THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF UBC VANCOUVER

Minutes of the AMS Governance Committee
November 14, 2017 – 4PM

Members

Present: Christopher Hakim (Chair), Jeanie Malone (Councillor), Julian Villafuerte Diaz (Councillor), Max Holmes (Executive), Sheldon Goldfarb (Clerk)

Regrets: Cameron England (Councillor), Kevin Doering (Councillor), Hadi Chaudhry (Member-at-Large),

Recording Secretary: Julian Villafuerte Diaz

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 PM

Agenda Items

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved: Julian Seconded: Chris

That the agenda be adopted.

Passed with unanimous consent.

2. Approval of Minutes

Moved: Julian Seconded: Chris

That the minutes from the October 30th Governance Committee meeting be approved and sent to Council.

Passed with unanimous consent.

3. Amending Discussions

Moved: Chris Seconded: Julian
That the code changes titled ‘Code Changes 2017 Adding Discussion Topics’ be recommended to Council.

Chris: The motivation for this is that the amendment procedure ought to be put in place to prevent councilors from using the current framework which allows for continuous additions of discussion items as a loophole.

Max: Two questions/points: (1) Loophole? (2) Discussion period… is the intention not to discuss?

Chris: As for loophole, the idea is to filter out inefficient discussions and to prevent, for example, councilors from using the discussion period to ask a fourth question following an update. What would be more efficient is for councilors to add discussion items prior to the meeting, or to use discretion in deciding whether an item is more appropriate to bring to council or to discuss individually. Relevant items will pass.

Max: Does not solve the problem. Creates problem of grueling process of amending agenda. Becomes less efficient, adds more time.

Chris: Filtering irrelevant discussion saves time.

Max: Not efficient or appropriate to add this barrier. It should be the right of councilors to suggest discussion items.

Jeanie: In the past the de facto process was that discussion items would have to be amended onto the agenda.

Max: Does not mean this should be the future or official procedure in code.

Jeanie: Also the status quo encourages people adding discussion unnecessarily

Max: I’m against this on the principle that it adds more bureaucracy.

Chris: This amendment to code creates a filter that prevents good vs. bad discussion

Max: This could create an unfair barrier against potentially valid minority opinions.

Chris: Past council meetings demonstrate why this code change is necessary. Irrelevant and excessive discussion.

Max: I don’t perceive this as an abuse of the system. These are still minor discussion periods. Meetings have not gone beyond 9pm. Time scarcity not an issue.
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Chris: This is not about time. This is about filtering legitimate vs. unnecessary discussion in council.

Max: This is not absolutely necessary. Is it a bit of drag? Yes. But there are a lot of things that are a drag. There is merit in councilors bringing up items that are unpopular. Example: let’s say in the future council was against sustainability, and a member wanted to raise a discussion item regarding a sustainability issue. Would it be just to leave the decision of whether or not this is discussed to majority rule?

Chris: Then the member would request the item be added to the agenda 3 days before the agenda is set.

Max: What if the issue were time-sensitive and arose the Monday before the Wednesday Council meeting?

Max: Sheldon, can someone remove discussion item?

Sheldon: Never seen it.

Jeanie: President could?

Sheldon: But not during the meeting.

Max: If people really didn’t want to talk about something, then they could make a motion to remove it. That does everything that we need. We don’t need this barrier that requires an agenda amendment to add discussion items. Otherwise we will have a worse impediment of having to amend the agenda. Is the status quo bothersome? Yes. But it is good for transparency and the institution as a whole? Yes.

Hakim: We are running around in circles. Is there new discussion or debate.

Julian: Max made a very convincing argument.

Jeanie, Max, and Julian vote against.

Chris votes in favour.

MOTION FAILS

4. Reporting and Questions

Moved: Chris  Seconded: Jeanie
That the code changes titled ‘Code Changes 2017 Reports to Council’ be recommended to Council

Chris: Proposing that ad hoc committees should be able to report to council without having to go through the president.

Jeanie: Is New Sub committee ad hoc?

Chris: Extraordinary.

Jeanie: Why not say ad hoc and extraordinary committees.

Chris: Some extraordinary committees like elections committee are reasonably excluded.

Max: Amendment says “shall” report, and not “can” report. Mandating elections and advisory board are not going to come to report at each

Jeanie: The way this amendment reads is that New Sub Committee is an ad hoc committee that is special.

Sheldon: It is. New Sub Committee is an ad hoc committee referred to in code as an extraordinary committee. So it is an ad hoc committee. But it’s special.

Jeanie: Sounds like something we should fix.

Max: Why aren’t we referring to Student Senate Caucus representatives instead of senators?

Sheldon: We no longer refer to SSC in our code.

Max: But SSC chooses the senators that come to AMS.

Jeanie: But any student senator could report.

Sheldon: Bylaws don’t refer to SSC. Neither do Code. We could define SSC and put back in code.

Max: Issue is that all it says is Student Senators, as opposed to SSC representatives. We should go away from the model where the non-designated representatives provide updates. We could say the non-voting student senators on council.

Informal approval.
Max: On this piece of code, can we amend paragraph 14 regarding University Committee reporting?

Sheldon: The issue this paragraph addresses is that councilors go to university committees without reporting what happened and what they contributed.

Max: I sit on 30+ university committees. I can’t make 30 reports to follow this piece of code realistically. I also provide reports on what I do on these committees in my council updates and on other occasions anyway.

Julian: and if we specify non-executive councilors appointed by AMS Council?

Max: That could work.

Hakim: Are we seeing any amendments?

Max: Yes. Let’s specify this to be valid for non-executive councilors appointed by AMS Council, and that they should present a report per term.

Jeanie: How about submit a report?

Sheldon: How about per winter session?

Max: Yes.

Hakim: No opposition to this amendment?

Motion amended with unanimous consent.

Jeanie, Chris, Julian vote in favour.

Max abstains.

MOTION PASSES

5. Discussion

- Student Court.

Hakim: We will move forward with a plan to remove Student Court. But couldn’t agree with how the referenda power should be delegated within the AMS.

Jeanie: Delegate this question back to Council.
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Max: Example of the issue of selecting a body ourselves: if we delegate to Elections Committee (1) COI and (2) Elections Committee reports to Council.

Hakim: There was also debate on who should hold interpretation powers. Proposed idea is that it is between clerk of council, speaker, and chair of Govcomm. Any other proposed ideas?

Max: Council. There is somewhat of an issue with govcomm chair Sheldon and speaker. There is one elected person, and they are elected from a constituency. What if the interpretation is in conflict for one of those people? What if one of the things is about the Clerk of Council’s job? There is an issue there. Best to say give to Council, and they can delegate by case. Council can delegate to GovComm if appropriate. Let’s say Council has the power to delegate.

Sheldon: In practice, we have gone to our lawyers

Max: It makes sense to do this. For sensitive issues, go to more sensitive bodies. Up to the discretion of Council.

Sheldon: Another power vested in Student Court is the ability to expel members.

Jeanie: We shouldn’t be able to expel members. What about Nest expulsion?

Max: We shouldn’t take powers away from students.

Sheldon: Shall we draft bylaw changes to remove mention of Student Court? By when?

Hakim: By next meeting (will be the last of the term).

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be on November 27\textsuperscript{th}, 2:30 PM.

Adjourn

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:55pm