THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER

AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of March 10, 2021

Attendance
Present: Cole Evans (President), Georgia Yee (VP Academic & University Affairs), Lucia Liang (VP Finance), Kalith Nanayakkara (VP External), Ian Stone (Student Services Manager), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Lorris Leung (Senior Student Services Manager), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Regrets: Sylvester Mensah Jr. (VP Administration)

Guests: Hong-Lok Li (AMS Chief Technology Officer)

Recording Secretary: Sheldon Goldfarb

Call to Order
- The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm and took place by videoconference.

Agenda
- The agenda was adopted (Georgia, Kalith).

Minutes
- The minutes of March 3 were approved (Kalith, Lucia).

AMS Email System
- Hong:
  - Alarming situation.
  - Been using Microsoft Exchange for 20 years or so. No problems before.
  - But as it evolves, it is becoming complicated, expensive, and vulnerable.
  - We have seen this in the past couple of days.
  - We need to act quickly and move to something cloud-based.
  - Currently we are using Microsoft 2016.
  - The next version will be Microsoft 2022.
  - If we host it ourselves, it will cost more: there’s going to be a subscription fee.
  - The recent attack on Microsoft Exchange was extremely bad.
  - We received no support from Microsoft.
  - We’re not supposed to run patches by ourselves, but yesterday I went ahead and installed a patch, and things are fine now.
o But this is not a sustainable situation.

   o We have two options:
      ▪ UBC has offered to allow us onto their domain; that would probably be best.
      ▪ Or we could move to Office 365: it has more storage, but is much more expensive (9 times).

   o We need a secure, supported system.
   o It’s a huge risk if we can’t get support.

• Cole
   o We’re all enthusiastic about updating and moving to something cloud-based; we talked about that earlier in the year.
   o UBC FASmail is just email support.
   o Office 365 is a full suite.

• Hong:
   o Yes, that’s why it is more expensive.
   o I also looked into G-suite, but there are issues. Our systems wouldn’t work with it.
   o But if you want G-suite for certain groups, it can be done without email.

• Cole:
   o There’d be a cost of retraining and also incompatibility issues with G-suite.
   o Let’s make sure our apps are cloud-based.

• Hong:
   o If you decide on 365, I can pursue that.

• Cole:
   o Do we pay a licensing fee currently?

• Hong:
   o We paid a one-time fee for the current version, but that’s the last time for that.
   o The next version won’t allow that.
   o Microsoft wants people to move to 365.

• Kalith:
   o This is a blessing in disguise, allowing us to shift to something new and better.

• Georgia:
   o Thanks for all your work on this, Hong. We are very appreciative.
   o Can we get an alternate email auto-reply for staff not coming to the office?

• Hong:
   o Another option would be to go to UBC email and also use Office 365 without their email.
   o But we need to act: this is the most dangerous situation I’ve encountered in my career.

• Cole:
   o Hong and Keith can come up with proposals.
   o I lean to Office 365.
o Probably have to go to the Finance Committee in the next couple of weeks.

• Hong:
  o Yes, it’s our top priority to make ourselves safe.
  o The only concern about Office 365 is the cost.
  o It has features that a lot of people won’t use.
  o Could make Office 365 available to staff on demand, not give it automatically to everyone.
  o That would save us a lot of money.

• Cole:
  o Maybe a hybrid option.
  o Work with Keith and Lucia on a proposal for Fincom.

Return to In Person

• Cole:
  o The news is that UBC, following guidance from the provincial government, is planning increased activity on campus in the fall.
  o They didn’t quite say In Person, but it looks like more people on campus and some classes in person.
  o I met the UBC leadership before this announcement.
  o A lot of people will be excited, but some will be concerned over health issues and study permits for international students.
  o UBC needs to make plans to communicate to the students.
  o Faculty members may have issues too.
  o But we’re cautiously excited.
  o For the AMS, it’s good news: a healthier number of students will be good for our businesses.
  o We’ll have to come up with our reopening strategy for the fall, for businesses and also clubs, bookings, people in the building.

• Georgia:
  o Looking to get student feedback about student comfort levels, returning to residences and classrooms.
  o The concerns may be more outside class.
  o Looking at doing a survey, a shorter one.

• Cole:
  o Most students will be excited, but let’s identify concerns: personal safety and guidelines, vaccinations, testing. For our advocacy.

• Georgia:
  o Can start compiling a list of asks.
Updates

- **Kalith’s update:**
  - Made decision to continue the U-Pass for the summer: seeing increased ridership; the province will be moving to Phase 4 of vaccinations, so we’re expecting even more ridership.
  - The BC Liberals’ Opposition Critic for Advanced Education, Coralee Oakes, has been raising our advocacy asks, which is good.
  - UCRU is consolidating the feedback on the proposed bylaws.
  - The audit report on U-Pass exemptions is being finalized.
  - SkyTrain to UBC campaign.

- **Georgia’s update:**
  - Tuition consultation.
  - Educate and Activate campaign about microaggressions and bystander intervention.
  - International student time zone challenges.
  - Multi-language resources.
  - Working with Food Bank to destigmatize food insecurity.
  - Increasing diversity resources for mental health.
  - On the Provost Reappointment Committee.

- **Lucia’s update:**
  - AMS budget reforecast.
  - Budget for next year.
  - Received feedback about a new budget format to address transparency and accessibility issues.
  - Responses from fee-receiving groups.
  - Follow-ups on subsidies.
  - WUSC allowance allocation being shifted to UBC from us; the same for the CUS co-op fees. This will make things easier for students.

- **Keith’s update:**
  - Great news: New SASC Manager and Assistant Manager have been hired. SASC will be back to being fully staffed.
  - Lorris is working on an update to the Services Review.
  - Further to the news about in-person, going to redo the budget.
  - Orientations for Executives.

- **Cole:**
  - What’s the latest on the Communications presentation?

- **Keith:**
  - The company is meeting us.
AMS Executive Committee

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- A preview before coming to the Executive.

  - Ian’s update:
    - Budget for next year.
    - Hiring soon: for next Student Services Manager, a new person in my role; they will be shadowing me.
    - Hiring for Coordinators will be starting soon.
    - RBC Get Seeded at the end of the month.
    - Everything else is going along as normal.

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 12:52 pm.