



Anne Kessler - VP Academic and University Affairs

**October 2014 – April 2015
Executive Report**

This report provides a summary of my activities from October 2014 to April 2015 and a reflection upon the year as a whole.

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1 Introduction

This end-of-year report is meant to sum up the achievements of the year and report on the work to be carried forward by my successor. My previous report listed goals, which were broader and on more topics than my Performance Accountability Incentive (PAI) Goals which were passed by AMS Council in July and revisions approved at the April 9th Council meeting. I will first report on the PAI goals, then on the other goals mentioned in my first ternary report. I will also report on my other activities, such as hiring, university and the Mental Health Network, and any other project or non-project based work that I have done.

2 PAI Goals

I have only listed my general goals, and not the sub-goals. Please refer to my PAI goals (approved by Council in July and revised in April) for the full set of sub-goals and metrics. The goals were revised in April to reflect the significant changes that occurred to my plans this year following the increases to international undergraduate student tuition and 8-month housing.

2.1 Aboriginal student and Musqueam engagement

Goal: Engage aboriginal students more closely with the VPAUA office and create groundwork for the VPAUA office to be better able to advocate for Aboriginal student issues in the future. Work for a better relationship between the AMS and the Musqueam First Nation.

Unfortunately in the fall I had significant difficulties re-hiring for this position, since the previous commissioner graduated and finished his contract at the end of August. Spencer and I significantly revised the job description in August to reflect the realities of the position, and we advertised for it, and went through the interview process but I was unable to hire anyone. Following this I had significant conversations with the president of the First Nations Studies Student Association and other indigenous students on campus about why we were having difficulties with qualified students being able to take on the position. Throughout the fall I spoke with several potential candidates who expressed interest, but then were unable to take on the position. Finally in January I was able to hire Salia Joseph to the position.

This goal was significantly revised because of this delay, and because we decided to focus on slightly different things than had initially been laid out in the goal. With the opening of the Nest, we felt it was of high priority to engage Musqueam in the opening of the building, which we have done, and have worked on putting together a proposal for a Musqueam Weaving to permanently mark territory in the building, and finding funding for that project. In terms of fostering a better relationship with Musqueam we also wrote a policy on Musqueam Communication and included land acknowledgment as part of the Council agenda. We also decided that in terms of engagement with aboriginal students, it was also of high importance to support the student-organized Powwow event that happened on campus on April 4th and was a huge success. Because many of the students and student groups we want to engage with were engaged in this project, we were unable to meet with them separately, but instead have seen our engagement with this project as our engagement. As well, in January I sponsored and presented at a Longhouse Lunch. I think we have put a significant amount of effort into better engagement with aboriginal students and the Musqueam Nation this year, and I think that while we have laid important groundwork, we still have much to do. I hope this topic will continue to be of high importance to the VP AUA and the rest of the AMS Executive and Council moving forward, and strongly believe an Aboriginal Students' Commissioner should be hired annually. In the short term, we have the Weaving project underway

and the Nest opening, and in the long term, have a long way to go in terms of supporting aboriginal students on campus and having a strong, ongoing relationship with Musqueam.

2.2 Equity/Task Force on Intersectional Gender-Based Violence and Aboriginal Stereotypes Follow-up/Orientations

Goal: Work with the university on the implementation of the Task Force on Intersectional Gender-Based Violence and Aboriginal Stereotypes' (IGBVAS Task Force) recommendations (as they pertain to students) in a way that has significant input from students and will create meaningful change.

All in all, the orientations portion of this goal has been completed. While we still have some concerns around orientations, all have been voiced and changes are underway. We have significantly better representation on the Orientations Steering Committee through all undergrad societies being at the table. I am personally optimistic that a better process will happen next year. An internal report was written concerning the events of last summer to organize our concerns in one place.

The second portion of this goal surrounding the equity requirement was removed due to the fact that once we did more research and learned more about what it would take to implement it, we realized that this would be a significantly bigger project than anticipated. The Senate has only begun to discuss how to implement the recommendations late this Spring. I am still hopeful this is something the Senate will implement eventually.

A report on the equity policies is almost complete, though so far we have seen no reviews of any of the policies mentioned in the report.

On a related note, we also spent a significant amount of time on the proposal for the AMS Inclusion Office, which will hopefully be passed by Council, and I see that work as very related to this goal given how important it is to be living that which we advocate to the university.

2.3 Acadia Park & C+CP Consultations

Goal: Finalize a resolution for the Acadia Park discussions.

