1. **What is this Document?**

The VP Academic & University Affairs (VP AUA) office will be releasing monthly 'newsletters' to EduCom, UNECORN, the Student Senate Caucus, the VP Academic Caucus, Vancouver Student Board Reps, and VP AUA Staff Members 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.

Additionally, here is the contact information for the full team in the VP AUA Office:

- **AVP Academic & University Affairs - Daniel Munro** ([avpacademic@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:avpacademic@ams.ubc.ca))
- **Equity Commissioner - Emmet Lee** ([equitycomm@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:equitycomm@ams.ubc.ca))
- **Campus Development Commissioner - Emily Rennalls** ([cdcomm@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:cdcomm@ams.ubc.ca))
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing Commissioner - Lina Castro** ([mhwcomm@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:mhwcomm@ams.ubc.ca))
- **Aboriginal Students' Commissioner - Salia Joseph** ([aboriginalcom@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:aboriginalcom@ams.ubc.ca))
- **International Students' Commissioner - Saxon Coop** ([internationalsc@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:internationalsc@ams.ubc.ca))
- **Academic Affairs Commissioner - Dario Garousian** ([academicaffairs@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:academicaffairs@ams.ubc.ca))

2. **September in Review**

1. **Open Educational Resources (OERs)**

   - **Student Campaign**

     We are almost finished compiling the “How To Talk to Your Professor About Open” piece of the student campaign (stay tuned for some beautiful postcards). The #textbookbroke-BC part of the campaign will be run again in January, this time in partnership with UBC Students’ Union of the Okanagan.

   - **Staff/Faculty Piece**

     We are continuing to work with the Senior Appointments Committee (SAC) to integrate language surrounding the creation of Open Educational Resources into the tenure track process.

     We are also continuing to work with the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) on professional development for Faculty and Staff, and will be involved in more presentations surrounding student involvement and engagement in the classroom when OERs are used. As a part of this we will be presenting at the Educational Technology
Users’ Group Un-Conference on November 6th on, “Engaging students in OERs and textbookbrokeBC”.

• Open Education Conference 2015

Daniel Munro, AVP Academic & University Affairs, the VP University Affairs from the Simon Fraser Students’ Society, a UBC faculty member and myself will be presenting on a panel at the Open Education Conference on November 19th on, “Faculty and Student Collaboration for OER and Open Textbook Advocacy.”

• OER Sprint

The AVP AUA has been working very hard on coordinating an Open Educational Resources Sprint with faculty members across disciplines. Currently we are working to secure funding from the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (TLEF), to coordinate a multi-day sprint with faculty members to create content surrounding the theme of “Environmental Ethics” and then working to integrate it into classes at UBC. More information to come soon on this project.

2. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

• Mid-Course Feedback & Exam Database

The Academic Affairs Commissioner is continuing to speak to faculty members about both projects and we are seeing some uptake in both, though very slowly.

• Undergraduate Research Platform

The creation of an undergraduate research platform is underway, with the Academic Affairs Commissioner working with many campus stakeholders to compile a list of undergraduate research opportunities and determine the best way to present the opportunities to students. This platform will be housed at http://www.ams.ubc.ca/leadership/executive/key-projects/undergraduate-research/

3. ENGAGEMENT & TUITION CONSULTATIONS

• International Tuition Consultation Implementation

The International Tuition Formal Consultation started on October 15th and will continue until November 12th. All the information you will need throughout the consultation can be found here: www.ams.ubc.ca/tuitionincrease. So far the town halls, think tanks and consultation sessions have been successful and interesting in terms of garnering student opinion. We already seem to be hearing from students who do not normally get involved in these sorts of discussions, which is very positive.

