



VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC & UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS - YEAR END REVIEW

Foreword: This was an exceptionally difficult and extraordinary year, testing our resilience and flexibility. Many of the actions we took this year were not things we had necessarily planned for in our goals and many of the actions we promised in the campaign were not able to be undertaken due to the pandemic, but this reflection and review hopes to encapsulate the activities we undertook to support and advocate for students during the pandemic. We are so thankful for those around us, including those at the AMS staff and council, our partners with faculty and staff, and students.

1. Goal: Active COVID-19 Response

Values: Compassionate, Proactive, Communicative

Due to the nature of the COVID19 pandemic, the goalposts were largely changing and affected many of the goals we worked on. While the situation was ever changing, this summarizes many of our COVID19 related activities.

Distribution of a COVID-19 Survey

We distributed a survey seeking to gain input from students during the pandemic, on their ability to access financial aid, housing, and food security. The survey's results were distributed to various leadership tables at the university, including more specialized presentations regarding the results of the survey and recommendations. The survey report can be found [here](#).

Guiding Principles for Fall 2020 Adaptation + Beyond COVID: Return to On Campus Activities Taskforce

We had an active part contributing to the Guiding Principles for Fall 2020 Adaptations that gave guidelines for the winter session 2020. Many of these principles revolved around providing flexibility and compassion for students, including equitable assessment and teaching conditions.

A similar task force is being struck for the return to on campus activities to ensure that students are able to be provided with equitable teaching conditions, including international students who may not be able to return to Canada, students with disabilities, and students living with immunocompromised relatives or household members.

Academic Integrity, Proctorio and Remote Invigilation

Proctorio emerged as an urgent need during the pandemic that students had significant concerns about invigilation, including ableist and racist exam proctoring software. The Principles for Remote Invigilation were developed over the summer, and were endorsed in 2021. We were successfully able to , in partnership with student senators.

These initiatives worked in tandem with concerns over academic integrity, with a perceived uptick in academic misconduct being found due to high profile academic misconduct incidents.

Community Engagement during COVID-19

As communication methods were limited to social media and Zoom, regular updates to the Reddit community were made to the community (resulting in 1.4k karma).

We held several community engagement sessions, including a collaboration with the VP Administration portfolio and Climate Hub on the Sustainability Symposium on a Just Recovery from COVID symposium.

A town hall session was incorporated into the Annual General Meeting session. More community engagement is recommended, especially as the campus plans to return to in person.

Timezone Issues

Significant language was indicated around the need to accommodate time zones during the COVID-19 pandemic, for international students who were living abroad. In collaboration with the UBC Ombudsperson office, we brought forward a proposal to the Policy J-102 on Exam Hardship and Clashes that classified timezone issues as an exam hardship. Unfortunately, it was not approved by the Academic Policy committee due to concerns about late implementation.

A more extensive look is needed at how flexibility needs to be incorporated into teaching - both from the teaching team and for students, and having a university wide approach to fair assessments. For the future, having centralized supports is necessary.

Housing Contract

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the housing contract included a problematic clause that stated that students could be evicted if in the case of an outbreak. We were able to successfully advocate for an amendment to the housing contract as a result and

ensure that any changes to the residence contract would receive appropriate consultation from elected student representatives.

2. Goal: Increasing Accessibility and Experiential Learning

Values: Accessible, Inclusive, Equitable

2.1 Increasing Student Accessibility

Lecture Recording

Over the past year, lecture recording technology has been developed and planned for the Forestry building and the Sauder School of Business building. The pandemic has given valuable precedence to expand the usage of lecture recording technology in the university.

To support, UBC has made mobile A/V lecture recording carts available. We put forward a budget request to go towards increasing lecture recording technology and are in the process of confirming a budget allocation from the tuition allocation, in preparation for the return to hybrid learning.

Increased Resources for the Centre for Accessibility

We endeavoured to bring up the various access barriers for students accessing the Centre for Accessibility, including capacity issues and problems with medicalization. We helped secure \$500,000 for the Centre for Accessibility through budget advocacy. As a result, the Centre for Accessibility has hired an intake coordinator and has set out to hire more Accessibility Advisors. This allows for higher capacity for students accessing the Centre for Accessibility and a lower and equal ratio of Students:Advisors.

