



**THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER**

**AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of January 27, 2021

**Attendance**

Present: Cole Evans (President), Georgia Yee (VP Academic & University Affairs), Lucia Liang (VP Finance), Sylvester Mensah Jr. (VP Administration), Kalith Nanayakkara (VP External), Ian Stone (Student Services Manager), Keith Hester (Managing Director, arrived 12:20), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Guests: Adeline Huynh (equity consultant)

Recording Secretary: Sheldon Goldfarb

**Call to Order**

- The meeting was called to order at 12:04 pm with Kalith in the chair and took place by videoconference.

**Agenda**

- The agenda was adopted (Georgia, Sylvester).

**Minutes**

- The minutes of January 20 were approved (Sylvester, Georgia).

**Equity Plan Data**

- Adeline:
  - I was engaged by the AMS to develop an equity plan.
  - I organized seven focus groups, including one for students of colour, one for students with disabilities, another for LGBTQ2+, an intersectional group, and two open groups.
  - Results were presented to the advisory committee.
  - Six main themes emerged:
    - Organizational functional structures and processes.
    - Accessibility.
    - Oppressive culture.
    - Recommendations.
    - Lack of accountability.
    - Strengths.

- Strong opinions about the AMS were expressed, based on perceptions and experience.
- Organizational/functional:
  - Participants felt there was insufficient outreach.
  - They said the AMS seemed in a bubble that people could not penetrate.
  - They asked for more communication, said it was difficult to find information, difficult to connect with AMS personnel.
  - Also they perceived a lack of transparency on spending.
  - They wondered about accountability and business ethics: does the AMS always engage with ethical businesses? There was mention of Starbucks in the Nest. Also of the referendum to divest from Israeli companies.
  - Participants said, Why can't the AMS do business with ethical local businesses?
  - They said the AMS seemed a closed club.
  - They also said its regular turnover made it difficult to address issues.
  - There was a perception of disorganized administrative practices.
- Accessibility:
  - The participants made comments about political exclusivity, "cronyism," lack of accommodation for diverse abilities, lack of racial diversity (though they noted it was different this year on the Executive), favouritism towards Greek Life, and administrative red tape.
- Oppressive culture:
  - The participants spoke of a lack of racial representation, racial erasure (this came from Indigenous students), systemic racism and colonialism, tokenism, an expectation that students from certain communities be representative of those communities, a lack of Indigenous art in the Nest, hierarchy in the AMS, certain groups being denied club status, people's pronouns being assumed during the AGM.

[Keith arrived.]

- Recommendations:
  - Improve outreach.
  - Increase accessibility.
  - Equity training.
  - Financial support for under-represented students.
  - Increase diversity.
- Strengths:
  - Services and space: people appreciated the Nest.
  - A lot of students felt a sense of belonging.
  - Accommodation for diverse abilities.
  - Organizational flexibility: able to be responsive when needed.

- Sylvester:
  - How many participants were there?
- Adeline:
  - About 50 students in the seven focus groups.
  - Those are good focus group numbers, a good cross-section, especially in terms of identity groups.
- Sylvester:
  - A lot of this is not necessarily new. I agree with a lot.
  - Want to consider ways to address these issues.
  - We need more than the students on this call.
- Adeline:
  - This may be more perception than experience.
  - Reputational perception.
  - The AMS is seen as not welcoming.
  - The majority were not involved in the AMS and they're letting you know why.
  - Some of these things have been addressed, but people don't know it.
  - Wouldn't it be great to have AMS 101 to explain the AMS?
  - People don't understand, don't know how to get involved.
- Cole:
  - The issues you've brought up are issues we need to work on.
  - One thing we struggle with is to find the time and capacity.
  - Some things are inherent in student societies.
  - The Equity Plan can be a guide.
- Sheldon:
  - Outreach came up a lot.
  - Have you spoken about this to Eric, the Communications Manager?
- Adeline:
  - Not yet, but a good idea.
  - The Equity Plan will come with action items beyond these preliminary recommendations from the focus groups.

## UTILE

- Kalith:
  - UTILE is presenting tonight on student housing.
  - Do we need a motion (for the agreement with them)?
- Sylvester:
  - It's being submitted just for information.

## Housing Service

- Ian:
  - Code is supposed to stipulate what the Services are.
  - Can the Executive recommend creating the Housing Service (to be called AMS Housing)?
- Cole:
  - Maybe we should do a launch.
- Keith:
  - As Ian says, this needs something in Code.
  - We don't want people asking how this was done without approval.
- Ian:
  - Next time.

## Updates

- *Ian's update:*
  - New Assistant Manager starting.
  - New Nimbus features.
- *Sylvester's update:*
  - Clubs Days on Zoom and YouTube.
  - Carbon Offsetters.
- *Georgia's update:*
  - Exam hardship policy: people struggling with time zones.
  - Equitable access.
  - Creating culturally appropriate mental health resources.
  - New Academic Experience Survey.
  - UBC budget advocacy.
  - Proctorio.
- Keith:
  - Can you speak to Lucia about our own mental health subsidy?
- Georgia:
  - Yes.
  - Am also meeting about the Athletics & Recreation fee subsidy.
- *Cole's update:*
  - On panel with the Green Party.
  - Working with the University on appointments.
- *Kalith's update:*
  - Meetings about student housing with the Ministry of Advanced Education.

- Meeting with the Green Party.
- U-Pass in full swing.
  
- *Keith's update:*
  - Budgets for next year.
  - Interviewing for a new SASC Manager.
  - Second All-Staff meeting went well.
  
- *Lucia's update:*
  - Budget.
  - Three reports to Council.
  - Club transactions.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 pm.