AMS Advocacy Committee Meeting Agenda
[June 9th, 2020] [2:00PM PST] on Zoom https://zoom.us/j/99848447126

Attendance
Invited: Clara, Emma, Georgia, Joshua, Kalith, Mitchell, Saad, Morgan, Nevana, Shivani, Matthew
Present:
Regrets:

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 2:04pm

Land Acknowledgement

Approval of Minutes

BIRT the 01 2020-05-26 Minutes of the AMS Advocacy Committee be adopted as presented

Mover: Emma
Seconder: Kalith

Chair’s Remarks
1. Introductions
2. Re-election of Vice-Chair
BIRT Mitchell Prost is nominated as Vice Chair as of Jun 9.
Unanimously approved.

Action Item Recap
1. Committee Year Goals
Clara: Provincial Elections - Raising awareness and education
Nevana: This is something they did for federal elections. Clarification of when this would take place?
Clara: This would happen 2021.
Kalith: This would take place for next year, but we can help support next year’s VP External.
Mathew: Anti-racism work and making sure that council is not an echo chamber.
Mitchell: Continuing last year’s committee goals.
Mathew: Helping other groups that are trying to do advocacy work
Clara: Wanted to clarify about October 16th - but there are lots of signs that it might come early with the new election cycle (might be in the Spring.)
Kalith: Setting out a grassroots plan and see what would be able to be accomplished. From meeting with the Ministry of Advanced Education, they're not expecting an election until October 2021.
2. JustRecovery Principles
Emma: They are good principles and cover all the bases of recovery from COVID-19. We should think about how we should be supporting student recovery from COVID - we should endorse these.
Joshua: They are great principles and we should stand by it when strategizing our advocacy plans. Planning to hold a Climate Change talks - inviting the climate change talks and consultation groups.
Mitchell: agree with the five statements - they are excellent. In terms of what we could do, release a statement.
Clara: Spent weekend on strategy retreat for JustRecovery. This is just the baseline of the core values, this may become a larger campaign. This is how we can incorporate them into our Advocacy Strategy and how we approach the university.
Emma: There’s been a lot of talk of the effectiveness of committee - look at goals that we set as a committee. This is how our goal matches with - see if we’re missing any of those principles within our goals.
Georgia: definitely think we should tie in the actionables - a statement is a great first step.
Matthew: hold politicians accountable for violence against Indigenous peoples. Make sure that Governments are working on these Principles. Keep them accountable.
Joshua: Two goals - have committee working on 1. Elections 2. JustRecovery principles + Actionables.

Portfolio Updates

1. AMS VP External [Kalith]
Kalith: Working on Upass. Recent data from the survey sees 60% of the students are using transit. 40% don’t have access to transit. 2 options, UPass back in motion if Translink accepts the VPX office’s notice. If only get Upass back for August, is it worth it? Setting up subsidy for August and July Upass. Half a million dollars a month - it’s very expensive. Looking at over the summer. Working with the provincial government on UPass. Spoke with MAE - went over advocacy goals and finalizing Budget Consultation. SVPMA - Bill 23 - Sexual Misconduct Act. Dealing with UNA - making sure that we’re getting designated student seats. Had a meeting with Michael White and Robin Ciceri.
Nevena: OER - Twittersphere - considerations of anti-racism and taking the white perspective out of our. Push to take whiteness and make sure black representation in school - professors online. Pushing my own professors and pushing my own faculty to take a stance and encourage this.
Kalith: Looking at it mostly from a funding perspective. How those OERs are used - falling under Georgia’s portfolio.
Georgia:

2. AMS VP AUA [Georgia]
Georgia: Student-faced initiative regarding racism in consultation with the appropriate groups and offices. Working on whole bunch of submissions to the BoG. Policy SC 17 got approved by people community international committee Will get approval on June 16th. The creation of the implementation committee, VP students and VP resources will take charge on it. Will allow us to take next steps forward and addressing current policy gaps. We prepared submissions on proper student consultations and the Covid-19 plan. Ensure funding for student priorities.
Spicy thing we are working on; tuition increase rate reduction. Currently at 2% as a cap for domestic students and for international students 2-5% annually. CPI rose to 0.9%, down from 2.8% from last year. Higher Education Price Index went down as well. The inflation rate has gone down so that our argument is that in light of a financial crisis, students are organizing petitions to ask for refund tuition or parts of tuition or lower the overall cost. Trying to balance it since the university as well is going through a financial crunch. Decrease the tuition increase. Lower it to 0.9% in light of the inflation decrease. Create report that is accessible to students to show what the budget will look like after modifications made to tuition increase rate. Big win is allocating money to digital meal fund.

Emma: How long is the survey open for?
Georgia: for almost a months.

Emma: Another question: associate of EDI in the prez’s office, in the Faculty of AS we have an associate dean for equity and inclusion. Is it possible for other faculties to have this position?