Closed Captioning for Courses and Learning Materials for Students with Disabilities

We set out to create more opportunities for closed captioning in courses, for students with disabilities or anybody who would benefit from receiving course content as written materials. As a result, UBC created a project with the CIC for [automatic Zoom transcriptions](#) and established the OER toolkit. This goal has been completed but more work is needed to ensure that this is implemented more broadly and advertise this option for students and instructors. Other platforms have been explored, including Microsoft Teams.

Accessibility Audits + Greater Physical Accessibility

We set out to ensure that accessibility audits were conducted every two years through the Rick Hansen foundation. As accessibility audits have already been conducted on buildings, we decided to take another approach. We also ensured that the Centre for

Accessibility and that would be consulted in the creation of new academic buildings and academic building renewals. Though this was a different approach than initially set out in the goals, it helped to gain a greater understanding and have a proactive approach.

Communications Audit

We gave feedback on a communications audit with the Vice President Students' office, with a focus on outreach to marginalized student populations, international students, and student populations that did not traditionally engage as much. This will support the shaping of a communications strategy, as well as the student strategic plan. This goal has been completed but requires follow up for proper implementation.

Consultation with Disability Related Groups

As part of our endeavour to ensure that we were prioritizing voices for students with disabilities, we established relationships with the Disabilities United Club, as well as CiTR's All Access Pass for consultation and spreading awareness of the work the AMS did. This was also supported by the Equity Plan's work, in holding a listening session for students with disabilities. By establishing a foundation for relationships, we were also able to gather testimonies directly from students with disabilities.

2.2 Expanding Experiential Learning and Research Opportunities

Undergraduate Research Opportunities

We met with the Undergraduate Research Opportunities club, as well as VP Research and Innovation and Vice President Students to discuss platforms for creating more opportunities for undergraduate research. As a result, we successfully were able to collaborate with UBC to create a new [navigational portal for faculty members willing to work with undergraduate students and open research projects](#). Due to the research curtailment, not much update was able to be given on the Program for Undergraduate Research Experience. More work is needed to assess the Program for Undergraduate Research.

Expansion of WorkLearn

We were able to secure \$500,000 for the expansion of the Off Campus WorkLearn program. The Off Campus Work Learn program is targeted for Indigenous students and students with disabilities, and intended to support community organizations.

Collaborating with the GSS for Work Opportunities

Collaboration with the GSS was highly successful this year, including joint letters supported to the Board of Governors. We supported the GSS' budget requests for awards to support graduate students who were not able to make progress towards their

degree due to the research curtailment. More work is needed to work with the GSS post-graduation work opportunities for graduate students wanting to continue their career in industry.

3. Goal: Proactive Consultation, Amplifying Student Leadership, & Accountability

3.1 Proactive Consultation with Students and Amplifying Leadership

Community Engagement through AMAs and Active Presence on Social Media

We hosted consultations through Reddit on topics such as the return to in person, which allowed for open-ended conversation. We were successfully able to attain 1.4k engagements on Reddit (determined through karma). Due to the nature of social media forums, future recommendations should be made to follow up with data-driven surveys.

Relationship with the Residence Hall Association

We developed a relationship with the Residence Hall Association, including consistent meetings to update each other on housing advocacy work and establishing joint goals to work towards. We developed a Memorandum of Agreement with them, but it was intentionally developed to be non-binding and flexible.

Commuter Students

Due to the lack of students coming on campus, we were not able to form a commuter students committee. However, we have established a relationship with the Centre for Student Involvement and Careers' Collegia program to better understand the first year commuter experience and provide supports. Virtual collegia will continue.

3.2 - Accountability and Feedback

Promotion of the AMS Advocacy and Ombudsperson Office

We were able to partner with the Ombudsperson's office on Policy J-102 amendments. Further amendments of a potential MOU with the Ombudsperson office regarding funding includes promotion of each other's resources. Promotion was offered informally; it may be valuable to look into for the future.

Policy I-11 Amendment

We were successfully able to amend Policy I-11 to reflect further alignment with the changes to the UBC Tuition Consultation policy LR4 and include a timeline for consultation with external groups.

Student Evaluations of Teaching

By serving on the Student Evaluations of Teaching steering committee group, we were able to provide feedback on the new student evaluations of teaching (now the Student

Experience of Instruction) questions. The change to the Student Experience of Instruction was made to reflect the nature of the survey sent out. The questions were changed to minimize as much bias as possible. We were able to support promotion of the community engagement, including focus groups and town hall.

VP Academic Caucus

Due to time zone difficulties, it was difficult to meet consistently with the VP Academic Caucus and secure a time. A better framework should be set up to connect with undergraduate societies and consult regularly, and provide better support.

