AMS Advocacy Committee Meeting Agenda
[August 4th, 2020] [2:00PM PST] on Zoom
https://zoom.us/j/99848447126

Attendance
Invited: Emma, Georgia, Joshua, Kalith, Laura, Mitchell, Saad, Morgan, Nevena, Shivani
Present: Joshua, Saad, Shivani, Emma, Mitchell, Georgia, Nevena, Laura
Regrets: Kalith

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 2:06 PM PST.

Land Acknowledgement

Approval of Minutes

BIRT the 05 2020-07-21 Minutes of the AMS Advocacy Committee be adopted as presented

Mover: Saad.
Seconder: Nevena.

Chair's Remarks

Joshua: Uploaded policy I-11 for review.

Portfolio Updates

1. AMS VP External [Kalith]
   a. Housing:
      i. Finally establishing goals with working group with Student Housing
      ii. Kalith is attending the UNA board meeting tonight.
   b. UPass:
      i. Still in talks if UAC will reinstate it.
      ii. Don’t know what the fall will look like.
      iii. Current thought is the Upass suspension will not be in place after August 31st.
   c. Mental health:
      i. Creating research projects and working with the Here to Talk app.
      ii. Increased consultation with students.
   d. Federal advocacy
      i. Creating proposal to allow international students to experience entrepreneurial opportunities.
e. Equity based grants:
   i. Campaign for individual consultations.
   ii. Work to secure funding for individual consultation
   iii. Working with AVP Equity and Inclusion.
   iv. Working with SEEDs for equity based grants.

f. SVP Advocacy:
   i. Finishing research project in terms of discrepancies of SVP policy and will be submitted to the Attorney General’s office

g. Indigenous student support:
   i. First meeting with the Indigenous committee tomorrow (August 6, 2020).
   ii. Wants to establish relationships and goals that they can work on in advocacy at a provincial and federal level.
   iii. Saad: meets Thursday at 1:00pm.

h. Joshua: Is the VP External office doing work on interest rates?
   i. Saad: Working on signing onto the knockout interest rates campaign. A member from our office will reach out and work on advocating at a federal level. We have been proactive, but want to work with the BCSF on that. In terms of student loan repayment freeze extension, currently discussing with other student unions. This will be included in the submission. Such high unemployment rates are reason enough for extension.

2. AMS VP AUA [Georgia]
   a. Lots of conversations around systemic racism:
      i. Working on projects around connecting the different networks and people who will be champions of equity and diversity in different faculties.
      ii. Having comprehensive training and resources - reaching out to the Faculty Association to address equity topics keeping in mind academic freedom.
      iii. Current certifications are Privacy Matters and the Preventing Workplace Bullying and Harassment - work to create new resources.
   b. Culturally appropriate mental health resources:
      i. Limitation is the current deficit.
   c. Met regarding the Vancouver Scheduling Steering Committee:
      i. Looking at the different models on how we can reshape scheduling aspects to accommodate commuter students, students with disabilities crossing campus, and more.
   d. Having more conversations about physical and digital food hubs on campus:
      i. Commissioned some research out of the food security initiative.
   e. COVID-19 survey and the AES:
      i. Will bring the AES to the Advocacy committee in two weeks.
      ii. Benchmarking different recommendations from the AES from last year.
   f. Anti-Racism Campaign review.
   g. Climate Emergency working groups:
The recommendations for all the Climate Emergency working groups have been in progress.

All at different levels, working on divestments and investment, teaching and learning, and more.

Hoping to not just get low handing fruit, but pushing for innovation and more radical change.

**Nevena:** talking previously about accessibility, saw the BC Gov't is providing 2 million to support students with mental health and disabilities. Do you have any information around that?

**Georgia:** Students need to be involved in the administration of those funds. I can reach out to Janet Mee to see if UBC will be a stakeholder in how these funds are administered. I will also check in with the GSS.

**Joshua:** Can you upload the two documents in the Zoom chat to the Google Drive so committee members can access them?

**Georgia:** Yes.

**Joshua:** What exactly does Culturally Appropriate Mental health Resources mean? How diverse are they?

**Georgia:** there are very few Black and Indigenous counsellors at UBC, and it’s difficult to explain where racial trauma comes from. You may find yourself trying to explain it, but if you have someone who already understands the racial trauma, it removes the barriers to accessing the culturally appropriate resources. Would include cluster hires of counsellors, which is included in Dr. Carry’s new health plan presented to the BOG in February. Gaining information on who provides training to the counsellors at UBC on Equity and Inclusion. Cluster hiring for people who speak more languages. Generally needs to be around more diversity and increasing the quality of the training, so that 1) the training be comprehensive, and 2) the training will be properly resourced.

**Laura:** Chinese students are feeling the burden of counselling due to lack of diversity, and there is one Indigenous Counselor with a two month waiting list.

**Georgia:** Would be very interested in learning more about this.

**Nevena:** Do you mean that Chinese students are not accessing counsellors? What is the barrier?

**Laura:** Could be language, could be cultural. It just goes to show the lack of diversity.

**Georgia:** Heads up that the Ubyssey wants to do an article on the AMS’s endorsement of the Just Recovery principles.

**Discussion**

1. **VP Students Communication Audit/Strategy**
   
   **Georgia:** VPS office is looking to overhaul some of their communications and present what are some of the things you like about the VPS communications, what are some things you do not like. Help make the university communicate better. What are some thighs you like about it?
b. **Nevena:** Can you give an update on what the VPS currently does to communicate with students?

c. **Georgia:** I have a list: students.ubc.ca, ubc.ca, @ubc_studentlife instagram, VPS website, email communication from VPS, Athletics and Rec, UBC Life Blog, many more. What are some of the ways that they ways that the VPS communicates well and/or can be improved.

