding a regular time for their meetings, and my office will be bringing forward several policies, such as a policy on Divestment, as is required from the recent referendum.

4.1.4 Impact Grant Adjudication Committee
The impact grant committee met recently and adjudicated the fund to the nine proposed student projects. Pierre will be contacting the project leads soon.

4.2 University Committees (Standing and Ad Hoc)

4.2.1 Student Evaluation of Teaching (SEoT) Implementation Committee
This committee is a UBC committee made up of university administrators and representatives from the major faculties to discuss the implementation of the SEoT. The committee has met once so far, and many topics were discussed, such as the difficulties of evaluations when there are multiple instructors (an item raised to me by Eric Zhao, a student senator, and which I added to the agenda), improvements that will soon be coming to the CourseEval system, whether evaluations in grad courses are always happening and/or being reported to the Provost’s office, and how to better communicate to students how course evaluations are used to ensure quality of teaching.

4.2.2 Connect Steering Committee
This committee brings together all stakeholders in the implementation of Connect. The committee meets monthly to discuss how the implementation is going, what issues are arising/continuing/have been resolved. We also have discussed issues of perceptions of Connect, issues around faculty no longer using it, how to resolve those issues and contingency planning. The committee is also provided with bi-weekly email updates on the progress of the implementation and on the status of Connect. I was unable to attend the one meeting that has been held, due to being triple booked at that time.

4.2.3 University Health and Safety Committee
The University Health and Safety Committee meets to discuss high level health and safety issues at UBC. The committee recently restructured itself and created 3 sub-committees. The purpose of this was to take a more active role in providing suggestions to the University on Health and Safety related matters, rather than simply receiving reports. I was unable to attend one meeting due to a conflict with my course schedule, and the most recent meeting because I had the wrong location sent to me.
4.2.4 Orchard Commons Working Committee
This committee works on issues related to design and development of the new Orchard Commons. The committee has met once, and updates were provided on the plan, minor changes that are still occurring to the plans, the LEED certification, and the budget.

4.2.5 UBC Life Building Working Committee
I am sitting on the UBC Life Building Working Committee. This committee will make the major decisions in regards to the building architecture of the UBC Life Building (the refurbished old SUB). There are bi-weekly meetings, and I was able to attend one of the two meetings (I sent my AVP when I was unable to attend the other one). There was also a three hour long “Social Sustainability Charette” which was a workshop to clarify the desires, in terms of social sustainability, for this building. I am very excited to be sitting on this committee and I’m very excited to see how the building will turn out!

4.2.6 Bookstore Advisory Committee
The Bookstore Advisory Committee is a body made up of staff, faculty, and students that provides feedback and advice to the UBC Bookstore on its product and service offerings to the UBC community. The committee has not met recently.

4.2.7 Vantage College Advisory Committee
This committee is the advisory body for Vantage College and the development of the first year international student program within the college. The committee has not met recently.

4.2.8 RCMP Community Police Advisory Committee
This committee is hosted by the RCMP University Detachment with representatives from the AMS, Metro Van Parks Board, Campus Security, UNA, UEL and the VP Students Office. I was unable to attend the only meeting that has been held recently.

4.2.9 Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Committee
The university Mental Health and Wellbeing Steering Committee is a cross campus committee comprised on students, faculty, staff and administrators. This committee discusses and strategies on initiatives relating to student mental health and wellbeing on campus from a diverse range of perspectives. This committee did not meet over the last few months.

4.2.10 Scholarly Communications Steering Committee
The Scholarly Communications Steering Committee met has not met in person during this time.

4.2.11 UTown@UBC
The UTown@UBC Committee brings together stakeholders from all areas of the University, both academic and nonacademic, to discuss issues that relate to the campus as a community and town. At the last meeting, updates were given on the new UBC Transportation Plan, the Block F development, the Regional Context Statement, and other topics. Community Members raised concerns in regards to how consultation is done with surrounding communities.

4.2.12 Flexible Learning Strategy Network
The Flexible Learning Strategy Network meets to discuss high-level strategy for UBC relating to flexible learning. The network has met twice since I have been in office and I have been able to attend both meetings, however, the material discussed is confidential.
4.2.13 **Orientations Steering Committee**

The Committee has met once so far. We discussed the draft response to the Task Force on Intersectional-Gender Based Violence and Aboriginal that pertain to orientations, orientations leaders training, the creation of event guidelines, the terminology “FROSH”, and what the University’s approach will be to student led orientations.

4.2.14 **Learning Technologies Advisory Committee – Pedagogical Working Group (LTAC-PWG)**

This committee meets to discuss broad issues surrounding learning technologies at UBC. Issues discussed have included Connect (though this has a separate Steering Committee, as mentioned above), whether UBC should at this time be pursuing a mobile version of Connect, technologies for curriculum mapping and iClickers. The committee has met once since I took office and I was able to attend this meeting.

