VP Academic & University Affairs
July 2015 Newsletter

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1. **WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?**

The VP Academic & University Affairs office will be releasing monthly ‘newsletters’ to EduCom, UNECORN, the Student Senate Caucus and the VP Academic Caucus, in order to ensure clarity about the work being done, as well as to find opportunities for work between these groups and the Academic & University Affairs office. Some initiatives will not have bearing on these different groups, but many issues and projects do align with them.

2. **JULY IN REVIEW**

1.1. **OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OERs) & EXAM PREP DATABASE**

- We are currently working with the Simon Fraser Students’ Society (SFSS) on content for a student awareness campaign on Open Educational Resources/Open Textbooks. We will be running #textbookbrokeBC as our campaign, which is a BC version of a campaign run in the US. We will have students take pictures with their textbook receipts leaving the bookstore and have them Instagram them, as well as posting them ourselves, and then educate students about Open Textbooks and Open Educational Resources. We are making bookmarks to give out, and are hoping to roll this campaign out to other student societies in BC as well. The UBC Bookstore has agreed to work with us on the campaign, and support us in any way we may need to support Open Educational Resources amongst faculty members.

- Parallel to the student awareness campaign, we are working with the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) to launch a few professional development workshops for faculty about Open Educational Resources. We are sitting on the committee that is planning Open Week, with the library and other stakeholders. We are also hoping to push for open content to be available in the library catalogue, with much more coming on the university administration and faculty/staff side in the coming months.

- This month, work on the Exam Database involved meeting with faculty members, and having a meeting with departments heads/designates from the Faculty of Arts with the new Associate Dean Academic, to introduce the resource and hear any concerns they had to adoption of the resources and barriers to use. We have taken these comments, as well as those within our office staff, and will be working to make necessary changes to the resource. This project and working with faculty on uptake will move to the Academic Affairs Commissioner when they are hired.

1.2. **UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES**

- We have been working to compile student undergraduate research initiatives, working with the club Undergraduate Research Opportunities. We will also be continuing to work
to ensure that the Provost’s office works on deliverables that they have been asked to look at from Senate in regards to undergraduate research. My office plans to create a platform on the AMS website that is a one-stop for students who are interested in getting involved in research, with resources and groups they can reach all there. The platform for undergraduate research itself will be worked on throughout October and be live by November, with the second winter semester being used to promote and engage students surrounding the platform.

1.3. **Engagement & Tuition Consultation**

- My office has started to engage AMS student staff, AMS councilors, and constituency executives in short discussions surrounding engagement. We will be moving on to clubs, and then the larger student population in the next few weeks, hoping to find themes and underlying trends, as well as recommendations, for the end of August. These recommendations will be used by my office to engage students this year, and will be passed along to the university. In March/April, my office will do a review of the engagement recommendations and provide changes to them based on experiences this year, to provide recommendations to my successor.

- In terms of international tuition specifically, my office has been working with the university’s VP Students office to create a set of Best Practices to fall under Policy 71 (http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2015/06/Policy71_Call-For-Comments.pdf), in regards to tuition consultation. The hope is that these best practices will be enforced throughout faculties and consultations. Going along with these best practices is a template for this upcoming round of international tuition increases that deans/students must fill out together and that will be published following this year’s consultations to ensure transparency in the process.

1.4. **Campus Development**

- The Library Garden project covers the space between Irving K. Barber and Koerner Library. I have been sitting on the Steering Committee for the space, and working to ensure that students uses of the space are integrated into the conversation of landscape changes. This space also will be the home to the Indian Residential Schools Dialogue Centre, so many stakeholders are involved in the conversation. Campus & Community Planning will be coming to UNECORN to discuss this project.

- The corner construction area at Wesbrook Mall and University Boulevard is called ‘GSAB’ and will be remaining empty for many years. Since this is the ‘gateway to campus’, the Board of Governors has asked that something be put up to cover the space. Campus & Community Planning has brought the AMS in to consult on what students
would like to see with the fencing, and we have been working to ensure that the student voice is integrated into their plans for the piece. This work will continue into August.

1.5. **Campus Safety & Sexual Assault**

- The Safer Party Plan is a set of resources and considerations for student groups to be making in regards to safe partying, to ensure that they are making plans for safety of their party attendees during the event and following the event. This plan has been draft-ed in my office and will be worked on by the AMS VP Admin, the Sexual Assault Support Centre, AMS Services, AMS Security, and Campus Security, with hopes of rolling out a pilot to some student groups in the first semester. Ultimately this will be rolled out to all student groups, with the hopes of sparking a larger conversation surrounding safe party-ing.

