VP Academic & University Affairs
June 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 these groups.

2. JUNE IN REVIEW

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

- Following the Open Textbook Summit (end of May) and meetings with UBC stakeholders, the VP Academic & University Affairs office has come up with an action-based plan at UBC, in order to advocate for OERs and Open Textbooks amongst students, faculty/staff, and the UBC Administration. We have also presented to the Alliance of BC Students, who will be looking to their policy committee to ensure that all BC Student Unions part of the alliance will be advocating for OERs as well. Additionally, we will be presenting at the Open Conference in Vancouver in November, with a student from the Simon Fraser Student Society and a member of the UBC faculty.

- The Exam Prep Database is now live and the Academic & University Affairs Office is currently seeking to collect content and a user base for the database. We have developed a strategic follow-up plan for all faculty members we will be talking to, and plan for gradual uptake in the summer, followed by a update presentation to Senate about the database.

1.2. UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

- In June, the Academic & University Affairs office worked to collect the different student-led initiatives regarding undergraduate research. We have also contacted the Provost’s office to determine their plans for undergraduate research, following a Senate directive to focus on this goal.

1.3. UNIVERSITY FINANCING ENGAGEMENT & TUITION CONSULTATION

- The Board of Governors passed a resolution regarding international student tuition (for all students besides those in graduate research programs) on June 9, 2015, directing the UBC administration to begin a program-by-program review of tuition, taking into account the tuition of peer institutions. The VP Academic & University Affairs has been working with the VP Students office to meaningfully include students in the process that the uni-
versity will be undergoing, with a previous plan being reworked after the Board of Governors resolution.

• A larger conversation about student engagement in university decisions is also being evaluated by this office. The next month will be students engaged in a number of ways about how they can be best engaged in future conversations, and a strategic engagement plan will be finished by the end of the summer, in time for September when students return to classes.

1.4. ACCESSIBILITY & AFFORDABILITY

• The Accessibility & Affordability Policy, passed through the AMS University & External Relations Committee as a pair of policies (one University Affairs focused and another Externally focused), directs the VP Academic & University Affairs and the VP External to advocate for accessibility & affordability more broadly than just tuition and housing, looking into Open Educational Resources (OERs), as well as maintaining some of the structures that currently exist to promote both accessibility and affordability at UBC and in the province. This set of policies is going to AMS Council for approval on June 24, 2015.

1.5. CAMPUS SAFETY

• The Campus Safety Working Group is a UBC group that meets monthly. In June, this working group held its first Campus Safety Forum, with stakeholders on campus (student leaders, faculty and staff involved in security and safety on campus) to provide updates on goals achieved, discuss next steps and include the campus community in the conversation. The main updates were that of community planning initiatives for safety (lighting, landscaping…), the new security blue phones that will feature cameras, steps forward on first year entrance intercultural understanding education, and sexual assault prevention and response. The next Campus Safety Forum will be held when students are back on campus and will be open to students outside of student leadership.

• Internally, the AMS is also working on campus safety, with plans underway for a Safer Party Plan for student groups and a Campus Observation Room, similar to the one at Queens University.

1.6. ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE SURVEY

• The VP Academic & University Affairs last year decided to hire Insights West, to help create, administer and analyze data for the 2015 Academic Experience Survey. The analyzed data and a preliminary report was received by our office mid-June, with plans to be completed finished the overall report by the end of June, and to create specific-content reports for campus stakeholders during the first two weeks of June. The data is completely open access, so please contact Jenna at vpacademic@ams.ubc.ca for any of the data or pieces of the report.
1.7. **Musqueam Weaving Project**

- The AMS Aboriginal Students’ Commissioner secured funding from both the AMS Sustainability Fund and the Grad Class Council graduation gift to commission a Musqueam weaving for the Nest. It was previously determined that there is not a lasting representation of the Musqueam in the building, and this project will provide that, as well as closer relations with the Musqueam community. Now that funding has been secured, the VP Academic & University Affairs, Aboriginal Commissioner and Executive Director will be meeting with the Musqueam to discuss steps forward.

1.8. **Internal Equity**

- The equity commissioner has begun his term by looking to put in place short-term steps, like programming of space and events for staff; to help promote equity and safe spaces in the workplace. Ultimately this will lead to partnering with Human Resources internally, and the Student Administration Commission with clubs, to ensure there is equity programming and training for students throughout the society.

1.9. **Mental Health & Wellbeing Investment**

- The Mental Health & Wellbeing Commissioner is finishing up some projects, like research and steps forward for a fall reading week and a withdrawal under extenuating circumstances.

- Following the 20% increase to 8-month housing contracts, UBC has committed $2.5 million dollar increase in their annual investment into Mental Health & Wellbeing Services for students. Keeling & Associates visited UBC this month to work with the community in order to determine next steps in funding with the increased investment.

1.10. **Campus Development**

- The Campus Development Commissioner is currently working on streamlining recommendations made by her predecessor in regards to the UBC residence contract. These recommendations will then have actions associated and meetings with Student Housing & Hospitality Services will continue.

- This month saw meetings with Campus & Community Planning in regards to University Boulevard plans, proposed micro units in Gage South, and other development projects passing Board approval on June 9, 2015.
1.11. Vantage College Representation

- The VP Academic & University Affairs had previously met with Vantage College to discuss the representation of their students on AMS Council. Following some consultation with current Vantage students by the previous international students’ commissioner, it was determined that more science students needed to be consulted before any more steps forward were carried out. This has happened and the next step will be working with the AUS, SUS and EUS to ensure that faculty representation for Vantage students can be achieved.

3. What’s Coming Up?

- Mid-Course Feedback
- Exam Prep Database
- Open Educational Resources (campaigns and actions)
- Student Engagement in University Financing
- Undergraduate Research Platform
- Interactive Student-Friendly Campus Map
- Academic Experience Survey 2016
- And much more...