Georgia:

Discussion
1. Discussion of Executives’ Goals
2. Climate Change Consultation Talk

Emma: What will be the intention?
Joshua: Discussing what AMS stance will be. This has been in the works in 2018.

Emma: Hard to have a consultative talk because it will be very echo chambery. Having a consultation discussion with the groups we have on campus is prone to agreeing a lot with each other with only parts of the issue. Advocate for the whole issue. As the AMS working with the JustRecovery principles - actionable for the AMS.

Joshua: Having the conversation is important to hear different opinions.
Clara: I hear what you’re saying - it’s not as simple as the fossil fuel industry has to end immediately. This could be a repeat of conversations and may not be. Figure out where students - as we look towards the green transitions of the oil industry.

Georgia: Having a consultation talk is to capture the wide perspectives of the student body and figure how to frame an open space discussion. Instead of an echo chamber, they’re free to express their opinion. Climate emergency dialogues have just resulted in agreements in the past. Draw upon the framework of climate emergency dialogues and tweak it to find how to involve those who might have hesitation and differing perspectives to feel safe and speak their mind.

Nevena: Historical perspective was that we can bring those perspectives to the table, we had very similar perspectives - would be able to have full range. We need to take some time to think about how we are approaching this. Plan it out and to look at understanding and respect diversity of opinions and to come up with tangible actions and understanding.

Mathew: Generally, original question was not having it in two weeks and not having a lot of visibility on the issue was concerning, concern about it becoming an echo chamber. For those in Alberta its important that it’s talked about, there are similar sentiments as before - it should be postponed to make sure consultation does not become an echo chamber.

Emma: Not opposed to having a consultation talk, there are people on campus with many opinions and its important to talk to each other, thinks there are a lot more groups on campus that would be on one side of the issue, difficult to find campus groups on the other
There are people in engineering working in relevant industries that would be more than willing to discuss this topic, but she doesn’t want to set us up to be engineers against the world. Thinks if we do want to have a consultation talk, don’t just include campus groups - include other groups. There are student organizations about pipelines (petroleum engineering chapters, sustainable engineering groups around Canada). Could focus on more as a committee in rather than saying “what do you believe about climate change” say “how can we responsibly use natural resources,” the industry contribute 10% of Canada’s GDP → change thought to how can these resources be responsibly used and incorporated into engineering classes, AMS thoughts. Set students up in their studies and thought.

Clara: Thinks it’s important to include groups on campus who are not officially registered to get perspectives for meaningful consultation. Ultimately about what is important for students realities and futures. Does not agree on framing it around just natural resources. A more general question is “How can we as the AMS advocate more effectively advocate for students on climate change.”

Emma: I agree, not always about the natural resources industry. There are many jobs (over 100,000) surrounding the energy sector. Make sure we discuss many facets.

Joshua: General idea of what is being said is that we need more discussion before we can launch a consultation with the committee and stakeholders. He will make a folder and action item to better prepare.

3. Statement on Anti-Asian Hate Crimes

Joshua: 8x increase in anti-asian hate crimes in Vancouver. Not meant to detract from current racial issues. Call for stronger measures to be done and work on advocacy campaigns for students on how to be anti-racist.

Kalith: Thinks it’s great, knows that asian folks are victimised especially amongst the pandemic. However, putting out a statement now might take some attention away from the BLM movement. Start preparing right now and doing our work, speaking with politicians and government officials on a daily basis. Can release a statement in a couple weeks, thinking of this from a PR perspective. Definitely think we can start work on releasing a statement and other actionables - releasing a statement should be postponed. Do something first, then release a statement.

Joshua: Releasing a statement right now might not be positively received and seen as diminishing the BLM movement and other indigenous work being done around Canada.

Mathew: Concerned that it might detract from the situation going on in Hong Kong. Talked to a lot of students from Hong Kong, not happy that UBC has not said anything about that. Feels like we must keep in mind that a statement on anti-racist statement does not detract from what is going on in Hong Kong.

Joshua: felt that it was disappointing how long it took to see the university to release a statement after the first anti-asian act in February. Wants to talk about this more in the next meeting.

Clara: Wanted to echo Kalith’s point that putting out a statement now might not be best, but also want to have the AMS do work on anti-racism. Wants to provide statements in a couple weeks on what the AMS is doing.

4. UPass Suspension

Joshua: Will be discussed next week as Kalith wanted to talk about this.
New Business

Actions Items:
- Go through the documents.
- Climate change consultation talk.
  - More thought on logistics.
  - Ideal to have before the summer ends.
- Work on Committee year goals
  - Just Recovery Principles
  - Provincial Election strategy

Adjournment

Next meeting will be held on June 23, 2020 at 2:00pm PST.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:21pm PST.