4.2.15 **Clicker Review Committee**

This is a committee that was struck up after a conversation at LTAC-PWG and will be examining whether UBC should continue using iClickers as the main clicker technology or move to a mobile version, and whether UBC should continue to have one, main supported clicker technology at all. The committee put together a faculty survey as well as several student focus groups, and the consensus has been to remain with iClicker for now, while recognizing that technology is changing and that further piloting of other systems will continue.

4.2.16 **Campus Safety Working Group**

I am now the AMS Representative to the Campus Safety Working Group. We have met once in this time, to review the consultation feedback that was received and the updated report.

4.2.17 **Informal Learning Spaces Committee**

This is a committee that meets once a year to adjudicate a fund that provides money for the creation of informal learning spaces on campus. The committee met in February.

5  **UBC Mental Health Network**

Since the signing of the MOU between the AMS and the [UBC Mental Health Network](https://www.ubc.ca/mental-health/), we have continued to collaborate and work closely together to expand the Network. I was able to attend the one meeting that has been held so far. The Network has been recently discussing its internal structure and what better structure it might create to ensure sustainability, and institutionalization of the Network: options such as becoming an AMS Resource Group, becoming a non-profit society or a non-profit organization are continuing to be explored. The Network has made several decisions around its preferred method of communication. The Chair of the Network, Kimberley Carter, and I meet regularly to discuss issues and collaboration. Kim, Liyang (the previous Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioner) and I have also been working to prepare for the upcoming review of Policy 73, the policy for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, and how we can better incorporate mental health into this policy. Liyang did background research into other universities’ policies, and Lina (the new MHWB Commissioner) has been polishing up the report.

6  **VP Academic Caucus**

The VP Academic Caucus is made up of all the VP Academics, and occasionally the VP Externals, of all the undergraduate and graduate student societies. The Caucus met in early March to give updates as well as
discuss the Academic Experience Survey, the Midterm Evaluations of Teaching, and student engagement with the Flexible Learning Initiative.

7 Portfolio Projects and Initiatives

7.1 AMS Academic Experience Survey 2014
Since March, my office finished the wide consultation with various stakeholders and finalized the question set. The survey was officially opened on March 26th. It was advertised in the AMS newsletter at the beginning of April, and with a second email later in April. 3750 responses were received at the time of closing the survey in mid-May, nearly 700 more than last year. Emails have been sent to prize winners of the iPad minis, and we are compiling the list of people who shared/re-tweeted to be entered for the New SUB tour prize. We put together a job description for a student with statistics experience for analysing and writing the report this summer. Neither Daniel (my AVP) nor I have much experience in this area, and think that it is a much better use of resources to hire it out. The job description went up today and we hope to hire soon. The survey analysis is the next portion of this and we hope to have it done as soon as possible.

We continued the conversations with Sean Cregten, but ultimately decided that for this year, the timeline was too tight. We hope that by next year we will have a better system in place to institutionalize the survey.

7.2 Acadia Park
On March 4th, we held our first meeting with the AVP Campus and Community Planning, Michael White, in regards to Acadia Park. The conversation in regards to the land use plan is one that the University is not open to having. They are very on board with improving consultation practices, and we have been jointly developing “consultation principles” and a consultation charter, which they will ask other groups to sign off on. This is an on-going conversation. I have been in regular contact with the residents of Acadia Park, and we have been in total agreement about strategy moving forward. On April 26th we held a Town Hall in Acadia, with pizza and ice cream, where I presented the results of the report, and there were 33 adults and 22 children in attendance. Several residents got up and spoke. On May 22nd several residents of Acadia and myself took Michael White, Aviva Savelson (C+CP Senior Manager, Consultation) and Andrew Parr (Manager of Housing and Hospitality Services) on a tour of Acadia Park and had a productive conversation.

7.3 Exam Database
The Exam Database project continues, and Umang has been taking on the bulk of the work on this project. The project manager was hired as of November 1st, and my office has been in close communication with him. The Steering Committee met in the second week of March to discuss high level strategy and direction for the project. A working group has been formed to take on the more operational decisions that need to be made and the AMS will of course take a large role in this. The project manager has been working on engaging faculty and Faculties in the project, and on legal issues surrounding obtaining exams. We have been working on identifying existing banks of exams.

7.4 Affordable Housing & Housing Demand Study
The results of the student housing demand study have not been released yet, we are looking forward to hearing the results of these from the university.
7.5  Housing Contract
Please see my February report for more detail. I will be following up with Andrew Parr soon in regards to this issue. My new campus development commissioner has expressed interest in working on this project.

7.6  Midterm Evaluations of Teaching (MEoT)
Not much has happened since the last update. Marianne and Simon from CTLT, Daniel and I met recently to set strategy for the next year, and we are planning and event for Faculty in the early fall.

