

AMS Governance Committee

Minutes for June 14, 2018

Governance Committee Membership: Dylan Braam (Chair, Councillor), Nathan Bowles (Vice-Chair, Student-at-Large), Max Holmes (AMS VP Academic & University Affairs), Jeanie Malone (Councillor) Evan Zhou (Councillor), Muse Greenwood (Councillor), Piers Fleming (AMS Student Services Manager)

Staff Support: Sheldon Goldfarb (AMS Archivist and Clerk of Council)

Attendance: : Dylan Braam, Cameron England (proxy for Nathan Bowles), Max Holmes, Jeanie Malone, Evan Zhou, Muse Greenwood

Regrets: Piers Fleming (AMS Student Services Manager)

Call to Order

6:04pm.

Land Acknowledgement

The Chair acknowledged that the meeting takes place on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territories of the Musqueam peoples.

Approval of Agenda – Motion

Whereas: without an agenda, we are adrift at sea,

Be it resolved that: Governance Committee approve the agenda for the meeting of June 14, 2018.

No opposition; unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes – Motion

Whereas: Dylan tried his best to write down what happened,

Be it resolved that: Governance Committee approve the minutes of the meeting of May 31, 2018.

No opposition; unanimous consent.

Executive Update – Presentation

[Max]: Policy I9 - we should review this once goals are complete. I will add this to the ExecComm agenda.

[Dylan]: Would love to have exec feedback before we begin the review.

[Sheldon]: Note that only constituency representatives are allotted a proxy in by-laws, not students-at-large or councilors. So Cameron cannot hold a vote for this meeting.

Cameron remains to represent Nathan's views.

[Max]: Note on timing – both Sheldon and I will be away in two weeks.

CiTR and VP Finance – Motion

Whereas: the laws regarding citizenship and radio communications are less strict than AMS Code,

Be it resolved that: Governance Committee recommend that Council adopted the proposed changes to policy attached in Appendix A.

[Dylan]: This was discussed at the first AMS Council of the year, which all committee members were in attendance. The discussion at Council and at our previous meeting has led to the following draft code.

No debate.

Motion passes unanimously (including Cameron).

Constituency Elections – Discussion

The Committee received the email recommendations from the last Elections Administrator to the 2017-18 Governance Chair, as well as a draft of the recommendations with relation to Code.

[Sheldon] The Governance Committee last year only discussed the items in the email after #5.

EA RECOMMENDATION 1.) Make it mandatory for AMS EA to run a test ballot on Simply Voting, days prior to launching the ballot.

[Max]: Hard to enforce. Already in transition.

The Committee concurs that this recommendation is operational, and does not need to be implemented within Code.

EA RECOMMENDATION 2.) Make rules governing candidates that are (a) incumbents (b) current AMS student staff (definition is same as mentioned in previous code additions referring to elections)

[Dylan]: Vague.

[Max]: Unsure what this means; already strict rules around office space. For current AMS student staff, last year they had a waiver signed stating support (which had issues with restrictiveness). Unsure what rules you would need other than not letting resources being used?

[Dylan]: At Queen's, hard rule – if you were an incumbent/staff member/constituency executive, you took a leave of absence for entire campaign period and nominating period. Very restrictive. Caused some people to not run (discouraged experience candidates). Not exactly successful at removing relationships/influence though.

[Max]: Almost everyone in my office would not be working last year if that was the case.

[Muse]: What was the original request around this? Is there a concern of nepotism?

[Sheldon]: Not clear – I don't have minutes from elections committee.

[Max]: May be a complaint that comes up time to time – staff members are at an inherent advantage because of the experience they come with.

[Muse]: How do we balance the playing field though? Bias?

[Max]: Difference between elections and hiring? Students choosing who they believe will do the job best.

[Dylan]: Systemic issue – where do they get the experience? Through hiring, we are indirectly choosing who gets elected.

[Muse]: I think this issue is really important. It is an issue of trust.

