



THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

AMS Advocacy Committee

Agenda of July 24, 2018

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

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

Guests: Rodney Little Mustache, Michelle Marcus (AVP Sustainability), Roshni Pendse (AVP Academic), Kennedy Gagnon (AVP University Affairs),

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

Territorial Acknowledgement

Call to Order

6:03pm

Approval of Agenda

Unanimous approval

Approval of Minutes

Unanimous approval

VP Academic & University Affairs Updates

- Max:
 - Pending announcement about an accomplished goal for this year
 - Meetings about Undergraduate Research working group
 - Ongoing meetings about SASC and SVPRO resources
 - Finalizing AES report for upcoming council meeting
 - Active conversations about Indigenous outreach and AMS apology with Julia and Jason
 - Discussed Brock Commons Phase 2
 - Meeting with Presidents Office about strategic plan, we have one AMS seat on the committee. Marium will be on that seat. GSS and SUO also have seats.
 - Conversations with Orientations steering committee about pep rally
- Daniel: I'm currently an Orientation Leader for Science, we did activities about changes to pep rally. Was any of the advice from the retreat weekend taken into account planning this year's rally?
- Max: Yes, they did talk about the retreat. I think it is informing some of the work about the pep rally. We don't have an MC this year, which is a change.
- Rodney: You had discussions about the Indigenous committee? Who was there in discussing the apology?
- Max: There were not as we were not discussing the content of the apology. We are not coming with a structure of what they should look like. We are coming with "we recognize the flaws that we've made in the past", only content is recognizing the past mistakes we've made and we'd like to engage with you and what structures you think is necessary.
- Rodney: What about pep rally?

- Max: It is UBC's pep rally. I told them it would be a good idea to include Indigenous dancers and to reach out to include more than a territorial land acknowledgement at the rally.
- Rodney: When I work at the Aboriginal AIDS network, I went to an Elders gathering and I heard drumming from far away. I would suggest students come into the pep rally with drumming. It would be a good way of honouring Musqueam people.
- Max: That is a good idea to bring forward.

VP External Affairs Updates

- Cristina:
 - Met with David Eby today and some other student societies
 - Had a conversation with Andrew Parr from SHHS about Rent with Rights, met with the Provincial WG on Student Housing
 - Met with City of Vancouver elections, we will be having a booth in the Nest to vote
 - Reaching out to different interest groups on provincial referendum stances, developing campaign

Approval of Committee Goals

- Max:
 - There is one slight edit on the goals I had sent out via email about Indigenous structures within the AMS.
- Dylan: Should say "comprising" not compromising
- Max: Steering committee will also look over grammatical errors.
- Rodney: Was there an email with this?
- Max: Yes it was sent Sunday, I included your email.
- Daniel moves approval of goals, Cristina seconds
- Unanimously approved by committee

Approval of E-2 Environment and Climate Change Advocacy Policy

- Max:
 - This policy has been headed up by Kennedy, our AVP University affairs.
 - Hyperlinks were an issue brought up last week.
 - People also brought up whether or not the AMS should be "actively opposing" so we changed to opposing.
 - Removed the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion piece because a policy like this reflects what our policy is on general issues, then becomes responsibility of the committee to follow the policy. If it determines the policy is to oppose the pipeline expansion, then we do so then.
 - Added advocating for the Climate Hub and rapid transit
 - Need a mover and seconder
- Moved by Cristina, seconded by Daniel
- Kennedy:
 - The idea of the policy was that there were several different policies that relate to sustainability, excluding transit.
 - We've updated divestment from fossil fuels
 - Max summed up everything
- Max: We reviewed policy last time, so not surprised no questions.
- Kennedy: Want to recognize all of Michelle's hard work and guidance on the policy.

