



THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

AMS Governance Committee

Minutes of November 4th, 2019

Attendance

Present: Katherine Westerlund (Chair), Jeanie Malone (Councillor), Michelle Marcus (Councillor), Max Holmes (Councillor), ~~Alex Gonzalez (Councillor)~~, Sahar Dua (Student at Large), Cole Evans (VP Administration), Sheldon Goldfarb (AMS archivist - non-voting)

Guests: Chris Hakim (President), Katrin (Ombuds)

Regrets: Alex

Recording Secretary: Jeanie

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:04pm.

Introductions

Approval of Agenda

Moved: Jeanie

Seconded: Michelle

That the agenda be adopted.

The motion carries unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved: Jeanie

Seconded: Cole

That the minutes of October 28th, 2019 be approved.

The motion carries unanimously.

Ombuds office role review - 20 mins

Chris is coming to visit!

[Chris]: Noticed some potential issues with the Ombuds office based on what is expected of this rule from our new policies. Hiring law students hasn't always worked out. If we want people

who come in with experience with investigations, we need to change qualifications. We also need to look at hours. Some of this is HR, some is Governance. The JD sits between both since some duties are in code.

The main role of Ombuds is investigations/independent body whose main role is to investigate the AMS. That has caused some challenges in the past where the role has blurred the line where the duty is to act as an advocate for the complainant VS a mediator VS an impartial investigator. We want to draw the line between an Ombuds and an Investigations office.

Talks with HR have started, mostly focusing on compensation. What are thoughts on mixing Ombuds/Investigations, separating, hours, etc?

[Cole]: Ombudspersons office always seems like it's constantly in transition, think the HR component extends beyond compensation, should be considering retention of students or converting to a permanent staff position. This isn't for us though, this is for HR comm. Personally this committee should wait until that decision has been made before considering the governance components.

[Katrin]: Looking at a much higher budget if we are looking at 3-5yr positions.

[Max]: disagree a little, think governance should come first. as long as HR comm seems ok with us looking at some of these compensation aspects. Look at other universities. I think we have complicated this, and that their role says they do investigations. May be a clarifications piece around advocacy. Don't necessarily think we need a whole new department for investigations. Think main changes will come from the HR comm, but governance should come first.

[Jeanie]: What is the workload like?

[Katrin]: October was dead, a few incoming requests. No actual investigations yet. Nothing with the new policy coming in yet.

[Chris]: Last year, Frank had a lot of cases coming through.

[Katrin]: Don't know that it's fully clear to people what the office is or what their powers are with the new policies.

[Jeanie]: my sense is we don't know exactly what the need is yet, and we may be getting ahead of ourselves. My sense is we should wait until the end of the year and review based on more experience.

[Katrin]: this traces back to our data collection push.

[Cole]: I'd almost say this year is completely juxtaposed with last year, my experience seems quite different to Chris'. Think people may trust us less, people are less likely to come to me.

[Sheldon]: Historically this was an entire office, do you have assistants?

[Katrin]: I don't particularly need them currently, could change in the future. Deputy ombudsperson exists!

[Jeanie]: I think volunteers concerns me based on the information those people are handling, would almost prefer compensation

[Chris]: would also like to clarify the reporting structure of the ombudsperson .

[Katrin]: Code has one, council! That's why I came to council.

[Jeanie]: Also, it would be good if Katrin can come do a presentation, maybe annually or once per term, on how many cases/how the office is doing.

[Cole]: Code says the HR committee is supposed to "do a review" of the person. Technically this exists as a reporting structure.

[Sheldon]: Legacy from the Oversight Committee.

[Katrin]: Side note, nobody can complain about me because the oversight committee doesn't exist.

[Chris]: I think my problem is there isn't actually a person who gets the complaints. Should it be me? the Speaker? HR committee?

[Max]: I believe the complaints would be referred to HR committee?

[Jeanie]: I think in the past, council gives warnings/discipline/conversation in camera. Not a great good model.

[Max]: Day to day, believe the president would be able to handle those things.

[Cole]: If the CEO has issues, where do they go???

[Max]: Day to day, the president. Large issues to council.

[Cole]: To me this is the same as the ombudsperson, there isn't really another person you can go to.

[Michelle]: HR committee seems reasonable.

[Cole]: respect the day-to-day service of the president, now I'm trying to think from a structural problem. In practice, for large issues it'd go to the Board?

[Max]: think it'd end up at council.

[Chris]: last point. Non-voting member piece. code is clear about the fiduciary duties of non-voting members of council. This may be something we want to fix.

[Jeanie]: seems like a problem with our code.

[Chris]: seems like we don't want someone with a fiduciary duty to the Society to be doing investigations of the Society.

[Cole]: As an ombudsperson you're holding the society to account, which is the height of fulfilling your duty to the Society.

[Chris]: My understanding so far: most things aren't drastic yet, most problems are HR, should consider doing a review at the end of the year.

Table on agenda discussion - 5 mins

Jeanie: I made this thing, do you like it

generally: people like it. Sheldon to draft

Elections Code review 2.0 - 30 mins

Continuing our convos from last committee:

IDEA 3: PRESERVING CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

[Max]: so this would mean saving platforms and campaign websites?

[Michelle]: my vision is all this information exists on the website so the public can see what people campaigned on. More of an incentive to make promises that are realistic. Also helps people see what campaign websites/posters look like

[Max]: think our executive goals policy is good at doing this. I think our "document dump" parts of our website is not good. Concerned about the sheer amount of documents as well.

Jeanie: I think maybe on our website we just need to communicate better about what people can do (communicate w archives etc.)

[Michelle]:

[Max]: maybe we should amend the goals policy that we need to include your platform in your goals presentation.

[Jeanie]: this feels more like an EA decision than a code thing

[Cole]: is there somewhere else that does something similar to this?

[Jeanie]: the media generally does this

[Max]: think we should include this, change policy. The platforms are the closest way for the Board to hold people accountable.

[Sheldon]: Would you like to amend I-9 to say this? What would we like to say?

[Max]: copy of their campaign material, a platform or something.

[Cole]: should we require people send this to the CEO? Would like to avoid situations where people lose documents

[Katherine]: Don't think people would fill that out well though.

[Max]: Agree with Katherine, don't think we have full platform points. Think we should just suggest people submit documents from the campaign.

[Katherine]: Sheldon could you draft something?

IDEA 4: CLUBS/CONSTITUENCIES

IDEA 5: APPEALS COMMITTEE

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is Nov 18th, 2019.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00.