[Max]: Information? Candidates, office hours, maybe let prospective candidates can talk to staff members about running (confidentially). Also need to be concerned about the optics of appearing bias.

[Muse]: Separately – concerned about the hiring piece. Applicants not receiving word back. No acknowledgement of rejection – this is one of those other issues of trust.

[Cameron]: HR Committee will be discussing this at our next committee.

[Muse]: How can we share this with HR? Mechanisms for collaboration?

[Cameron]: Committees collaborate periodically.

[Jeanie]: Still unclear on what rules are being discussed?

[Max]: Rules already exist?

[Muse]: If this is about ensuring a sense of inclusion for not a) incumbents or b) staff – and influence. Then it is about making sure we are inclusive.

[Dylan]: Inclusion within elections – we should discuss further.

EA RECOMMENDATION 3.) Hiring timeline: EA hired in September to help conduct Constituency by-elections, followed by committee hiring (latest) by November.

[Sheldon]: We never hire them early enough. Ask this every year. Elections are Feb/March.

[Dylan]: Are there rules around impeachment/resignations?

[Max]: Council appoints an interim, we hire EA, by-election. We usually don't hold elections over the summer – postpone it.

[Sheldon]: Issues with respect to hiring – HR committee, HR department... someone eventually remembers we need an EA.

[Max]: Timeline for Sept is complex. Why does the EA need to deal with all these extra elections...

[Jeanie]: I could bring this topic to Operations Committee to discuss the possibility of the VP Admin handling constituency elections?

Some support of this idea.

[Muse]: How big is the committee?

[Max]: 7? We tried to add more people to support, but it is hard.

[Sheldon]: One of the more external positions.

[Dylan]: At Queen's, for a time, the Speaker was the head of the Elections Committee. It was not possible to have a vacancy.

Chris Hakim enters Governance Committee.

[Max]: I have a report that I wrote when EA – some of this is within code already (ex. office within AMS space).

[Jeanie]: Note – reason why we have EA do constituency elections is that it aligns in the spring very tightly with AMS elections. Don't want too many people in the simply voting system

[Max]: Why not webvote?

[Jeanie]: But having the vote together on same ballot increases voter turnout.

[Muse]: Hire for a few hours in September!

[Dylan]: Let's have HR Committee consider this.

BIRT Governance Committee recommends to HR Committee to consider hiring the EA for 5hrs/week for Sept – Dec, and 20hrs/week for Jan – Apr.

Committee agrees unanimously.

Chris leaves.

RECOMMENDATION 4.) Official office space allocated to the Elections Committee that is outside the AMS offices area but located in the NEST

[Max]: We already have this in code.

RECOMMENDATION 5.) Addition to AMS EA job description in code: The EA must train constituency elections officers and in extraneous circumstances (removal of EO etc...) must conduct the constituency election. [Also the EA should ensure the Constituencies have election committees]

[Max]: Mostly in transition manual. I did this. Concerned that this is a little much.

[Dylan]: I think this comes from a committee that runs elections that is very big, primarily running faculties with several thousands. Smaller constituencies with vacancies... maybe we should deal with that.

[Muse]: Concern around JD – is it sufficient?

[Max]: It makes the job sound better than it is.

[Muse]: Can there be other supports without creating conflicts of interest?

[Max]: Transition – you don't get to talk to your predecessor. When you aren't communicating with exec – you lose out on a lot of helpful support.

[Muse]: Can we outsource?

[Sheldon]: expensive! Has been discussed in the past.

[Jeanie]: What is pay rate? Compensation issue...

[Dylan]: Constituencies may push back – people don't like external folks.

[Muse]: I hear everything here – since it has never been tried, we are assuming it won't work.

[Max]: I think the AMS's mandate for hiring students is pretty important here.

[Sheldon]: Do we feel it is a failure?

[Max]: Rarely, people appeal...

Updates on Previous Business

Other Business

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38pm.