

February 19, 2021 Minutes of the AMS Governance Committee; 4pm

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/91681615917>

Attendance

Present: Sebastian Cooper (Chair), Danny Liu (SUS), Ryan Wong (VSEUS), Katherine Feng (SUS), Sheldon Goldfarb (Clerk of Council)

Guests: None

Regrets: Carter MacLean (AUS), Kalith Nanayakkara (AMS VP External Affairs), Kamil Kanji (student-at-large)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:17 pm.

Agenda Items

Territorial Acknowledgement

Approval of the Agenda

Moved: Katherine Seconded: Ryan

That the agenda be adopted.

[The motion carries.]

Approval of Past Minutes

Moved: Ryan Seconded: Katherine

That the minutes of February 12, 2021 be approved.

[The motion carries.]

I-22: Committee Chairs Transition Reports

Update from Steering Committee.

Katherine: Some policy to encourage transition reports better than none. But want more to be done to ensure Chairs fulfil their reports and Cole is still in favour of the \$100 formula. Now been sent to Finance Committee. Also discussed how the Steering Committee works - right now it meets rarely. Want to change composition and make it more agenda-based. Ensure that chairs submit materials on time.

Danny: Transparency issues with the Executive Committee - see the Ubysey article quoting from minutes (<https://www.ubyssey.ca/news/ams-exec-committee-transparency/>)

Ryan: Re: Steering Committee, I understand the sentiment behind concerns with operational efficiency. But if the purpose of the Committee is to discuss long term plans, that should be doing that still, rather than changing it wholesale into an operational one.

Katherine: still a role for goal review. Proposed changes remove Student Services Manager, VP Finance - idea is to make it more about committees.

Sheldon: What would be the right role for Govcomm here? Changes would have to go to Council. Govcomm is tasked with updating Code but no other committee is forbidden from making changes to Code.

Ryan: Fine with Council having a role in approving this. Seems like a fundamental shift from strategic planning to an operational check-in. Especially with a lack of a strategic plan and the COVID situation.

Sebastian: Could make a request that it be brought for consultation to Council before coming for approval.

Katherine: Understand the concerns but in its current state, the Committee doesn't meet much.

Ryan: Shouldn't get in a habit of because it's not being done properly, we should change Code to match. This is in particular a big shift.

Katherine: Agreed. Should add important oversight of committee chairs. But would like to see some kind of "steering" of the AMS - strategic planning is still important.

Danny: Could ask these questions directly of Cole.

Sebastian: Regarding I-22, I'll send context to Lucia and ask her expectations on timing.

Policy I-9: Executive Goal Setting and Reporting Policy

Up for review. Policy: <https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Policy-I-9-exec-goals-february-may-2019.pdf>

Ryan: Concerned that there's no clear guidelines for what KPIs should be.

Sebastian: How can we change the language to make it clearer?

Sheldon: Could add quantifiable metrics.

Sebastian: Will send emails to execs to either come to committee or submit thoughts on how policy can be improved. Not sure who else can be consulted.

Katherine: Past execs.

Sebastian: Will email a few.

Ryan: Would be nice to have more clear language for section 16 and define the expectations for reflection documents at the end of the year. Do we have copies of past reflection documents?

Sheldon: I have the ones that were submitted to Council. Will gather those and submit to Committee but they don't go back many years.

Conflict of Interest – officers and employees other than directors

Discussion of whether Govcomm should review conflict of interest responsibilities and language for officers of the society not including voting members of Council.

Sebastian: There is Code language requiring Execs to create provisions regarding conflicts of interest for officers and employees other than directors, e.g., AVPs. That used to be satisfied by the executive manual, which is no longer in force. So we could look at including that COI language elsewhere. Alternatively, we could remind the executive committee of these provisions and suggest that they put together an internal policy for reminding their staff about COI rules. Will send email to Cole.

