



THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF UBC VANCOUVER

AMS OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

January 22, 2019 – 5PM, Room #3511

Members

Christopher Hakim (Chair), Katherine West (Vice-Chair, Member-at-large), Jeanie Malone (Councillor), Dylan Braam (Councillor), Jerome Goddard (Councillor), Cole Evans (Councillor), Nicholas Harterre (Member-at-large)

Present: Chris, Katherine, Jerome, Dylan, Cole

Regrets: Nicholas

Guests: Frank (Ombuds)

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 5:06 pm

Approval of the Agenda

- BIRT the agenda be adopted

Moved: Cole

Seconded: Katherine

Motion passes unanimously

Approval of the Minutes

- BIRT the meeting minutes from the January 15, 2019 Operations Committee meeting be approved and sent to Council (Jeanie, Katherine).

Moved: Katherine

Seconded: Jeanie

Motion passes unanimously.

Updates from the VP Administration

- Chris gives his lovely updates on things he's been up to.

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[Chris]: Clubs days is over! A few new club applications are in process. Documents going to UBC legal for new clubs as per an agreement with predecessor to ensure they follow naming conventions. AVP Sustainability - some sections in process for OpsComm Manual.

Several guests enter; there is interest in recording the meeting with a video camera. It is decided by the chair that we cannot record.

[Chris]: There is interest in having sustainability reps for each club. Many logistical challenges with this. Additional items - some sustainability orientation with executives, but needs to be short for it to be doable.

[Katherine]: Interested in sustainability orientations, but there are limitations. Would like to not increase the overall length of orientations.

[Jeanie]: focus on resources available, SLSC etc. Clubs are interested in sustainability, but this can cycle around hosting events and would be nice to have it focused on resources.

[Chris]: Updated version of OpsComm manual is mostly done. VP Finance - checking on the funding grant/club status piece, Kuol is happy. Need to make sure clubs staff and funding staff have access to that.

[Frank]: Franz has a complaint to about the proprietary nature of the Women's Centre funding. I motion to have this added to the agenda.

Moved: Chris

Seconded: Dylan

Motion passes unanimously.

Discussion: Funding of Women's Centre

Introductions: Guests - Franz Kurtzke, Mo Jo Kiani, Henry

[Frank]: Let us recognize Franz on this topic.

[Franz]: I am involved in a number of anti-discrimination claims involving the AMS. (circulates a claim). This is a claim against the AMS Women's Centre. (proceeds to read the text of the claim).

[Franz]: Note: I am also concerned about the Social Justice Centre as I am concerned they are not currently taking in men's issues and have not responded to my attempts to engage them. Additionally I am concerned about the SASC Healthier Masculinities programs for not including the full range of men's rights issues.

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[Franz]: Note: Additionally I am concerned about the issue of the centre receiving free rent.

[Franz]: Additional note - I don't know if the funding has been reviewed since the 1970s. I am not sure if it has ever been reviewed. I think it might be reasonable to grandfather the old centre in the old SUB, but the responsibility of the AMS during the move to the NEST should have been to reconsider at that time. Philosophically - I hope the ethical consideration of distinguishing equity and equality is clear. However, since UBC became female majority because of the AMS's anti-sex[ism] policies that the entitlement to these specialized spaces is no longer valid. A program initially put in place as a social justice program has become a social injustice issue.

[Dylan]: Is this claim of discrimination in respect to the BCHR act or AMS code? Enumerated ground?

[Frank]: I believe this is with respect to the respectful environment policy and sex as an enumerated ground of the human rights code.

[Dylan]: There is limitations in BCHR - is there an enumerated section in specific?

[Franz]: I think this is beyond my scope. I have cited the respectful environment policy.

[Frank]: I believe the BCHR prohibits discrimination in services customarily provided to the public. I am not able to advise on the definition of public in this case.

[Chris]: I will note that the AMS is a private institution

[Jeanie]: How was this fee collected?

[Chris]: I believe there is allocation occurring through the Resource Group Allocation committee as per the referenda fee. The Resource Group Allocation committee is formed by the resource groups themselves.

