UBC Board of Governors
c/o UBC Board of Governors Secretariat
6328 Memorial Road, Room 121
Old Administration Building
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2

April 25, 2013

AMS Submission to Board of Governors Regarding Proposed Tuition for First Year International Students Program in Vantage College

To the Members of the UBC Board of Governors:

This submission is made on behalf of the Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver for consideration regarding the proposed tuition fees for the first year international students program in Vantage College. A draft form of the item presented before the Board was circulated to the AMS and other student groups involved in the tuition consultation process by representatives of Vantage College on March 6, 2013. Following the receipt of this information, the AMS and International Students Association (ISA) worked with the Vice-President Students Office, Provosts Office and the College Staff to organize a tuition consultation with an open forum session held on March 26, 2013.

Enclosed in this submission is a copy of the formal motion regarding the program approved by the AMS Council on April 24, 2013.

Tuition Proposal
This proposal presents a program fee structure that differs from the traditional per credit fee counting for tuition in most undergraduate program. As a result, it is difficult to make a direct comparison between existing tuition structures because of the nature of the program. Taking the tuition and credit load at face value and comparing the program fee to the ISI tuition rate for first year Arts and Science of $22,622¹, based on a 30 credit load, the proposed tuition is significantly higher for a lower number of credits (24 credits).

From our understanding of the tuition structure, the fee proposed is a program fee that would provide all students with a minimum of 24 credits. In addition to the credit load, the fee will cover the extra English language support offered. Students placed in an accelerated stream who require less English language support will have the opportunity to increase their credit load. The AMS understands that this program based structure provides a curriculum that is tailored to the needs of individual students thus ensuring that all students receive the support they need to be successful upon matriculation into second year.

¹ [http://www.students.ubc.ca/coursesreg/tuition-fees-deposits/tuition-fees/](http://www.students.ubc.ca/coursesreg/tuition-fees-deposits/tuition-fees/)
Under the University’s tuition principles, 25-30% of all tuition revenue is allocated to Central to cover the institutional costs of delivering education\(^2\). In the case of this program, \(~35\%\) of the tuition revenue is being contributed to central at steady state (Year 3). The administration has made it clear that this central allocation will contribute to filling the anticipated budget gaps of the University over the coming years.

The AMS recognizes the direct contribution this program will make to the financial sustainability of the University and as such, acknowledges that any decreases to the proposed tuition will have reciprocal impacts on the operating budget of the University. We are aware that a budget shortfall will result in budget contractions across the institution that will affect the quality of education for all students. We recognize this trade-off, but encourage the University wherever possible to reduce the tuition figure to be equivalent to the anticipated budget gaps of the University only.

**Student Financial Aid**

One of the goals of the program is to increase the diversity of our international student body; however the program is set at a much higher fee structure than ISI tuition rate. The AMS is aware that the costs associated with attending UBC pose a significant barrier to entry for both domestic and international students from lower income backgrounds.

The AMS is pleased to see that the University has committed to setting aside 7% of all tuition revenue from the college towards financial aid for its students. In our research of other similar programs, many institutions do not provide such provisions and we are encouraged by UBC’s step to make this program accessible for promising students.

The AMS encourages the University to consult further with international students and the ISA to develop an appropriate mix of merit and needs based financial aid for the students in the program. The financial aid allocations should also take into account provisions for the entire course of study for students. While the program duration is a maximum of 16 month, successful students will matriculate into a full length UBC degree program. As such, any financial aid provisions should be designed with the entire course of a student’s study at UBC in mind.

The AMS is in support of the goal of the University to increase the diversity of international students on campus. Financial aid allocations will need to be leveraged effectively to not only gain ethnic and national diversity but to also increase socio-economic diversity among our international student population.

**Allocation for Student Services**

In reviewing the budget cost allocation, the AMS noted that the allocation of funds for student services reaches a steady state number at year 2, while student enrolment reaches steady state at year 3. The table below shows the resulting allocation of student support programming in terms of dollars per student from year 1 to steady state. The AMS is concerned that there is not a corresponding budget increase to accommodate 400 additional students in the program from year 2 to year 3 onwards, rather the support per student by dollar values deceases by 40% from year 2 to year 3.

