



Agenda of the AMS Governance Committee
(Agenda for June 16th, 2021 Meeting at 8pm | [Zoom](#))

Attendance

Present: Katherine Feng (Chair), Sheldon Goldfarb (Clerk of Council), Kyle Gough, Rebecca Liu, Romina Hajizadeh, Kamil Kanji (Vice-Chair), Jason Liao, Saad Shoaib (VP External)

Regrets: None

Guests: Neal Cameron (Speaker of Council), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Cole Evans (President)

Recording Secretary: Kamil Kanji

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:01pm.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Approval of the Agenda

Moved: Saad

Seconded: Kamil

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be adopted.”

Agenda Items

1. Remote Council Attendance Discussion

Katherine: We have been trying to determine whether Council meetings should be remote or not.

Neal: I think the Code changes make sense. Typo revision for 41c. Curious why it's the President's for 43 and the same for 44.

Sheldon: All the stuff about remote attendance the existing Code already indicates that the President can conduct email votes in extenuating circumstances.

Neal: Should we do at Council's discretion through a straw poll or President's? Not sure

Sheldon: But if Council is having a straw vote then should they just have a real vote.

Saad: AMS permanent staff compiles a lot including the agenda and other materials but at the President's recommendation. That is part of the rationale of why it is at the President's discretion.

Neal: That makes sense.

Sheldon: One aspect Neal might want to talk about is that we are putting new responsibilities on the Chair for the remote attendance piece of the Code changes. Does he have thoughts?

Neal: Was unsure about the definition of good reasons and whether the Chair is the best person to adjudicate peoples "good reasons". Should we put a cap on the number of remote attendance?

Jason: Putting a cap might make things very difficult especially for a situation like COVID.

Saad: Personal emergencies are quite broad and so the speaker would have good discretion to allow remote attendance or not.

Sheldon: Two parts to this amendment: allowing remote attendance regularly at the discretion of the chair, second part is allowing email voting in general whereas now we

have only allowed it because of COVID. Last week there was pushback as it was suggested that it move too much Council business away from Council. There was no way to have remote attendance prior to COVID. There is no provision in code for hybrid meetings so we could tweak code to allow for hybrid in emergency settings or all year round, these are issues that the committee might want to address.

Saad: In favour of hybrid model because it makes council more accessible for councillors and students-at-large. Hybrid model more indefinitely might be the best way.

Katherine: In favour of having option for students-at-large joining in person so it's easier to listen in or participate. My concern is that councillors may be less engaged and less able to participate in discussions when they're joining virtually. But like the idea of having this for students-at-large.

Jason: I broadly agree with hybrid meetings. $\frac{1}{3}$ threshold for putting digital votes to council discussion is very high. Should have just one person or two people want the vote to be in person then we should consider having the vote in person.

Katherine: This was discussed last week and people were in favour of this proposal. Sheldon, could we change it to if one person objects then suggest this to council?

Sheldon: Yes.

Saad: Virtual Councillor engagement can be enhanced if councillors are briefed appropriately about how important their duty is as a director.

Rebecca: Has the committee considered mandated certain roles to be in person? Or a certain subset of people having to be there in person?

Sheldon: The old rule for summer remote attendance said that only the people in person count towards quorum. The people who attended remotely could participate but did not contribute to quorum. If we left that rule in place and half of the council decided to stay home and attend remotely then we couldn't have a council meeting.

Rebecca: I think it's more so relating to our situation now where we are looking to transition in person. Was seeing if we had considered a certain group such as the execs or others having to be there in person?

Sheldon: I don't think we have but the committee can discuss.

Saad: We could definitely require certain positions to be there in person as executives are living in and around UBC but concerned about the special circumstance that an exec may not be living by UBC. Speaking as an exec that might be a good approach.

Katherine: An issue with this is that the groups required to be there will likely be the people who have worked on items being brought to Council for discussion or approval. Engagement from other councillors is needed.

Saad: Potentially if just exes are there then it can be seen as execs dominating the conversation. In reality, because we have the stipulation that the Chair can permit remote attendance for good reason, what we had will work well.

Katherine: Could Students-at-large choose to attend remotely at any time, even if all councillors are in person?

Neal: Probably not as section of the code does not permit that

Sheldon: Yes they probably could. The question is logistics? Will there be a zoom link to our meetings in the future even if no councilor says they want to attend remotely.

Katherine: Is anyone familiar with the system that will be used for hybrid meetings?

Saad: Your face will be displayed on Zoom if you are talking using the microphone in the Michael Kingsmill forum.

Sheldon: Cole was going to look into this but I don't know the results.

Neal: When I was speaker of AUS we were never able to get that system set up. Could GovComm defer this to the managing director or President?

Keith: We have a facility for dial in that we have used in the past but now people can vote from anywhere because we have OnBoard. We publish the zoom details for council on the website so that students-at-large can attend if they want too.

Katherine: Would this be the same when most people attend in person?

Keith: Yes, people dialing in remotely can dial in through zoom when in-person and can vote through OnBoard and we will live stream the council meetings as well.

