Agenda of the AMS Operations Committee
(Agenda for July 10th, 2020 Meeting @ Zoom)

Attendance
Present: Sylvester Mensah Jr. (VP Admin), Ben Du, Katherine Feng, Daniel Martin, Nadir Nurali

Regrets: Alex Arbelaez, Lawrence Liu

Guests: Nicolas Williams (Associate VP Admin)

Recording Secretary: Katherine Feng

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:05pm.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Approval of the Agenda
Moved: Katherine Seconded: Nadir

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.”

Approval of Previous Minutes
Moved: Daniel Seconded: Sylvester

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the minutes from July 3rd Operations Committee meeting be approved and sent to AMS Council”

Agenda Items

1. Fall Clubs Engagement Survey Report

Nicholas: The purpose of this survey was originally related to room bookings. We received 180 unique responses and didn’t ask for club names. Many clubs are uncertain about whether they will book rooms. This indicates that some clubs are still planning on using Nest space. Most clubs are likely to actively host events in the fall. Most clubs said they would benefit from
support from the AMS in the following ways: Zoom accounts, access to PPE/sanitization, access to additional training/resources on how to host events

Most clubs are very or somewhat concerned about recruiting new members and interested in a virtual clubs day and workshops. The AMS can better support membership recruitment with marketing support. Clubs also want a better way to interact with members (CampusBase). Smaller clubs need more support in the form of workshops and training. Some clubs suggested workshops on management, financial, sexual assault/harrassment/racism within clubs.

Sylvester: Currently we have resumed allowing bookings. Clubs will be required to provide information like who is at events so contact tracing will be easier if necessary. Clubs are mostly concerned on how many students will be on campus. We can't do anything about who is on campus, but we can help clubs to operate given the circumstances.

Ben: Providing clubs with resources to operate online will be very important. As clubs adapt to the effects of the pandemic and shift their operations online, our assistance to these clubs should accommodate this as well.

Sylvester: Some clubs are hesitant to be active because they feel like they need to be in person to function. We are considering free or subsidized Zoom accounts, but the question is whether the AMS can afford it. We can arrange for PPE to be borrowed from the Clubs Resource Center if events are not in the Nest. Rooms in the Nest have hand sanitizer and are frequently cleaned. We can create an alternative clubs programming resource document. We're able to use the Clubs Benefit Fund but we need to make sure that when we use it, it’s useful to clubs.

Nicolas: It would cost about $34,000 to provide Zoom to all clubs

Katherine: That seems like a lot just to provide all clubs with Zoom accounts when we don’t yet know how many will need it. I do think it’s good to help clubs out if they need software to operate online though.

Sylvester: I agree. Are these 360 clubs going to make use of their Zoom accounts at least once a month for club activities? It would be a good service but the benefit might not be that great.

Ben: Could we just make a central Zoom account? (One that can be handed over and transitioned into another club’s possession after a period of time…maybe more cost-effective)

Sylvester: That might be logistically difficult.

Daniel: Clubs collect fees so it’s natural that they have funding to buy a Zoom account if necessary. The question is just whether there are clubs that don’t have the budgets that we can help.

Sylvester: We can make a reimbursement form.
Daniel: Yes, a subsidy form would help clubs that need funding.

Sylvester: I would move away from a full subsidy, but I think a subsidy of a certain percentage up to 50% would be reasonable.

Katherine: Are there cheaper or free alternatives like Skype or Hangouts that may work in place of Zoom for some clubs? These alternatives may be a better use of funds. Also how much is available in Clubs Benefit Fund to be spent?

Daniel: Some of those have participant caps, but we could make a resource document to help them choose. Then some clubs could just use the free or cheaper alternatives. Facebook Messenger has a maximum capacity of 50 participants and Hangouts has a maximum of 150.

Sylvester: We'll put together a document like that. It will be a good way to make the best use of the funds. $522,559.02 is available in the Clubs Benefit Fund, but we have the responsibility to not use the money unnecessarily and this way will be a good way to accommodate club needs.

Ben: I also think a subsidy is better than fully paying for Zoom, which would be very expensive.

Sylvester: We will present alternatives to Zoom and then if they need Zoom, we can implement a subsidy. For alternative operating venues, we will reach out to undergraduate societies to see if they are willing to let clubs use their spaces and put those additional spaces and some open areas around UBC in the resources document.

Daniel: Does the AMS system allow people to book venues for different sizes of events?

