



THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

AMS Advocacy Committee

Minutes of August 14, 2018

Members: Max Holmes (Chair – VP Academic & University Affairs), Cristina Ilnitshi (VP External Affairs), Kailey Graham (Dylan Braam's Proxy), Daniel Lam (Student-at-Large) Hannah Xiao (Councilor, *arrived at 6:05pm*)

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

Guests: Elizabeth Garvie (External Affairs Campaigns and Outreach)

Recording Secretary: Kennedy Gagnon (Associate Vice President University Affairs)

Territorial Acknowledgement

Call to Order

6:04pm

Approval of Agenda

Removed presentation on university governance for a meeting with full attendance.

Unanimous approval.

Approval of Minutes

Unanimous approval.

VP External Affairs Updates (5 minutes)

- Has been assisting with SASC hiring.
- Had a meeting about bike share which is coming to campus (it launched this week). Full speed ahead for the new academic year.
- Has been doing lots of preparation for the Student Union Development Submit
- Had a discussion with Ministry of Advanced Education alongside other student unions; are taking on a mental health initiative and developing program to support students (leasing with them). Next steps are meeting in the fall semester.
- Has been doing lots of work student financial aid prep, hoping to have main points to bring to the province for Student Aid BC by going through most salient issues for students and developing advocacy to take to province on those findings.
- Met with Joyce Murry. She held a UBC student leadership round table discussion and Cristina met with her privately afterwards and discussed some areas of interest (e.g. rapid transit to UBC, open educational resources, etc.)
- Is working with other U15 student unions to develop our federal asks for this year; working on creating joined submission for copyright act.

No questions

VP Academic & University Affairs Updates (5 minutes)

- Is working on a submission for the mandatory syllabi policy.
- Had a meeting with the stadium road planning committee, also met with subgroup of the neighborhood committee. Some stakeholders are supportive of current proposal but with the addition of faculty and staff housing (indirectly benefits students), others want a lower density plan. The AMS does not agree with lower density plan given the current housing crisis.
- Working on 2 campaigns currently: One is the Textbook Broke Campaign; all is the same as previous years with the addition of an acknowledgement of the faculty who use OERs currently. Another is the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Campaign, there are lots of different groups involved in this, but it is being led by SASC, SVPRO, and the AMS.
- Met with the adjudication committee and went through initial proposals (most were approved to go forward).
- Participated in a Policy #131 workshop (6 hours long). There were lots of stakeholders there and all left happy knowing where we're going in the future. 15 issues were discussed and will be coming to the September BoG. AMS is satisfied with current work being done with policy 131, we have a submission to BoG coming soon.
- Attended the Senate Undergraduate Research Working Group, spoke about the current state of research opportunities and moving forward we'll look into how to enhance what we have.
- For the upcoming BoG, we will produce a submission about life building, and give an orientation for new BoG members to give current state of Student Government (presentation about AMS)

Questions

- Hannah: inquires if there will be new opportunities created for undergraduate research (not just more of what already exists).
- Max: The committee isn't just about expanding current opportunities that are offered, it's about how we can better evaluate current opportunities, how we can better measure the experience of undergrad research. Work being done over a 2-year timeline: The first year will focus on evaluating current opportunities and the second year will look into how we can improve current opportunities and possibly create more.

BC Referendum Campaign Discussion (15 minutes)

- Cristina: provides introduction; Liz has been working hard on looking at logistics, values, and how to connect with students on issues. We want to communicate why it's important to vote in elections and plan some events in relation to this (e.g. a debate with the candidates).