[Frank]: Kuol did not know the referenda in question. Perhaps Sheldon would know more.

[Dylan]: Are you claiming being denied something, or that you ought to have access to something? Positive/negative right?

[Franz]: I am not claiming solely on my behalf. We are being denied services of the type that the women's centre supplies but the male equivalent. Consciousness-raising concerns, etc. I have made a video of me demonstrating outside of the NEST a few days ago.

Have not been able to access their budget. I think it is strange that I cannot take a copy of the finance report outside of the offices or take a photo of it. Suspicious.

[Dylan]: I think this is a positive rights claim - a right to the same services . Not sure a positive right exists, but I think a negative right does exist. I think the AMS would in no way have the

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right to deny one the right to funding if there was a referenda successfully passed. I don't agree all groups have the right automatically in the same way.

With respect to the finances, we are a Society, similar to a corporation, but a shareholder does not have the right to line item level finances and neither does a member of the society. The documents that go to Council are published; if there are issues with that, referenda or elections or motions to council are levers through which our membership can raise those issues. I believe we exceed our minimum legal obligations.

[Franz]: My concern is about the \$100,000 over the past 10 years, and what it has been spent with. I, and many people, would expect transparency around this.

Positive rights claims need to be sound, need to be based on something that is socially just and a rigorous process. It has to be based on something more than what was voted for, rooted on the principles of what we are based on.

Imagine this issue was about race. In that thought experiment, for Race A (majority) to consistently vote for their priorities at the detriment of Race B would be socially unjust.

[Cole]: I think it assumes a single party votes 100% the same. I understand you have an issue with this fee, but what is the grounds for coming to this committee?

[Franz]: I believe this may be an opt out. I don't think there should be any fee, even for the women, because it is socially unjust. I think this is more constitutional than a democratic issue.

[Dylan]: Constitutions are democratically informed documents? They require supermajorities because they are fundamental

[Jeanie]: I don't think the AMS Operations Committee has the ability to change or modify this fee at all. Would have been done by referenda.

[Mo]: I am interested not only in the legal aspect but the moral piece. If the AMS grants the right to the Women's Centre but not Franz is that not favouritism? That is morally objectionable.

[Chris]: Code of Procedures - there are rules in which Operations Committee can

[Cole]: There is nothing preventing a group of students for running a referenda for a men's service centre. If there is a big enough group behind any idea the thing will get enacted. I don't think there has been anything the AMS has done to prevent any issue such as this from going to the ballot.

[Dylan]: Agreed. The Women's Centre acquired funding in the 70s when they were a minority. I believe although we have the situation reversed now, we can make the same process occur. I think it would be discriminatory to not make a group go through that process; it would be privileging one group over other.

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Document transparency - individual funding - submit a motion to council to release a document. This is basically the equivalent of a freedom of information request.

I would like to deny this claim that many institutions within UBC, AMS, etc - you can be a majority of the population and not hold majority of the decision making power. I would say that the AMS is not particularly discriminatory to men in my experience as a man. However, I encourage students to bring forward a motion to change / add / remove fees.

[Frank]: I will be here for 20 more minutes.

[Cole]: Can you elaborate on what process you would like to enact these asks?

[Ben]: Coming off the concern to change things without referenda with respect to the 1970s environment. It would have been unfair at that time to demand that a minority achieve that vote. It would be unequal in the present to change this process but I believe this was unfair in the first place. I would recommend that it would be better to rely on a principle rather than a referenda - more what is right than what is popular. You may be putting a student body in a place where a debate isn't needed. It is much more safe to hold a position in a way in which it is stationary.

[Chris]: Note we cannot unilaterally put things on the ballot as Operations Committee.

[Franz]: A number of counterpoints - I respect the thoughtfulness of Dylan's points. Currently the SJC refuses to cover men's issues. I will provide the video from the square. I was insulted in public repeatedly. It made it clear someone bringing forward men's rights issues receives a hostile environment. I have spoken to a number of male AMS students who has noted that they will not participate in male activism because they are scared for their careers and their future and are concerned about the backlash. Healthy Masculinities nor Men's Circle programs are covering men's rights issues. Explicit exclusion of MR issues. A radical feminist orthodoxy being oppressed onto the men. I would argue this is an aggressively exclusionary environment. A number of Free Speech Club (I am not associated with that group) article went to the SASC, there was some amount of hostility. Some argument occurred.

