



# THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Agenda of the AMS Advocacy Committee on the 22<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

[22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021] [5:00 PM PST] on Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/96991215514?pwd=NmFHYk9QOWRoYUdwUllKSWNVd0cwUT09>

## **Attendance**

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

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

Regrets: Shivani

Recording Secretary:

## **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:13 pm

## **Land Acknowledgement**

## **Approval of Agenda**

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

**Move: Joshua**

**Seconded: Jackson**

**Unanimously approved**

## **Approval of Minutes**

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

**Move: Joshua**

**Seconded: Jackson**

**Unanimously approved**

**Agenda Items**

**Chair Remarks**

**Discussion (30 mins, 10 mins each)**

**1. From Georgia: Policy I-12, I-11 Review**

- a. Georgia: For I-12, more work is needed to turn it into a policy that is all encompassing. Quite a few surveys have been made outside of the required 2 (nest experience and academic experience). The Policy needs to be reworked. I have asked Sheldon to rework to a more general survey, based on prior meetings. If there are thoughts on policy I-12 as follow up or any other pieces, let me know. Sheldon will come back with more concrete draft.**
- b. Georgia: If there are no comments on Policy I-12, I can go on Policy I-11, which is mostly housekeeping. After revisions we had over the summer as well, and briefly from last week. I wasn't sure if the effective date needs to be changed to March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021, but if we look to approve this policy, we can change that. I can walk through this and fix the formatting when it was converted form DOCX.**
- c. In the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph under the policy, Policy 71 is changed to policy LR4, as the UBC Administration switched policy coding, so this clarifies what policy it is in regard to. This one is the research and learning policy. We also discussed a change in regards to the timeline and they will be notified at least 10 days in advance where the BOG will be asked to update tuition and**

fees for the program. On section on receiving consultation in the policy, the VPAUA will decide with the policy advisor (which we do not have). If anyone want to make a comment, feel free to raise your hand. The VPAUA will consult stakeholders within 7 days, and all that, and I think there is a reformatting error in the document under 4b. So this “will be reviewed by at least 1 staff member (policy advisor and AMS Exec”, which is basically a document formatting thing. It got messed up in last little bit. Any thoughts around this?

- d. Mathew: Are modifications for changes for review date needed?
  - e. Georgia: No. The only change will only be formatting and housekeeping such as reflecting UBC’s change in policies’ coding.
  - f. Jackson: How does it work if UBC needs consultation, will it be an AMS GSS collab or is GSS delegated to it by the AMS?
  - g. Georgia: A bit of both. We connect with the GSS, but we also get the requests separately, and the undergraduate society with an interest in the program, and making sure it’s not contradicting each other, because of different viewpoints in those student populations.
  - h. Jackson: I think this looks good. I’m trying to figure out how to write a similar policy in GSS, so we would like to steal some of this language.
  - i. Georgia: I may go back to this, the section regarding at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. We discussed this in the summer, but I think we should extend that time as well to consult groups, but it did not have a timeline previously.
  - j. If no further thoughts I will take this, improve, and bring it back to next advocacy committee meeting
2. From Kalith: Code changes to Advocacy Committee
- a. Kalith: There are conversations on how we can make advocacy committee more impactful and drive our advocacy. A lot needs

to be done and there is a lot more potential that have not been met. This is an important topic being for our incoming executive. Saad took it upon himself to consult with our offices and execs that will be replacing us, on top of Sheldon on possible changes we can make to council, to code that allows us to have a more useful advocacy committee. Over the past year we have had useful conversations, but that being said, Saad's changes will help us improve a bit more.

