

## August 2020 COMMITTEE REPORT TO AMS COUNCIL:

AMS Governance Committee

July 30, 2020

Prepared by Sebastian Cooper, Chair



Govcomm meets weekly or biweekly on Tuesdays at 4pm (Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/91681615917>).

### 1. Works in progress:

#### **Finance and Operations Committee Chairpersonships**

After considering the motion from Council that the VPs Finance and Administration no longer be required to chair the Finance and Operations Committees, respectively, Govcomm is bringing this change forward to Council for approval. Govcomm has discussed the issue and has received input from Sylvester Mensah (VP Administration), Lucia Liang (VP Finance), Cristina Initchi (former VP External), Cole Evans (AMS President), the Operations Committee, and the Finance Committee. There is broad support for this change, along with specific concerns regarding whether a non-Executive chair would have sufficient background to fulfil the role.

We propose that this change be in place for the September reconstitution of committees, and that Govcomm reevaluate this change before May 2021.

#### **Policy I-21 / AMS Committee Appointments**

Govcomm has met with the AMS President's office to discuss a proposed Policy I-21, *Policy on Committee Appointments*. This would provide a clear and streamlined process for appointing members to AMS Council. Following a substantive conversation, a version further of I-21 is being drafted. Govcomm shall discuss this version further and aims to make recommendations to Council by the August 26 meeting.

This follows previous discussions by Govcomm regarding the committee appointment process, especially with regards to accessibility, bias, and equity.

#### **Policy I-9 / Executive KPIs**

Following discussion at the June Council meeting regarding the AMS Executive Goals for 2020-2021, Govcomm has discussed Policy I-9, especially with regards to the requirement that the Goals include Key Performance Indicators (para 13). Given that Policy I-9 is up for review by Govcomm in February 2021, we will be continuing our discussion of this topic later in the year. We also hope that our examination at that time will be partially informed by Executives' updates to Council regarding their KPIs.

#### **AMS Disciplinary Action / Ad Hoc Governance Committee Review**

Govcomm has been mandated by Council to "Investigate new guidelines or procedures regarding disciplinary action at AMS Council and report back to Council with a report and/or relevant Code

changes by the last Council meeting of August". Govcomm is continuing the discussion by looking at the practices of other boards and the practices of other Canadian universities' student societies. Govcomm will also undertake consultation with Executives/Council Members. Govcomm is also requesting that Council extend the deadline from August to November, to allow for the required work and research.

### **Committees and Chair Transitions**

Govcomm has discussed the issue of committee members, committee chairs, and executives not receiving adequate assistance with transitions. Following discussions with the AMS President and his office, Govcomm will continue to look at the issue, including the potential creation of a new Policy on Transitions (I-23).

Thus far, Govcomm has looked at previous Code requirements for transition reports.

### **Constituency Membership**

Govcomm has picked up this project from the previous Govcomm (2019-2020). Some AMS members are not represented by constituencies, and others are represented by more than one constituency. The first issue presents an obvious concern regarding democratic representation. The second represents a concern regarding students in the same situation paying different student fees. Govcomm has examined the materials developed by last year's Committee and has spoken with Katherine Westerlund (Govcomm chair 2019-2020). A meeting with the GSS, who are currently looking at the issue of unrepresented certificate program graduate students, is pending.

### **Other Governance Issues**

Govcomm is also considering a number of issues raised by the AMS President and his office, including: expanding I-1: Policy on Policies; vote tallies on recommendations from Committee; ways to improve and streamline committee reporting; and membership of Representatives from the Senate and the Board of Governors on AMS committees.

## **2. Works completed:**

### **Distance Education - Code Definition**

AMS Code provides that Active Members taking only distance education courses are exempt from paying Society fees. Govcomm proposed a clarification to Code that distance education courses do not refer to courses that are regularly in-person but have been moved online due to COVID-19. (Definition adopted by Council on June 24).