



# THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Minutes of the AMS Advocacy Committee on the 22nd February, 2021

[22nd February, 2021] [5:00 PM PST] on Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/96991215514?pwd=NmFHk9QOWRoYUdwUllKSWNVd0cwUT09>

## **Attendance**

Invited: Georgia Yee, Kalith Nanayakkara, Laura Beaudry, Joshua Kim, Jackson Schumacher, Mathew Ho, Mahmoud Borno, Saad Shoab

Present:

Regrets:

Recording Secretary:

## **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:07 pm

## **Land Acknowledgement**

## **Approval of Agenda**

**BIRT the agenda of the AMS Advocacy Committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021 be adopted as presented**

**Moved: Joshua**

**Seconded: Jackson**

**Unanimously passed**

## **Approval of Minutes**

**BIRT the Minutes of the AMS Advocacy Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 be adopted as presented**

**Moved: Laura**

**Seconded: Joshua**

**Unanimously Passed**

**Agenda Items**

**Chair Remarks**

**Discussion (10 mins, 10 mins each)**

**1. AUA: Exam Hardship Draft Language (Docket Item Missing)**

[Examination Hardships and Clashes 2021 \(3\) \(1\).docx - Google Docs](#)

- a. Georgia: People living abroad currently don't get accommodated in exams, or would need to look for it themselves. Therefore, we are pushing for additional language for the scheduling of examinations outside of hours of consulting on 8am to 10 pm in their local time zone, and further language about subsequent actions. Examination candidates facing hardship and requesting scheduling change, will be given new exam dates and times, which would specifically be given during their local time zone, and in normal human hours. This will apply for final assessments as well, with some guidelines around examination. They will notify instructors as well, if alternate writing times are not available, to try and accommodate students. By incorporating such language, we will be taking this to the Academic Policy committee or the joint committee with Teaching and Learning Committee in Senate.
- b. Mathew: Where were they referenced from?
- c. Georgia: The ways of seeking accommodating students isn't well known currently, but communications packages should be sent to students.
- d. Laura: For scheduling, does that mean professors will have to be awake when students do exams? How does it work for profs?
  - i. Georgia: We will push for accommodation that would look like extending timeframes when they are doing exams, e.g.

In canvas exams, something we would push for more through the centre for accessibility, is the time when they do invigilation, as some TAs can do that, accommodating students. I think the specific logistics of accommodating this have to go out to the individual instructors and pointing out to them that these are the support resources from Enrolment services and the Centre of Accessibility. This should not be creating more burden but the underlying principle is that they need to be accommodating and these are resources they can use to do so.

- ii. Laura: If this goes through, if a prof refuses to accommodate, what can a student do?
- iii. Georgia: Students would be able to access the ombudsperson's office, the advocacy coordinator in AMS and/or complain to the department head or to the coordinator, or to sending groups etc. That's one of the things we've been kind of noodling on as to how since there have been cases of instructors not following guidelines, or cases when a student brings a complaint forward, it's scary for the student to go to a dept head or ADA or dean of faculty to complain. We should think: How do we better resource them? Maybe a manual of student rights? – That would be awesome! Something like Know your rights.
- iv. Jackson: That sounds like a good idea
- v. Georgia: I agree, so something like what SLFS did on their seminar on online privacy. We can do something to address that. We used to have a handbook but it's no longer something we do. I would need to ask Sheldon about this, since we would need to know where this lie. The science student senator has been working on something similar so reaching out to him may be an option.

- vi.** Jackson: Or even putting something on reddit or twitter could be a good idea.
- vii.** Georgia: Yeah definitely. I'm trying to find way for central communications as well, in regards to communications, or something like Academic related communications, since questions on withdrawal dates have been raised by students, and UBC has been behind on communications in this regard.

## 2. Governance: Faculty Student Senator Elections

Discussion Item Addition Approval.

Moved: Mathew

Second: Georgia

Discussion Item Added

- a.** Georgia: It would be a great time to invite student senators like Max to be a part of the discussion, on top of advocating to UBC directly. Currently, one of the biggest barriers is apparently under the BC Societies act. Since we are separate legal entities from UBC, we're technically not allowed to run the elections, like we are currently, but we technically can't. It is unclear as to how that applies to faculty and student senator at large and BOG rep elections, but there are legal complications, so we also need to advocate directly to UBC. I think we can bring it to the registrar's office to initiate a conversation with Isabelle (AMS Elections Administrator), Cole (AMS President), Sebastian (Governance Committee Chair), but I'm also interested in hearing your views.
- b.** Jackson: it's an important task to have students to run student senator elections. It's not obvious how advocacy committee can work until we know more details, with an outline of the actual process. I agree with what Georgia was saying, and I think senators might be more familiar with the process.