Referenda Responsibilities

Submission from Georgia Yee, VP AUA:

- *I think it adds on a lot of additional labor to manually verify signatures. I don't think it fits well in the VPAUA's current responsibilities and skill set, nor is it an effective use of time of the VPAUA's time either. It's been pointed out that it might fit under the VP Admin portfolio or solely under the Elections Committee.*

Submission from Jeanie Malone:

- *My understanding of the issue is that we are lacking some clarity in (a) who owns the advertising/comms piece of the open call for referenda and (b) there was a sense from past AUAs that maybe verifying signatures isn't the best use of their time/skillset. My suggestion would be to explore what can be done to ensure these duties are owned by someone (perhaps the CEO?) without needing to change bylaw. I think from my reading of bylaw 4 there is room for these specific duties to not belong to the AUA - but up to your committee to discuss. Or if it is best they reside within the AUA portfolio, some rewording may be needed to ensure there is clarity in this being their responsibility. Some of this may be better fit in a JD than in code and may end up getting delegated out to HRcomm, but again, up for the committee to consider first.*

Sebastian: Referenda were brought up at council and there was a discussion on whether VP AUA should be responsible for verifying signatures and advertisements/marketing or not. Have asked Georgia for more details about how long the work takes.

Ryan: Initial thoughts are that these responsibilities should go to elections committee.

Sheldon: Bylaw requires only that the petition is received by VP AUA. Room to maneuver around that.

Sebastian: Could add that responsibility for advertising/communications go to chief electoral officer. Likely prudent to wait for more information from Georgia and from the chief electoral officer.

Faculty-Student Senator Elections

WHEREAS the decision made by the Elections Committee about elections for UBC-Vancouver, faculty-student senators cannot be reversed for the 2021 Elections; and

WHEREAS Council continues to believe that all student elections at UBC should be run by students as has been the practice for decades;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT AMS Council direct the governance committee to report back with Code amendments to best ensure the following:

THAT AMS Elections, along with constituencies, continues to run student elections for UBC-Vancouver faculty-student senators;

THAT AMS Elections, must meaningfully consult UBC-Vancouver Student Senators and Governors for any changes related to their respective elections;

THAT AMS Elections, must meaningfully consult constituencies for any changes related to their respective faculty-student senator election; and THAT AMS Elections, must seek Council Approval if they plan on not running a UBC-Vancouver Student Senator or Governor election.

Sebastian: Haven't heard back from any of the people I emailed. Will follow up.

Danny: All senators are in favour constituencies running the elections.

Ryan: Not sure what our role is. This is purely a UBC decision. Does changing Code affect anything?

Katherine: I think Max's intention is that, moving forward, there should be consultation with the people involved in the elections, and that the language will be somewhat vague given that it's UBC's decision.

Sheldon: As Ryan says, this is the University's election but Max wants us to push for the constituencies to run this. But it seems that the University wants either the university or the AMS to run it, but the chief electoral officer didn't have the capacity.

Danny: Haven't figured out what senators think about choosing between having the AMS run ALL student senator elections (not constituencies) vs UBC. I will follow up with them.

Sebastian: Is there other Code language that advocates for certain things?

Sheldon: Sounds more like what would go in a policy. University found that sometimes constituencies don't follow laws that UBC is supposed to follow for its senate elections. Constituencies also aren't perfectly matched up with faculties/schools which can make it complicated to ensure everyone gets to vote in the elections they should vote in.

Sebastian: We could look at Code language that requires the AMS to advocate for student-run elections. Perhaps we could also suggest the creation of a general policy statement outlining the AMS/Council position.

Sheldon: That would be an external policy, which falls under advocacy committee.

Sebastian: Will reach out to Chair of the Advocacy Committee and Georgia to suggest they look at this

Proposed Code changes

Discussion on proposed changes to bring Code into line with practice and Bylaw changes. Introduction of suggested amendments from the President.

Sebastian: Introducing these now, but Committee should discuss them once we review them more thoroughly.

Sheldon: I will do a first review and comment on Cole's comments.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is February 26, 2021.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 pm.