

AMS Advocacy Committee Meeting Agenda

[August 18th, 2020] [2:00PM PST] on Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/99848447126>

Attendance

Invited: Emma, Georgia, Joshua, Kalith, Laura, Saad, Morgan, Nevena, Shivani

Present: Georgia, Joshua, Kalith, Laura, Saad, Nevena

Regrets: Emma, Shivani

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:06PM

Land Acknowledgement

Approval of Minutes

BIRT the 06 2020-08-04 Minutes of the AMS Advocacy Committee be adopted as presented

Mover: Kalith

Seconder: Laura

Chair's Remarks

1. Mitchell's Resignation
2. Last Meeting!

Portfolio Updates

1. AMS VP External [Kalith]

- Kalith: last week we filmed a video with Joyce Murray, an explanation of what their office does and filmed it in the Nest. Video is being edited and released sometime next week. A good way to warm students up in regards to what Joyce Murray does as Minister of Digital Government. During times like this, it is important that she gets a platform to discuss what she does. The fall situation regarding U-Pass is looking clearer, meeting with the UBC transit team on Thursday. Last committee meeting, the U-Pass will be reinstated and students that live outside the Lower Mainland will be apart of an opt-out system. We will have our regular subsidy program running for individuals who cannot afford the regular U-Pass. Happy that Translink has worked with us on this. UCRU: gave a presentation on UCRU to tell councillors what UCRU is and what it does. I am the Chair of the Governance Committee. We are going to go over the proposed bylaws as we get closer to formalization. Mackenzie, the Chair of UCRU (Western), will be present at our upcoming council meetings to explain what formalization means. We were just in a call with the

BCFS, the BCFS is gearing up for a provincial election soon, looking at a get out the vote campaign, still having discussions as to whether we should sign-on. We will be working with all student unions in the province collaborating together to get the vote out. BCFS hired Barack Obama's first campaign communications manager and they will be working with BCFS on the campaign. Pledge to vote system and emailing local MLAs. Students will be able to select issues and emails to their local MLAs. Meetings coming up with the Rapid Transit Team

- Nevena: Can you clarify on the U-Pass situation? How is the Transit Subsidy Going?
- Kalith: Really good questions! Essentially, we will be reinstating the U-Pass, everyone will have access to transit. The only difference this time will be if you live outside the Lower Mainland, and you'll be opted out of the U-Pass. We are working with Translink if they're going to require students to show proof of residence. Either way, the aim is to make sure that students outside the Lower Mainland can opt-out. If students need it and can't afford it, we will have the back-to-normal U-Pass Subsidy.
- Nevena: Is there going to be communication to students?
- Kalith: we're working with UBC comms to ensure that the work gets out: newsletter, UBC and AMS, we need to get the word out! I know I am going to get emails from students outside the Lower Mainland so it is important we get to them before they get to us. In terms of our transit subsidy, they posted again today; we've been trying to get it out as much as possible. Some students say they don't know about it. We have reached out to campus organizations such as the Calendar to get it out. AMS Comms has new staff, we're trying our best to get this out. External Affairs communicates with Comms every day. We have 100% acceptance rate, we don't even look at the financial hardship. Initially, the number we came up with was \$65,000. We have been giving it to everyone.
- Nevena: I wonder whether the "financial difficulties" marketing is the right way to go. If we could change the marketing to "for anyone who has to purchase a U-Pass", we have more money to spend and we wanna give it away to students. If you purchased a U-Pass, we want to give it away to students.
- Kalith: We have identified some of these problems, we kind of learn as we go. I'm not trying to blame our Comms team, but it takes time to do something. We need to change some things internally.

- Nevena: If we can maybe create a plan to do a drastic push of the funds, and have that be a part of the AMS- advertised through UBC emails and if it could be combined with all the packages.
- Kalith: I will reach out to them today, we are past August 15th and that is another problem.
- Nevena: I get how Comms can be extremely frustrating.
- Kalith: getting the word out on the fall plan, GSS VPX is looped in on all meetings and have learned some lessons from my experiences, we will be marketing correctly for the fall.
- Nevena: the whole idea for the last-minute push for that fund - maybe communicating with the GSS, most of the Summer subsidy - that would apply to grad students the most.
- Kalith: 75% of [transit subsidy] applicants have been grad students.

2. AMS VP AUA [Georgia]

- Georgia: Some of our updates, I put some of the supporting documents around both the study space and what we need to do around the internet connectivity enhancement for students in China, that is mostly the piece I want to get feedback on. Other business: Is the Climate Emergency a specific item of its own, Josh?
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- Josh: Yes it is [a discussion topic].
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- Georgia: Engaging with the climate emergency working groups and task forces, we recently had a meeting about research with regards to equity and undergraduate, for example, what does the peer program look like. UBC has also started partaking in Dimensions, a new program about EDI, which talks about hiring, research, how do we make research an equitable space? We also moved into the Undergraduate Research Org: discussion about having some centralized hub, barriers associated with getting into research; meaningful paid research. Some entry-level paid positions; how do you create research opportunities and how do you compensate people for their effort? We are also working with the President's office on anti-racism workshop projects for education about that going forward, so I can update a little about that. Josh has created really cool resources about that. The remote exam invigilation principles document is coming together and will come to the next Advocacy Committee. We will have a draft that we can present. Thank you for your feedback on a lot of stuff like remote exams, etc. The document is set to

endorsed for September Senate Agenda. August senate was cancelled. Discussion around food security initiative having conferences and workshops; provide more details about that. Meeting with SVPRO and some of that education piece as to what the new online atmosphere looks like. We've been working on how some campaign strategies work and how survivor-centric campaigns work to shape it in an online atmosphere. Some of those online atmosphere applications are what we are targeting. Terms of reference for SC17 which will be engaging all campus partners and survivors. Some of the confidentiality pieces and how they are transferred from units to units; what does this implementation committee look like? We have been working on the COVID-19 and AES reports and will be on the docket for the next council (clarify this). There has also been the rec centre that is being built, we recently had our first steering committee meeting and making sure it's going along smoothly and how making sure the construction costs are going down. The piece that I want consultation on or guidance is the internet connectivity for students in China [attachment 3B]. Ali Baba Cloud which is the Cloud Enterprise network is in tandem with UBC VPN is to create an accelerator and existing network authentication and encryption resources. A student in China that can't necessarily access Youtube normally and would be able to use UBC VPN and the Ali Baba network to access their resources.