d. **Saad:** Thinks the emails that students receive are good - need to improve ensuring that emails don’t go into the spam. Length is important, we don’t want super long emails.

e. **Nevena:** If I am looking for something, I will go to specific websites. Email is the best way to get information to me - don’t follow UBC’s social media. Emails need to be short and concise.

f. **Joshua:** Tried to contact the UBC Student’s instagram account, but they didn’t read the message. Contacting VPS was hard.

g. **Nevena:** When I was looking for help to talk to someone without submitting a ticket, their website made it challenging. Even a phone number would be helpful. The grad student website could be fancier.

h. **Mitchell:** Listening sessions run by the VPS were very helpful, but communication to student staff has been very lacking, leaving a lot of students in the dark.

i. **Nevena:** Additionally, the communication has been largely focused on the undergraduate student population.

j. **Shivani:** RAs, CAs, Jumpstart Leaders, etc. were all in the dark regarding communication.

2. **Zoom & HK + Panel talk suggestions**

   a. **Georgia:** Hoping to put together an interview panel with various students in countries where they may face persecution, especially in the academic context. Recently heard about students in the Middle East facing political persecution for using dating apps, particularly members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Brought this up with Santa Ono, there are limitations to what UBC’s actual advocacy powers are. How do we take those proactive measures? Alibaba started creating an online portal for students to access class resources. Also looking at policy SC-12 that is up for review. There will also likely be policy review and prioritization this year in terms of ranking BOG policies. If anyone has people they would like to recommend to be interviewed, let us know.

b. **Joshua:** Will it be anonymous?

c. **Georgia:** Yes, in all cases, people can maintain anonymity.

d. **Joshua:** How will people be recruited?

e. **Georgia:** Probably not an email. Reaching out to students. If they would like to be interviewed, it will be on a work-of-mouth basis to ensure there is adequate vetting of these kinds of panelists.

3. **Anti-Racism Campaign review**
a. **Joshua**: I provided a list of resources for review. Ideally, there will be a tab on the AMS website with resources etc.

b. **Laura**: Should there be a section on Religious racism?

c. **Joshua**: Sure, if you have any other resources, let me know. Was there any feedback?

d. **Nevena**: I liked how you identified Canadian resources. I would stress it being Canadian focused. I like that it is focused on specific groups. I would want to prioritize things that can be quickly viewed, because sometimes when you are providing people with information and asking them to dive into really hard subjects on their own, it can be a lot. Like videos that are easy to digest to help the learning process. Would like to see resources that apply to healthcare students. Could there be specific resources for racism in specific industries.

e. **Shivani**: Likes that idea, it is going to be quite a big project. What would be cool along with the idea of having a highlight provided by each faculty specified in their specific industries.

f. **Nevena**: Feminists Deliver did stuff on racism in Canada - a panel that was recorded talking about racisms and history. Perhaps some resources and even the recording may be helpful.

g. **Joshua**: Can definitely look into their website.

4. **August Provincial Government Submission**

a. **Saad**: Our submissions are going to be split between COVID-19 advocacy and year-long advocacy. Wanted some ideas on provincial recovery. Following the provincial gov’t promise to collect race-based data. What are some ways we could support students through the pandemic and through a second wave. One category is student employment - talks of establishing a wage subsidiary.

b. **Larua**: Like the CERB but for students who volunteer. This one is classist, assuming that students have nothing to do but volunteer. I believe that we should talk to the gov’t about it.

c. **Nevena**: Could we move money addressing student unemployment away from volunteer work and to actually finding employment for students?

d. **Saad**: The CERB will be ending soon. When we talked to Minister Murray’s office, she said that this was a way for students to increase their disposable income in the midst of the pandemic.

e. **Larua**: Also, they’re encouraging people to volunteer during a pandemic.

f. **Nevena**: Believes that any money being put towards volunteering should be moved to actually solving unemployment. Make sure that money is redirected towards that. Addressing the privilege not all have in volunteering during the pandemic and moving money to supporting student employment.

g. **Saad**: We need to work on promoting the hiring of Black and Indigenous people of colour.

h. **Nevena**: If people of colour are more likely to work in these jobs and work on the front lines, we need to look at this. Also look into technology needed.
i. **Saad**: Brought this up with the provincial gov’t, people in rural areas that have limited access to the internet, how do they work when more than half of work is online? These are issues that need to be addressed.

j. **Nevena**: What exactly are the issues you were already tackling?

k. **Saad**: Race based-data should have already been happening, sexual violence prevention, and student unemployment. We are looking for a fourth topic.

l. **Laura**: Is the SVP on campus?

m. **Saad**: It is with the provincial gov’t. Post-secondary institutions have a huge discrepancy between their SVP policies. Some institutions have minimal provisions. Our end goal is that the bill has minimum standards for all schools. The research project outlines what is necessary.

n. **Nevena**: Affordable housing for students, helping with financial issues for students. A number of people who are living in tent cities were putting together a lawsuit against the city to provide long-term housing and to not evict them. I’m wondering if there is a long-term strategy around housing.

o. **Saad**: It’s sometimes hard for students to get employed out of UBC. We want the housing working group as a precedent, so that next year’s exec team can create recommendations to the gov’t. The provincial gov’t is not going to intervene in a post-secondary institution’s internal affairs. Create separate legislation on housing.

p. **Mitchell**: I read somewhere that the eviction freeze didn’t apply to student housing?

q. **Saad**: the housing support was not for post-secondary housing. The RTA and eviction freeze is unclear for student housing. Will be something we bring up with Andrew Parr and the Attorney General.

**New Business**

**Adjournment**

Next meeting will be held August 18, 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:33 PM PST.