



President's Council Minutes

November 26th, 2020

Presents: Cole Evans (AMS President), Sylvester Mensah Jr. (AMS Vice-President Administration), Emma Dodyk (EUS President), Janelle Julian (MUSA President), Anita (LASSA), Christopher Quilty (FUS President), Daniel Martin (VST President), Gabriella Sunario (LFSUS President), Jenny Liu (VSEUS President), Keira Britto (KUS), Kristian Oppenheim (CUS President), Simran Chalhotra (ESA President), Nealie Alavie (AUS President), Kiera Stel (LSS President), Shovon Das (SUS President)

Regrets: Angela Chen (NUS President), Parsa Amin (PhUS), Kimani Karangu (GSS President), Billy Zhao (MUS President), Regula Winzeler (RCSA President)

Guests: Vib Wadhwa (Student Leadership Conference Chair)

Recording Secretary: Haiger Ye (AMS Assistant to the President)

1. Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 5:06pm, and held by online video conference through Zoom.

2. Territorial Acknowledgement

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

No objections, 1 abstention

4. Adoption of the Agenda

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

5. Introductions

Welcoming newly elected presidents

6. Student Leadership Conference Presentation by Vib and Sylvester

- Sylvester:
 - Trying to make the conference free for students and we will follow up with each president to help find student leaders who could lead discussions.
 - Also looking for funding if constituencies want to participate.

Discussion

- Kristian:
 - Have you decided on which online platform to use?

- Vib:
 - Still looking, we want our platform to be unique. Currently budgeting and IT is conducting privacy assessments.
- Jenny:
 - Will the same Zoom link be sent to every student?
- Vib:
 - Depends on the platform. Some platforms have “tables” where students will be grouped based on their preferences.
- Daniel:
 - VST has used Hoopa.
- Kristian:
 - CUS also used Hoopa. There’s also Hopin, but Mac users might have a hard time with it.
- Emma:
 - When will registration info come out?
- Vib:
 - 1.5-2 weeks.
- Sylvester:
 - Communication should be going out around early December
- Cole:
 - How can constituencies be involved? How can it benefit them?
- Sylvester:
 - Student leaders can share their experiences to help others learn about the process that goes into being a student leader. Constituencies can collaborate with AMS, we will circulate topic ideas to presidents for feedback. To make this event free, we are looking for funding.

7. AMS President Update

Cole (President)

- On track with AMS equity plan, currently wrapping up discussion groups. Hopefully constituencies can use this as a resource to discuss equity within individual constituencies.
- Having some public relations issues, but getting past it.
- Implementing more COVID restrictions by reducing capacity in the Gallery, reducing seating in the Nest.
- Financial situation has been rough. Most constituencies will probably have a surplus. How can we get constituencies more involved with AMS to make sure we are working together to use our money effectively.
- We want to hear about your financial situations and what your constituencies plan to do if you have a surplus.

Sylvester (Vice-President Administration)

- Working on keeping the Nest safe and open, responding to Provincial Health orders. Enforcing restrictions has been challenging.
- The Nest will be closed from December 19th to January 4th.
- Campus base was one of our biggest projects this year, there were some technical challenges, but they've been addressed.
- Implemented a video conferencing grant for meetings and events, looking to see other types of support we can offer.

8. Constituency Updates

Simran (ESA):

- Started Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to engage students through social media.
- Student engagement is challenging because the age range of students is broad and people don't want to spend more time on Zoom.
- Increase in the number of people reaching out with COVID-related concerns, we are working with the UBC teaching office to try to alleviate some of that anxiety.

Shovon (SUS):

- Difficult to engage a large number of students when we can't reach out to them directly.
- Email subscription database has 300 sign-ups and we are aiming for 1000 by March. Working with science clubs to get them on board and allowing them to promote their events through the email base.
- Waiting on permission from faculty to use their logo in our online merchandise store.
- Event attendance for social and professional development events have been good.
- Trying to reduce mortgage with the operating surplus.

Nealie (AUS)

- October's by-election was delayed, engagement was very low.
- Having a hard time getting access to our office, hopefully we will be able to access it by January.
- Event management has been good.
- Good relationship with Associate Dean of Students.
- Arts student centre is going well, estimated completion by August 2021, but might be later.

Kristian (CUS)

- Working on mental health initiatives over the course of November.
- Thinking of incorporating more academic or professional events such as financial literacy and academic review sessions.
- Trying to develop more consent culture initiatives by working with equity initiatives and SVPRO.
- We were rejected from student representation on the EDI Committee.
- Trying to advocate for more compassionate academic policies.

- Budget surplus going towards Commerce student initiative funds. Students come present their ideas to receive funding. Developed new scholarships for the BIPOC community. Started a Sauder business review which is similar to Harvard Business Review. Funding undergraduate and faculty professional development initiatives.