- b. Saad: it's important for the AMS to include students at large. It's external and it's to university. Increasing from 1 to 3 members, which will provide exec with increased accountability and outreach to more students. Increases flow of ideas which will work on advocacy issues, which has been a great process throughout this past year. Everyone has been amazing in making sure we are representing concerns of students, and there are collab with students. A concern on increasing amounts, is difficulty in scheduling meetings, but that is important job of chair to manage, and it's more important that the AMS is increasing options to get involved, compared to the difficulty in scheduling. So, I want this to get passed, and approved by council. Absolutely welcoming any questions, and there is also the amendment rationale documents for you to refer.
- c. Mahmoud: Amazing addition and amazing proposal, and increasing perspectives in advocacy committee that is very much needed. One of my questions was, What are the shortcomings of trying to expand the committee? However, you have answered that. Another thing to keep in mind is nominations, and how students at large are nominated. Not a lot of students are aware of nominations. It has to be a fair selection process where students are aware of it, rather than a few people who want the position. I think this is more like an opinion than a question.

- d. Jackson: Yeah. If we're generally talking about how to make advocacy committee more effective and that, one reflection I have over the past year is when we had fewer and more in depth consultations and discussions which was more productive rather than a lot of things on the agenda, because it feels we are just checkboxing things and not talking about it. A tip for the incoming execs is to use advocacy committee more like a strategic consultation committee, rather than a checkbox, and making discussions feel short.
- e. Saad: Yeah, I will talk with Eshana about that and I am committed to it.
- f. Saad: This will be brought to council. To answer Mahmoud, changes to nominations process has been made. Making more students are being aware of committee openings and making it more accessible for students to join.
- g. Mathew: Rather than being a sounding board, I'd also love to see advocacy committee be more relevant by consulting with groups
- h. Saad: Would absolutely love to see more
- i. Laura: I brought this up with Mathew a few months ago. I joined in June, and the tone from Summer to Sept felt different, and I was thinking like whether we were an exec sounding board, or whether things have changed.
- j. Saad: I think when we reached the end of the year, things wrap up a lot for portfolios, but I'll let kalith and Georgia explain.
- k. Kalith: I agree there were a lot of high level conversations, as year progresses and we have had more discussions. Laura brings up a good point, and I want to point that advocacy committee ends up being what you make out of it, and there's no limitations to what the conversation is made out of it. I think what we should do, when Mathew is transitioning to the next

chair is making indications of how all of this went, and reminding the importance of making what you think is most suitable out of this committee, and I think the most productive processes, is where advocacy is not specific institutional programs or initiatives, and with students at large, they can bring issues, and encouraging advocacy committee members to bring forward issues from their community that are not being discussed, be it GSS, or Indigenous students, or Mahmoud from Palestinian student community where we have been blind to, where we are not living their real student experiences, and find a way to encourage committee members to bring things up, and how executives can advocate, and not executives deciding on what issues are going to work reporting on it and answering questions.

- l. Saad: To add on, this is not supposed to be like the US Senate, but it's partnering on how we can make advocacy better, and provide executives with a bit more accountability and how to make this better and stuff like that.
- m. Mahmoud: Since it will impact incoming execs, I don't know if we should vote on it now.
- n. Saad: I've talked with Sheldon, as a committee we have the right to wait until changeover happens, it can definitely take effect in next advocacy committee.
- o. Georgia: It would be great to have this prominently advertised on campus, like 1<sup>st</sup> year reps to engage people at different levels of UBC Journey, but that's one of the pieces. Nothing to the motion.
- p. Saad: That's a good point, Sheldon: Back in 2017, wanted to create caucuses, but didn't work because finding those representations is difficult. This could be something we can explore further.

3. **MOTION: Be It Resolved That Advocacy Committee recommends to AMS Council that Section V, Article 8 (1d) of AMS Code be amended from one (1) Student at Large to three (3) Students at Large.**
  - a. **Friendly Amendment: add Effective 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2021. Motioned Mahmoud, seconded Georgia**
4. **Amended motion: BIRT the AMS Council amends Section V, Article 8(1)(d) of the AMS Code of Procedure from one (1) Student at-Large to three (3) Students at-Large effective May 1, 2021.**
  - a. **Move Kalith**
  - b. **Second Joshua**
  - c. **Unanimously passed**
5. **Any other topic**
  - a. **Anti-Asian Racism**
    - i. **Georgia: We will be releasing the statement later this week, recognizing the intersections of anti-asian racism and how it disproportionately affects women of colour and migrant workers, and local communities. We're also going to look to amplify SWAN Vancouver's asks around the group for immigrant women engaged in sex work and taking the lead on those pieces too. It's important that we're also including actionables as well on top of the statements too. So that's a lot to be thinking a lot about**
    - ii. **Jackson: That's amazing work. I wanted to ask if you've statement from the events dept and if they had collaborated with you or if the statements are going to be consistent etc**
    - iii. **Georgia: I have seen the statement. There was not any collaborations but this is one of the areas we can address to make sure they are aligned, but we are also happy to talk about how we can also align the two arms of the organization since they operate independently.**