I am convinced the only men's issues groups we have are about rape and toxic masculinities. The rape culture topic has been questioned in a RAINN report is "unfortunate". This includes issues like going after fraternities. It is publicly available on the RAINN website.

I have offered to volunteer in their existing program. I have donated a number of classic social justice theory texts. I have provided extensive materials on male social justice issues. A copy of the red pill. I attended a meeting and said some things that I believe were factual. I was told after that in a private meeting to leave. They only want to prioritize trans* and women's issues. I have engaged in as much activism on these issues as anyone, yet I have encountered a number of issues and roadblocks.

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I would like to note that the Chair was involved in clubs day for a Men's Rights Activist BC organization. I was told to leave the property. Security was called, I refused to leave. RCMP gave me a nod of okay, and that I was within my rights. I have received no acknowledgement of that and no apology. So there may be a bias on that issue.

The member Dylan Braam's argument is generally that there are places in which there are more overall

[Dylan]: Clarify - I note that the leadership/hierarchical spaces tend to still be male dominated.

[Chris]: The committee is welcome to remove me as chair if needed.

[Franz]: I am concerned still about the transparency component. It is below what I expect for the standards of the organization.

I did not mean to argue that constitutions are not democratic. I want to highlight the principles in which we do not allow inequity. As a principle, this has become a socially inequitable situation. Regardless of the complex circumstances in which it has occurred it is incumbent upon the AMS to address this. I will provide digital copies of the full claim to members of the committee.

With the resistance I received from the SJC and the chair. I have been a heavily involved activist. I have been involved in AMS elections, papering campaigns, I have been interviewed by a number of papers. I find the ideological rigidity of the institutions at UBC including the AMS. The response that it is the member's duty to change the systems that we deem are unjust. The AMS is essentially funding activists who are opposed to the activism I am interested in. Their mandates are similar within the resource groups, we essentially have several SJCs. These groups receive the funding. One of the challenges with activism is having the time to enact activism, it is uncommon, and funding helps considerably. Men are intimidated to become involved in an information table passing out factually correct articles. Men are intimidated. I am facing an AMS activist core which reacts like a beehive whenever a referenda comes up. The AMS is partially responsible for funding only a particular type of activists. There is no diversity of issues. As I presented in the square, one of the insights I am trying to expose people to is male social justice issues that are not covered by the SASC, SJC, Women's Centre... I want the AMS to take this seriously.

Missing and murdered Aboriginal narrative. The majority of murdered are men. More men might be missing. 70% of perpetrators are themselves Aboriginal.

Don Dutton, UBC - the violence against women narrative - showed only 15% of domestic violence are male perpetrated. Most reciprocal. Males are reporting more.

I also have a claim against the UBC GRSJ department.

I do not think men's issues are being addressed. I think the AMS is not addressing this.

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[]: We have a rise of feminism, declining traits of masculinity. There is an imbalance of principles. I think that this is a corporation not a Society. There are more services for the females, not the males - actually none for the males. Why don't we give it to the students to vote on this issue? If this is a democracy, this has to be put up to a vote. Many people will feel uncomfortable paying a fee that pays zero necessity. You guys are paying redundant money. Males nowadays lack a role model. There is a toxicity with having a men's right. The other solution is to endorse a male Society at UBC, to reestablish the values of virtuosity are very vital for the health of men.

Motion to adjourn (Dylan)

43 minutes over time, had a long discussion and being tired leads to a bad discussion.

Moved: Dylan

Seconded: Katherine

Discussion: MUNSA Dispute

- Discussion on a club issue.

Discussion: Operations Committee Policy Manual

- Discussion and work on the Operations Committee Policy Manual.

Adjournment

- The next meeting will be held on January 29, 2019.
- The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM.