

Advocacy Committee Report - June 2017

Cameron England (Chair)

June 25, 2017

Below is a summary of the meetings of the AMS Advocacy Committee for June 2017, which met on June 5th and June 19th.

June 5th - Once the agenda was approved, the committee approved a variety of minutes (one of which was in-camera), with some dating back to 2015. Next, a vice-chair was appointed, member-at-large Jamiu Abdsalami. Next, a consultation period was led by Daniel Lam on the draft of the definition for a new retaliation policy. Lam explained that this policy is meant to complement Policy 71, but is still in the early stages of planning. There was general praise for the policy, in particular its multifaceted and holistic approach. Finally, the committee set out projects that they would like to work on over the summer. Lam alluded to a new Internal Consultation policy, in conjunction with Governance with the goal of completion by September. Sally Lin mentioned that while nothing can be done before a new government sits, our lobbying philosophy stays the same, including pushing for a student loan interest rate gap and rental rights. She also mentioned the need to continue the terms of reference for the new caucuses within the committee. Kelsi Wall mentioned that the U-Pass working group had been formed and is working. Possible transit advocacy was also discussed, particularly in regards to the 480 bus. Finally, Lam updated the committee on open educational resources, where he is seeking a memorandum of understanding between provinces to work together on the issue, as well as the launch of a fully year-long campaign at UBC.

June 19th - The agenda and previous meeting's minutes were approved. Next, Daniel Lam gave his updates, including his trip to the CACUSS conference in Ottawa, where he focused on disability accommodations, Indigenous affairs, and mental health. Lam also promised updates at a future meeting on the retaliation policy, as a meeting for it occurred while he was away. Meanwhile, AVP External Affairs Isabella Picui updated the committee on consultation for the 480 bus, that has been compiled from staff and students. The External portfolio planned to send Translink a summary of their findings and recommendations for rerouting as opposed to ending the route. Finally, consultation was done within the committee on the terms of reference for caucuses. It was reiterated that caucus members would be appointed, and not elected. While there were no problems with the Student Issues caucus, there were concerns raised with the Equity caucus. For example, their work would likely overlap with paid positions such as the Indigenous Affairs commissioner. As well, there were issues with the terminology of the groups, in that it might not be appropriate to lump all of the issues and viewpoints of a very diverse group (such as LGBTQ+) into one individual. This could cause division and exclusivity within the caucus that was not originally intended. Furthermore, it was mentioned that there could be low interest in these caucus positions because some do not like to put the label of an entire marginalized group on themselves. It was agreed that more specificity is needed to make the categories more distinguishable. As a result of the discussion, the executives pledged to give the caucuses more thought and come back to the committee with more specific options moving forward. These could possibly include allowing open eligibility for caucus representatives

(allowing those from outside of a marginalized group to consult with and represent them), or even scrapping the Equity caucus altogether.

The next scheduled Advocacy Committee meeting is on July 10, 2017.