Liz gives presentation

- The Referendum is occurring through mail-in ballot, all registered BC voters will be mailed a ballot (between Oct. 22 and Nov. 30, 2018) to determine which BC should use for elections to the Legislative Assembly (you can vote for only one). Option 1: The current First Past the Post voting system, Option 2: A proportional representation voting system.
- If British Columbia adopts a proportional representation voting system, there are multiple voting systems within that: Option 1: Dual Member Proportional (DMP), Option 2: Mixed Member Proportional (MMP), Option 3: Rural-Urban PR
- Background: BC has held 2 similar referendums, PEI is holding a similar referendum this year, but currently all provinces use FPTP

- Explanation: in First Past the Post (FPTP), the candidate who receives the most votes wins, the candidate does not need a majority of votes to win. in Proportional Representation (PR), the candidates are elected to proportionally represent the results.
- Potential Implications of PR: Increased spending on public services - roughly 8% of GDP, Voter turnout among students could be 5-7% higher, Women tend to be better represented
- Our Proposal: Run an educational campaign that provides students with awareness about the referendum, how they can vote, and the benefits of the different systems
- Concerns around taking a stance: isolating students, isolating political allies, the system is applied in a different way than its conception

Discussion

- Hannah: Thinks booths are good because they will help inform students, but thinks the AMS should not have to take a stance as our job is more about educating people about their options while staying neutral.
- Daniel: Noted that we did take a stance on a past referendum (related to transit), how is this different?
- Cristina: That referendum had an impact on students directly, more of a tangible impact on their life in university specially.
- Liz: Also, probably because there would have been definite negative implications if we hadn't of moved forward with that referendum.

Tuition Consultation Proposal Discussion (15 minutes)

Max gives background

- Any changes with tuition fees have to come up with students. There are 30 days open for consultation, any student that is affected by it is able to send in submission about it to UBC. UBC is also meant to do consultation with student leadership.
- We get over 20 tuition consultations in a year. Usually the AMS is supportive of programs, especially if they follow current program fees.
- BUT there are 'inflationary increases' each year; domestic tuition increases each year at 2% (UBC has a 2% cap), international at 3% usually. Some years there are larger increases for international tuition.
- The AMS stance: we hold the position that increase should not be above 2% and international increases should not be more than domestic. We are limited in our opposition when the province doesn't increase funding for seats by inflation.
- *Document sent by VP Students discussed with the committee.*

Max explains document sent by VP Students

- Process for Annual Inflationary Increase, if annual increase is at or below 2% for domestic students and 3% for international students: Separate meetings with the following groups: AMS & GSS Executives. The AMS and GSS will do internal consultation within their respective societies before this meeting.
- Process for Larger Increase, if annual increase exceeds 2% for domestic students and 3% for international students: Broader student consultation and two additional meetings with the AMS & GSS Executives. Separate meetings between undergraduate societies and their dean's offices would also occur.

Discussion

- Hannah: Is this to be sent somewhere?
- Max: This is the first draft, there is a lot to be edited/changed. Eventually this will be changed and approved by AMS and UBC, but until then we follow the old process.
- Kailey: where in the policy does it state that UBC has to do student consultation? So, major difference between inflation and the larger increase is cutting out general public consultation?
- Max: The UBC policy has a requirement to include student consultation in any increases.
- Kailey: criticizes AMS for not having enough consultation, references to SASC events as of late
- Max: The AMS would put together student questions and UBC would put together a response to all of our questions, but with the current process, students are consulted but not listened too. Note: we would not agree to anything if it doesn't involve the university creating a response, they don't respond to students currently. For a larger increase, there needs to be a whole lot more consultation (e.g. the AMS should have time at BoG to discuss this, there should be town-halls, etc.).
- Hannah: I agree that it would be a mistake to take away UBC consultation. There is a distrust of the AMS right now, we could also have our own consultation, but we shouldn't get rid of UBC's.
- *Agreement and further conversation from Kailey, Hannah, etc.*
- *Conclusion:* Max: If we aren't willing to give anything it's hard to get something out of them – it's important for us to expend our political capital on things that we can change. I will tell VP Students we are not interested in exploring new options for the tuition consultation.

Other Business

August 28th is next the meeting.

Adjournment

7:13pm