

AMS ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Minutes of AMS Advocacy Committee – October 29, 2018

Attendance

Present: Max Holmes (Chair, VP Academic & University Affairs), Andy Wu (Councillor), Yash Gurnani (Councillor), Cole Evans (Councillor), (Juliana Craig (Student-at-large), Chris Hakim (VP Administration), Michelle Marcus (AVP Sustainability)

Regrets: Cristina Illnitchi (VP External Affairs), Laura Finkler (Councillor)

Recording Secretary: Chris Hakim (VP Administration)

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM.

Territory Acknowledgement

- We acknowledge that we are on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral land of the Musqueam people. It is important to recognize that learning has happened long before our time here, and that we are very privileged to be on these territories that are not ours.

Approval of the Agenda

- The agenda was approved (Yash, Cole).

Approval of the Minutes

- The minutes were approved (Juliana, Yash).

VP External Affairs Updates

- Elizabeth:
 - Cristina is currently in Victoria for a provincial lobby trip.
 - Setting up federal lobby trip for December 2018.
 - Almost done with a SFA report that'll be ready after lobby meetings.
 - Wrapping up the municipal elections campaign.
- Andy:
 - Are we hearing anything from students about how they will vote for proportional representation or whether they even know anything about the ballot?
- Elizabeth:
 - All student groups that we have met with are for proportional representation.
 - We have not started boothing, so we don't have any data about one-on-one interactions.

VP Academic & University Affairs Updates

- Max:

- Gave a presentation on the AMS to the Alumni Board with Marium.
- Gave a tour of the NEST to Paul Davidson President of Universities Canada.
- Academic Concessions Working Group of Senate was approved, and I am the Chair of that working group.
- We will be finalizing the first academic concessions policy in 10 years.
- May 2019 is our goal for the policy.
- I went to the Aga Khan Ceremony as I was part of the Academic Procession.
- The Undergraduate Research Working Group finalized what undergraduate research currently looks like at UBC.
- The VP Academic Caucus met last Friday, we talked about broad range of topics such as the AES Report and tuition consultation.
- Yash:
 - What part of the Excellence Fund deals with Jumpstart funding?
- Max:
 - Jumpstart is already fully funded for international students.
 - Domestic students this year was a pilot, so we got funding to include them.
 - It's currently up in the air of whether we will continue with that model.
 - The AMS is currently advocating for that model to continue.
 - The AMS also wants a bursary for students who cannot afford to attend.
 - We want Jumpstart to have continuous funding because it is so important, not just a one shot.

Code Change: Student Senators and Board of Governors

- Be it resolved that Advocacy Committee recommend that Code changes in the document titled 'Code Changes 2018 Student Senators and Board of Governors' to Council for approval.
- Max:
 - Context: we used to have an office for Student Senators and Governors.
 - I think it is a good idea to provide them with an office because they are student leaders that don't get paid and don't have a formal space to work.
 - They used to have a space where they can work and hold meetings that was given by us.
 - My office tries to support these people as much as possible.
 - I have had conversations with Chris about this idea and it is feasible.
 - My office would be responsible for maintaining that access is only provided to Student Senators and Governors.
- The motion was approved (Max, Andy).

Ben Shapiro Statement for Approval

- Max:
 - After talking to Marium, we think it would be important for Advocacy Committee to approve a statement like this, especially since we have had conversations about this before.
- Juliana:
 - It's great, especially with the section on the services that can be provided.

- Max:
 - Those statements were also written by the services themselves.
 - We want the focus of our statement to be on students who might feel threatened from this event, as opposed to focus on Ben Shapiro.
- The statement was approved (Juliana, Andy).

Academic Experience Survey Priorities

- Max:
 - Note: we will probably eliminate the question specifically on Greek Life since not a lot of students may know much about Greek Life and we want to get as many responses from students.
 - There are other opportunities to gauge how students feel on this issue
- Juliana:
 - I would agree; with such a small range on students involved in Greek Life or knowing about it, this would not be relevant to the Academic Experience Survey.
 - Also, taking note that we might have polarizing responses from students involved versus students not involved in Greek Life.
- Cole:
 - Do we ask questions on how engaged do students think the AMS is?
- Max:
 - No, because the Academic Experience Survey has moved away from asking AMS-focused questions since this survey is primarily centered on the student experience and advocacy.
- Andy:
 - I've taken the Academic Experience Survey before, I am wondering if there have been attempts to add more policy-specific questions?
- Max:
 - Typically, we try not to put things in the survey about things that students don't have a lot of knowledge of because it can skew data.
 - If you put policy-specific questions, it can be difficult since a lot of people don't necessarily know enough to answer very specific policy questions.
- Andy:
 - That is fair, but I think on big topics, it may be useful to gauge the opinions of the student body.
 - I point to when we had that meeting on the Trans Mountain Pipeline where we had a divisive discussion on whether we should release a statement on it or not because we were not sure if it was representative of the student body.
- Max:
 - I think this is more about gathering data on students' experience and using that for data, as opposed to bringing political issues to the plate and gauging if that is something that influences their experience at UBC.
- Yash:
 - Do you think it would be useful to ask students about how often they access the disability shuttle at UBC?

- Max:
 - I can look into whether that is one of the services we can ask questions about.
- Michelle:
 - I think it would be useful to ask questions on climate change and see what students' interests lie there.
- Max:
 - We can potentially frame it into a UBC context and see what students feel on how well UBC is doing regarding climate change and sustainability.
- Andy:
 - Adding more questions about how the University or the AMS is tackling climate change may be useful to the VP Administration office.
- Juliana:
 - What do you think the nature of the graduate students related questions will be?
- Max:
 - We already ask students whether they are an undergraduate or graduate student.
 - However, graduate students in the past have said that the Academic Experience Survey doesn't always ask questions that are relevant to them.
 - It is difficult to ask specific questions to them, because we need to have common ground questions in consideration of the amount of time it takes to complete the survey.
 - We may be able to add one or two additional questions for them.

UBC Annual Tuition Consultation

- Max:
 - This is to give people a heads up that I will be sending in a submission on the AMS's opinion on UBC's annual tuition consultation.
 - UBC has not done a good job with their consultation, and I will be including that in our submission – I had to ask UBC to consult with us.
 - I blame this somewhat on the VPS turnover.
 - We are opposing the tuition increase because we do not approve of any international tuition increase that is larger than domestic tuition increases.
 - Another reason we are opposing because we have been asking UBC for a long-term enrolment plan, so we can understand what our enrolment will be in the future along with the costs.
 - I want to see the potential of if the increase did not happen, and UBC has not sent me the numbers.
- The Committee agreed with this stance moving forward.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:03pm.