3.3 Climate Justice and Sustainability

Climate Emergency Task Force Report Recommendations + Fund

Throughout the summer, we were able to support the creation of the climate emergency task force report by serving on the Teaching and Learning subcommittee and Accountability committee. A huge focus was accountability to the community and urgency to address the Climate Emergency at a timescale that matched the nature of a crisis, and we were able to secure a commitment regarding regular updates to the community on the website. The University Sustainability Initiative will be the main unit that will be indexing and tracking all actions.

In making sure that the climate emergency recommendations had the financial support to be implemented, we were able to secure a \$1.5 million fund specifically for the Climate Emergency Task Force Report recommendations. This is meant to work in tandem with many of the other sustainability-related funds on campus, and get the quickstart actions funded.

Student Activism and Resource Group Connections

We made a point of regular contact and relationship building with the resource groups, including collaboration and consultation with the Pride Collective, Social Justice Centre, and Climate Justice UBC. Together, we were able to discuss shared goals and shared campaigns. It would be beneficial to continue maintaining this relationship in the future.

4. Goal: Affordability Through Holistic and Systemic Action

4.1 - Tuition and Financial Aid

Tuition Consultation Process

The tuition consultation process this year overlapped with the budget due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to COVID-19, the administration decided on a one-time allocation towards COVID-19 supports. This resulted in highly vague categories. While not the most ideal, it demonstrated how problematic the tuition allocation model was.

This strays significantly away from the tuition allocation model - a more extensive look is needed at the tuition allocation model for how tuition moneys are allocated to the faculty.

Affordability Plan

We were able to secure a commitment from the Vice President Students and both Provosts, as well as a Board-backed commitment towards the creation of an affordability plan for students. This will be a long term project that needs proper financial and human resourcing and actionables. The AMS will endeavour to ensure that it is resourced and supported properly in the middle of the pandemic, and ensure that it is ambitious.

Financial Aid

Our COVID-19 survey demonstrated significant gaps in access to financial aid. We decided to present some of the results from our COVID-19 survey towards those in the Enrolment Services. However, a better formula needs to be worked out in tandem with the BC Access Grant. We hope to see this covered in the student affordability plan to determine all those barriers keeping students from accessing financial aid.

4.2 - Food Insecurity

Digital Meal Donation and Digital Food Hub

We were able to secure \$10,000 funding for the digital meal donation, a meal donation program that allows students to discretely access funding for . This next round, it will be funded for \$20,000.

The digital food hub - meant to consolidate food security resources, including recipes, resources, and low barrier financial resources for food - is also receiving support and is continuing to progress smoothly, including several rounds of stakeholder feedback.

Community Food Hub

We have worked on securing funding for the AcadiaPark Community Food Hub. This has had the impact that it significantly extends the AMS Food Banks' resources. As a result, we are looking into providing more support from the UBC end, as professional and full time support.

Long Term Food Security Plan

The groundwork has been set for the creation of a longer term food security plan. We are hoping that the affordability plan addresses many of the core drivers of the food security plan, while the Food Security Initiative addresses more specific aspects regarding food security (ie cultural foods, nutrition, cooking and grocery skills)

4.3 - Student Housing

Hospitality Services Trust (HOST)

Due to COVID and continual hold ups through the CRA, progress on HOST has been stalled. It may be losing steam, and it may be valuable to focus energies elsewhere. If it is picked up again, we will be able to continue assuring the AMS' position in the HOST.

Campus Vision 2050 - Land Use Plan

While actions around Campus Vision 2050 have been delayed, the AMS has secured a position around the engagement process for Campus Vision 2050 and around the steering committee. Priorities for the Campus Vision 2050 process will be including historically marginalized groups in the consultation and development process and affordable and sustainable development.

4.4 - Open Educational Resources

TextbookBroke

We ran TextbookBroke this year virtually. This has differed from previous years where we were able to set up in front of the bookstore and campaign in person. Therefore, a lot of the work was targeted towards an online version of TextbookBroke, open source software, and raising awareness of the Principles for Digital Learning Materials.

Open Educational Resources and Reducing the Costs

In collaboration with the VPS, we have explored the idea of providing discounts on books from the bookstore for students with need, or creating a fund for students requiring support with textbook costs. This has been something put forward for the tuition surplus allocation, which is yet to be finalized. This is something to continue looking into and secure funding for. We were also able to incorporate accessibility and connectivity to the principles for OER Fund. More work is needed on the Digital Learning Materials Assessment Policy.

