



THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

AMS Advocacy Committee

July 3, 2019

Members: Cristina Ilnitchi (VP External), Julia Burnham (VP AUA), Tanner Gjosund, Michelle Marcus, Nevena Rebic, Nicholas Harterre, Lindsey Palmer

Guests: Conor Doherty

Regrets: Nevena Rebic, Nicolas Harterre, Lindsay Palmer

Recording: Will Shelling, Neha Tadepalli

Territorial Acknowledgement

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at: 11:20.
- Meeting is *not* quorate.

Approval of Agenda

- Moved: Tanner Gjosund
- Seconded: Michelle Marcus
 - That the agenda be adopted. The motion *carried unanimously*.

VP External Affairs Updates

- Planning SUDS
- Met with President of Universities Canada – talked about the federal election and possible areas of collaboration.
 - Works with CASA and really supports students.
- Presented in-person and sent in our submission for the BC Budget consultation (attached)
- Attended a meeting with the Moving in a Livable Region (MLR) group to discuss federal election efforts around transportation and Translink's Transportation 2050 plan
- Met with provincial student union partners, meeting soon with BCFS and ABCS
- Met with UBC to discuss transit advocacy for this year, plans to collaborate on events early in Fall
- Went to monthly meeting between AMS/Santa Ono to discuss the U7 organization
 - Michelle: Excited about the U7 Alliance. Do you have any other information on this?
 - Cristina: New initiative, takes place once a year with university presidents attending, first meeting is next week in France. We're putting together a letter with a proposal to have student engagement in this group.
- Met with Student Housing Working Group to move forward work on shared leading practices document on student rental rights/responsibilities
 - Tanner: How did the meeting go?

- Cristina: Myself and Andrew Parr put together a proposal for one of the recommendations. It will be shared with government, student housing units in institutions. Going from there, it was well received and others will be taking on writing the other recommendations. By the end of the summer, we'll have the draft proposal ready for feedback and be presented to other groups as well. Presenting as "this is the direction that we want student housing to go toward".
- Won election for UCRU chair

VP Academic and University Affairs Updates

Committee Meetings:

- Thrive Advisory Committee
 - Becoming a month, instead of a week, this year (November)
- Scheduling Project Steering Committee
- Learning Spaces Advisory Committee
- Ombuds Advisory Committee
 - Also joining the search committee for the Ombuds Officer vacancy
- Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Diversity and Inclusion
- Property Planning Advisory Committee
 - Voted to endorse a new site for the Arts Student Center
- Stadium Neighbourhood Planning Advisory
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month Planning
 - Kick-off meeting for January 2020
- Board of Governors
 - Full board meeting June 13th, Chris and I attended in audience
- SVPRO Director Search Committee
 - First meeting to create a shortlist of candidates
- Food Insecurity Action Plan
 - Neha attended as a proxy to the first session

Administrator Meetings:

- Been arranging many meetings with university administrators to introduce myself (alongside Chris, or my staff) and discuss our goals for the upcoming year.
 - Santa Ono, President
 - Ainsley Carry, VP Students
 - Matt Dolf, UBC Wellbeing
 - Andrew Parr, SHHS
 - Chad Hyson, Student Safety
 - Michael White, C+CP
 - Patty Hambler, Health Promotion
 - Joanne Proft and Aviva Savelson, C+CP
 - Peter Smailes, VP Finance
 - Duke Indrasigamany, Student Communications
 - Heather McCaw, VP Development and Alumni Engagement
 - Robin Ciceri, VP External

Projects:

- Open Scholarship Award

- Working with CTLT and the Library to discuss creating an award to recognize faculty, staff and students excelling in Open Scholarship at UBC
- OER Funding Proposal
 - Working with CTLT and the Library to draft a proposal that outlines the distribution of the new OER Fund (\$1 million/4 years) from the Academic Excellence Fund.
- Academic Experience Survey (AES)
 - The AUA staff team is hard at work compiling the data from the 2019 AES and creating a report with recommendations to share at the July 31st council meeting
- Textbook Broke
 - Neha is working hard on our annual Textbook Broke campaign, set to launch in September

Advocacy Committee Goals Finalize

- Cristina: Any thoughts on the goals?
 - Michelle: Overall I really like the goals. One other idea I saw is having student engagement being twofold, engaging the ones who are already involved, and educating students how to get involved in advocacy and teaching them how to advocate.
 - Cristina: can add a line in there about how Advocom members can engage with our community to get involved in our campaigns. To note: specific topics around CERT and student grants are issue based, and are embedded into the goals.
- Tanner: Is this in line with other years?
 - Cristina: More thorough, builds on previous years and adds on.
- Tanner: Likes how the goals are a bit broad as it allows the committee to have a wide range of actions they can take through the year.
 - Cristina: I will get more input from the other committee members and it will go to Steering Committee.

