

AMS Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes

January 27th, 2020 in NEST 3511

Attendance

Present: Cristina, Julia, Nevena, Anne, Rashika

Regrets: Brandon

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:04pm

Adoption of the Agenda

BIRT the 07 2020-01-27 Agenda of the AMS Advocacy Committee be adopted as presented

Mover: Cristna

Secunder: Nevan

Result: Passed

Land Acknowledgement

Introductions

VP AUA Update

[Julia]:

- It has been a crazy month.
- Stand with Survivors Campaign is going very well!
- Most updates to follow in discussion.

VP External Update

[Cristina]:

- Month's focus was the federal lobby trip preparation.
- Federally - AMS is part of the URCU, I [Cristina] am the Chair.
- University Endowment Lands is creating a development plan, which is said to include Student Housing Plan.
- AMS will be sending in a submission to reinforce the availability of affordable student housing.
- Another submission was sent to the UNA (Cristina sits on the UNA Board) about our position on the proposed bylaw changes.

- The proposed by-law would remove AMS from the Board. AMS sent in a submission to again reinforce the need to have a student voice at the table for affordable student housing.

Discussion

UCRU

[Cristina]:

- Reaching out to all MPs in Ottawa in preparation for federal lobby trip:
 - Hoping to meet at least 75 MPs.
- Also reaching out to different Student Union Groups.
- The focus for the trip:
 - Supporting International Students;
 - Supporting Indigenous Student;
 - Affordability;
 - Funding Undergraduate Research.
- All parties committed to different types of student affordability plans during the election: UCRU will be pushing to see them put into action.
- Fact: Highest income percentile utilize Tuition Tax Credit for education more than lower-income percentiles:
 - We want to reinforce that this tax credit should be targeted to those who need the funding most (lower-income).

[Nevena]:

- Issues with the timing of these grants (ie: need to pay out of pocket and then wait for reimbursement)

[Anne]:

- Who is part of it [UCRU]?

[Cristina]

- 9 research-intensive universities from across Canada.

[Nevena]:

- Is the same system to allocate grant funding the same for student loan funding?
- There are issues with this: can't get a grant without applying to student loans first.

[Cristina]

- On the federal level, grants and loans are usually integrated. Clearly an issue. I will consider this with UCRU

[Rashika]:

- What about international students/research?

[Cristina]:

- Very limited funding. Don't have a lot of data on this program (ie.: demographics). Part of our ask last year was to include an Equity and Diversity piece to the program. We want a representative group of students who access this funding. This will give a more diverse group the chance to go to graduate school. We are asking for around \$35 million in new money.

[Nevena]:

- Have you considered any other barriers to accessing this funding? What are the criteria for research funding?

[Cristina]:

- Awareness of this funding is very low. We want to expand this beyond NSERC to other research councils. Need a faculty sponsor, detailed research plan...

[Nevena]

- How do we help students connect with Faculty Sponsors?

[Cristina]:

- One aspect is pushing for better communications and awareness campaigns to get faculty/research councils to reach out to students and engage with them.

[Anne]:

- Would it be linked to WorkLearn?

[Cristina]:

- No

[Cristina]:

- Funding would not be for graduate students. Important context is that there is a gap of advocacy for graduate students at the federal level. Most of UCRU has only undergraduate students as constituents. That's why our focus is on undergraduate students.

[Cristina]:

- Supporting International Students:
 - Liberals changed the system for PR to make it a clearer process, we want to push for a change in policy to allow international students to use work experience gained during their education as part of their Permanent Residency application.

[Nevena]

- Is this to include common undergrad/graduate work (ie.: WorkLearn) as part of their PR application?

[Cristina]

- Yes.
- Ask around Supporting Indigenous Students:
 - In 2017, Liberals committed \$50-million to support indigenous students (a federal mandate) + a 2% cap on this funding.
 - It doesn't make sense as indigenous [enrolled in post-secondary] growth is faster than 2%. Limits access.
 - Liberals committed \$300-million in the past budget.
 - UCRU will be asking for another formal injection of funding to match the estimated number AFN has put out of over \$1 billion in funding needed, as well as to include indigenous students as part of the feedback loop.

Academic Experience Survey

[Julia]

- Per code, I'm bringing the proposed question of this year's AES.

- We need better data to know what we need to advocate on
 - This is why some question is “turned-off,” condensed.
- We added Empower Me as the AMS Health Services question.
- We added questions surrounding Career Services.
- Removed questions around why the student chose to attend UBC. UBC can ask those questions.
- The added question surrounding Food Insecurity.
- Added a 2015 question regarding the length of commute - will help with transit and housing advocacy. Bringing it back this time.
- Added a new question around what forms of student financial support are most useful - will help to better our student aid advocacy.

[Cristina]

- Can we condense the commute length question?

[Julia]

- We could, but then we wouldn't be able to compare it to the 2015 data.
- Can we try to pass a motion?

[Cristina]:

- When is the latest this should be passed by the Advocacy Committee?

[Julia]

- Friday, ideally.

[Anne]

- Who has access to data?

[Julia]

- It is held by my (VP AUA) office.

[Nevena]

- Changing the discrimination question might change the response.

[Cristina]

- How do we keep track of changes question, in terms of our tracking data?

[Julia]

- We lose it and we have to build it back up over a few years.

Motion:

BIRT the Academic Experience Survey draft questions are approved as presented by the AMS Advocacy Committee.

Mover: Julia

Second: Cristina

Objections: NONE | Approve: ALL | Motion: PASSES

AMS Policy Submission on Sexual Misconduct, At-Risk Behaviour and Retaliation Policies

[Julia]

- AMS preparing the statement in response to these UBC policies.
- AMS was not consulted:
 - Not a great sign of student consultation by UBC.
- Policy 131 (Sexual Misconduct):
 - More issues include:
 - Investigations (need better language, more clarifications), disclosures (institutional disclosures, UBC can become the complainant [not survivor centric]), lack of student survivor support in the policy, UBC needs to liaise with any service that the survivor wants to work with (currently only includes SVPRO), they need to commit to having a SASC seat at the table, staff+faculty have more rights under this policy than students, need more trauma-informed training for staff.
 - Good things:
 - Immunity against residence consequences while reporting, updated definitions of consent.
 - This all happened while the SVPRO Director was on leave.
- We had a great town hall earlier this year to walk through this policy and the changes.

[Nevena]

- At-Risk Behaviour: are we looking at the language of describing at-risk behaviour to avoid creating stereotypes? Is the language being used as a surrogate to mean something else, to not allow marginalized communities to be characterized?

[Julia]

- I was not on that committee, unfortunately. Will include bias-informed training for people at the decision making table.

Wet'suwet'en Statement

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CMRmNLazPvW1SJyYizON7KuGz5AmiTFrZsZxO5lq8wU/edit?usp=sharing>

[Cristina]

- We have already consulted with the Social Justice Centre and the Indigenous Committee.
- Purpose of the statement: there's been a number of student walkouts in support of the Wet'suwet'en community over the pushback against the LNG project.
- Premier said the project will move forward, even though the UNDRIP legislation passed a few months ago.
- The statement has been reviewed by affected groups and allies/activists, we are ready to put the statement out.
- Beyond social media, we will be emailing it out to relevant Ministers and MLAs and there is a possibility of collaboration with other student unions.

BIRT the Advocacy Committee approves the Wet'suwet'en statement as presented.

Moved: Cristina

Second: Nevena

Objections: NONE | Approve: ALL | Motion PASSED

Adjourned at 7:06.

Next meeting: Monday, February 3rd at 6:00 pm.