- Joshua: What does allow by default mean?
- Georgia: The VPN will allow certain resources to be accessed by the students in China, it is up to UBC to allow whether or not the students should be granted to access a specific resource.
- Georgia: Thoughts?
- Laura: Does anyone know anyone in China or HK who have been affected by this?
- Georgia: we have been involved in those discussions with Pheonix who attended our previous council meetings, we're still waiting to hear back from some of these students as to what the most sensitive way to talk to them.
- Laura: there are other countries that have these issues as well.
- Georgia: This one specifically with Ali Baba, this one is directed to Chinese students. In discussion with Vice-Provost International, there is a suppression of the internet in India, targetted attacks to Queer students in Russia and Saudi Arabia. Since its an internationally intertwined discussion, UBC is hesitant to take a stance.

- Nevena: I feel very lost in this conversation, this is just a thought. I'm wondering about access to the internet. How we are thinking about that in relation to student access to courses. There was a particular dictator-like person who used Facebook to use it as propaganda. The idea that Facebook might be readily accessible by people as opposed to something other than ways to access the internet. I forget the details of this and I'm wondering what we are thinking about how we are supporting students overseas especially when less democratic places have financial barriers to repressing access to information online.
- Georgia: Yeah definitely! The tech bursaries are continuing into the fall as well; financial barriers is another way that participation is limited as well. 3A attached the technology discounts to remote learners; data cards, etc. Obviously, those providers are not necessarily in those countries always but that is one of the options that kids are in discount for. We're currently kind of monitoring the current uptake and usage of this before tossing more [money] into it.
- Nevena: Something else to think about! The idea when we're giving that out.
- Georgia: they say about 2-3 business days for funding but if you have an exam, it would be a pain. I think that it is something that needs to be looked into further for some of the delivery for some of these things as well. Academic concessions as well in light of COVID. They may be able to add in an extenuating circumstance; technology or connectivity issues.
- Josh: Do you know which [Ali Baba] plan the UBC admin is considering?
- Georgia: Starting with the smallest one: 100 MB per user.
- Nevena: Something that came up in conversations that may be related to advocacy. Some departments are looking into the tier of how TAs are paid, going from research to academic assistant. If we are not changing professor salaries, why is UBC considering TA pay decreases? This is more of an idea to give to you Georgia if you do not have much information about that Georgia, if we are able to kind of follow up on that, we should.
- Georgia: Let me do some digging around that. Have not heard about restructuring the pay structure.
- Nevena: it is mostly the code you provide to payroll. It seems like a fishy way to lower how much a TA might be getting paid. That is probably still within the policies of the university.

- Josh: question regarding the internet thing. Is UBC planning on signing contracts with different VPN services in whatever authoritarian countries students are in or is it just China?
- Georgia: I don't think they're connecting with other countries. It is mostly Ali Baba that is state-owned that created this and said here's this service that is available. On the VPN end, it will be operating through UBC's own personal VPN but this would just be using the Ali Baba accelerator which would improve internet access.

Discussion

1. Updating the External Policy Manual
 - Josh: since no one filled out the survey, we will be doing a review of the manual.
2. Policy I-11 Comments
 - Josh: I have seen Emma commenting on the policy documents on Google, I have not seen any other. I'm going to assume everyone is okay with the policy feedback.
3. Climate Emergency Materials Discussion
 - Georgia: for context, UBC declared a climate emergency and from that, they started consultation pieces. They had different themes around well-being, teaching, learning, and research. They also talked about divestment and climate justice. I will go over the strategic priorities that they have identified. Will touch base about John Madden about embedding climate justice discussions into Climate Action Plan 2030. Other strategic priority is centre conversations at UBC. One of the pieces of feedback at the community consultation was creating fellowship programs, etc. Recognizing alternate forms of scholarship. Foster a culture of engagement and advocacy. Enabling community engagement. For strategic priority D, support community well-being in the face of a climate crisis (eco-anxiety, provide resources around the climate crisis). E, expand education resources for UBC Community and the broader public. Being able to provide those resources in terms of climate education and all that. G, climate emergency lens. H, support BIPOC community-led climate initiatives. I am of the belief that priority H should be there and highlighted throughout all the priorities.
 - Nevena: Alternative forms of scholarship. Steps and ideas shared about this. It is a little bit of an unknown topic.
 - Georgia: That is where we really want to engage with alternative forms of scholarship. Some of the brief overviews is a communication from BoG, Deans, Directors, and Senate in support of public scholarship. Creating

awards for engagement in academic and community learning. Developing outreach scholarship programs.

- Nevena: something shared a lot on twitter: Black professors end up mentoring Black academics and the additional difficulties of being Black in Academia, whether the number of students you take to mentor because students from other universities and don't have Black mentors if we're looking at the broader picture and contributions you can make.
- Georgia: mentorship for communities and BIPOC academics. I really like that idea! What are the current mentorship programs available for Black students in academics?
- Nevena: activists in academia talk about mentorship.
- Georgia: UCRU talked about this as well.

New Business

Adjournment

Next meeting will be held September

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:27