BC Budget Submission

- Michelle: UBC also did a submission?
 - Cristina: Yes.
- Michelle: Didn't know BC was that bad on grants.
 - Cristina: Yes, BC is really lacking in a comprehensive grant structure
 - Tanner: Alberta's grant system is a lot more put together.
- Cristina: Any other additions for lobbying provincially going into this year?
 - Michelle: We should include students more in the process, it would increase how powerful it can make the work.
 - Tanner: The engagement issue is with students who aren't present on campus. It's easier for on campus, domestic students to get involved and be engaged.
- Cristina: Any thoughts about what more we can do? How else to engage students?
 - Michelle: Something a bunch of environmental groups can do is sending letters to ministers and having a tool to easily do it.

- Tanner: making the information advertisable in a sense. If you don't see the info you don't necessarily see if something is wrong. If students can see that BC is an exception in regards to some services (ie grants), they may become more engaged.

Federal Election "Get Out the Vote" Campaign

- Presentation by Conor Doherty, AVP External
- Cristina: Want thoughts on the big 4 issues; reconciliation, climate, housing, students and education/students/post secondary. Our overall message is that students *are* voting, and we want to provide detailed information about this topic. We honed in on topics that are important to students and those they are passionate about on campus. Any thoughts on these? Anything that's big that's missing?
 - Michelle: I was wondering about health and mental health specifically. Tanner may be able to speak to this more?
 - Tanner: Being so provincially based there is not much variation on the policies the party can come out with. I don't seem as much variation, as MSP is provincial based, I don't know if there would be as much stuff to engage in with that.
- Cristina: We wanted to pick things that students could strongly engage with. For example with housing students have visceral experiences with this (high rent, roommates, living with parents). So talk about where each party stands on housing etc. Climate & Reconciliation are widely discussed on the campus and will drive dialogue.
- Cristina: There are some things we can do to include issues without putting them in the big four. This is included in the presentation (which is to come). We'll have web pages about the big four, but can also link to party stances on other issues.
 - Tanner: Immigration and Refugees as a topic of conversation for the election?
 - Conor: Also difficult to hone a specific plan as the parties haven't released detailed policies yet. So our rollout about policy-specific messaging will roll out more late August. So we don't have to lock in a detailed framework now, but need to have a basic structure
- Michelle: How will you compile info from the parties in a way that is fair & balanced but not so fair & balanced that it becomes unbalanced
 - Conor: I have been researching policy platforms, and looking at what the parties are saying. How I'm thinking about going about it is looking at the colour of the parties. Colour code the issues, (orange NDP under climate action), while also bullet pointing their policy stances and quotes from leaders underlining the party's view. That way it is easy to look at but the information is also there. We're basically going to display what the parties have highlighted in their platforms as their main strategies, and what the federal leader has also said on the matter. So if you care a lot about this issue you can easily see with confirmed info what each party says and plans about it.

- Tanner: Who is included? Smaller parties, independents, etc
 - Cristina: We have a criteria. Going to include the top four, based on debates, polling etc.
 - Conor: From a logical sense, Canada has had four main parties (liberals, conservatives, Greens, NDP), and who knows what will change later this year but right now there are four nation-wide parties.
 - Cristina: even in the past when we did our municipal election campaign, we got pushback from students that we weren't being neutral. We replied with our methodology and we actually got responses back from the students who then understood how we were going about it. We want to tell students info to be able to empower them to get informed and vote but not tell them how to vote.
 - Conor: Not to say we won't have options for smaller parties to have a voice. One of our ideas was to hold campaign days for various parties to come in and campaign in the Nest. Have a three hour block to campaign. 4 days for the four major parties, and the fifth day could be for smaller parties.

Quebec's Bill 21 Discussion

- Cristina: Quebec passed a law that prevents public sector workers from wearing religious symbols. Prevents muslim women from wearing hijabs, people from wearing crosses etc. The reason why I bring this up is how controversial it is and the public response it is provoking. Students in Quebec, specifically the McGill student union, have reached out asking for our support in a letter they are writing to the federal government. They want to talk about the effect on post-secondary instructors, the disproportionate effect on already marginalized communities. They are dissatisfied with the provincial government's actions/responses. What do you think about the AMS signing on? I don't think that this is something that we need to necessarily hesitate to sign onto, it's students exercising their voice. We don't do this very often but it is something important we could do it for.
 - Michelle: Could argue that it is justified by our values of inclusion and equity
 - Tanner: And our student pop from Quebec
- Michelle: What effect will this letter have? What is the federal government going to necessarily do?
 - Cristina: These are the questions I have too. Have a call with the McGill student union, going to see an early version of the letter and I will check in with those questions. I'll will provide more info as it comes.

Other Business

- Michelle: are we having the Equity plan discussion?
 - Cristina: We will, coming up in the next 1-2 meetings
- Michelle: Rodney came to council speaking about Indigenous students' representation at Council. I thought what he was saying lends a pathway to of course discussing

indigenous representation, but also the broader scope of representation on AMS Council and how to make more voices heard there. Who is in the room absolutely impacts what is being discussed and the decision making. Having a broader chat about representation and including indigenous representation within that would be a good way to tackle the broader issues and Rodney's concerns

- Cristina: I think that is definitely going to have a dual home in governance committee and advocom. Governance committee looking into what it would look like to have Indigenous representation specifically on AMS council, so on our end, we could have a broader conversation at the equity plan working group

Adjournment

- The meeting will adjourn 1 hour after the meeting is called to order.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:51pm