THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

Agenda of the AMS Governance Committee, June 9, 2020

Attendance

Present: Sebastian Cooper (Chair), Carter Maclean, Christopher Hakim, Danny Liu, Georgia Yee, Nicola Vanderveer, Ryan Wong, Sheldon Goldfarb

Guests: Cristina Ilnitchi

Regrets:

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at _________4:08 pm

Agenda Items

Territorial Acknowledgement

Approval of the Agenda

Moved: Sebastian Seconded: Ryan

That the agenda be adopted.

[The motion carries]

Approval of Past Minutes

Moved: Sebastian Seconded: Ryan

That the minutes of May 26, 2020 be approved

[The motion carries]

Chairs of Finance and Operations Committees (Discussion)

Review of input form Sylvester Mensah, VP Administration.

- Sebastian alluded to the danger (possibly for the finance committee) in bringing people or councillors into Committees who don’t necessarily have the best experience or resources to really excel in the oversight function. VP Finance is in a better position by having external staff in order to help. Sebastian discussed Sheldon’s research and was surprised at how recently it was made a requirement for VPs to chair the committees.
Carter had an inquiry about the finance committee: Would it be possible to make it so that there is a provision to require the chair to have previous experience on committee? Sheldon raised the conundrum of no-one appointed to the committee having previous experience.

Cristina Ilnitchi has been invited to share her thoughts at 4:15pm.

- Christina: Hasn’t been in respective VP roles but will contribute her personal experience, explaining how some committees where the people with the most knowledge will attain roles such as the chair or VP in order to bring discussions about what they truly want to see in this meetings
- Especially for finance meetings, she emphasised that the person that is most closely involved can be the VP finance, it would be very difficult in order to get the information necessary for council without the VP finance present
- Operations and finance should be open to having the VP as chairs, for the sake of transparency of the committee it could be beneficial
- She suggested that we must pay more attention to the role of councillors on the committees, and how the VP can do a better job at collaborating with the committee members
- When Christina was VP external, and a member of the advocacy committee, it wasn’t required to have the VP as chair but often she was
- Was there a difference? or shift? What she speaks from is her knowledge of advocacy, what happens in between the two weeks when they meet, when the VP was chair then we could have more updates / resources or material. When the chair was a councillor on the other hand it required a lot of coordination in order to get the information, and this didn’t often happen in the most organized or prepared way
- Not to say that councillors don’t do a good job, if you have someone dedicated; you must need to empower them in this role
- VP workload: one criticism that comes up often is if VPs are chairs they might not be as engaged in committee work; all about allocation of resources and if the VP is taking that on then they understand the responsibilities of said committee. Maybe we can improve on accountability and more deadlines, or addressing lack of consequences from executives might allow for more responsibility
- Empowering council members: Understanding the responsibility of the role, because you are committing yourself to more hours, more responsibility, taking on a more leadership role then the onus is on the person that does take on the responsibility
- We have seen a lot of councillors who excelled in this role, understand the job description; a lot of the difficulties arise from lack of hand off protocols, could be resolved from more orientations and better training
- Oversight/accountability: The people who are overseeing are sometimes the people who are chairing the committees. If a VP finance is the chair then the committee could be lacking information and this could cause issues in checks and balances; doesn’t know any chair that has actively denied an agenda required, the respective VP would add it onto the next agenda, no more oversight than if you were the chair of the committee
How do we provide the skills for counsellors in training to provide them the skills to do the oversight needed? Is there room for more collaboration of having conversations that define more clearly the role and therefore the responsibilities? More so about strengthening the knowledge of VP and Chairs in order to work more collaboratively.

- **Chris Hakim:** The one thing about committee chairs is the level of involvement that a chair can provide, in his experience his chairs are more involved in executive work. It is hard to pick out of the group of committee meetings, talking to someone in the committee that has been appointed as a chair. We might lose this relationship benefit when a VP is the chair.

- **Christina:** In terms of what Chris said, it’s only a value to Council if the VPs are very involved in committees; she participated in the transition of the advocacy chair and how this benefited the committee as a whole of passing off information between participates during this transition. To the detriment of the council if they don’t have good transitions between chairs, and how we need a process more similar to the VP transition process.

- **Georgia:** We should have a more defined process for chairs? A written document? What is currently in the code requiring transition? Making sure it’s a written record in order to keep all parties accountable? Keep in mind that we could have a structure that the VP and Chairs don’t have to be either due to there can be a more fluid way of the structure and roles could be a beneficial to the committee as attributing to more emphasis on the responsibilities of chairs.

- **Chris Hakim:** Good transitions are great, the one thing is that transitions only set you up to be a good advisor, they attempt to catch you up to speed but they don’t make you that advisor or it doesn’t make you a great advisor, it possibly makes you a greater council member; Co chairs are not beneficial, the role of the committees aren’t just for an operational function, if it was to make sure that work gets done but the AMS is more beneficial to a singular chair and they are managing work and you are providing an accountability piece. When there is a co chair there is a conflict where you are both trying to manage a committee.

- **Sebastian:** We could make a requirement that the VP must be a member of the committee, not necessarily the chair.

- **Christina:** They must be a part of the committee as it might not be beneficial for the chair of VP to be not additionally a member of the committee.

- **Sebastian:** Discussed the accountability to continue the projects and works of the previous committees agenda, we can discuss further.

- **Sheldon:** Used to pay them a transitional honorarium, and how their used to be a more transition process, if we want to bring this back in order to create more emphasis.

- **Georgia:** Believes this previous policy would bring more incentive in order to make a transition report more seamless and make Chair’s accountable.

- **Ryan:** Agrees that it would be a great idea to bring back the incentive, and how this would allow the previous chair to continue to aid in the transition, asked if they remain the chair until they are replaced.

- **Sheldon:** Yes, he believes that the old policy was an incentive for even previous chair members to continue to transition.
- **Sebastian:** Would be keen to implement the policy or more so a requirement to a council have access to the transition

**Constituency Membership (Discussion)**

- **Sebastian:** suggested that one member of the committee take over a coordinating role as it might be one of those projects where everyone working on it might contribute to lack of progress
- **Ryan** is now appointed as a coordinator lead for one of these projects, in order to facilitate outreach
- **Ryan:** Possibly send out an email or document or come to the next meeting in order to spell out exactly how this role will function

**Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting is [June] [16th], [2020].

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at [4:47]