Open Education Awards

We set out to have a Senate-adjudicated award to celebrate leaders in open learning. We brought this to the Senate Awards committee, but this was out of the purview of the Awards committee of the Senate. Therefore, we have struck to make awards a collaboration between the Provost's office and the AMS.

Collaboration with Student Societies

We have worked with various undergraduate societies and student societies to have joint collaborations for open education. Some student societies have explored the idea of creating a fund for textbook bursaries. It will be helpful to continue this collaboration with

the student societies, especially at the departmental level which often have closer relationships with faculty and departmental heads.

5. Goal: Advancing an Equitable and Inclusive Future through Community Support

Collaboration with the Pride Collective

We were able to establish a collaborative relationship with the Pride Collective. Based on capacity, it could be helpful to establish a communications plan with communications based on days of significance (i.e. UBC Pride). We were also able to consult on culturally appropriate and diverse mental health resources.

Recognizing Gender Diversity in Systems

We set out to ensure that gender diversity could be reflected in the information systems at UBC. We secured a commitment that actions with the Integrated Renewal Program Student would be inclusive and reflective of gender diversity and be integrated with other IAP actions. As a result, Canvas changed to have the ability to set one's pronouns. More work is needed to demonstrate the implementation and make the community aware of this option.

Anti-Racism Campaign: Educate and Activate

We decided to run a campaign on anti-racism. This campaign was centred on the creation of educational and interactive workshops centred on anti-racism, as well as 2 animations recapping both workshops. This year, the workshops focussed on the topics of bystander intervention and microaggressions. The animations are on the AMS website and will be used in online canvas training modules meant for the AMS clubs' executive members.

Indigenous Engagement and the Indigenous Strategic Plan

We have made the connection with the First Nations House of Learning as well as the Indigenous Committee. More regular connections should be made. Due to the pandemic, previous years' traditions of funding Longhouse Lunches were disrupted, but could be something that could be taken up in the future.

We also advocated for funding to be allocated to the Indigenous Strategic Plan to support it adequately. It should be a priority that all budget items going towards the Indigenous Strategic Plan must be consulted on by Indigenous communities, moving forward.

5.2 Goal: Creating a Culture of Consent and Supporting Survivors

Policy SC17

We had the privilege of concluding, including more amendments towards a more survivor-centric policy, including training, clauses protecting substance users who experienced sexualized violence, clarification around consent, and a trauma informed approach. More efforts are needed to stabilize. The Policy SC17 Implementation committee is set to meet in the future and finalize the terms of reference.

A plain language version of Policy SC17 is currently being developed by SVPRO.

Residence Advisors

We were able to support residence advisors in the unionization process. As it is something that primarily affects residence advisors, we hope to work with residence advisors in a safe and supportive environment. Concerns around mandatory disclosure practices can be addressed through some of the concerns that were brought up around training and a safe environment for residence advisors, and then we are able to ensure a process for disclosures that is survivor centric.

Creating a Safe Environment

Due to the pandemic, the First Aid Student Team and St. John's Ambulance were not providing services related to party spaces. However, training was offered for club executives around sexual violence prevention and response (see VP Administration reflection). This is an area for continued education and initiatives.

5.3 Goal: Community-Driven Mental Health and Wellbeing

Gateway Building

The Gateway building has passed Board Approval 2. A submission was made on this to Board. The AMS should stay involved with the student health aspect, to ensure that sufficient space is allocated towards student health needs. One aspect to take into consideration for the future, is the move towards telehealth services and how that can be balanced with both in person.

QPR and Mental Health First Aid

We were able to secure funding from the Student Wellbeing Fund for the expansion of the QPR program for student groups, faculty, and staff groups around campus. More attention is needed to give support towards the implementation of this initiative.

Culturally Appropriate Mental Health Resources

We developed a report on culturally appropriate mental health resources and presented it to the Health Leadership executive. This contributed to the Mental Health and Resilience group on Diverse Mental Health Resources. Key focuses for the future will be mental health literacy for

cultural groups, as well as resource navigation for BIPOC. Far off goals may include hiring more diverse counsellors, including counsellors and therapists from non-traditional backgrounds.

Student Death Protocol

A student death protocol has been developed. One aspect to focus on in the future is the implementation of this. More information will be developed for student service websites, including supporting students when a death has occurred in the community in a “contact-tracing” approach that respects the needs of the family.