Over the summer and early fall I worked on the Engagement Principles for C+CP that were approved by the Board in September. I am quite pleased with the principles themselves, though still have concerns about how they will be kept to account. I spoke of this issue with several Board members and as part of my presentation to the Board in September, but unfortunately they did not feel that additional measures such as a university wide committee of consultation to be necessary.

The conversation on the land use plan has unfortunately not progressed. We did finally receive a Freedom of Information Act request that we made last summer, and it totals 1252 pages. We will be sifting through those documents in the coming weeks and months in order to see what might be of help to use there.

The residents' representation under the RHA has also not progressed. There was an original call out for candidates in the fall, but they did not consult residents on what the terms should even be, and did not let anyone see them unless they came to look at a physical copy in the commons block. Unsurprisingly given that process, they received no candidates, and have now pushed in back to May to do the elections. We are concerned about this because last time we wanted it to happen in the summer but they pushed it back to the fall since they wanted to wait for new students arriving in September. We are writing a letter to express our dissatisfaction with the process.

2.4 Tuition and Housing

Goal: To ensure the student voice is heard throughout the consultation process for the tuition and housing increases.

This was a new goal that was added since the last report, given that this issue ended up taking up a significant amount of my time between October and February. I feel at this time that I have met the goal, and that I did everything that was within my abilities and power at the time to engage students and make sure the strong

opposition to these increases was voiced to the university. We met many, many times with the university, I presented to the Board of Governors on both issues, and tried to support students and student groups (such as the ISA and RHA as well as Jamastudent) organizing on the issue as much as possible. Our response was at times not as fast as I could have hoped; however, given how much of a surprise this was, I think I personally put everything into this that I could. We certainly saw more students engaged on this than we have in a long time, for example the large numbers of students attending the AGM, the teach-in and various protests, all of which I spoke at. As well, the review of Policy 71 is well underway, and I am fairly happy with the result, and hope that it will result in a better process for students.

2.5 Academic Experience Survey and Report 2014 & 2015 (and institutionalize it)

Goal: Continue and improve the Academic Experience Survey and make the data more accessible.

The 2014 report was released in December. This was late due to various difficulties. We worked with the university in the fall to use the preliminary results to inform several of their surveys that they are conducting, to get more in depth on various issues. We also presented the results of 2014's survey to many groups on campus, including several Senate Committees, the FL Implementation Team, the VPS Office, etc. From November to January we worked to find a company that could do the survey for us, and eventually settled on Insights West. We conducted wide consultation on this year's questions, engaging many internal groups as well as some from the university. This year, at the request of the GSS, we are excluding grad students from the survey as the GSS is running their own survey and does not want over-surveying to occur. Insights West was a great help in the crafting of new questions and re-crafting of old, and did all the writing of the survey and it has now been out for several weeks. We have so far not had the response rate we would hope for, but are working to bring it up.

Myself, Tanner, Bahareh and Daniel Levangie discussed the long term needs of our offices in terms of data, and have been exploring options of expanding capacity with additional permanent staff members. At this time that conversation has been rolled into the governance review, and at least for now, working with Insights West has been fantastic and working with them in the future is strongly recommended.

3 Other Goals for the year

3.1 WE Standings

Goal: Withdrawals under Extenuating circumstances (WEs) approved by Senate.

This goal was originally a PAI goal but was removed when I added a goal in regards to the Tuition and Housing Increases since the timeline has been moved back on this project. A draft report has been written with the research in regards to other universities that have similar policies to what we might want to implement, and are currently contacting a select number of people who have worked at universities with these policies in order to speak to how they can be implemented.

3.2 Housing contract

Goal: To create structures and procedures (perhaps within the Housing Contract itself) that will better protect students' rights in housing and better communicate to them their rights and housing procedures

Natalya, the campus development commissioner, completed writing a report that outlines best practices, compares us to other BC Universities' contracts and makes recommendations for areas for improvement. We met with the Residence Hall Association to discuss the report, and they strongly agreed with our recommendations and felt that we had covered all areas of concern. Natalya and Pierre also drafted a briefing

note in regards to coverage by the Residential Tenancy Act and then a policy calling on us to advocate to UBC and to the Provincial Government, which were then brought to Unecorn then Council for approval. Moving forward, now that the policy is approved, we need to meet with the University again and push for them to implement the proposed changes, though I believe the ultimate solution won't come from the University regulating itself, but from the government regulating the university.

3.3 Tuition Consultation on New Programs

Goal: To work with the university to improve consultation processes for new program tuition.

This year there have been several tuition consultations for new programs, and the university has so far given us significantly more time for consultation and have been generally willing to provide us with budgets. This has been a topic of conversation at the committee that is discussing changes to Policy 71 and its procedures, and so far I am quite satisfied with the proposed changes.