Saad: If the zoom is publicly available then councilors can join the zoom and vote through onboard which would allow councilors to scapegoat in person attendance. One work around is having the Speaker control access to the zoom link.

Katherine: It might be an extra barrier for students to have to email someone they don't know rather than just click a link

Saad: Could councillors use the public link to see what's going on, vote, and be counted as present?

Neal: We would still take attendance of in person councilors and if they had good reason we would account for that as well. If they tried to do what Saad is suggesting then that would go towards one of their missed meetings.

Kyle: On the subject of being out of town: is it possible that it could be abused such as not understanding the definition of "town"

Neal: We could add a revision that the out of town reason would still be at the discretion of the Chair.

Sheldon: We already give discretionary power to the Chair in the paragraph above.

Neal: Agreed. We still need a verb in 41c such as "permits".

Sheldon: I'm not sure if there is a verb missing. I think a comma would be good.

Neal: Yes that would be fine.

Sheldon: I can make Neal's change.

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Code changes be recommended to Council as presented.”

Moved: Saad

Second: Romina

Decision is unanimously in favour.

2. Code Section III Time Limit Amendment

Katherine: Neal brought this up in an email prior to the committee meeting. It is about Code Section III, Article 1, Clause 19. Will give the Committee sometime to review the section of code since this is a last-minute addition to the agenda.

Neal: Right now in Code we have time limits to each agenda item. For the archival update it says 1 minute but in reality it is different.

Sheldon: I know Cole at the last meeting changed it to 10 minutes on OnBoard but that's not what Code said. Last time I did it in 5 but I would be fine with 5 or 10.

Committee agrees to 10 minutes

Sheldon: I am in favour of that as the maximum.

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Code changes be recommended to Council as presented.”

Moved: Romina

Seconded: Rebecca

Decision: In favour unanimously.

Katherine: Thank you Neal

3. Electoral Engagement Ad-hoc Committee Appointment

Katherine: We need to appoint someone to the Electoral Engagement Ad-Hoc Committee. Information about Committee was sent out with supporting documents.

Kyle: Interested

Katherine: If no one else is interested, we will move to a vote.

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT Kyle Gough be appointed to the Electoral Engagement Ad-Hoc Committee Engagement”

Moved: Jason

Seconded: Saad

Decision: In favour unanimously.

4. Goals and Planning

Katherine: Finish up discussion from last meeting. Some of the items remaining are the faculty student senate elections, reallocating referenda responsibilities from the VPAUA to the Chief Electoral Officer, designating a person responsible for conflict of interest screens, and a review internal policies. Has there been any follow up from Finance Committee on I-2?

Sheldon: Finance Committee reviewed I-2 but did not update the responsible body. Will follow up with VP Finance.

Saad: The CEO isn't appointed year long and so referenda that occur before they are appointed wouldn't be able to take place.

Sheldon: We could have a CEO all year long but Romina could tell us when the CEO vacancy it is likely to be filled

Romina: HR Committee is meeting Friday night and will discuss that. Will speak with Cole and Lawrence to figure out how to go about doing this.

Sheldon: Recommends touching base with the HR department.

Romina: Will make sure to do that

Katherine: Given we don't have a CEO yet, the referendum project is something we could focus on later. Another item we could look at is I-9 as there are two potential issues: are

there enough opportunities for the broader AMS community to contribute to executive goals and whether the policy should mandate a 360 review for executives

Saad: I think that's a good idea but more so it would be about logistics. The executives report to council so would it be all of council conducting the 360 review? Maybe focus on faculty student senator elections and maybe internal policy reviews for now.

Sheldon: The policies are up on the website so govcomm could review them. But many of the policies have been assigned to other committees so we don't want to step on other people's toes. Will look into which are our responsibility for the next meeting.

5. Executive Committee Discussion

Katherine: Since last meeting, I learned that Executive committee has changed since we talked about it last year.

Cole's comment (emailed out with supporting documents): "I've made a few changes this year to how we run things. This includes longer ExecComms at 2-hours weekly, pre-set agendas, and replacing what we use to call "Exec Strategy Meetings" that started in Chris' year to weekly team check-ins."

Cole: The email explains what we have done. They are not huge changes. We have had great discussions. Changes to the executive committee have been good as we have been quite productive.

Keith: As Cole mentioned, the extension of meetings to 2 hours has allowed us to invite staff and management to meetings which has made people feel more included. My concern was always that the council was not getting to hear the important conversations but not anymore.

Saad: ExecComm is a great place for connection between execs and even with the business operations side of the AMS. It has been functioning really well.

Katherine: It seems that the accountability and communication issues brought up last year have been resolved. Is anything needed to keep it this way?

Cole: Not much that can be done right now as it is often the President's responsibility to run the committee well. We are already on top of things for the most part so nothing I can think of right now that needs to be in code that would meaningfully make a difference.

Katherine: Thank you Cole and Keith.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be on June 30th at 8pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06pm.