



THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

AMS Advocacy Committee

Agenda of June 12, 2018

Present: Max Holmes (Chair – VP Academic & University Affairs), Cristina Initchi (VP External Affairs), Dylan Braam (Councilor), Daniel Lam (Student-at-Large)

Guests: Rodney Little Mustache, Roshni Pendse (AVP Academic Affairs)

Regrets: Andy Wu (Councilor), Kate Burnham (Councilor), Hannah Xiao (Councilor)

Recording Secretary: Julia Burnham (Academic Campaigns and Outreach Commissioner)

Land Acknowledgement

Call to Order

- 6:09pm called to order

Approval of Agenda

- Max:
 - Amendments: approval of the minutes from May 29, discussion on engagement on Indigenous committee or structure in the AMS
- Michelle:
 - Add: discussion on Rodney's role in the committee, Trans Mountain pipeline statement
- Max:
 - Need to make sure we leave at 7, so Trans Mountain pipeline will need to wait until the next meeting.
 - Can include Rodney's role in this committee in the discussion on the Indigenous committee

Approval of Minutes

- Moved by Daniel, seconded by Cristina
- Unanimous consent.

Indigenous Engagement

- Max:
 - The AMS has had a major failure in engaging Indigenous students. We apologize for not creating this earlier.
 - This needs to be the first goal that the Advocacy Committee works on and becomes a continuous discussion in the AMS as a whole
 - At our last meeting, we discussed the principle of the AMS creating space/structure that Indigenous students want within the organization for representation and involvement.

- We agree that anything created needs to be an active discussion led by Indigenous communities and Indigenous students, not a siloed conversation at this committee
 - Need to ask these communities what structure they would like and what they would like us to advocate for
- Jason:
 - So to recap, there's interest in creating this committee and possibly much more (i.e. different positions or advocacy).
- Max:
 - This committee needs to hold the AMS accountable to make sure these things get done. Indigenous communities and students need to be deciding on this.
 - Their recommendations should be what we approve and send to council.
 - This is the first goal that we should work on.
 - We need to reach out to the Longhouse and be setting up those discussions
- Cristina:
 - To add, we heard what you (Rodney) said at the Indigenous Advisory group said and we take this into account.
 - We realize that this initial structure did not provide a successful environment for this conversation.
 - We want to do better when we are reaching out the next time we go to Indigenous groups.
 - We need to make sure that they are consulted in a way they see fit and is an environment that they feel welcome in joining the conversation.
- Rodney:
 - Can the apology be made public by the President of the AMS?
- Max: I can't speak on behalf of her, but I can immediately discuss this with Marium. I assume we all agree on this. This committee can also look at the text of this apology. This apology should be created.
- Rodney:
 - When I was first at UBC, I've been to the elections debates and I felt not included in them. Nothing about us for us.
 - Living with HIV, I fight to get my voice heard. We formed the HPAA committee, we gave them our terms of reference. My vision is to be part of the AMS, 2 seats.
 - I don't know how many people have tried this before me.
- Max: We can get our archivist to look at this.
- Rodney:
 - Want the history of how First Nations were included.
 - Where are the notes for advisory group?
- Cristina: Passed publicly in council, I can send to you
- Rodney: Are any of these offices Indigenous? Is there an ombudsman?
- Max: No. We need to be advertising these to Indigenous groups, putting them in the Talking Stick newsletter, at the Longhouse lunch etc. It will also be important to have a staff member be responsible to follow through with this.
- Rodney:
 - As part of the Indigenous committee, we need to have an Elder. This is the tradition here.

- Terms of Reference would be done by us, I can give examples from across Canada.
 - After this committee is formed, who would we submit it to?
- Max:
 - To be created, it would go through this committee – obviously we would approve this in consultation with them.
 - Then at council, when its presented, I would pass on the motivator at the meeting to have the chair of the Indigenous committee motivate it.
 - Would then be moved, seconded, approved by council.
 - Then, whatever structure is created could work on these issues and bring forward directly to council.
 - This would be an autonomous functioning committee.
- Michelle: How would this work if committees are required to have a certain number of executives on them?
- Max: This may not be a standing committee, we could make this an extraordinary committee that has less structural requirements. This wouldn't be a standing committee, but would have all the same approval processes and go directly to council – like the Elections committee. If this the structure that is decided.
- Rodney:
 - I spoke to the Longhouse before this and I've been told I need to go through them to get anything done with the AMS. Why?
 - I spoke with the Ubysey about this and they took 5 months to print this story, they released the Board of Governors one first. That really upset me.
 - Who takes precedence with the AMS? The students?
- Max:
 - We have many constituencies, as well as clubs. Publications are independent – the Ubysey separately incorporated in 1999.
 - We have no jurisdiction over what they do. We do not fund them. CiTR is also separate, we're a little involved in their finances but not their media publication.
- Rodney:
 - Why do I have to go to the Longhouse to get things done with the AMS?
- Max:
 - I don't think that should be the structure. We should discuss how we can improve this if it's been a failing in the past.
 - We need to make sure Indigenous students can come to the AMS to improve that.
- Rodney:
 - One of the things coming up in the next term is to include Native performers there. To have Larry Grant speak and to have Coast Salish, as well as dancers from across Canada, perform.
- Max:

