

UBC Student Senate Caucus

Meeting Minutes for Oct 16, 2013

Meeting Location & Time:	UBC SUB 266J, 5:00 – 6:00pm Meeting Started: Meeting Ended:	Date: Wednesday, October 16th, 2013
Prepared by:	Graham Beales (Vice-Chair)	
Formatted and Initial Edits by:	Graham Beales (Vice-Chair)	
Present:	Anne Kessler, Nina Karimi, Tom MacLachlan, Melissa Patton, Elaine Kuo, Kiran Mahal, Philip Edgecumbe (by telephone), Casey (by telephone)	
Invited:	Umang Khandelawl (Associate VP Academic & University Affairs, AMS) Curtis Tse (Student senator and UBC Board Member from UBC-O) Pavani Shirley Nakata, (UBC Vancouver Ombudsperson for Students)	
Regrets:	The meeting was a special-purpose meeting. No regrets sent.	

1. Welcome/Introductions

Introduction of Elaine, the new Education Student Senator

2. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: That the Agenda be approved as circulated.

Note: Looking to include a short discussion of student on search committee for Academic director of Vantage College.

Moved to approve by Nina, seconded by Elaine.

Approved

3. Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting – September 18th, 2013

Motion: That the SSC approve the Minutes of the SSC meeting held on September 18th, 2013.

Quorum was not present so the motion was tabled until the next meeting.

However, there was one correction. Cole did not present on the Dual Degree Program Option in the Bachelor of Commerce.

**Motion Tabled
for November
20 Meeting**

4. 27 Credit Issue for Students with Disabilities

Pavani detailed the personal experience in which she discovered the issue: that a student who is approved to study with a full course load equal to forty percent of the normal through Access & Diversity, is not eligible for Dean's list in the Faculty of Arts. This was appealed, and then denied with the official response being: "You do not meet this 27 credit requirement, and the Faculty of Arts is not in a position to discriminate between different students allowed to study at a reduced course load." There was an attempt to appeal this at the Senate level, but it was noted that there did not appear to be a process in place to do so. An appeal was then sent to the Academic Governance

office, which forwarded it to the appropriate committee.

It was noted during the presentation that this should affect many students across the campus, and not only those approved to study with a smaller full course load by Access & Diversity, but by other departments as well. As well, as it takes place behind the scenes, most students affected by this issue would not even know that it came into play. Finally, Pavani mentioned that the issue is also prevalent in the Regulations Governing University Awards, which affect all awards and scholarships distributed by UBC.

Tom commended Pavani for following through with the issue, and offered to help.

Graham mentioned that the Regulations Governing University Awards are to be reviewed in November, and that he has asked to review the eligibility section of them at the Student Awards meeting as well. Kiran then replied that the policy will then be passed onto the Academic Policy committee if a decision to amend it is made.

Pavani commented that how awards are selected in Arts, (the top ten percent of the faculty being a requirement), does not agree with how UBC has been moving towards an education that is not purely academic, citing the example of the widespread use of broad-based admission.

Melissa asked if there is currently a student disability liaison, and received the reply that no there was not.

Graham asked the faculty specific senators if they could approach their respective faculties about modifying Dean's List requirements. Tom commented that the issue may not be modifiable within Senate.

5. Website Update

The updates described at the September May 15 and July 4 meetings were completed. Committee placements are now on the website, as well as student initiatives and SSC minutes and attendance records. Placements for the new senators are not up to date.

Graham asked for other SSC members to check for any errors and report them to him.

6. UBC Connect

Student senators have been asked to bring up the issue of UBC Connect in its current state at the next meeting of Senate Proper. Student senators are asked to attempt to poll students so that they can compile issues.

One issue that was mentioned at meeting was the fact that students often cannot get online, and this can be critical when that is the only location that a course's readings are found. Another is the issue of Connect being down during online quizzes or tests.

Kiran noted that issues with UBC Connect are recognized by the CTLC, however they need to address structural issues before they may address Connect. Therefore she recommends that we compile a list of current priorities to be fixed first.

Nina recommended a possible quick, temporary solution—that professors get a notifications when the CTLC is down, or assignments/readings do not get properly uploaded, so that the

material may be emailed to students. It would be good if the CTLC could be similarly notified of UBC Connect going down.

7. Discussion of SSC budget – What are our spending priorities?

Discussion tabled due to time constraints and small portion of student senators present.

8. Discussion about Senate Appeals Committee with the UBC Ombudsperson

Shirley Nakata attended the SSC meeting to ask student senators who have seen the appeal process for feedback, as she does not personally attend them.

Melissa mentioned that students often don't have the letters/documentation required for an appeal due to lack of proper instruction. Eg, students who are not allowed to advocate for themselves but instead need to go through Access & Diversity need a letter from their doctor to before Access & Diversity will do so.

Tom stated that he has had a good experience with the Academic Appeals committee so far, and that it has been generous to students in general.

Shirley asked if student senators receive training in the appeals process. Kiran replied that yes, the chair of the committee trains them as well as they read the entire policy. Tom mentioned that there will be a continuing studies course offered later in the year available for student senators on the appeals committees to take for free. Shirley stated that perhaps all student senators should take this course, and that the BC Council of Administrative Tribunals offers a good course on the subject. Kiran replied that it would be better to set up the timing correctly so that senators can receive this training before starting on the committee.

Shirley asked if the SSC thought that a quorum of five members is required on the appeals committees. Tom stated that yes, it is probably so. If fewer than five it needs to be lowered to three, which is few. Also, decreasing the quorum would make little difference to scheduling the appeal as a respondent, the witnesses; etc. would still be required to attend. Kiran commented that the primary limitation for scheduling appeals is most likely to be the dean, as a representative of the faculty, as deans have heavily limited schedules. Tom also mentioned that unlike in the BC Court of Appeals, the panel is not made up of experts on appeals and therefore a greater number of members are required.

Shirley asked if students are well advised and supported. Tom replied that once the student reaches the senate level of appeals yes, they are. Kiran commented that the AMS and the GSS should probably look at their own advocacy. Also, that the Student Legal Fund Society should perhaps use its funding and that more traction between these three organizations would help. She commented that the student advocates have never been evaluated by the students they represented.

Melissa asked how long the whole appeal process may take, and specifically if a student is disciplined may he or she be required to take a year off while waiting for an appeal. Shirley replied that only the president can mete out discipline, so such a situation is rare as any discipline is only enforced at the level preceding Senate.

Kiran mentioned that the Appeals Committee chair makes an annual report to Senate, and that he may be a good person to learn about appeals from. Tom added that he has been on the committee for many years.

Shirley mentioned that she is working with assistant deans of faculties to set policy on academic misconduct, and may be able to include appeals on academic standing.

Casey asked what the role of the ombudsperson is while appeals are still at the faculty level. Specifically, if the student goes to the ombudsperson to better understand the appeals process, would it be admitting fault? Shirley replied that all communications with the Office of the Ombudsperson are confidential and that therefore the student would still be able to appeal a faculty decision. The role of the ombudsperson is to discover what the student knows, to instruct the student on how to discover the allegations against him or her, and the rights of the student.

Melissa asked if a student wants to seek outside council instead of going through the UBC process, would the student still be forced to complete the UBC process of appeals. Kiran replied that a student can sue under provincial or Canadian law, but under the university act the power to make these decisions belongs to the university. Shirley mentioned that the court would most likely tell the student to finish the process at the university level before returning to court if unhappy with the decision.

9. Adjournment

The next meeting of the SSC will be on Wednesday November 20, 2013 at 5pm.