



THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of May 15, 2018

Attendance

Present: Marium Hamid (President), Chris Hakim (VP Administration), Max Holmes (VP Academic, left at 12:50), Cristina Ilnitchi (VP External), Kuol Akuechbeny (VP Finance), Piers Fleming (Student Services Manager, left at 12:55), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Recording Secretary: Sheldon Goldfarb (with assistance from Chris Hakim)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:07 pm.

Agenda

- The agenda was approved (Kuol, Chris).

Minutes

- The minutes of May 8 were approved (Max, Chris).

The Way Forward (Businesses, Services, Strategic Plan)

- Keith:
 - Business declined from 2008 through 2016, and in 2016 we suffered a huge loss.
 - In the last two years the businesses have been making contributions again.
 - Nest refinancing: We found a way under the lease to switch our loan to save us \$70 million: repaying over 19 years instead of 35.
 - We reviewed all our businesses and departments: closed some, revamped others.
 - Removed our Director-level positions.
 - Added flair:
 - Got rid of the Upper Case and Lower Case names, returning to Blue Chip.
 - Got rid of the Peko Peko name and returned to The Honour Roll.
 - Killed the Perch restaurant and restored the Gallery (which is doing really well).
 - Added I Wana Taco (Mexican food), getting rid of the declining burger business (Flipside).
 - Conferences & Catering will now concentrate on offsite catering, and the building will focus more on clubs and Constituencies.

- Where going?
 - Keeping expenses low, driving revenue.
 - Constant review of businesses.
 - Rebranding the Nest as an entity.
 - Need to do more social media outreach.
 - Want more animation to draw traffic to the Nest: make it seen as the centre of campus.
 - Student Services:
 - Working towards financial sustainability so they are effective and productive.
 - See what we are duplicating: Is the University or the Government already doing this?
 - Need to do more for international students.
 - Food Bank: More and more usage. Look at what we can do to help students.
 - Mental Health: Marium's idea last year: a triage system. Also need a toolkit so people can see the services related to mental health.
 - Minimum wage going up, which means an increase in salary and wages, which will reduce the financial contribution the businesses make.
 - Need to review efficiencies, look to cut costs; review duplication.
 - HR:
 - Need to review structure, create a training toolkit for frontline staff; also an orientation kit.
 - Need to do a better job at employee engagement: listen to the people working here.
 - Need a performance tracking system: identify issues and also good performers.
 - Staff retention needs work.
 - Financial sustainability:
 - Refinancing.
 - Endowment Fund:
 - Sale of Whistler Lodge and closure of dormant funds produced money that went into the Endowment Fund.
 - Excess from businesses will go in to it too.
 - Long-term the plan is to fund our services from it and be able to reduce student fees.
 - The idea is for the Nest to become a self-sustaining engine.
 - Need to try again to do a fee restructure.
 - New investment policy to be implemented.

- AMS Formula:
 - Education – sharing information and resources
 - Entertainment – make the student experience fun
 - Engagement – welcoming to our members
 - Empowerment – enable our members to participate in what we do
- I would suggest including some or all of this in Executive goals.
- I do think we need a strategic plan: because of our annual turnover it's easy to lose track of where we are going as a society.
- Chris: How should we animate and attract? Outside? Inside? We do have plans related to the Art Gallery.
- Keith: Inside. We have all these clubs; they can do demonstrations. Like the Karate Club.
- Sheldon: We used to have a Medieval Club that did a joust.
- Keith: We want people to think the Nest is a place where things are going on.
- Marium: Seattle airport does that.
- Cristina: Renting out ping pong tables, games, etc.
- Keith: Yes, foosball, table hockey. We originally had plans for those in our pocket lounges.
- Marium: The Speakeasy space is coming open. We can use that. We can rent out volleyballs and frisbees.
- Chris: On staff training, do you mean training to do their jobs and use equipment?
- Keith: No, that's done, but we don't tell them anything about the AMS.
- Chris: Would performance tracking/indicators apply to the Executives?
- Keith: No, you are directors of the society; this is for employees.
- Max: What is the ideal for a strategic plan? A three-year operational one or a 10-year vision?
- Keith: More operational. It could be a rolling three-year plan: each year you would reinvent.
- Marium: It should be value-based; we don't have unifying values. We need something beyond the warm and fuzzy HEART (Honesty, Effectiveness, etc.). Then we could have an operational plan based on those values.
- Max: Strategic plans don't go well at the AMS: Executive portfolios turn over. An operations plan can work for businesses and services.
- Keith: But a strategic plan is about vision, values, where we're going.
- Max:
 - We change significantly: we used to hate development; now we think it's a good thing for student housing.
 - It will be easier if we don't delve into areas that people are not going to follow.
- Marium:
 - A strategic plan doesn't say how to fulfill values.