3.4 Vantage College

Goal: To engage with Vantage College Students, and ensure the students are having an excellence academic experience

My international students' commissioner, Ayush, and I have had several meetings with Vantage over the past few months. After many repeated requests to be able to see their program evaluation they gave us the results of their beginning of term one and end of term one surveys. We will be writing a response and critique of this soon. In terms of our own data, in the academic experience survey we have asked students if they are in Vantage, and so we will be able to see what their experiences are, if the sample size is large enough. We have also begun a conversation around representation of Vantage students, and following a conversation with Council, we attempted to conduct focus groups, however, there have been issues coordinating these focus groups and they have not gone forward as hoped (and it's now the end of term). We will be exploring what our options are moving forward to ensure that we choose the right model of representation.

3.5 Engagement with students

Goal: To better engage on academic and university issues with the VP Academics and Students at Large

The VP Academic Caucus has met regularly throughout the year and has had many productive conversations and facilitated collaboration between the VP Academics. Unfortunately the FL Forum did not happen as hoped with the Education Committee, due to the significant engagement occurring on the tuition and housing issues.

3.6 Exam Database

Goal: To have the Exam Database up and fully operational, used and with a full plan for its sustainability.

Daniel, my AVP, has taken the lead on this project. CTLT has finished the back-end database itself, and then we did some fine-tuning the instructor and student user-interfaces. The database itself is now ready, and we are still fixing small bugs as we have gone on. In terms of Faculty engagement, we took a strategy of speaking to Associate Deans who could provide us names of people within departments who could push the project, and then contacting these people to get them and their departments on Board. We have also drawn on the Faculty Association and their support for this project, and they have brought together undergraduate chairs from Science in a meeting (and soon chairs from Arts in another) to discuss and promote the project. We are aiming to roll the database out to students in the fall, and hope to have it reasonably populated by then. The steering committee is also determining how it will transition to a more operational committee once the project is at steady state, and believe this transition will occur after a full term with the database up and running.

3.7 Midterm Evaluations of Teaching (MEoT)

Goal: To expand on the pilot in all Faculties, and work for wide adoption in Arts.

This term we expanded the approach of identifying an individual in each department who is highly engaged in teaching to be the spokesperson for the project, rather than having student reps contact individual profs. It worked really well in History dept. in term 1, so in addition to History in term 2 we tried it out in Philosophy, Classical Near Eastern & Religious Studies, and Visual Art/Art History in order to see if it would work just as well more broadly. In the last week Daniel reached out again to those individuals for follow up, and reports from each of those departments were very positive on using faculty members to spread the word about it and field their colleagues' questions. They also said many instructors opted to use the template evaluation the AMS provided. Moving forward, we should make a plan to roll out this same approach in other faculties.

3.8 Policy 73 (Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities)

Goal: To incorporate mental health into Policy 73, and improve the policy overall to better work for students' needs.

Policy 73 is up for review, and this past year the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioner wrote a report examining similar policies at similar universities in Canada and abroad, and an evaluation of the short survey we did in regards to students with disabilities, and those reports are now complete. It is unclear when this committee will meet, since it was initially to be reviewed in the spring of 2014.

4 Committees

Please note that while there are many more committees I sit on, I have excluded from this list any committees that have not met since October.

4.1 Student Evaluation of Teaching (SEoT) Implementation Committee

This committee is a UBC committee made up of university administrators and representatives from the major faculties to discuss the implementation of the SEoT. The committee met several times throughout this period, and many topics were discussed, such as Fall 2014's scores, how to better communicate to students how course evaluations are used to ensure quality of teaching, Faculties' policies on how to respond to low scores, and data issues surrounding equity and discrimination (e.g. ratings of male and female profs).

4.2 Learning Eco-System Steering Committee

This committee discusses Connect and other learning technology platforms. Other than updates on Connect, an important topic of conversation has been the roll-out of a mobile option for Connect.

4.3 University Health and Safety Committee

The University Health and Safety Committee meets to discuss high level health and safety issues at UBC. In addition to the usual business of receiving monthly accident and incident reports as well as statistics on trends in these areas, the committee has been focusing on implementing new mechanisms for UBC workers reporting accidents. A report on student ergonomics and ergonomic injuries will be going to the next meeting.

4.4 Public Realm Committee

This committee oversees the implementation of the Public Realm plan within C+CP. There have been two meetings and various topics were discussed including the University Boulevard Precinct.

