THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF UBC VANCOUVER

Agenda of the AMS Governance Committee
October 30, 2017 – 2:30PM

Members

Christopher Hakim (Chair), Jeanie Malone (Councillor), Cameron England (Councillor), Julian Villafuerte Diaz (Councillor), Kevin Doering (Councillor), Hadi Chaudhry (Member-at-Large), Sally Lin (Executive), Sheldon Goldfarb (Clerk)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:29 pm

Agenda Items

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved: Chris Seconded: Jeanie

That the agenda be adopted.

2. Approval of Minutes

Moved: Hadi Seconded: Cameron

That the minutes from October 16 Governance Committee meeting be approved and sent to Council.

3. Steering Committee

Section 5, Article 7 (2)(a), strike the words “approve and”.

Max: In conflict with Policy I-9, the responsibility of approving executive goals is on council as opposed to Steering Committee. Governance Review didn’t setup Steering Committee to review goals, and if we were to keep this we’d get another Oversight Committee which in itself was flawed.

Sheldon: Have you checked over this change with Steering Committee?

Max: Not really, but they’re supposed to be concerned with steering the Society, not there to be an approval body for executive goals, that’s for Council to take care of.
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Sheldon: So you’re suggesting to leave it as ‘coordinate’ goals and not approve?

Cam: Approval of goals should be going through council and not Steering Committee; Steering Committee is more coordination

*Unanimously approved*

4. Approval of Document

Moved: Seconded:

*That the document entitled ‘Governance Committee - Decision on Student Court’ be approved and sent to Council.*

Sheldon’s email: Few changes such as the historical background on the power of Student Court, Student Court as a disciplinary body, referendum question rewriting, and Elections Appeals Committee.

Chris: Need to make changes as per Sheldon’s recommendations

Jeanie: Can we please do an email vote when we have the final draft?

Sheldon: Chris can you add to the current document what you would replace the Student Court with in regards to rewriting referendum questions?

Cam: Perhaps give Governance Committee the power to revise referendum questions?

Chris: I don’t think Governance Committee should be rewriting referendum questions, as Governance Committee is a bit like Council. Maybe give it to the body consisting of the Chair of Governance, Speaker of Council, and the Clerk of Council?

Jeanie: Elections committee is the farthest from being elected by Council perhaps use them? However, may not be good to use Elections Committee themselves, we can use them to appoint a working group body that rewrites referendum questions (as they’re least attached from Council)

Chris: Should we pass an informal motion to amend this?

Jeanie: Better to get pros and cons of this before we decide

Julian: It’d also be good to list different options to Council to give them choice
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Chris: Should we approve the document as it is, then?

Jeanie: I think we should approve it as is right now, in principle, then approve the amended version via an email vote

**Unanimously approved in principle**

4. Discussion

- Steering Committee

Chris: I asked Max, Jakob and Sheldon as well as looked at the Governance Review to get more insight about why Steering Committee was formed and the reasons behind getting rid of Oversight Committee. In the review, it wasn’t stated explicitly that replace Oversight Committee was to be replaced, but it was stated that Oversight Committee caused too many problems and should be removed. MNP, the consulting firm, suggested that maybe staff could provide information about bad executives as a work around oversight.

Julian: Not a good idea of staff reporting as it may raise ethical issues and conflicts of interest

Chris: What should we do with Steering Committee, should it be there with its current mandate?

Jeanie: May be better to ask what Steering Committee does and its importance in ‘steering’ the AMS

Sheldon: Jakob was one of the people that suggested look into the feasibility of Steering Committee anyway

Jeanie: Steering may be problematic as it’s focusing too much on short-term, relatively unimportant issues. However, using it to do long-term strategy may be more effective

Chris: Long term strategy may spark conflict when executives and chairs turn over

Julian: Often people that replace in times of transition look back at previous objectives and work on them, so this may not be a big issue

Jeanie: Moving Steering Committee into long term as opposed to reactionary may be optimal, however, this will probably be a difficult task

Chris: We also shouldn’t be delegating council’s jobs into committees i.e. Steering Committee approving goals
Jeannie: Perhaps Steering Committee is good for Council to delegate some tasks as it’s not easy to draft and write in Council.

