THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of March 27, 2020

Attendance
Present: Chris Hakim (President), Julia Burnham (VP Academic & University Affairs), Cristina Ilnitchi (VP External), Cole Evans (VP Administration), Lucia Liang (VP Finance), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Abdul Alnaar (Senior Manager of Student Services), Ian Stone (Student Services Manager), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Recording Secretary: Sheldon Goldfarb

Call to Order
- The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm and took place by videoconference.

Agenda
- The agenda was adopted (Chris, Cristina).

Minutes
- The minutes of March 20 were approved (Chris, Cole).

Budget
- Lucia:
  - Cole and I are looking into enrollment numbers and how UBC is handling that.
  - We’re looking at what UBC is doing for their budget.
  - We’ve been told there may be enrollment reductions of 10% or 20%.
  - UBC is preparing various versions of its budget, and looking into what happens if enrolment drops 40%: will there be no summer session?
  - They are talking about approving a budget now that will only include the absolute necessities, but then a revision after the first quarter.
  - All additional asks would be on hold.
  - It was suggested that the AMS do this as well.
  - We need to decide our top priorities.
  - When we asked when we might learn the enrollment number, we could get no concrete answer.
  - The number might even go up for domestic students because in a recession that can happen.
  - But international enrollment is the big unknown.
  - Our businesses will be hit.
  - Working with Keith on various scenarios and models.
  - Doing several budgets.
• Cole:
  o The University is just as unsure over what to do as we are.
  o But they have a lot more manpower to do budget modelling.
  o As Lucia said, we’ll model various scenarios.
  o There was positive news from the health ministry today about a good trajectory.
  o If we can get back to normal for May, that would be good.
  o But Conferences & Catering will probably lose a significant amount of money.
  o We should look at making cuts: determine what we really need, prioritize, in case we’re low on cash.

• Keith:
  o We need revisions in a week.
  o On the business side, even before COVID, wage increases were coming.
  o Now we can maybe break even.

• Chris:
  o Can we do multiple versions of our budget?
  o It will take a lot of staffing.

• Lucia:
  o Yes, that’s what I meant when I talked of doing several budgets.
  o Need to focus on the business numbers.
  o Fees will be impacted by enrollment, but our business operations will be seriously affected: all businesses will be reducing profit.
  o Some will open in the summer; a few will close.
  o This will reduce income by 10 or 20%.
  o If we’re breaking even or in deficit, we can cut.
  o Keith asked about pushing back the April approval of the preliminary budget.
  o We can probably get something in, but by June we may not have final numbers (for the final budget). May not get them till July or August.
  o We have limited access to our accounting software at the moment, which is slowing us down.

• Chris:
  o Timeline? Late April?

• Lucia:
  o Yes, aiming for April 22.
  o Do want something to present to Council.
  o But there will be lots of changes for the final budget if there are huge variances with our revenue sources.

• Cristina:
  o Tough decisions with departments, deciding where to cut.
  o Block Party and Welcome Back events: not knowing if we can have a gathering in September.

• Lucia:
  o More considering cutting across the board.
Events are being factored in.
Services are the Number 1 priority.
It’s all being looked at.
Welcome Back will probably happen, but be cut back.
Can’t see this department as not important.

- Cristina:
  - What about the new Executive?
  - Are we going to collaborate with them?
  - Of course, all departments are important but some are essential, e.g., Services.

- Lucia:
  - Working with the current Executive to pass on knowledge to the new team.

- Cole:
  - Do operational first.
  - Maximize efficiency.
  - We’ll present and then edit.

- Keith:
  - If going to reduce or cancel Welcome Back Barbecue, we have to decide fairly soon.
  - Part of the loss on Block Party is being transferred to Welcome Back.

- Cole:
  - Do you need to know in a month? A couple of months?

- Keith:
  - We need to know in the next couple of weeks.

MoU on $21 Athletics & Recreation Fee

- Chris:
  - Finalized with Athletics & Recreation.
  - This is the copy.
  - Lays out the 40% discount to clubs.
  - The terms for the $21:
    - Commitment to lower membership fees
    - Equitable funding
    - We’re part of their budget process.

- Keith: Does the 40% apply to AMS Events as well?

- Chris:
  - Yes, it’s for the whole AMS.
  - Want to bring this to Council April 8.