- This is part of orientations, which is done by an orientations steering committee. So we'd need to discuss this in the framework of whether that's something they'd like us to advocate on. We also want to create an Indigenous advocacy policy to dictate what Indigenous students would like us to advocate on.
- Larry Grant does already do the Land acknowledgement, but of course there is room for improvement.
- Rodney:
 - As well, there's always big parties outside and there are no Indigenous parties there. As well, there was a speakers series on World Peace and there weren't any Indigenous people there. It's about inclusion.
 - How long will it take to get two seats on the council set aside for Indigenous people?
- Max: That's something we want to talk to Indigenous communities about
- Rodney: You already asked that at that meeting last year. We told you already.
- Max: There were recommendations that came out of that advisory group, but we want to make sure that we engage the community on a larger scale where all Indigenous students know this is something they can be part of when we create this.
- Rodney: So this is going to take another year?
- Max: No, I don't think so. We want to engage with students, which can be difficult sometimes over the summer. If we can with good turnout, then we will. If not, that's the first thing we will do in the academic year. The timeline for implementation would be up to these students.
- Jason: So hopefully this summer, but if not, September?
- Max: Yes. No matter what, if we establish something this summer, we will revisit it in the academic year and is a continuous conversation for the AMS.
- Rodney:
 - It's frustrating. Since colonization, everything has been taken and we're trying to get back and be part of society. We face policy after policy, not our policy,
 - It's time for UBC to start creating programs for Indigenous people.
 - There's a lot of Native students who see what's going on in their home communities, but they can't go to university.
 - We want to create separate programs for Indigenous students so they can get here.
- Max:
 - This is actually one of the things that a recent BoG meeting discussed, the Aboriginal Access Studies program at UBCO.
 - We are exploring implementing this system at UBC Vancouver, that any Indigenous student who wants to study here should be able to.
- Rodney:
 - I never learned of the importance of the land until I came out here.
 - I was thinking of a program where Indigenous Elders and people living with HIV could learn about living with HIV.
 - What's the next step?
- Max:
 - Reaching out to communities on campus. We can commit to the timeline of trying to engage with groups this summer, if not, in September we will create and engage with a structure made by Indigenous students on campus.
 - This is one of the first things we will work on. Julia will contact these groups.
 - This will get done by the AMS.

- I will speak with Marium to create an apology.
- I am gone from June 23 – July 3rd, but Jason and Marium can work on this when I am gone.
- Thank you Rodney, for all of your efforts in bringing forward these issues. I'm grateful to you and all the people before you who has advocated for this.
- Rodney:
 - I'm sorry I've been so pushy, but please understand where I'm coming from.
 - There's different levels of activists in Indigenous groups, there's very few that are fighting for what I'm doing.
 - We are trying to be included at times we are not.
- Max: Thank you so much Rodney. We understand the frustration.
- Cristina: We want to do better.
- Max: In the interest of time, we're going to remove the rest of our agenda items. This was a good discussion. I will put together the committee goals into a google document, we will send it out to all of the members, as well as to you Rodney. Everyone can make additions and edits. We will be able to do an email approval vote or discuss it at our next meeting.
- Michelle: Can I give everybody a primer on my thoughts on committee goals?
- Max: Okay, but we are going overtime.
- Michelle:
 - I've done research on other student societies are a lot more progressive than the AMS on human rights issues and societal issues.
 - I found that these principles of social justice and equity are enshrined in the constitution and mandate, the AMS does not.
 - These are issues a lot of students on campus care about, so I'd love to see this be a conversation on if these are things the AMS can speak up on.
- Dylan: Do any societies in BC say these things? The BC government forces you to put these things in bylaws, not constitutions.
- Michelle: UVic does in their bylaws.
- Max:
 - This is important, this is something that would be done at the AMS strategic planning process this year
 - These are issues that the AMS has taken action on in the past and continue to do as well. We can continue to have this conversation and figure out how to enshrine this.
 - It's within our committee goals to have conversations on what advocacy positions we do take.

Adjournment

Adjourned at 7:08pm. Next meeting July 10th at 6-7pm.