- c. Georgia: If an initial proposal comes to Advocacy Committee, then we can discuss it. Otherwise I don't think we have enough to tackle what we would need to tackle now. Maybe a joint committee with advocacy Committee and governance committee and inviting student senators should be the way to go.
  - d. Mathew: Would this relate to External?
  - e. Kalith: No, but External is happy to help.
3. AUA: BIRT Discussion Item: statement on Anti-Asian racism
- Agenda Item Addition:  
Moved Georgia,  
Seconded Joshua  
Unanimously passed. Agenda Item added.
- a. Georgia: The statement is not in its first draft yet, but I was hoping to see Advocacy Committee's thoughts on putting it together, especially in regards to Anti-Asian racism resources and posts. Joshua has put some resources, and I'm hoping to address what the different facets, resources, posts and statements are.
  - b. Mathew: Query: Is there a formal process to creating a statement, since the HK statement didn't need to go through Advocacy Committee
  - c. Georgia: No. There's no formal process on how it's made, but something we could look into. Currently, maybe putting a working group on how to make the anti-Asian statement may be useful.
  - d. Jackson: Are there groups we can consult?
  - e. Georgia: There is the Canadian Asian caucus group as well, but I'm also looking at cultural clubs. But yeah, we can look back into previous things like the statements on mental health or diversity, and seeing if people feel unsafe, which they can contact safe walk. I don't know if there are anti-Asian incidents on campus but those have been happening a lot in lower mainland, and many Asians are also getting a lot of online hate.

- f. Kalith: I raised my hand because I'm interested in what advocacy committee thinks and what actionable items can be made. I haven't looked up as well as I should have prior to this meeting, so I'm seeing what can be done.
- g. Laura: (Have any incidents happened on campus? Could people contact safewalk if they are feeling unsafe?)
- h. Georgia: Is there a hotline for racism? As far as I currently know there is a hotline for racism in healthcare.
- i. Kalith: From what I understand there is none. There seems to be lack of dedication on solving hate crimes in the province. But yeah, this is something we can look provincially and federally later
- j. Laura: (<https://vancouver.sun.com/news/premier-condemns-spike-in-anti-asian-hate-crimes-in-vancouver>)
- k. Georgia: Joshua anything to add?
- l. Mahmoud: Are you asking in terms of hotlines on campus or in Vancouver?
- m. Georgia: Depends. If it's in Vancouver it would be useful, on top of the human rights advisors which would be useful to support people.
- n. Mahmoud: I don't know if there's anything on campus or in Vancouver, but on campus it seems in order to deal with an incident of racism, one would have to file a report with the equity and inclusion office, but I feel it has been abused by some and is not very efficient
- o. Georgia: Can you elaborate on that?
- p. Joshua: Regarding this, I'm willing to work with Georgia and the AUA office. At the same time, I probably talked about this with Georgia, but I've shared my concerns with Lauren but on the website, the resources I compiled and sent to her have still not been fixed. I'm wondering if someone can talk to Lauren in the office about this.

- q. Georgia: Hopefully we can follow up with this in a socially distant situation. It's just the amount of info that have been processed by the Communications department right now. This is something ongoing that we are working on as well.
- r. Shivani: I empathize with your concerns, since a lot of communication infrastructure at the AMS is not that well, and now it is flooded. We need to make sure students are engaged. I have some undergraduate society resources that have not been posted, so Lauren's trying her best but we need more time. We have some new hires but they need time for onboarding. We will make sure to get it done.
- s. Mathew: maybe talking with clubs and admin portfolio may help.

### **Portfolio Updates (20 minutes, 10 mins per item)**

#### **1. AMS VP External**

- a. **Kalith: We've been talking with the government, making sure everything is in line with what we are doing in terms of advocacy as we're at closing time. One main issue is Skytrain to UBC, it's a big talking point and there is a lot of support from stakeholders in region and the province has expressed support, but the problem is who is responsible for this. Translink needs funding and support. And what's happening right now is there is a mayor's council who meet and decide what is in their best interests. Usually the provincial government has the ability to work on big projects without the mayor's council, especially with the Skytrain extension. However, Skytrain to UBC needs money, so what's happening is that the provincial government is keeping this up to mayor's council and they formally need to accept the project and move forward with this. There are multiple problems, but that means they will need to engage in public session, and having seen the situation with the consultation on the SFU gondola, which has been something**

that happened, where a lot of students expressed support to that. Despite the consultation, the project is still in the backburner so now we are trying to figure out how we conduct public engagement for pushing for Skytrain to UBC. Therefore, whether it is like the gondola where we get students to come out, or whether we do something where students individually get to the mayor's council. The problem is when we advocate for Skytrain to UBC, if there are big swarms of students asking for it, from the mayor's council's point of view, they would see that the project is just for students only, but it might be more than just that in the future and we shouldn't have to mute it for so long. So we need to highlight the project in regards to other sectors: so we have jobs, and the area needs an economic boom etc, so a lot of things. We are trying to create a lot of conversation, so we need that direction where students have the ability to reach out to their mayors on their own, so the big problem is trying to connect students to the bigger issues such as us wanting the whole region to be able to access the project. We need more non students and other more interested people. This has to happen in March or April, so this is a tight deadline, and we need to show more needs to move forward.