• Board of Governors Submission on International Tuition

At the same time as the consultation, the VP AUA Office is working to create a counter-proposal to the proposed international tuition increases that the university is putting for-
ward. This submission will include research into questions of diversity, recruitment and retention, excellence, and peer institutions, providing an alternate methodology to assess international tuition increases, as well as present a proposal for a new needs-based international student financial aid award. This will be ready by mid-November and will be sent out at the same time as it is submitted to the Board of Governors for consideration. We will also be presenting to the Board of Governors at their committee meetings on the 24th, and at the Board of Governors meeting on December 3rd.

- **Policy 71 Consultation & Best Practices**

  Policy 71 is UBC’s policy on ‘Consultation with Students about Tuition and Mandatory Fees.’ After the consultation small changes were made, including making language more prescriptive in terms of specific elements that the university has to fulfill to create meaningful consultations with students. This policy and it's 'Best Practices' will go to the Board of Governors in December for approval.

- **Tuition Consultation (MPCTL, EdD, MSDS)**

  The tuition consultations for the new Masters in High Performance Coaching and Technical Learning, Doctor of Education in Reading Education, and Masters of Science in Data Science all took place this month. There were a few issues with the first two programs and their tuitions, but the Faculty of Education worked with us to address concerns and make appropriate changes. If you would like to see the Board of Governors submissions for any of these new programs, please email Jenna at vpacademic@ams.ubc.ca!

4. **Campus Development**

- **Library Garden**

  The Library Garden is the space between Irving K. Barber Library and Koerner Library, and Campus & Community Planning is currently planning to revamp the space in preparation for the Indian Residential School Dialogue Centre that will be placed in that compound. The VPAUA Office is working with Campus & Community Planning to ensure that student groups who use the space are involved in the conversation, like the Ski & Board Club, and hosted someone from C&CP at the last UNECORN meeting.

- **Climate Action Plan 2020**

  The Climate Action Plan for 2020 is currently under consultation, and the AMS has been involved in providing feedback to C&CP. The Campus Development Commissioner of the AMS is also working with student groups involved in climate advocacy and sustainability to ensure that they are an active part of the conversation.

- **Wesbrook Place Plan**

  The Campus Development Commissioner recently attended a workshop on the future of
Westbrook Place, with lots of construction/development plans being implemented in the area to expand. Additionally, the VPAUA will be sitting on the Advisory Planning Committee for Wesbrook Place to decide on Neighbourhood Plan changes to the area.

5. **Sexual Assault Prevention**

   - Sexual Assault Prevention Team (SAPT)

     Along with the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC), the VP AUA has been sitting on the UBC Sexual Assault Prevention Team, which seeks to coordinate educational and outreach activities on campus. This group is now working to solidify a 3-year education plan for the university and support Sexual Assault Awareness Month in January.

   - Greek Community Partnerships

     The AMS President and VP AUA have been working with both UBC Fraternities and UBC Sororities on integrating more programming surrounding sexual assault awareness and education amongst their members. Both groups and chapters within have been great in terms of uptake on SASC programming and initiatives.

6. **Respectful Environment Policy**

   - Respectful Environment Policy

     The VP AUA Office is still working on revamping the processes for the Respectful Environment Policy, with the AMS Equity Commissioner, Sexual Assault Support Centre, and AMS HR.

   - Sexual Assault External Policy

     The VP AUA is also working on an external policy on Sexual Assault, with the support and knowledge of the AMS SASC, to encourage further action in regards to sexual assault and sexualized violence by the university, and the province. This is an ongoing project, which should be finished by the end of November.

6. **Academic Experience Survey**

   - AES 2016

     Work has already started on the AES 2016, with a strategic outlook done, the deletion of questions that will not be needed, and the beginning of re-writing questions. Staff within the AMS will be asked to weigh in throughout October and a consultation of all major stakeholders (essentially all those who received this newsletter) will be done in November. All questions should be complete by beginning/middle of December to allow time for Insights West to weigh in on questions and survey composition, with time to make changes as needed.
7. **ABORIGINAL STUDENT GROUPS**

- Musqueam Weaving Project
  
  The AMS Aboriginal Students’ Commissioner is currently working on solidifying funding for the rest of the weaving project, which will commence once all funding has been collected. This weaving will be an acknowledgment of the territory that the AMS Student Nest is built upon, and serve as a permanent reminder of the importance of the Musqueam Community to UBC.

