

AMS Indigenous Advisory Group #1: March 5, 2018

The following document captures the ideas gathered from the conversations at the first meeting of the Indigenous Advisory Group. These ideas came up as items of discussion from the stakeholders present at the meeting and they reflect an ongoing dialogue about how the AMS can be more intentional in including and elevating Indigenous advocacy. The AMS is hosting these meetings with the intention that they provide the opportunity for open discussion to highlight Indigenous perspectives and voices. As a student society whose mission is to improve the quality of the educational, social, and personal lives of UBC students, we recognize that the AMS has gaps in how we engage Indigenous students in this mission and we want to do better. The feedback collected from this group will be used to help inform the AMS on how to more effectively include Indigenous voices in our advocacy and all other work we do at the AMS. This is one of a series of in-person meetings that will be held to give wide opportunity for input.

KEY WORDS

- Acknowledge
- Perspectives
- Positioning/privilege
- Outreach
- Holistic
- Committee
- Wellbeing: Mental Health, Sexual Violence

HIGH-LEVEL SYSTEMS

- Make 2020 the Year of the Indigenous Student
- Increase Indigenous student positions created on Board of Governors and Senate
- Senate: Indigenous student admissions → need to do better outreach to communities/schools with higher Indigenous populations
- Senate: Faculty recruitment/hiring → need more diverse/Indigenous faculty
- Senate: Indigenous foundations course as a degree requirement or inclusion of more Indigenous-content based courses within existing requirements
- What do we do for Musqueam?
 - We need Indigenous perspectives → every issue has an Indigenous dimension to it → Indigenous peoples need to be at the table

AMS STRUCTURES

- Communications (media)
 - Access to website: need to revamp so students can navigate it and actually have it be useful for students

- More visibility for opportunities for Indigenous students: find new platforms to promote AMS hiring (Careers online)
- Open to using more online surveys as a consultation tool (need to be weary of data collection but a good way to reach people who maybe don't want to come in person or can't make it in)
- Communications (outreach)
 - Talking Stick (need to send in submissions by Thursday nights)
 - All Indigenous students receive this newsletter
 - Longhouse Lunches
 - Do one in both terms, especially at the beginning of the year
 - It's a central space for engagement/dialogue
 - Creating continuity for deeper conversations between AMS and Indigenous students throughout the year
 - Attend Welcome Back event
 - Reach out to faculties/courses that work with Indigenous content
 - AMS should be going *to* Indigenous students
- Leadership
 - Create a VP Indigenous Student Affairs
 - Strengthen Indigenous Affairs Commissioner
 - Position would be more useful if it could spearhead the advocacy in an advisory role
 - Too much work to be done in position, don't know where to start, needs more people to delegate work to (AMS Indigenous Affairs Committee?)
 - Would this position go under the President? VP Admin? Or stay in VP Academic?
 - Have AMS committees reach out to/include Indigenous students at the table
 - Create an AMS Indigenous Affairs Committee
 - Implement accountability to working on Indigenous issues within the AMS
 - Recognize diversity of indigeneity
 - Open to all students
 - Collaborate with Indigenous student groups
 - Work on Indigenous Strategic Plan
 - Holistically-led meetings: start meeting with a check-in from each person, welcome, acknowledge positioning

GAPS

- Lack of acknowledgement
 - InSA's role is to connect students to knowledge about Indigenous history on this land/current indigeneity on campus
 - Land acknowledgement: need to understand meaning of unceded, what it actually means/why it matters
 - This knowledge should be disseminated by the AMS too
- Residences

- Educate students moving in about what the names of the houses mean
 - What is the formalized process that UBC goes through before naming the buildings?
- UBC surveys
 - UBC administration need to follow up and respond back to comments given through surveying
- Lack of funding
 - Student groups need more money to be able to hold events, reach students
 - Would a dedicated office space be needed?
 - How much money is needed? How can the AMS help secure this funding?
- Indigenous Strategic Plan
 - Need to pressure UBC – Where is it? Who is involved? Timeline?
 - Proper consultation with students
 - This needs to be a meaningful plan, not just a prop
- AMS First Week
 - Need to have an Indigenous First Week component (a day/few days dedicated to Indigenous students)
- First Year Orientations
 - Imagine Day: use arena setting as an opportunity to begin students' education on Indigenous peoples
 - Orientation leaders should be trained to talk about indigeneity on campus in their small groups, discuss land acknowledgment
 - Ensure space for Indigenous volunteer organizations on Main Mall
- UBC Thrive
 - Have Indigenous-specific programming, acknowledging that Indigenous students are often left behind and can be affected the most by issues of wellbeing/mental health
- The Ubysey
 - Need a section dedicated to Indigenous students