Dear Council,

The purpose of this report is to include the work that the committee has undertaken over the last ten days, as well as goals and issues that I’d like to bring to Council in the future.

CASA

I will be working with the President and VP External’s offices to compile a report on CASA to present to the committee. From there, we will create a list of questions the committee will ask CASA when they come to do their presentation to the committee and Council. After that, the committee will make a recommendation to Council before the vote of our membership in the organization.

Japanese-Canadian students interned during WWII

Universities in Canada and the USA have granted honorary degrees to Japanese-Canadian students that were interned during the Second World War. So far, the University has opposed this move. I am bringing this to the committee because the students were once AMS members, paid AMS fees and were unable to continue their studies through no fault of their own.

In 2011, the University will be granting honorary degrees to David Suzuki, as well as a Canadian Senator, a musician, and a choral conductor, among others. This is not to say that these individuals do not deserve their honorary degrees, or that their contributions to society did not have a substantial impact. But to grant honorary degrees to these interned Japanese-Canadians is an issue for which the AMS ought to be advocating.
Future plans

U-Pass Subsidy

The University and AMS are currently negotiating the agreement for the U-Pass BC program. During negotiations with the province, it was decided that no post-secondary institution should subsidize the U-Pass program. The government claims that post-secondary institutions should not double dip into provincial funding since the province supports both public institutions and the U-Pass program.

Previous to this agreement, UBC has been contributing $1.3 million towards the U-Pass program. This $1.3 million is generated from parking services at UBC.

In lieu of funding the U-Pass program, the University is proposing contributing $500,000 towards promoting biking as a mode of transportation, which greatly decreases the contribution of the University towards the U-Pass program.

I will be working with the offices of President and VP External, as well as Andrew Jackson, the U-Pass Commissioner for the AMS.

International Students

In contact with VP External's office, International Student Commissioner and Education Committee chair on work to improve services offered to international students.

BC Budget Submission

On October 14, the AMS will attend the BC government annual budget feedback seminar. I will be working with the President and VP External to direct what the AMS will ask to be included in the budget.

Gage-South/(Affordable) Student Housing

Continue to work with the VP Academic and University Affairs office on the Gage South development plan to ensure the issues is resolved with the students’ best interests in mind, and to press the University to respect the “under review” designation.

If the University plans to build condos in Gage South, I would like to push for more student-housing on campus, and even affordable student housing, something that the University lacks.

Student Loan Reform

Work with the President and VP External with Minister of Advanced Education, Naomi Yamamoto to reform the BC student loan program, as the government offers these loans higher than any other province in Canada. Changes to the program could include
increasing the cap of maximum allowed debt and integration with the federal student loan program.

I apologize for the brevity of this report. If there is anything else that you would like to see be addressed in this committee feel free to contact me. My door is always open.

Best,

Michael Haack, Chair
University and External Relations Committee