- Powwow
  
  The Aboriginal Students’ Commissioner is working with Aboriginal groups on and off campus to coordinate the second annual powwow at the end of March/early April. This event was immensely successful last year with over 1000 people coming through throughout the course of the day.

8. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- CSI&C Partnership
  
  The AMS has partnered with the Centre for Student Involvement & Careers (CSI&C) to provide professional development for AMS Staff, Councillors and Undergraduate Society executives. The first session will be on November 3rd, and will focus on Effective Communication and Feedback.

9. **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**

- Wellbeing Steering Committee
  
  The Wellbeing Steering Committee, which the VP AUA sits on, is currently preparing how the dialogue surrounding wellbeing will be carried on with President Martha Piper, and is planning next steps into carrying on the conversation surrounding wellbeing at the university as a whole. The direction of the committee has changed since the acceptance of wellbeing as the foundation of strategic planning at the UBC executive going forward. The VP AUA is also sitting on a Working Group of this committee that will be facilitating a workshop on empowerment in wellbeing with the university’s senior administration.

- Academic Policy
  
  Big things are happening in the realm of Academic Policy. The AMS Mental Health & Wellbeing Commissioner has been working on the attendance policy, withdrawal dates, a fall reading break, and a policy surrounding syllabi. Headway has been made on all, especially attendance and withdrawal. Many Senate committees have also set themselves up to work on pieces of this academic policy and practice this year.
• Healthy Minds, Healthy Campuses Webinar

The VP AUA presented on a webinar with over 200 participants from across Ontario and British Columbia on academic accommodations and wellbeing, focusing on what has already been done in terms of mental health considerations for academic accommodations at UBC, and changes that the AMS hopes to see in the near future.

10. International Student Financial Aid & WUSC

• International Student Financial Aid

With increasing pressure for international students, especially with rising tuition prices, it is apparent that the current financial aid available for these students is not sufficient. The VP AUA is working with the VP Finance and has created a proposal for a new Student Financial needs and merit based award that would offer $15,000-$30,000 to incoming students. This award would ensure that more students have access to UBC with increasing international tuition fees, but would also help to address the increasing need for needs-based awards for international students. Additionally, the AMS is proposing in-program loans for continuing international students with changing situations.

• WUSC

The World University Service of Canada is an organization that works with universities and their student societies to provide an education to refugees. The AMS works with WUSC and students are levied a fee of $2.61 every year to support about 12 refugee students every year at UBC. With recent events showcasing the need for the support of refugee students, the VP AUA office is working with WUSC students to run a referendum to double the WUSC fee to $5.22, ensuring that the University Administration and Student Housing & Hospitality Services are willing to offer their part of the funding for new students coming to UBC through the WUSC program.

11. Other

• Shout out to the VP AUA Staff

The VP AUA staff have been doing an amazing job balancing their own portfolios and working on research regarding international tuition increases. They are going above and beyond their job descriptions, and we should all thank them for their hard work!

• Thunderbird Support

The AMS has been working to support the Thunderbirds, and specifically the football team. I have been involved in some of the events surrounding the football games, and look forward to more! Can’t wait for Super Weekend - Go T-Birds!

• New Goal!

Having just submitted the November ternary report, there is an acknowledgement in the VP AUA Office that we have actually achieved more in the last 6 months than we had
thought we would have the chance to. As such, the VP AUA will be exploring other possibilities for goals/projects for next semester, and will be reaching out to your group to consult on what that might possibly be.

3. **What’s Coming Up?**

- Safer Party Plan Roll-Out
- External Sexual Assault Policy
- Interactive Student-Friendly Campus Map (Through the AMS App)
- Next steps for OER Campaign
- Mental Health & Academic Policies
- AES 2016
- Musqueam Weaving Project
- And much more…