- Kate: Reading through bit about leaving $\frac{3}{4}$ of fossil fuels in the ground and linking to Global Challenges – why is AMS taking this stance?
- Michelle: Journal article found that to keep 2-degree climate increase, we need to keep 75% fossil fuels in the ground. This number is widely cited, including by other student society policies.
- Max: I think the rationale makes sense. If we're taking the 2 degrees UN recommendation and this is what is necessary, then I don't see why we wouldn't have it in the policy. Our members have clearly stated that climate change advocacy is important.
- Kate: Yeah, I'd like to see a directly cited in-text that the numbers are coming from a UN site, rather than Global Challenge article. Makes it easier to follow.
- Max: Luckily small changes to clarify the policy are able to be made after it's approved by the policy advisor. Also applies to the broken links issue raised by Dylan last week.
- Unanimously approved and recommended to council

Approval of E-10 Mental Health Advocacy Policy

- Max:
 - This is a new policy, thanks to Roshni AVP Academic who worked on this.
 - Few new changes since the last time we met
- Roshni:
 - After consultation with Marium, we added changes about funding towards research
 - Changes to point 10
 - Changes to investment in embedding mental health in wellness strategy
 - Few minor wording changes that don't change meaning of policy itself
- Kate moves, seconded by Daniel
- Unanimous approval and recommended to council

Discussion on AMS Statement about Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion

- Cristina:
 - Wanted to follow up on last meeting's discussion
 - Now have two statements drafted
 - One is broader focus on opposition to pipeline, student engagement and Indigenous consent
 - Second draft hones in on Indigenous consent and stands in support with non-consenting Indigenous communities
 - Kate provided thorough feedback on aspects needing work in the statement, like actually naming the nations that are against the pipeline
 - Also feedback on speaking to philosophical and ethical aspects of climate change
 - Also switching "clean" to sustainable, and adding more nuance all around
 - More nuance is definitely required, all of the feedback and consultation has been great
 - Got feedback from Michelle again, looking at which communities are against pipeline and adding more information around the BC and Albertan families
 - Kate also had feedback on that part, that it wasn't the correct sentiment. Suggested something about students that are engaged in oil sector work.
 - Rest of the feedback will be from the sustainability collective as a whole, will also be reaching out to the EUS and INSA (the Indigenous students association)
 - Would love to hear more feedback from committee members

The Chair created a speakers list to ensure committee members and guest all had time to speak.

- Rodney: I read this and thought it was very good. I think we should be adding truths in here. All lands are unceded in BC. Went to a rally, and they don't want the pipeline here. Crown lands transportation, was natural resources apart of this agreement? No. UBC should start questioning the spiritual significance of the pipeline to all involved. It's not religious, it's spiritual. No one is talking about the spiritual significance.
- Kate: I still believe that issuing a statement like this is not the place of the AMS. This issue is complex. This is not the best use of time for these elected and paid staff of the AMS. I believe that this is not a statement for the AMS to make. Everyone has stronger perspectives from different backgrounds.
- Dylan: I feel like it's not convinced of its own convictions in the statement. It isn't grounding itself in the background and in the facts as much. Specifically when speaking about indigeneity. I think it's important to demonstrate that we are taking an informed stance and is a call to action to UBC students. This is why the statement falls flat for me.
- Michelle: To the point about climate change not being a student issue, I would strongly disagree in that. It affects all students on this campus. A lot of young people are really scared about climate change. Climate change is also such an urgent issue, we are nowhere close to 2020 goals. If a student government can't speak up and make progress, how can we expect our governments to? AMS has a huge opportunity to make a big positive difference.
- Daniel: Which resources are you planning on putting on the statement?
- Cristina: Hoping to have a discussion with the committee on this. Was thinking about adding groups that students can join on campus and resources
- Rodney: Michelle is right. If you talk to a FN person, they will tell you how important the land is to us. We are all one. The only people who are really fighting for the land itself are the Indigenous people. If something happens to that pipeline along the way, we're the ones that are going to be paying for it. If you go to a protest, you'll understand that the people who get up and speak are youth. They study what's going on and how it's going to effect the whole world.

The Chair reminded members at this time to address all comments to the Chair and not to individual members of the committee. Also, to address arguments and not to assume the views of committee members.