Chris: Moving Steering Committee from approval of goals and coordination to more of ‘steering’ the direction of Council and shape the long term.

Sheldon: Two things: consult with Steering Committee and dig up discussions to see what is wanted from Steering Committee.

Chris: What do we do when we have a bad executive? Steering Committee, or use a different body?

Cam: We may want to give that power to Council since if Steering Committee’s chairs and vice-chairs are executives, it may have a conflict of interest.

Jeannie: Council’s mandate includes keeping executives in check, not a good idea to delegate to another committee.

Sheldon: We had a bad executive; solution was Oversight Committee. In this case the solution was worse than problem.

- Efficiency and Amendment of Discussions

Chris: We may want to place a limit on how many discussion points had in council or possibly introduce a vote on adding a discussion point during Council.

Cam: We need to make sure councilors still know that they’re able to amend discussion points and that we’re not trying to restrict their ability to put points forth.

Julian: This is why it’s dangerous to limit the discussion items. Does Code actually allow discussion items to be added in the way they are being currently?

Sheldon: Yes.

Cam: It may be beneficial to keep the current structure of discussion amendments as it allows viable points to come forward.

Sheldon: Discussion period is there for when there’s no motion, and just for information possibly before a motion. Some year’s discussion is hardly used, and has been used a lot lately; perhaps that’s because there haven’t been many motions and not much to discuss at council.
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Chris: Councillors should be able to make a motion to amend the agenda, with motivation, seconding, and a vote; is this the agreement?

Julian: I don’t have a problem with the current structure

Chris: The problem is that it’s being used as a loophole to certain things like the limit on questions.

Jeanie: It doesn’t say in Code that you can’t

Sheldon: This seems to more of an issue now as opposed to before, why?

Jeanie: Does the proposed change allow for deeper and better discussion, or not?

Chris: This should act more as a filter, with motivation to be able to see the intent of amendment rather than arbitrary amendments. Sometimes there’s a very specific or arbitrary discussion that only a few people can participate in and wastes the time of Council as it could be held elsewhere

Sheldon: I can draft something to add a filtering method for amendments in the Code and send it to Chris

- Ad-hoc Committees Reporting

Chris: Ad-hoc committees are unable to report to Council at the moment, and no progress updates provided. Currently it’s seen as out of order. Perhaps we should get more updates from Ad-hoc committees considering that SHAPE committee is responsible for art worth around $4M. There are only 3 ad-hoc committees to my knowledge, so it wouldn’t be long and time consuming in Council.

Julian: Thing with Ad-hoc committees is that they rarely meet.

Sheldon: we could put this in Code, and revise the hangover of Extraordinary committees. Perhaps change ‘extraordinary’ to ‘ad-hoc’ in Code; and just suggest to Jakob to bring this up to Alan as Code states.

Chris: Problem with that is it then we only get reports from some committees if they feel like reporting and they could never update us if they want to.

Sheldon: Perhaps say they ‘shall’ report in Code

Cam: So are we mandating to report?
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Julian: How about have a part of Council agenda to open for reports?

Chris: Then we have no filter on reports coming in from relatively unimportant committees

Cam: Perhaps have a section for standing committees and ad-hoc committees

Chris: I think it should be an automatic report, and they can specify in Council if they have no report

Julian: I don’t think automatic reports make sense for Brewery Committee as we’ve only met 2 times

Jeanie: Is the concern of no reports that we don’t know what they’re doing?

Sheldon: the reason we don’t have this in Code is that this was mostly drafted in 2010 where there seemed to be consensus of no ad-hoc committees in the future

Chris: Should we have automatic reporting, or choice to report?

Hadi: Automatic reporting is beneficial as it also reminds Council that ad-hoc committees exist and may remind to keep up with those committees rather than leaving them adrift (they can say they haven’t met if necessary)

Informal agreement: to add automatic reporting of ad-hoc committees to Council; Sheldon to draft and also add question period for Board of Governors, Senate, and Presidents’ Council.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be on the ---th of November at 2:30 PM

Adjourn

1. Moved: Cam  Seconded: Hadi

   There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3:32