- Cristina:
  - When the contract for the new recreational space came to Council, Council had some questions about representation and accountability.
AMS Executive Committee

Minutes of March 27, 2020

- Chris:
  o Representation was around the management committee: that’s separate.
  o Membership fees: UBC has requirements on their end.
  o The fees are approved by their Managing Director of Athletics & Recreation.
  o We do have a commitment from them to bring fee changes to us.
  o There’s also an understanding with Athletics & Recreation:
    ▪ Neither of us want to increase fees.
    ▪ Both of us want people to access the services.
  o They’d look to reduce costs or make cuts first before increasing fees.
  o If they must increase fees, they’ve made a commitment to include the AMS in the process.

MOVED CHRIS, SECONDED COLE:

“That the Executive Committee recommend to Council that it approve the MoU on the $21 fee.”

... Carried

Board Software

- Chris:
  o This will definitely help us with committees and at the Board level as well.
  o The budget costs will come from the student government side.
  o It’s only for one year, so we could pull the plug if not satisfied.
  o They want to spend April with us on implementation so it can be used in May.

- Cole:
  o This situation shows we’ve not been digitized properly.
  o Can we approve this in the current fiscal year?

- Chris: It will just be a budgetary expenditure.
- Cole: So we’ll need a budget amendment on April 8.
- Keith: Or it could come from the Capital Projects Fund, which covers software.
- Chris: Let’s do a budget amendment.
- Cristina: Have we looked at other platforms?
- Chris:
  o Did benchmarking and price shopping.
  o Functionally similar to other products, but a price difference because this company is willing to give us a better price as a non-profit in the postsecondary education sector.
- Sheldon: Has to go to Fincom if it’s a budget amendment.
Government and COVID-19

- Cristina:
  - Working with Communications to get a COVID page up on our website to describe resources.
  - It will include a feedback form for students to describe their experiences getting support.
  - In conversation with the federal government about international students, especially their work permits; also about long-term investment in Canada Student Jobs.
  - Talking to the provincial government about the renter supplement of $500: can they accept other things besides EI as part of the approval process to get it, so students can take advantage of it.
  - Note that student housing is not covered by the rent freeze or the eviction ban: having conversations about that.
    - The government wants to see leadership from the University.
  - Consulting the Advocacy Committee.

- Chris:
  - Julia and I spoke to the VP Students about various areas of student support.
  - You can use that as part of advocacy to government.

- Cristina:
  - Fantastic.
  - There are a lot of asks from SFU about international students; also with UCRU.
  - Long-term economic stimulus package: thinking of unemployed students post-COVID.
  - Thinking of encouraging government to invest in small and medium-sized businesses that might hire new grads:
    - We’re told the government is having conversations.
    - We want to get in as soon as possible.
  - Working with Capilano and UVic on the renters piece.

- Chris:
  - Can we prepare a statement for Communications to tell students to follow social distancing?
  - That’s been an issue.

- Cristina: Already spoken to Cole.

Governance Changes

- Chris:
  - Folks have been asking us to look at governance to improve efficiency and also not to have to wait two weeks (for a Council meeting).
  - A lot of organizations are making governance changes.
  - I’m having my team draft a report.
AMS Executive Committee

Minutes of March 27, 2020

- Sheldon is drafting Code changes and suspensions.
  - This is to allow email votes by Council and accepting consent items from committees.
  - Have informed committee chairs: want to move oversight to them.
  - It will make our lives a little easier.
- Cristina: Sounds really good: make things more efficient.

Services

- Ian:
  - Food Bank is very consistently seeing a higher than usual number of students now.
    - It’s a really tough time.
    - We’re doing our best to keep it stocked.
    - We’re maintaining social distancing and sanitizing.
    - Organizations have reached out to us with deliveries and donations.
    - We’re continuing to operate.
    - Will keep you up to date.
- Abdul:
  - Santa Ono and John Metras (UBC AVP Facilities) have really been helping out with cutting red tape to let Food Bank stay open in the Life Building.
  - Our expenditures are $18,000, but we have room in our budget: can spend up to $35,000.
  - Ian and I have been out shopping, at Costco etc.
  - We’re in a good place with Food Bank.
- Cristina: Really appreciate all the work.
- Ian:
  - Safewalk is not operating.
  - Information for the Services is on the website.
  - Only change is that Nimbus, the Tutoring app, will be ready Monday to offer online tutoring.
  - Drafting a presentation.
- Abdul:
  - Ian and I are looking at budgets.
  - Looking at our Advocate’s Office: will we see more or less appeals now?
    - Angus (the Coordinator) has a good team of volunteers.
- Chris: Thanks for all the work.

Election

- Cole:
  - Will there be election results tonight (for the special election for VP Academic & University Affairs)?
• Chris:
  o Great question. Let me follow up.

Donation
• Abdul:
  o Vice has received a donation which has raised various issues.

Adjournment
• The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 pm.