Daniel leaves at 7:00pm

- Dylan: I would say that I have huge environmental concerns about the pipeline. However, conflating environmental harm due to oil spills and climate change is a very easy mistake to make. This project does not increase fossil fuels emissions, it's just a method of getting a product to the key market that it was going to get to anyway. It may reduce emissions because it is less oil transported by rail. Advocating for reduced extraction is a great way to address climate change. But to say that this pipeline is a climate change issue is not true, but to say it's an environmental and Indigenous consent issue is true and huge issues.
- Kate: Agree with sentiment about confusing climate change. Climate change is a really complicated issue, difficult to see net change. Seen many industry people with best interests at heart and it has a net negative impact. To have the AMS make uninformed statements on this

takes time and energy away from the AMS. I also want to reiterate that blanket statements about Indigenous nations is dangerous because not all nations oppose. I have a different experience on this in my industry and working with nations that approve of projects. There is a lot of nuance to this conversation. As well, my constituents and executive do not want to condemn this pipeline. A lot of young people in engineering want to get involved in this industry to make things cleaner and regulations tighter. Taking a spiritual and philosophical stance on this is a separate conversation about renewable energy. Pipelines are quite a bit cleaner to transport oil. You need to be incredibly specific in the statements that you're making.

- Jason: I agree about the issues around Indigenous sovereignty and free prior informed consent being the most significant issue surround the pipeline. So far 43 First Nations have signed an impact and benefit agreement, which means that the majority do not support this. There are various lawsuits being filed by the nations and environmental groups. The strategy about stopping the pipeline creates a bottleneck where oil is not able to get out of Alberta. Environmentalists are strategizing to stop the transportation.
- Michelle: I will argue pipelines are climate issues. If we want to be serious about combating climate change, we need to invest into renewables and technology. Pipelines are expanding the oil industry. The points about safety by pipeline rather than rail, some argue is not true. Need to add bitumen by pipeline which is toxic, don't need to do that for rail. Also need to consider that consent is about everyone consenting to the pipeline, which isn't what is currently happening. I agree on adding more specific facts.

The Chair emphasized the points made earlier to address arguments.

- Kate: I want to underline that there are a lot of complicated, different factors into how our climate is changing and people have different stances of short term and long term strategies. You can continue to rely on a resource while investing in new sources of energy. Solar panels also use rare earth metals. A statement saying the majority of nations don't approve, there are lot of different levels of approval in this and there have been over 100 agreements signed. Saying that majority oppose isn't an accurate statement. You need to say which nations oppose and what you're standing for in alliance with that.
- Rodney: She mentioned the word negligence. I think we're all being negligent of the point going on here. We should only be talking about this area and the First Nations in this area – they don't want the pipeline. Instead of talking about the rest of the province and Alberta, let's talk about the nations on the land that UBC stands. There's a lot we can learn from them. It all goes back to spirituality. If organizations and businesses don't have a spiritual base, they're going to be gone soon. I am here to protect Mother Earth. I would not be where I am right now if it had not been for the teachings of the people from this territory.
- Max: Thank you for this robust discussion. I think it's important as a student society that when we make statements most people support those things. This is a statement that would alienate some students. We would be making a conscious choice to go against some of our students, but this has been done before. Usually these precedents are of moral and/or social importance. It is important to continue to have a robust discussion, but if we are making a statement, we need to be confident that it's a statement that students support and is valuable for the resources that the AMS has.

- Cristina: Thank you to everyone who contributed to this discussion. This is a complicated issue and it requires a lot of depth and research. I think the statement hopes that students will go out and do this research and get engaged and get informed, to encourage that level of engagement. I agree that the statements that were made need to be revised to make things specific and refined. As we pass the Environmental and Sustainability policy today, we can see that this is an issue that students care about and that we care about. This discussion needs to continue to happen.

The Chair noted we must respect the opinions of everyone at the committee, be careful about how we word things, and not discourage any members or guests from speaking on issues they may care about. Members and guests were encouraged to attack ideas and arguments, but not people or the way they think. The Chair stated that in the future members and guests can be interrupted if they are out of order.

Other Business**Adjournment**

Adjournment at 7:28pm