



THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of January 31, 2019

Attendance

Present: Marium Hamid (President, by phone), Max Holmes (VP Academic & University Affairs), Chris Hakim (VP Administration), Kuol Akuechbeny (VP Finance), Cristina Ilnitchi (VP External), Piers Fleming (Student Services Manager, arrived 2:40), Abdul Alnaar (Senior Manager of Student Services, arrived 2:40), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Recording Secretary: Sheldon Goldfarb

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:08 pm in Nest Room 3511.

Agenda

- The agenda was approved (Max, Cristina).

Minutes

- The minutes were postponed.

U-Pass

- Cristina:
 - Agreement between TransLink, the U-Pass Advisory Committee, and the provincial government.
 - Recommending a U-Pass question with the fee frozen at the current rate of \$41 until 2020, then going up to \$42.50 in May 2020 and rising annually after that by 2% till it hits \$46.

MOVED CRISTINA, SECONDED KUOL:

“That the Executive recommend the U-Pass question to Council for it to be put on the ballot as a referendum question.”

... Carried

SASC Fee

- Kuol:
 - The options for the sexual assault support services fee are for increases that will bring the fee up to somewhere between \$8.50 and \$9.50.

- The VP Finance Caucus says it is fine with any increase that leaves the fee under \$10.
 - The Finance Committee is still to discuss it and is awaiting Executive feedback before bringing forward a recommendation.
- Marium:
 - There should be a joint recommendation from Finance and the Executive.
 - Executives are the ones who can answer questions on this, the ones who know how SASC is run.
- Kuol:
 - Fincom members know how to answer too.
 - The Executive should come up with a number, but not impose it on Fincom.
 - Let Fincom make the decision.
- Marium:
 - This is not just about finances. It's about what SASC offers.
 - We promised the community something.
 - It should be a joint recommendation.
- Max:
 - I don't think \$8.50 is appropriate.
 - It should be \$9 or \$9.50.
 - We need money for the SAIF (the Sexual Assault Initiatives Fund).
 - We need flexibility if we want to expand.
- Cristina:
 - I don't want us to be in precarity.
 - We need SASC to run at its best.
 - So somewhere between \$9 and \$9.50.
 - I don't think students will react negatively.
- Kuol:
 - Our members might be willing to pay as much as \$12 or \$15, but do we charge on the basis of willingness to pay or on need?
 - I'd go with need, and think slightly below \$9 would be fine.
- Max:
 - We are all looking at need, but there are also future needs.
 - Right now SASC is not doing legal advocacy, but it might.
- Kuol: If we're talking about expansion, what sort of expansion? If legal advocacy, what would that cost?
- Max:
 - We don't know the cost of legal advocacy.
 - And what if SASC wants to expand education and training?
 - What if it decides it needs an elder present for Indigenous students?
 - We don't know the cost of these things, and if we don't pass enough, we may need to go to another referendum.

- Kuol: When we explain to people, I want to be able to tell people what the extra money will be for.
- Marium:
 - This is a very fast-growing landscape that we can't predict.
 - To specify an exact cost is nearly impossible.
 - I object to lower than \$9.
 - I won't object to more.
 - Will we be there for students, or will we have to say, Sorry, we don't have the funds.
- Max:
 - If we end up with surpluses, we can run a referendum to lower the fee.
 - I'd rather do that than run another one to raise it.
 - Let's say \$9.25 and provide an explanation, and be flexible.
- Chris: I worry if we go too high, we will get a negative response from the students.
- Kuol:
 - If we want to be flexible, let's give a range.
 - My opinion is \$8.75, but as a member of the Executive I recommend \$9-\$9.25, so Fincom doesn't have to go against the Executive.
- Max:
 - If Fincom says \$9, and we go along with \$9, that's not disagreement; that's healthy discussion.
 - So let's suggest \$9.25, but listen to Fincom.
 - \$9.25 with flexibility.

[Piers and Abdul arrived.]

Services in the campaign

- Max: We should ask Council to authorize campaigning by the Services only on the SASC referendum.
- Kuol: Maybe it should be for any question endorsed by Council.
- Marium:
 - SASC is happy to talk about the fee referendum affecting them.
 - Not sure they would be comfortable discussing the other fee referendums.
- Max:
 - Services should only get involved on questions affecting the Services.
 - The SASC question affects the Services; the other questions do not.
 - The Code rule means that in general the Services are not involved in referendum campaigns.
- Chris: Can individuals who work for the Services be involved?
- Sheldon: Yes, they can. The Code rule only prevents the Services as Services from taking part (unless Council authorizes it).
- Marium: We can mobilize Safewalk.