- The value could be sustainability, but we can choose how to implement it, just we wouldn't be able to choose not to do it at all.
- Max: UBC just put values in its plan, and people didn't like that.
- Marium: This won't be an implementation plan.
- Max: Things are always changing.
- Cristina: But if nothing's written down, things fall by the wayside.
- Max: That's what policies are for.
- Marium:
 - I'd rather have one document that our members can look at.
 - I don't see why a strategic plan would hurt.
- Max: If reviewed every year, the new Executive will rip up parts of the plan.
- Marium:
 - But people still look at old plans. People still refer to Spencer Keys' plan.
 - Of course, things change, but there will be a certain continuity over three years, things like sustainability, indigeneity.
 - People have criticized us for not engaging in conversations about sustainability, indigeneity, social justice.
- Max: What would the process look like? Consultation? Timeline? Council?
- Kuol: There's too much flexibility now. We should go to Council to establish a plan.
- Marium: I'd like us to give it a try.
- Max: It's not the biggest ask from our membership.
- Marium: Just because they haven't asked for it doesn't mean we shouldn't do it.
- Keith: We do get feedback from our members: they don't know what we do.
- Chris: We need clear indicators to show us moving forward, but that may be hard to do for advocacy. There can be a problem finding key indicators. I don't want advocacy to be a weak part in the plan.
- Kuol: On the question of international students, what can we do?
- Keith: Don't know yet: we do some things, but could do more.
- Piers: Need to make them feel more valued.
- Chris: Clubs focused on international students.
- Kuol: About Nest animation. There's no Communications Manager now.
- Keith: I'm already working on a plan.

SUDS (Student Union Development Summit)

- Cristina:
 - Want to brainstorm.
 - We'll have student leaders from across the country here: it's an opportunity to idea share.
 - One thing to talk about would be indigeneity at universities, engaging Indigenous students, creating a more inclusive environment for them and for all.

- Past feedback has indicated we need to be more inclusive, to promote shared values, to have a healthier approach to drinking (not excluding some people based on what they do or do not do).
 - Drag Night is an idea.
- Chris: A session on mental health might be good. Ask what others are doing and share what we do.

[Max leaves.]

- Marium: Advocacy.
- Piers: Strategic Plan values.
- Cristina:
 - We had sessions on strategic plans and mental health last year.
 - The issue is making them better.
 - We also need better feedback; nobody fills out surveys.
 - We did hear that it was too AMS-centred and that we need a healthier drinking culture.
- Marium: We can get an outside consultant to help gather feedback.

[Piers left.]

SHAPE Appointment

- The Executive appointed Kuol to sit on SHAPE (the committee to sell art works).

New SUB Committee

- Chris:
 - The terms of reference say the committee is to end when the New SUB Project is done.
 - But after the construction is done, there will still be things to do: moving clubs into the other building, cleaning up loose ends.
 - Do we need to amend the terms of reference?
- Sheldon: The term “project” can be said to include those post-construction things.
- Marium: If anyone objects to the committee continuing, we can suspend Code.

HR Committee

- Marium: If you have any JD changes, send them to Hannah, the HR Committee chair.
- Cristina: I want to create a temporary position to assist the SUDS coordinator. Will send it to the HR Committee.

Finance Committee

- Marium: Need a meeting.
- Kuol: Still missing people for the at large positions.
- It was noted that the committee could still meet without them and that quorum would actually be lower because of the vacancies.
- Kuol: We will have the preliminary budget done for the May 30 Council meeting.
- Keith: We also would like the committee to approve an expenditure from the Capital Projects Fund for the new POS software system.
- Kuol: We can meet on May 28 or May 29.
- Keith: We can have a placeholder on the agenda when it goes out May 25.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:06 pm.