

November Ternary Report
Vice President, External Affairs
2016/2017

Kathleen Simpson

1 General Progress Update

The first school term of the year has proven to be a busy time for outreach campaigns, from Affordability, to Sexual Assault Policy, to Rent with Rights. These early campaigns have also proven to be an important opportunity to learn how we can improve our operations and strengthen them for the coming months.

2 Consultation Submissions

2.1 PROVINCIAL STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE SUBMISSION

On September 16th, the AMS presented our submission to the BC Standing Committee on Finance to detail our asks for the upcoming provincial budget. In the submission, we advocated for:

- 1) A long-term commitment to an affordable U-Pass program beyond the current contract
- 2) An increase in provincial core-funding to post-secondary institutions of 2% annually, as to better share the burden of rising costs between students and the province
- 3) A reduction in the current BC student loan interest rate, which currently sits at the highest in Canada at 2.5% + prime

2.2 TRANSLINK TEN YEAR VISION PHASE 1 CONSULTATION

In early November, the AMS submitted a consultation on Translink's Phase 1 of the 10 Year Vision. In keeping with AMS policy, we reiterated the importance of the Broadway Subway Line and stressed the importance of short-term solutions to transit to campus, including increasing the number of B-Line routes that service UBC.

3 Projects Progress:

The following section details large-scale projects that the VP External Affairs office has been taken on. Although you may recognize the introductory section of several of the projects, the progress updates for each have been updated.

3.1 PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

This year, we are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to use the provincial elections to highlight student advocacy interests. The task of bringing out student voters for this elections however, will be especially difficult due to the scheduling of the elections in May of next year, when students are not in school and therefore are harder to reach out to. While it will be challenging however, the provincial elections are critical to the AMS's lobbying strategy and goals. Many of the issues that students and the AMS care most about, including tuition caps, funding for post-secondary institutions, and student loan programs are all provincially controlled. It is critical that the AMS membership's voice be heard and listened to on these important issues. A poor voter turnout also has

the potential to send a message to provincial politicians that students are apathetic to these issues.

Progress Update

Coordinate Voting Options with Elections BC: Completed

After working with Elections BC, we have secured both regular voting for May 9th (on Election Day), and an early voting day on April 29th. The polling stations will be held on the second floor in the Nest. Although voting earlier than April 29th would be preferable for student schedules, that is legally the earliest possible day for voting. To find more flexible voting options who may have left BC by the end of April, we will continue to investigate other voting options, including mail-in ballot.

Create Campaign Plan: Upcoming

Our Organize BC training session at the end of October gave us great inspiration for a large-scale voter outreach campaign. Over the coming weeks, we will be investigating outreach options ranging from volunteer mobilization to phone-banking. All of this is with the goal of reaching a 70% eligible voter turnout among UBC students.

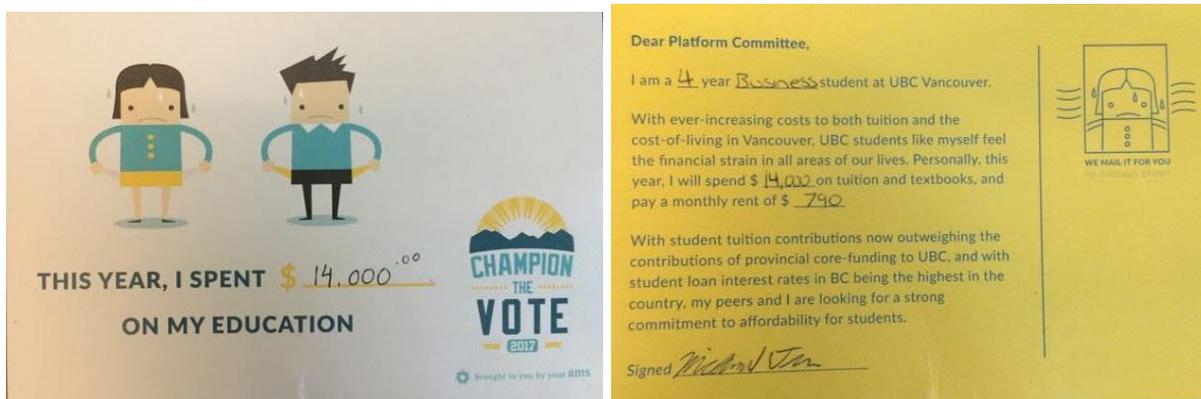
3.2 AFFORDABILITY

The goal of the Affordability Campaign is to serve as the pre-cursor to the provincial elections campaign, and to establish affordable post-secondary education as a priority youth-voter issue in the upcoming elections.

Progress Update:

Campaign Plan & Implementation: Completed

Over the course of the late summer, the VP External Team developed a campaign plan for the Affordability Campaign. It included an event with The Price is Right and a letter signing campaign. The letter signing campaign proved to be especially successful, with over 400 letters signed. Student feedback from the initiative was extremely positive. These letters are being sent to the platform committees of both of the major provincial parties to raise awareness about the importance of affordability for students.



(fig. 1 & 2: Example of a signed affordability postcard)

Next Steps:

After the Winter Holiday, we will be working to bring back our message of affordability and relate it directly to the Provincial Elections, as a part of our get-out-the-vote campaign.

3.3 HOUSING CAMPAIGN

The housing campaign this year will focus exclusively on housing rights that are not afforded to student who live in Student Housing, as a result of them being excluded from the Residential Tenancy Act of BC. The campaign will work to bring awareness to this issue, and have the ultimate goal of gaining greater legal protection for students living in student housing. This can be achieved in one of three ways: 1) provincial regulations, 2) provincial legislation, 3) improved UBC housing contracts.

Progress Update:

Consult with Other Student Associations: Completed

Our consultation process involved several weeks of workshopping our policy recommendations and coordinating meetings both with local student groups and other student associations in BC. As a result of this work, the original asks were expanded to accommodate certain issues that although we do not face at UBC Vancouver, are concerns at other schools.

As of November 7th, the UBC Students' Union Okanagan, University of Victoria Students' Society, and Simon Fraser Student Society have signed onto the campaign and lobby documents. The Acadia Park Residence Association has also officially supported the initiative.

We were disappointed to hear that the Residence Hall Association declined to support the campaign, citing concerns over maintaining their relationship with Student Housing. We also have expressed concern with senior SHHS management that SHHS seemed highly involved in the RHA's conversation around whether or not to support the campaign.

Finalize Lobby Document: Completed

The finalized lobby documents have been approved by our other stakeholders and are now public at www.ams.ubc.ca/rentwithrights

Create Campaign Plan: In Progress

In early October, we delivered through campus mail over 2,000 individualized letters to UBC students living in residence. These letters included a brief explanation of what the campaign was, along with a removable window sticker to put on their dorm room window to show their support for the campaign.

Moving forward, we will also be working to collect petition signatures for the initiative. The goal of this will be to garner further student support, as well as to have the petition be able to be presented at the floor of the Provincial Legislature.

Present Asks to Relevant External Stakeholders: Upcoming

This week, I will be meeting with Kelsi, our Policy Advisor, and our partners at other student unions to develop a list of external stakeholders to reach out to, to present these recommendations

3.4 TOWN HALL SERIES

As a part of our goal to generate discussion surrounding issues around the provincial election, we have been hosting a monthly Town-Hall speaker series. These events are each focused on an issue that is relevant to students and their interests.

September and October Town Hall: Completed

In September, we hosted David Eby, our local MLA and Opposition Critic for Housing to come and discuss housing rights and affordability in the Nest. Although the event was successful, we chose to go for a more intimate event at our next Town Hall, so we chose to move venues from the Atrium at lunch to the Lev Bukhman Lounge in the evening. Our second town hall featured a panel of academics and activists to speak to issues surrounding LNG Pipelines in Northern BC. We saw a successful turnout of students with thoughtful questions.

November Town Hall: Upcoming

For our final Town-Hall of the first winter term, we will be talking about corporate campaign donations in BC. We are looking to team up with Dogwood, a non-profit group that is currently running a 'Ban Big Money' campaign.

3.5 STUDENT ISSUES SURVEY

In order to work towards one of my campaign goals of improving research and data-driven advocacy, we have undertaken the commission of the 'Student Issues Survey'. The survey, which was designed by the AMS in partnership with Insights West, who has been hired to administer the survey and compile its results, asks students about their political leanings, voter history, and positions on issues such as housing affordability and the U-Pass program. The survey is intended not just for UBC students, but also students across BC.

Survey Administration: Completed

In total, 9 student associations other than the AMS agreed to participate in the survey: University of Victoria, UBC Okanagan, Camosun College, Vancouver Community College, Emily Carr University, Capilano University, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Simon Fraser University, and Langara College.

The AMS provided the completed survey link and a media package to promote the survey to participating groups. Participating student associations were asked to provide a prize to incentivize participation in the survey. Although the response rate at UBC Vancouver has been exceptional, with over 4,000 responses, the response rate at other schools has lagged.

Survey Administration: Completed

Once the survey closes on the evening of November 8th, the results will be compiled by Insights West and delivered to the AMS and participating schools.

3.6 INCREASING STUDENT OUTREACH

In working on campaigns this term, I have come to the realization that traditional outreach methods have become strained as a result of the ever-increasing population on campus. When stuffing the 2,200 envelopes that were sent out as a part of our Rent with Rights campaign, I realized that these envelopes only represented 5% of students. This was a hard reality to face when reflecting on the five consecutive hours it took to print these envelopes. To combat this issue, we need to develop new and robust mechanisms and networks to reach our massive membership.

Tracking Membership Interactions: Upcoming

One of the ways that we can combat the challenges of reaching out to our mass membership is to better track our day-to-day interactions with them. Over the coming weeks, we will be investigating what pre-existing software we have to track our outreach interactions with students. This tracking will allow us to communicate on mass with our members in a more targeted way. It will also allow us to identify what groups of students we already have strong communications with, and where gaps exist that can be improved upon. We will be using voter-outreach for the Provincial Elections to test this methodology.

Building a Volunteer Team: Upcoming

Another solution to engaging with 52,000 students is also to implement a highly organized and expansive volunteer team. In the wake of the VP External Office's training from Organize BC, we will be working to develop such a team of volunteers. Volunteers will be asked to canvas campus for petition signatures, and possibly even conduct phone-banking to help students register to vote. We will be looking to test this method using both our Rent with Rights campaign and our Provincial Elections Campaign.

4 Questions?

As always, my office (Nest, Room 3524) is always open to those who have questions or would just like to discuss anything. I can also be reached at vpexternal@ams.ubc.ca and (604) 822 2050.

Thank you!

Kathleen Simpson