- Abdul: Hand out flyers, stickers.
- Chris: They won't use their office space, will they?
- Max: They won't do that.
- Marium:
 - This always comes up.
 - We need to trust the Services; they know what is appropriate.
 - They know that providing Services comes first; helping in the referendum is second.

Grad Class Fee

- Kuol:
 - The Finance Committee discussed this.
 - The \$7 fee is too high; it should be reduced to \$4.
 - We can use the other \$3 to create a Student Initiatives Fee and, if the Indigenous Committee agrees, for an Indigenous fee.
 - Have consulted the VP Finance Caucus and the GSS.
 - Grad students don't pay the Grad Class Fee; that's why we consulted the GSS; this will mean a new fee for their members.
 - They were more supportive of an Indigenous fee than the Student Initiatives Fee.
 - I have also spoken to Student Life; they're looking at changing the Grad Class Code.
 - They're okay with reducing the fee.
 - I suggested that the Finance Committee oversee the fee.
- Max:
 - We should not be discussing an Indigenous student fee without Indigenous students present. We need to consult Indigenous students.
 - As to the Student Initiatives Fund, there's no evidence it needs more money.
 - Yes, the Grad Class Fee is probably too large, but ...
- Kuol:
 - This year more money was used from the Student Initiatives Fund: \$10,000.
 - We raised the cap on grants from the fund.
 - It's a flexible fund; lots can apply.
 - Other funds are more restrictive: e.g., just for clubs.
- Cristina:
 - How important are the projects funded from the Student Initiatives Fund?
 - What is the money used for?
- Max: A lot is for professional development.
- Marium:
 - I'm fine with reducing the Grad Class Fee.
 - I can't endorse increasing the Student Initiatives Fund: it's largely funding people to go to conferences. There are multiple other sources for that.

- The role of the AMS is to fill in gaps, not simply to add resources, but to add things that are not being done.
 - We need to look at all our fees. Have we done an assessment of them? I don't think so.
 - The purpose of the Student Initiatives Fund is not fully articulated.
- Chris:
 - I don't know enough about what the Student Initiatives Fund is.
 - As to an Indigenous fee, we need to consult the Indigenous Committee.
 - It's inappropriate for this conversation to take place here without it first coming from the Indigenous community.
- Kuol:
 - We have a report being sent on all AMS fees.
 - Council can change the purpose of funds.
- Marium: Will you propose new terms of reference for the Student Initiatives Fund before we vote on this?
- Kuol: I thought its terms of reference were good, but I will look at them.
- Cristina:
 - Knowing the current terms of reference, I don't support putting more money into it.
 - If you can propose a new plan for the Student Initiatives Fund ...
- Max:
 - For the Indigenous fee, we can ask the Indigenous Committee, and if they say they want the fee, then obviously we would go ahead.
 - But one rushed meeting puts them in a difficult situation: it's not meaningful consultation.
 - We should have done this earlier. Or start now and do it later.
- Marium: Especially if we're going to them with a suggestion.
- Abdul: We do need to alleviate the concerns for funding the Indigenous Committee next year.
- Max: Yes, of course. We need to give money to the Indigenous Committee.
- Marium:
 - I'm not suggesting we don't run a referendum. If they want one, we'll go ahead.
 - But I don't want to go to them and say, Your funds should come from other funds.
 - There should be a fund for them on its own.
- Cristina:
 - Meaningful consultation would have meant letting them lead what this would look like.
 - It should not be led by us, with us telling them these are your options.
 - We can offer this as one option, and if this is what they want, yes, support them and do it.

- But if not, if they want to wait for next year, then we should wait – but still make it clear there's going to be money for them.
- Max:
 - We can tell them we can run a referendum if they'd like one.
 - But if they decide they don't want one now, we will tell them they will still get funding, e.g., from the Grad Class gift of \$20,000 or out of the AMS student government budget.
 - We need to make clear they will get funding and not pressure them to take a position.
 - We need to say: No matter what, you will get funding.
- Cristina: And if they choose not to do a referendum this year, we're still committed to discussions of future fee referendums.
- Max: And committed to having a fee for them.
- Marium: We will give them time, will not push them.
- Chris: We shouldn't even be having this discussion now without any Indigenous presence.
- Max: Yes, I don't think we should have been having this discussion.
- Kuol:
 - I'm just seeking perspectives and options about using the Grad Class Fee.
 - I appreciate the feedback.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.