- iv. **Joshua: So I was wondering. Thank you for working on anti-asian statement. Still wondering why the anti-asian supporting resources are still not on the website. I know Lauren is busy with transition and it's a one-person team, but with the recent event in Atlanta, it's important that AMS adds the resources. I was also wondering whether there are any initiatives AUA office has plans to share to combat anti-Asian racism rather than just general statement in supporting asian students and communities.**
  - v. **Georgia; I will continue to follow up. Now we have regular check ins with comms on these pieces. If not up by end of this week, I'll definitely be able to see and expand that resource list you have sent over about and have that on website as well as resources too. That's a good point on how we are looking at anti- asian racism, and how we perpetuate it. One of pieces we want to make an official list of recommendations to mental health and resilience committee, making it available to the health and leadership team is a particular focus on anti-black and anti-asian resource groups, so black caucus in UBC. Being mindful of time, but that is one piece around making more culturally appropriate mental health resources and pushing for UBC to push for equity related competencies. Making sure there are more asian and black therapists on campus and making it easy for students to navigate those resources, esp from international or ESL student lens. There are Onboarding discrepancies and how we tackle interpersonal racism and training with the grads to how faculty and grad experience racism.**
- b. Recorded Lectures (AUA should have updates according to last meeting minutes draft)**

**i. Skipped due to time**

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

**1. AMS VP External**

- a. Working with Eric on the Website to set up advocacy section. There is a large disconnect with the execs and work and student bodies, since they care about the Nest and finance and our businesses and services, but we definitely want to be more accessible in our work in what we are doing and what we stand for, such as affordability, stances on various issues, who to get involved, and stuff about that.**
- b. In UCRU we're still working it's a long process. There are some graduate student concerns that are yet to be addressed. Meeting next Tuesday, and will be conversation we need to talk with the GSS VP External and incoming VP External, and we have lengthy concerns about proper representations and whether graduate students should pay into it. It will be a long process and need time. Jackson, Mathew will be joining us. We will try and see what conversations come out of that. Unfortunately, I don't have many updates.**
- c. MLA Corlee oaks has spoken on the floor again on our priorities, especially about graduate students, which has been good news for Ali, and we will be scheduling a meeting with her to see how we can carry this on. The BC Liberals are finding some support from us. I will be going for UNA board meetings, but there is news about the UBC basketball court to be torn down for hydrogen field centre next to the parkade. UNA board members brought same concerns to the Ubysey, that UBC doesn't have plans on replacing the basketball court. Since it's always occupied, people use that. It's important to maintain those resources for people to enjoy. It's the one next to the arena, and thunderbird parkade. So I spoke to Michael Light**

(associate director of UBC) about that, and Carol from the Campus and community dept, and UBC committed that the hydrogen field Centre won't be built until community consultation happens. We will keep that in mind as campus is reopening.