Sylvester: Right now they don’t need to make bookings for outdoor spaces. We’ll just identify areas on campus that they may find useful for events.

Nadir: I think we should let clubs know how to use the UBC booking system too. Having a support structure for using other booking systems would be helpful.

Sylvester: There is a lot of support for online clubs day and since we’re participating in Jump Start, we will figure out how to host clubs day by the time it happens. Campus Base will probably make it a lot easier to recruit members but how effective it is depends on how engaging the clubs are on the platform. Does anyone have ideas for how else we can help clubs get members? And if clubs decided to collect membership fees, how can we help them collect fees?

Nicolas: There is one possibility, which is that when you ask to join a group on CampusBase, you need to be approved by club executives. So prior to being approved, you have to pay through whatever ticketing software is there like Showpass. I think we need to ask how much responsibility the AMS has in helping clubs get new members, particularly this year. We’re
already doing clubs day and providing the CampusBase database. Some clubs suggest the AMS should be using its social media and website to promote clubs and we need to decide whether that’s going too far.

Sylvester: We can suggest ways for them to collect fees, but is the Operations Committee willing to allow members to not pay membership fees?

Ben: In the past, what I’ve noticed is that if there’s some sort of payment, it signifies that there’s some sort of commitment being made to join the club.

Katherine: Most clubs allow people to sit in on meetings without paying a membership fee so people could still figure out whether they want to commit to the club or not. Often membership fees are just required to access events or equipment and charging a small fee gives us a better indication of how many people are invested or active members of the club.

Sylvester: Yes, clubs don’t have to and often don’t collect membership fees right away on clubs day. If some clubs are really having trouble getting members this year, we could allow some clubs to not collect membership fees at all on a case-by-case basis.

Nicolas: If a person doesn’t pay the fee, they’re not considered a member of the club. Having a fee is helpful in assessing how big the club is and how many active or committed members it has. It would be harder to understand which clubs are strong enough to meet the new 25 member minimum. A club audit would be harder to do without a fee.

Ben: The AMS page on joining a club is pretty bare so something could be added there to encourage more people to join clubs. I’d imagine new students would look at our website first, to find information on joining clubs. We should announce the transition to Campus Base there.

Sylvester: We’re making the Campus Base announcement in an AMS newsletter later this week. It wouldn’t make sense to invest too much time into fixing the site since we’re moving everything to Campus Base anyway.

Sylvester: If a club does reach out to us with an issue about membership fees, we will give them the go-ahead to drop their fee through a form from the office of the VP Admin.

Katherine: Is there a criteria for determining which clubs are able to drop membership fees?

Sylvester: We will leave clubs to make that decision and deal with them on a case-by-case basis.

Nadir: Are the criteria for being active enough to count as a member outlined anywhere?
Sylvester: I don’t think we need a criteria. We can just make a note of which clubs aren’t collecting fees and we can see their members on Campus Base and then we can pass on this information next year.

Katherine: Is this something we’re able to do within the guidelines of the Operations Committee Manual?

Sylvester: We make the Operations Committee Manual, so yes. If there’s a general agreement within the Committee then we can do it.

Nicolas: One dollar being the minimum is not a very limiting factor and it ensures that potential members are committed and feel more connected. Fee requirements exist to ensure the financial stability of clubs. It also makes the club audit a lot harder.

Nicolas: What are your thoughts on getting clubs involved in workshops, so for example, asking marketing clubs to give marketing workshops?

Ben: I think it’s a good idea. It seems to align well with our goal of engaging clubs more with AMS operations.

Sylvester: I like that idea as well. We wouldn’t want to force clubs to participate and we would provide compensation for what they do. Social justice information can be provided by the AMS, but things that are more specialized like how to operate and have events during the pandemic, we should probably consult professionals who are more knowledgeable.

Katherine: I also think it’s a good idea

Nadir: Me too.

Sylvester: Nicolas and I will work on creating a resource document. We might also decide to publicize the results of the survey, but we’ll have to discuss if that’s necessary. Let us know if you have ideas for resources.

This year, clubs are still allowed to apply for grants from the Clubs Benefit Fund, so we’ll let them know about this and advertise it so clubs know that we can help them if they need help.

2. Change to Chairpersonship Discussion
   - Moved to next meeting
Adjournment
Moved: Katherine  Seconded: Nadir

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:22pm.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be on July 17th, 2020