- I have been working with the Sexual Assault Support Centre in terms of prevention, edu-cation and response to sexualized violence at the university, representing students in decisions made on this topic in Student Development & Services. I have also participat-ed in meetings with the SASC surrounding off-campus resources and policy this month.

1.6. **Academic Experience Survey**

- The AMS Academic Experience Survey 2015 report was released and is available on the AMS website. Our office has also sent out supplements of the survey out to specific groups on campus (ex: Enrollment Services, Student Development & Services, Provost Office…) to ensure that pertinent information gets to each group. Additionally, a constituen-cy supplement was created, providing recommendations surrounding constituency-specific questions. We also newly have a portal that allows for further analysis of survey data, so all inquiries in terms of the survey data are welcome.

- My office will start working on the 2016 survey at the end of August, working with the VP Students office to ensure that our survey complements what is done at the university, rather than duplicating. We will also be working to condense the survey’s length.

1.7. **Musqueam Projects**

- Currently the Aboriginal Students’ Commissioner is working on the dimensions and location of the Musqueam Weaving in the AMS Student Nest, with a hope to have that com-pleted before the end of the summer. After that we will be creating an RFP to call out for weavers who are interested in being involved in the project, and have a committee with Musqueam to choose the artist and move forward with the weaving.
• We have also been working to create a space for Indigenous students and groups that are representing them to come together to collaborate and connect. The Aboriginal Students’ Commissioner has been working with the First Nations House of Learning (FNHL) to ensure that we are complementing their programming, and that actions coming out of these meetings can be supported by their staff. We are working on having the first meeting of these groups in September.

1.8. **EQUITY PROJECTS**

• The Equity Commissioner has been working on bringing the Positive Space training to the AMS. The training will take place for student and permanent staff towards the end of August, with a hope to continue trainings for other groups throughout the year, creating a lasting connection with the campaign.

• We are currently looking into the AMS Respectful Environment Policy, to see if any changes should be made to the processes under the policy, as well as looking to update it, eventually working with LPC to make changes.

1.9. **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**

• I attended the International Conference on Health Promoting Universities & Colleges at UBCO last month and in the follow-up have been working with the Wellbeing Initiative at UBC to report back, as well as figure out next steps for students involved in work surrounding wellbeing.

• We have created an insert for the AMS First Week packages that will speak to the resources available on campus for Mental Health & Wellbeing, both within and outside of the AMS, to ensure that there is full understanding of what is available for incoming students.

1.11. **VANTAGE COLLEGE REPRESENTATION**

• We have been working to incorporate Vantage college students into their appropriate undergraduate societies, working with the AUS, SUS, and EUS. The only anomaly is that management Vantage students do their first year in arts courses, so they will be AUS members. We also have been working with the college and enrollment services to ensure that Vantage students pay their society’s fees and have now completed that process. In August we hope to bring the undergraduate societies involved into a conversation about specific needs of this constituency group, and will work with them to hold elections in September for a Vantage representative to their society. The AMS will also support the three Vantage reps from the undergraduate societies to work together.
1.12. Other

- My office has been working to ensure that undergraduate societies have been working with their Dean’s Offices on Orientations Guidelines, and that they feel supported to finish their planning. Additionally, we have been working with the VP Admin portfolio to ensure that clubs are aware of the considerations to be made for events held for ‘new to UBC’ students.

- I will be presenting on the Academic Experience Survey, and with Campus & Community Planning on their Principles of Engagement at the upcoming Student Union Development Summit (SUDS), so I have been working on my presentations for that conference. Additionally, my AVP and I will be co-presenting with Christina Hendricks (UBC faculty member) and Brady Yano (Simon Fraser Student Society) on Open Education and Student Involvement at the Open Education Conference in November in Vancouver, so we have been starting to work on that presentation.

3. What’s Coming Up?

- More hiring (Academic Affairs Commissioner & International Students’ Commissioner)
- Exam Prep Database & Mid-Course Feedback
- Open Educational Resources (campaigns and actions)
- Tuition Consultations
- Undergraduate Research Platform
- Interactive Student-Friendly Campus Map
- Academic Experience Survey 2016
- And much more…