Kiera (LSS)

- Made some reforms to the budget.
- Less social events, which has been difficult.
- Increasing academic advocacy with a COVID Ad Hoc committee. Students come to us with complaints and we can support them by contacting the faculty. We have academic reps in all levels of faculty.
- Did not succeed in advocating for exam policy changes. It was voted down but still a good precedent.
- Successfully brought a vote to The Law Society of BC to give articling students employment standards.

Keira (KUS)

- KUS has a bit of surplus due to lower expenses and we intend to make some scholarships and bursaries, but struggling to get support from faculty, will continue working on this in term two.
- Constitution is currently outdated.
- Good engagement from students.
- BIPOC community is doing well. Will be conducting a curriculum review to implement policies for inclusive event planning in the School of Kinesiology and changing hiring strategies.

Jenny (VSEUS)

- Huge surplus, over 70% of the entire balance which gives us a lot of flexibility.
- Saw a steep decline in engagement, especially with social events. Academic and career events have very good attendance rates, so we are trying to leverage that. Launched a newsletter to get more engagement and will increase spending on advertising.
- BIPOC empowerment grant available for students who come from marginalized backgrounds or working on projects that benefit marginalized groups.
- Merchandise launched last week, we got a few orders but are limited to domestic and pick up orders. We are subsidizing merch and won't be making a profit.
- Found that keeping track of data is really important to find out if things are working. Hoping to analyze data to get us out of student engagement slump.

Janelle (MUSA President)

- Executive transition was difficult.
- We are struggling with performance opportunities and practice rooms, trying to find ways faculty can help fund and find spaces for practicing and events. Less performances have increased online event engagement.

- There has been good socialization and networking happening. We are looking into scholarships, funding music research papers and hosting student led virtual concerts.

Gabi (LFSUS):

- Want to create opportunities for students to get involved without taking on councillor role
- Grant subcommittee helping fund projects with budget surplus. Grants created for food insecurity and COVID emergency fund.
- LFS has an EDI working group, we represent the student side, and faculty is taking initiatives to address ongoing issues
- Hosted student town hall to address students' academic concerns. Attended by deans, head of student services and program directors.
- Low student engagement, some events can't be carried out due to lack of volunteers.

Emma (EUS):

- We've had a series of meetings to see what to do with budget surplus. Depending on how E-Week goes, we might have even more surplus by the end of the year. Will be loaning some of the money to the Engineering Student Centre payment. Graduating students who won't benefit from this can apply for a subsidy.
- From the EDI audit on EUS we were recommended by the ad hoc committee to add an executive position to work on initiatives. This got mixed reviews from council.
- Event engagement is good, tutoring services seeing a lot of first year turnout. Professional events, social events usually happen within department clubs, turnout has been good.
- Challenges mostly around midterms and exams. We have a meeting with faculty every term to raise those concerns and academic advocacy is going pretty well. Our biggest concern is proctorio.

Daniel (VST):

- Student engagement is difficult, but COVID laid groundwork for more online events.
- Hosted a successful talent show over Zoom.
- Currently testing hybrid events such as social distanced pub night at Koerners.
- Interest has gone down as semester goes on.
- Had to rewrite the constitution, which was difficult.
- Looking forward to our "giving project". An end of the year way to connect students and encourage students to donate to an organization in some way.
- We are utilizing CampusGroups to collect information.

Christopher (FUS):

- Internet presence is working well.
- Faculty relations are good.
- Hoping to start up an online store via Instagram by January. Items can be mailed domestically or picked up.
- Struggling with student programming and subcommittees.

- Groundwork has been laid out for a capsule upgrade plan. We've figured out what we can and cannot do without needing to go to the building committee. A questionnaire will be distributed to ask students what they hope to see in the area, the plans will be forwarded to building operations.
- FUS conference scholarship will be introduced in January, which will cover anything related to a conference. Students can provide a receipt for their expense and we can reimburse a certain amount.

Anita (LASSA):

- We've established a better relationship with faculty and increased BIPOC representation.
- Pushback from faculty about syllabi.
- Online engagement is going well. We have a successful Discord channel, each cohort has their own Facebook group .
- Increased integration between clubs.
- We've been encouraged to use the faculty newsletter.

9. Other Business

Winter break situation:

- Cole: Discussion to extend winter break recently became public. UBCO Senate has approved, hard to say what UBC Vancouver Senate will decide.

Questions

- Jenny:
 - When would we find out ?
- Cole:
 - Academic policy committee is meeting on monday, depending on what they decide there will either be an emergency meeting of senate or email vote.
 - There is the accreditation issue of teaching days and there will be more exam conflicts for programs with multiple exams.
 - Hard to predict what will happen, if students ask, be sure to communicate the complexity of the situation.
- Emma:
 - Engineering is exam heavy, so students will face complications during exam season.
 - Might discuss with the dean about operating Engineering on a separate academic calendar.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, this meeting was adjourned at 6:44pm.