- d. I also had a webinar with the co-op series with the Peter Wall institute . I was supposed to be co host but was bed ridden with fever. Saad has been able to be active in supporting. Happy to answer any questions.
- e. Jackson: So the skatepark will stay?
- f. Kalith: I will bring you an update on that. Since most of the conversation was only about the basketball court.
- g. Laura: Have you heard of the NDP's promise to eliminate 20k of student debt from federal from Jagmeet Singh
- h. Kalith: I've heard.
- i. Laura: But it's not over yet. It will need time, as it should be more. It might be a cheap thing to get people to vote, but who knows?
- j. Kalith: It is something. The more and more student loans are part of the conversation we will be able to progress towards things like elimination of interest rates, but that is a step towards that goal, Political parties are reluctant to target students, and Saad can do this. Even the BC Liberals that are more conservative aligned, have also been increasing student support for students.
- k. Saad: I will push hard on UCRU's board on removing student loans. We've been on a great trajectory this year, and many student unions are thinking that, and that will be something I will recommend to UCRU board.
- l. Kalith: We've also released the statement publicly on HK situation

- m. Thoughts on the BizChina conference situation.**
- n. Kalith: There have been discussions around that. There's a process to cancelling an event, and execs are having a conversation on this, and if we want to make a large event, and say 'hey we are hosting an event', We do have an argument of PR and showing students that our Uyghur students we don't want to have a platform to have ideas regarding this, and people supporting this to begin with.**
- o. Jackson: Is divestment a consideration?**
- p. Kaith: This is a VP admin issue but I can bring to VP Admin. Which do we accept support form organizations that play a role in genocide? When the AMS Gave out amazon gift cards, maybe it's not the best approach to support something like Amazon.**
- q. Mahmoud: Are we talking about companies that are complicit in human rights violations, or the ones UBC is interacting with, because if we look at UBC's endowment fund list listed, there are companies where companies manufacture weapons such as Lockheed martin, fossil fuels and oil and gas industry, and as one of the biggest campuses in Canada for champions what is right we see administration is what is right and what we need to advocate for, and the university administration to divest from every single controversial and implicit company the cycle of performative politics, and actual change needs to start. Companies are impacting our respective communities. It needs to be a collective response rather than an individual response.**
- r. Mahmoud: UBC's endowment fund list that has been publicized there are investments in companies that manufacture weapons such as Lockheed Martin. UBC invests in fossil fuels and the gas and oil industry. As a campus, as the biggest campus in Canada and the most progressive ones [always championing], we always see our**

**administration place money in companies. We need to hold UBC accountable on this. Controversial and complicit industries. Companies that impact living inside the world. We need to hold them to account collectively.**

- s. Laura: do you have the list of companies?**
- t. Mahmoud: I do.**
- u. Laura: This CBC Article and Ubysey article are not saying the same thing.**
- v. Mathew: The Ubysey article relates to how students are concerned about the genocide. It is affecting scholars [who are going to jail].**
- w. Laura: They're inviting someone else from Huawei?**
- x. Mathew: The Ubysey article is separate. More related to the genocide as a whole.**
- y. Laura: This is the event that Justin Trudeau approved [signed off on]?**
- z. Kalith: That is why we had such a tough time - when they usually host this, they host this at the Vancouver Convention Centre.**
- aa. Laura: This list is all banks. They all invest in oil.**
- bb. Mahmoud: We see especially with the list, seeing that UBC is giving performative politics but giving money to complicit and controversial companies etc. I'm pissed off looking at this list. Nestle India, Japan petroleum, and Canna legit oil company. Blood boiling.**
- cc. (Motion to adjourn meeting officially) OFF RECORD.**

## **2. AMS VP AUA (Updates were made before VP External's)**

- a. **We are preparing for transition, recently had academic integrity working group meeting, dedicated towards making culture in academic integrity and follow this similar model for research website that went out. I will send a link in a follow up, and making resources on academic integrity, such as, are you following academic integrity, and resources for instructors in case there is cases of academic misconduct and navigating those resources responsibly, and kind of giving a official reward to leaders in open education. I have to leave, but if I can also send text updates.**
- b. **Also, more international student scholarships.**

**AOB**

**Submissions:**

**Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting is 5<sup>th</sup> April on Zoom

**Adjourn**

- 1. Moved 6:38 Laura \_\_\_\_\_, Seconded \_\_\_\_\_ Jackson \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Action Items:**

Add: Discussion: AMS and UBC endowment investments