4.5 UTown@UBC

The [UTown@UBC](#) Committee brings together stakeholders from all areas of the University, both academic and non-academic, to discuss issues that relate to the campus as a community and town. The committee met once and discussed projects in development, the C+CP Engagement Principles, the Zero Waste Plan and the 2013 Transportation Status Report.

4.6 Flexible Learning Strategy Network

The Flexible Learning Strategy Network meets to discuss high-level strategy for UBC relating to flexible learning. The network met once during this time and discussed various topics related to FL.

4.7 Orientations Steering Committee

The committee met in the fall and twice in the spring. There were several subcommittee meetings as well to discuss training and the terms of reference in more detail. At these meetings we discussed feedback from last year's implementation, the committee's terms of reference, and changes moving forward following student concerns, such as the new training plan, plans for Imagine Day, changes to the event guidelines, etc.

4.8 Campus Safety Working Group

I am now one of the AMS Representatives to the Campus Safety Working Group. The Committee meets quite regularly to discuss issues. Most significantly, we received a report in regards to the upgrade of the blue phone system on campus and adding cameras to go with that system, and made a recommendation for implementation of this to the UBC Executive, who have also approved of it.

4.9 Ombuds Advisory Committee

I was able to attend the only meeting of this committee since I was appointed to it. We discussed the Ombudsperson's annual report to the Senate, and had a discussion of priorities and on-going issues.

4.10 Wellbeing Initiative (previously: Ad Hoc Transformational Wellbeing Change @ UBC)

They have been discussing a university wide initiative on improving overall wellbeing on campus and the meetings have focused on goals, scope, and strategy.

4.11 Property and Planning Committee

This committee reviews major planning projects the university is proposing. They met in November and discussed the Student Housing Demand Survey.

4.12 Informal Learning Spaces Committee

This is a committee that meets once a year to adjudicate a fund that provides money for the creation of informal learning spaces on campus. The committee reviewed several proposals in late March.

4.13 Mental Health Network

I have attended all the MHN meetings that have happened during this time except one. The Network worked on many areas of collaboration this year and in April we will be electing a new chair for the coming year.

5 Other Portfolio Projects and Initiatives

5.1 FL Assessment

This project has mostly been in its research phase, and so the research assistants have been taking the lead and we have not been very involved. When the project manager returns from maternity leave soon, we will likely be more involved in the project as it moves towards interpreting the results and making recommendations.

5.2 Divestment

The new AMS policy was approved at the University and External Relations Committee and Council. As well, the Faculty members of UBCC350 put forward a referendum to Faculty that ultimately passed. Thus we submitted a responsible investment proposal to the Board of Governors, which is currently considering it. Our future actions on this file depend significantly on how the Board responds.

5.3 Boycott, Divest and Sanction

In the past couple months I have spent a significant amount of time on the BDS file. I aided groups who wanted to know more about the referendum process, since it is I who receive the petition. I aided Tanner in the crafting of language for our communications, and various other tasks. I also organized the mediated dialogue event held on March 24th, and attempted to bring together a panel on the topic though in the end, due to short timelines, wasn't able to bring together the diversity of voices that was needed for such a topic.

5.4 AMS Policy on UBC's Policy 69

The AMS's external policy on UBC's Policy 69 on Student Safety Abroad expired over the summer. Because of some vagueness in the expired AMS policy, we conducted our own review of Policy 69, including consultation with Go Global about the context in which Policy 69 was created. An updated external policy about the AMS's position on Policy 69 was discussed and approved at the University and External Relations Committee and Education Committee and at Council.

5.5 Tuition Policy

Following Council's feeling that an initial new version did not follow the Referendum results, we brought a new version of the policy to Unecorn and spend a significant amount of time revising it. We consulted Council on the proposed policy in the spring, and then brought it forward on March 25th to Council. Council still had a philosophical concern around how closely we should follow the referendum, and decided that more work needed to be done to determine the road ahead, and thus failed the motion. It will be up to the next Executive to move forward with a new AMS policy.

6 Concluding Remarks

Well, it's hard to know how to conclude after a year and a half as an executive, having started as an AMS Councillor more than 4 years ago. There were so many things that I could have worked on this year, things that I wanted to, but we all have to pick our issues. Sometimes we get thrown years like this one where your job is so significantly influenced by events of that year. It feels like a long time sometimes, and yet there are so many things I would need to stick around for another 5 years to see through to the end. I guess my hope with the AMS and future VP's is to keep the long term always in the back of your mind. It's so easy to get caught up in the minute and the immediate, but when we think long term, work on things that were brought from before and we won't see completed, we'll achieve a lot for students.

Respectfully submitted April 13th, 2015.

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