THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of May 15, 2018

Attendance
Present: Marium Hamid (President), Chris Hakim (VP Administration), Max Holmes (VP Academic, left at 12:50), Cristina Ilnitchi (VP External), Kuol Akuechbeny (VP Finance), Piers Fleming (Student Services Manager, left at 12:55), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Recording Secretary: Sheldon Goldfarb (with assistance from Chris Hakim)

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 12:07 pm.

Agenda
- The agenda was approved (Kuol, Chris).

Minutes
- The minutes of May 8 were approved (Max, Chris).

The Way Forward (Businesses, Services, Strategic Plan)
- Keith:
  - Business declined from 2008 through 2016, and in 2016 we suffered a huge loss.
  - In the last two years the businesses have been making contributions again.
  - Nest refinancing: We found a way under the lease to switch our loan to save us $70 million: repaying over 19 years instead of 35.
  - We reviewed all our businesses and departments: closed some, revamped others.
  - Removed our Director-level positions.
  - Added flair:
    - Got rid of the Upper Case and Lower Case names, returning to Blue Chip.
    - Got rid of the Peko Peko name and returned to The Honour Roll.
    - Killed the Perch restaurant and restored the Gallery (which is doing really well).
    - Added I Wana Taco (Mexican food), getting rid of the declining burger business (Flipside).
    - Conferences & Catering will now concentrate on offsite catering, and the building will focus more on clubs and Constituencies.
Where going?

- Keeping expenses low, driving revenue.
- Constant review of businesses.
- Rebranding the Nest as an entity.
- Need to do more social media outreach.
- Want more animation to draw traffic to the Nest: make it seen as the centre of campus.

Student Services:

- Working towards financial sustainability so they are effective and productive.
- See what we are duplicating: Is the University or the Government already doing this?
- Need to do more for international students.
- Food Bank: More and more usage. Look at what we can do to help students.
- Mental Health: Marium’s idea last year: a triage system. Also need a toolkit so people can see the services related to mental health.

- Minimum wage going up, which means an increase in salary and wages, which will reduce the financial contribution the businesses make.
- Need to review efficiencies, look to cut costs; review duplication.

HR:

- Need to review structure, create a training toolkit for frontline staff; also an orientation kit.
- Need to do a better job at employee engagement: listen to the people working here.
- Need a performance tracking system: identify issues and also good performers.
- Staff retention needs work.

Financial sustainability:

- Refinancing.
- Endowment Fund:
  - Sale of Whistler Lodge and closure of dormant funds produced money that went into the Endowment Fund.
  - Excess from businesses will go in to it too.
  - Long-term the plan is to fund our services from it and be able to reduce student fees.
  - The idea is for the Nest to become a self-sustaining engine.
- Need to try again to do a fee restructure.
- New investment policy to be implemented.
AMS Executive Committee

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AMS Formula:
- Education – sharing information and resources
- Entertainment – make the student experience fun
- Engagement – welcoming to our members
- Empowerment – enable our members to participate in what we do

- I would suggest including some or all of this in Executive goals.
- I do think we need a strategic plan: because of our annual turnover it’s easy to lose track of where we are going as a society.