- b. Kalith: Nothing much significant since last updates in terms of our research-based work. Some are about operational funding which is a priority with GSS council. Since it's after lobby week, it's currently about putting results together and putting it as the foundation moving forward, and we're researching and working with the whole team about it.
- c. Kalith: Upass conversations have gone forward in regards to what it will look like in the summer and going forward. There are some good news but nothing solid. A student from UBC spoke to Global news on problems on Upass, which some of those problems don't

lie with UBC so this negative media release has the gotten attention of the BC government and we're trying to see if federal funding to transit can be applied to the Upass program and see if it would be more appropriate for students to get some of that funding. I personally think Upass's price is too high, but there are gaps. Then again Translink needs to cover their cost, so we need to see if there is wriggle room to make it a lot easier for other schools to have options or opt out of Upass. That's pretty much it.

- d. Kalith: UCRU is talking about policies and what it looks like. Now that we're incorporated, it is more formal when we are transitioning from one board to another but this is challenging because different schools have different times.
- e. Kalith: I'm cohosting a webinar series with a Peter Walls scholar on cooperatives and how it can solve issues we face in our community. The 1<sup>st</sup> webinar is this Wednesday at noon, on housing cooperatives. We will be moderating this talk with experts such as our housing coordinator Mitchell, who is working on potential co op housing projects, their feasibility and surveys etc, that will be important topics. I will drop link in chat for RSVP. AMS will push out advertising. It is so last minute because it's hard to get all panelists, but the graphics look beautiful. Even when communications was busy, they were able to make nice graphics.

## 2. AMS VP AUA

- a. Georgia: I wanted to pose questions, for the next meeting whether there are certain discussion topics you might want to hear about. Rather than just hearing us from top down, we want to be hearing directly from you as to what students have questions about and places we are not currently addressing and filling out that time as well, and proposals you would like us to tackle.

- b. One good news in terms of the SC17 policy implantation committee is that it is coming together. Once we have a SASC manager hired we will likely be able to completely put that committee together. The terms of reference are finalized, and the humans for those hired. We are excited and will be able to look at policies and procedures for SC17, as it was going slow earlier.**
- c. Other things we've been talking about is the provosts extension appointment committee as well as well as feedback on provost Andrew szeri. Feel free to follow up on that. We have also been consulting with the VP finance office, and also been able to get some answers and confirmation of what will be funded as well, especially in terms of worklearn funding and continuing funding for emergency bursaries and supporting efforts of the GSS, as a result of increasing graduate student funding as well. We have also been able to get the first active academic integrity group meeting we have been calling for lately. UBCO has a working group and its mandate is look at processes of academic misconduct and how to create culture around academic integrity, with a wide scope as well. I can elaborate more. Essentially, it is going to be a more proactive approach to academic integrity, which will look at remote invigilation software, Chegg or conduct promotional campaigns as well so we're excited about that.**
- d. One of the things we're excited about is the creation of a motion limiting algorithmic invigilation to faculties that require it for accreditation external bodies, and the call on UBC to lobby to these external accreditation bodies. So faculties that commit to getting rid of it have been arts, science, land and food systems, dentistry, Sauder, medicine, etc. Law is the only one that has an explicit need for Proctorio so maybe we will be reaching out to them and student societies on this topic. For accreditation requirements we will also**

work with student advocates to take on this as well. It is a big win, but there is a long way to go. In terms of algorithmic proctoring software, these have been pretty much baby steps and we are needing more steps forward.

- e. Shivani: In addition, I was late from another meeting and reflecting notes on that, but I wanted to highlight this meeting which was on the open education working group, so I took opportunity to send a message of solidarity to Ian, who is involved in the lawsuit with Proctorio, and going through what we are about accreditation and go continue lobbying and accreditation bodies, to which he has responded positively. Seeing that it has become a broader conversation and even though we don't have a policy advisor or staff member being sued by company but it is an indication our actions are in line of what is needed right now.

## **AOB**

### **Submissions:**

### **Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting is 8<sup>th</sup> March on Zoom

### **Adjourn**

1. Moved \_\_\_\_\_ joshua \_\_\_\_\_, Seconded \_\_\_\_\_ Laura \_\_\_\_\_

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at \_\_\_\_\_ 6:07 \_\_\_\_\_ pm

### **Action Items:**