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\(^2\) [http://www.students.ubc.ca/tuitionconsultation/ubcs-tuition-framework/tuition-principles/](http://www.students.ubc.ca/tuitionconsultation/ubcs-tuition-framework/tuition-principles/)
Furthermore, there has been discussion about the potential of expanding the Faculties participating in the program beyond Science and Arts in future years. If there are plans in place to increase the breadth of disciplines available to students, the AMS feels this may have a corresponding impact on the variety of student services that will need to be offered and in turn may impact the budget.

**Institutional Capacity**

The AMS is aware of the enrolment targets of the University and how this program fits within these plans to increase the international student population at UBC Vancouver. We recognize the many benefits to the University and student experience that an internationalized community brings. Knowing that international students pay the full cost of their education in tuition, the AMS understands that there is no upper ceiling or “cap” on international student enrollment at this time. We would however, ask the University to consider the physical capacity on campus and what defines maximum enrollment from the physical space and facilities perspective.

The Orchard Commons project will provide academic facilities for the College specifically; however as the student matriculate into 2nd year at UBC, the AMS is concerned about the corresponding demands on Faculty academic facilities and how this additional student demand will be accommodated not only in classroom space but also informal learning, recreational, and study spaces.

**Student Experience**

The AMS and Student Senators have been engaged in discussions surrounding the academic development of the program. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage the University to make greater efforts in developing the non-academic aspects of the program. The AMS strongly feels that students enrolled in this program should have the privilege of the full UBC experience from orientations onwards. Social integration will be essential to student success in this program and beyond. Developing plans for student service provisions and student experience will take time and the AMS strongly feels the University should begin this process as soon as possible. We hope that we will have an opportunity to see this conversation evolve and take shape over the next few months.

**Student Consultation**

The AMS would like to commend the University for the ongoing consultation that has been taking place with the AMS, Student Senators, and the International Students Association regarding this program. This process has been a great example of the benefits of consulting early and often with students. Leadership from the AMS and ISA have commented that it is a refreshing change to be consulted in the early stages of program development where student input and suggestion can be taken into account in shaping the program. We would like to thank the Provosts Office and College for their commitment to a transparent planning process and hope that this ongoing consultation will continue.

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3 International Program Financial Projections
Wherever possible, the AMS encourages the University to work towards lowering the cost burden associated with attending UBC and the Student Financial Support Project is an indication of the University working within its mean to improve access. However, given the financial realities caused by the status of post-secondary education funding from the provincial government, the AMS recognizes that the University is in a tough position. If, through this program, we are able to provide high quality education to a diverse body of international students while also ensuring the quality of education remains strong for all students, this is something the AMS can support.

The AMS will continue to work with University administration to ensure that the academic and non-academic development of this program contributes to an enriching educational experience for our current and future members.

Sincerely,

Kiran Mahal
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Cc:
Dr. Louise Cowin, Vice President Students
Dr. David Farrar, Provost and Vice President Academic
Mr. James Ridge, Principal, Vantage College
WHEREAS the UBC Senate and Board of Governors have approved the creation of Vantage College and the establishment of a first year international students program within the college;

WHEREAS this program will seek to fulfill three goals: 1) to diversify the international student population; 2) act as a living lab for the development of innovative pedagogy in the delivery of first year courses; 3) provide a financial contribution back to the central University budget;

WHEREAS the AMS is aware of the financial outlook of the University and the contribution that the program will make to ensuring the financial sustainability of UBC;

BIRT AMS Council supports a diverse student body and an investment into improving the delivery of first year curricula;

BIFRT the AMS encourages the University to ensure that the experience and quality of services offered to students enrolled in the program is parallel to those offered to all other UBC students;

BIFRT that the AMS encourages the University to minimize the tuition costs associate with the program wherever possible and that funds be allocated towards need-based financial aid and externally funded scholarships to better meet the goal of a diverse student population.

Adopted by AMS Council April 24, 2013