- Chris: How should we animate and attract? Outside? Inside? We do have plans related to the Art Gallery.
- Keith: Inside. We have all these clubs; they can do demonstrations. Like the Karate Club.
- Sheldon: We used to have a Medieval Club that did a joust.
- Keith: We want people to think the Nest is a place where things are going on.
- Marium: Seattle airport does that.
- Cristina: Renting out ping pong tables, games, etc.
- Keith: Yes, foosball, table hockey. We originally had plans for those in our pocket lounges.
- Marium: The Speakeasy space is coming open. We can use that. We can rent out volleyballs and frisbees.
- Chris: On staff training, do you mean training to do their jobs and use equipment?
- Keith: No, that’s done, but we don’t tell them anything about the AMS.
- Chris: Would performance tracking/indicators apply to the Executives?
- Keith: No, you are directors of the society; this is for employees.
- Max: What is the ideal for a strategic plan? A three-year operational one or a 10-year vision?
- Keith: More operational. It could be a rolling three-year plan: each year you would reinvent.
- Marium: It should be value-based; we don’t have unifying values. We need something beyond the warm and fuzzy HEART (Honesty, Effectiveness, etc.). Then we could have an operational plan based on those values.
- Max: Strategic plans don’t go well at the AMS: Executive portfolios turn over. An operations plan can work for businesses and services.
- Keith: But a strategic plan is about vision, values, where we’re going.
- Max:
  - We change significantly: we used to hate development; now we think it’s a good thing for student housing.
  - It will be easier if we don’t delve into areas that people are not going to follow.
- Marium:
  - A strategic plan doesn’t say how to fulfill values.
The value could be sustainability, but we can choose how to implement it, just we wouldn’t be able to choose not to do it at all.
- Max: UBC just put values in its plan, and people didn’t like that.
- Marium: This won’t be an implementation plan.
- Max: Things are always changing.
- Cristina: But if nothing’s written down, things fall by the wayside.
- Max: That’s what policies are for.
- Marium:
  - I’d rather have one document that our members can look at.
  - I don’t see why a strategic plan would hurt.
- Max: If reviewed every year, the new Executive will rip up parts of the plan.
- Marium:
  - But people still look at old plans. People still refer to Spencer Keys’ plan.
  - Of course, things change, but there will be a certain continuity over three years, things like sustainability, indigeneity.
  - People have criticized us for not engaging in conversations about sustainability, indigeneity, social justice.
- Kuol: There’s too much flexibility now. We should go to Council to establish a plan.
- Marium: I’d like us to give it a try.
- Max: It’s not the biggest ask from our membership.
- Marium: Just because they haven’t asked for it doesn’t mean we shouldn’t do it.
- Keith: We do get feedback from our members: they don’t know what we do.
- Chris: We need clear indicators to show us moving forward, but that may be hard to do for advocacy. There can be a problem finding key indicators. I don’t want advocacy to be a weak part in the plan.
- Kuol: On the question of international students, what can we do?
- Keith: Don’t know yet: we do some things, but could do more.
- Piers: Need to make them feel more valued.
- Chris: Clubs focused on international students.
- Kuol: About Nest animation. There’s no Communications Manager now.
- Keith: I’m already working on a plan.

**SUDS (Student Union Development Summit)**
- Cristina:
  - Want to brainstorm.
  - We’ll have student leaders from across the country here: it’s an opportunity to idea share.
  - One thing to talk about would be indigeneity at universities, engaging Indigenous students, creating a more inclusive environment for them and for all.
Past feedback has indicated we need to be more inclusive, to promote shared values, to have a healthier approach to drinking (not excluding some people based on what they do or do not do).

- Drag Night is an idea.
- Chris: A session on mental health might be good. Ask what others are doing and share what we do.

[Max leaves.]

- Marium: Advocacy.
- Piers: Strategic Plan values.
- Cristina:
  - We had sessions on strategic plans and mental health last year.
  - The issue is making them better.
  - We also need better feedback; nobody fills out surveys.
  - We did hear that it was too AMS-centred and that we need a healthier drinking culture.
- Marium: We can get an outside consultant to help gather feedback.

[Piers left.]

SHAPE Appointment
- The Executive appointed Kuol to sit on SHAPE (the committee to sell art works).

New SUB Committee
- Chris:
  - The terms of reference say the committee is to end when the New SUB Project is done.
  - But after the construction is done, there will still be things to do: moving clubs into the other building, cleaning up loose ends.
  - Do we need to amend the terms of reference?
- Sheldon: The term “project” can be said to include those post-construction things.
- Marium: If anyone objects to the committee continuing, we can suspend Code.

HR Committee
- Marium: If you have any JD changes, send them to Hannah, the HR Committee chair.
- Cristina: I want to create a temporary position to assist the SUDS coordinator. Will send it to the HR Committee.
Finance Committee

- Marium: Need a meeting.
- Kuol: Still missing people for the at large positions.
- It was noted that the committee could still meet without them and that quorum would actually be lower because of the vacancies.
- Kuol: We will have the preliminary budget done for the May 30 Council meeting.
- Keith: We also would like the committee to approve an expenditure from the Capital Projects Fund for the new POS software system.
- Kuol: We can meet on May 28 or May 29.
- Keith: We can have a placeholder on the agenda when it goes out May 25.

Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 1:06 pm.