7.7  Aboriginal Student Engagement
The AMS has not had a strong connection with Aboriginal Students in the past, and I consider this to be a priority area for myself this coming year. In January I hired the first Aboriginal Students’ Commissioner, and he has been working on many things, including improving our relationship with aboriginal students and aboriginal student groups on campus. One highlight of this so far was when we presented at the Tuesday Lunches at the Long House on March 18. It was also the president of the First Nations Studies Student Association who raised the issue in regards to the aboriginal headdress worn by a student at Block Party, which resulted in Tanner, Spencer, Margareta, Anisa, and I crafting a response:
http://www.ams.ubc.ca/2014/05/ams-responds-to-block-party-incident/

7.8  Policy 73 (Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities)
The review committee has yet to be struck but after speaking with Janet Teasdale, the Director of Student Development and Services and Janet Mee, the Director of Access and Diversity, they agreed that there should be student representation on the review committee. As mentioned in Section 4, I have been working with Kimberly Carter of the MHN to better incorporate mental health into this policy. There is no representative group for students with disabilities on campus (partly due to the diverse nature of disabilities), and therefore I thought it was extremely important to be able to hear the voices of students with disabilities in this process. In the spring we created a short survey for students with disabilities. We will be compiling this data soon in order to ensure the voices of students with disabilities are heard throughout this process.

7.9  FL Assessment
The Flexible Learning Assessment Project has been a joint project between the VPA office and the VP Students office. The goal of the project is to provide assessment of Flexible Learning classes. The project manager is creating a ‘toolkit’ of a survey and focus group framework that can be easily used by professors to assess their own classes. We have been aiding her with consulting with students on the pilot survey and focus groups.

7.10  Divestment
After the referendum, the AMS needs to take a policy position on Divestment. We have been in conversation with UBCC350, and they have given us a large package of background documents. Daniel has been working on reading these and compiling them into a policy. We will be bringing this to Unecorn once they start meeting again.

7.11  Services Review Follow Up
I have continued to help Matthew Duguay and Daniel Levangie on certain aspects following up from the Services Review where they have to do with the University. We decided that transferring Volunteer Connect to the CSI+C was ultimately going to be more expensive than running it ourselves, and we therefore decided not to continue this conversation with the university. I have also been in continued conversation with the University as well as Matthew (and now Ron), Daniel and the Tutoring coordinators in regards to AMS Tutoring.
8 Other Non-Project Based Work

8.1 Orientations
Conversations have continued with Janet Teasdale’s office in regards to student orientations. Moving forward, Ava will also be part of these conversations given her position’s link to the undergrad societies. We will soon be meeting with Undergrad society presidents to discuss the expectations that have been set by the University through the Task Force’s recommendations.

8.2 Budgeting
Much of my time has been spent preparing a budget for my office. This was something new for me, and it served as a good way to think about my priorities for the year. The budget has not yet been fully approved by the Budget Committee, and I look forward to all my projects being funded.

8.3 Tuition Consultation for new programs
Please see my previous ternary report for a background on this issue. Since March, we have received notice and given feedback on the following programs: Masters of Common Law, Masters of Community and Regional Planning, Masters of Naval Engineering, Grad Certificate in Adult Learning and Education, Graduate Certificate Laddering into Related Masters Degrees and joint Masters of Physical Therapy and PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences. Some concerns in terms of the consultation process have been addressed, but not all have been. We will continue working with the VPS office to improve this.

8.4 University Committees Policy
Tanner and I have been working on a policy to determine how students get placed on committees, and my focus has been on the aspect to do with students on universities committees. This stems from the issue where execs get sent requests for students and there is no procedure to follow. This has gone to LPC and was sent back for revisions, but LPC has been very busy.

8.5 Task Force on Intersectional Gender-Based Violence and Aboriginal Stereotypes
I coordinated an official response to the Task Force’s report, and consulted with the Education Committee, Ava, Tanner, my aboriginal students’ commissioner and my equity commissioner. The response to the report officially came out in mid-May, and we will be working closely with the university on their implementation of portions of the report that have to do with students.

8.6 Policy 34
I saw on a review committee for a new Board of Governors Policy on Appointments of Administrative Vice-Presidents, and raised concerns in regards to how students were chose for these committees. The committee was not in agreement with me, and I will be continuing to voice concern.

8.7 SSC Strategic Planning Session
I attended the Student Senate Caucus Strategic Planning session (which is also part of my role as a student senator) and I am very excited with the overlap between my priorities and the Caucus as a whole. The three areas identified as priorities are Mental Health, Flexible Learning and Intercultural Understanding. I look forward to working closely with them this year. It is worth noting that my AVP, Daniel, is also a student senator.
8.8 University Search Committees
I am currently sitting on the search committee for the Associate Vice-President Equity and Inclusion, but due to the confidential nature of this, I cannot say more.

9 Staff Portfolio Updates
Most of my staff have been in a transitional phrase in the past few months. The old staff were finishing up their terms and projects, and writing transition reports. New staff were being hired and being transitioned into their new positions. Most of the work has been on on-going projects, and those can be found in my previous (February 2014) report.

Respectfully submitted May 27th, 2014.

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