

## **STUDENT COUNCIL MINUTES**

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Guests: Ubysey News, Ben Du (AMS Operations Committee), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Sheldon Goldfarb (Clerk of Council), Joanne Pickford (Admin Assistant)

### **A) Call to order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 pm with Cole Evans in the chair.

### **B) Territorial Acknowledgement:**

The Chair:

- We are on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the hə́nqəmíneh̓-speaking Musqueam people.
- It's important we acknowledge the lands we're on and the role we can play as student leaders in meaningful consultation on reconciliation.
- Learning took place here long before any of us or our ancestors arrived here.

### **C) Adoption of the agenda:**

#### **1. MOVED SEBASTIAN COOPER, SECONDED KATHERINE FENG:**

"That the agenda be adopted as presented."

... No objections

### **D) Speaker's Business (5 minutes):**

The Chair:

- Fill out the Councillor of the Year survey if you haven't yet:
  - We have 25 responses so far.
- Overwhelmingly, people prefer the 28<sup>th</sup> for the next regular meeting.
- That will be this Council's last meeting: if you have anything for the agenda, let us know. It's going to be a packed agenda.

### **E) Discussion Period**

***Ethics & Accountability Report re the VP External*** [SCD471-21], [SCD472-21]

Katherine Feng:

- The committee looked into the conflict of interest issue concerning the VP External.
- We determined that he was in an apparent conflict but not a real conflict of interest.
- Our recommendations are as follows:
  - The VP External should issue an apology.
  - Council should examine:

- How to ensure that incoming Directors, including Executives, are provided with sufficient information about their obligations regarding conflicts of interest.
  - Whether to establish a system whereby incoming Directors, including Executives, publicly declare any conflicts of interest.
  - Whether the AMS has sufficient internal procedures (such as conflict of interest screens) to ensure that Directors, including Executives, are able to avoid conflicts of interest.
  - Whether a member of AMS staff should be designated with responsibility for being a point of contact on issues regarding conflicts of interest.
- The VP External was co-operative throughout the process.
  - We don't think it's necessary to pass a motion asking him to apologize.

Kalith Nanayakkara:

- I want to thank the committee for taking the time to carry out such a comprehensive investigation.
- I fully accept the findings and recommendations.
- I hope Council is aware that I've long regretted my actions.
- I have apologized. I will apologize again. I apologize here.
- This has been a learning experience. I've learned a lot, especially about due diligence.
- I truly am sorry, and I appreciate your support.

Katherine Feng:

- Since the VP External has been cooperative and has made an apology, I don't think a motion is needed asking him to apologize.
- As to the other recommendations, I think it would be a good idea to refer them to Governance Committee.

2. MOVED KATHERINE FENG, SECONDED SEBASTIAN COOPER:

"That the agenda be amended to add a motion to refer the Council recommendations to the Governance Committee."

... No objections

3. MOVED KATHERINE FENG, SECONDED SEBASTIAN COOPER:

"That the Council recommendations in the report be referred to the Governance Committee."

Katherine Feng:

- On the first recommendation, we need to ensure that we're providing sufficient information and resources for Directors.
  - The VP External mostly received informal warnings in passing.
  - Better information is needed to prevent this problem in the future.
- Public declarations of conflict of interest may be a way to deal with the situation.
- We need internal procedures.

- For the staff member designated to look into this, student staff and Directors turn over; perhaps it could be a member of the permanent staff who could be turned to for advice.

4. MOVED KATHERINE FENG, SECONDED SEBASTIAN COOPER:

“That the Council recommendations in the report be referred to the Governance Committee.”

... Carried

**For (19): Sylvester Mensah Jr., Kalith Nanayakkara, Lucia Liang, Ruby Barnard, Mathew Ho, James Chen, Ryan Wong, Emma Dodyk, Nadir Nurali, Alexandra Arbelaez, Nevena Rebic, Annika Szarka, Sebastian Cooper, Christian Bailey, Kiera Vandeborne, Danny Liu, Jimmy Kim, Katherine Feng, Anissa Meghji**

***Further Discussion***

Nevena Rebic:

- I am concerned about the last line of the report, which states that AMS members, that is, ordinary students, should engage with the AMS in a more “collaborative and collegial manner.”
- This puts responsibility on the students.
- I would like to remove any suggestion of that.
- It would send a better message.

Sebastian Cooper:

- It’s not that AMS members are being asked to take action.
- It’s just that we wanted emphasis on a collaborative approach rather than an aggressive approach.
- Being respectful goes both ways.
- I have seen some of the comments online and they were not respectful.

Nevena Rebic:

- We need to consider the dynamics of power in this scenario.
- It’s the Society – the Executives and Councillors – with power.
- It’s up to them to create trust.
- It’s like the relationship with minorities in the medical system; the onus should never be on those who mistrust the system.
- The responsibility is on the system to explore the history of mistrust.
- It’s not the responsibility of those on the lower end of the power scale to create trust.
- It’s on those who hold these positions in the Society.
- It’s our responsibility to go above and beyond in dealing with those who treat us with mistrust.

Sebastian Cooper:

- I think Reddit members have power over public perceptions.
- Their posts remain online and can affect individuals' futures.

Cole Evans:

- There were comments saying Kalith was corrupt.
- There has been an increase in hate online.
- Someone said I have a punchable face.
- I think the responsibility lies with the AMS to mend this by communicating more and being more transparent so people don't come up with crazy theories.
- But the onus is on everyone to be respectful.
- It's okay to disagree with your representatives and to question them, but it's not okay to make personal attacks and erroneous assumptions.
- These things have an impact on the well-being of people in leadership positions.
- And this is in the context of us wanting to get more people to run for such positions.
- If they see that leaders get slandered on Reddit and UBC Confessions, they may think, I don't want to do it (run for office).
- Maybe there's a way to balance the two.

Nevena Rebic:

- Thanks for the context.
- We do need something about harassment.
- Social media is our cultural context, and maybe we need to talk more about that rather than about what AMS members should or shouldn't do.
- This is a report on the ethics of an Executive; it doesn't seem the place for a statement about what AMS members should do.
- We need a conversation about transparency and accountability.

Cole Evans:

- Maybe we should be aiming at quelling tensions: is that the approach?
- Maybe Council should look at making a statement beyond this report, addressing the general increase of rhetoric.
- These comments affect our reputation.
- A survey two years ago showed that people get more of their information about the AMS from Reddit than from the Ubysey.
- It's a risk to have misinformation being circulated.
- Councillors may wish to look into this further.

Mathew Ho:

- This seems like we're trying to control people.
- We need to figure out how to engage students.

Nevena Rebic:

- Maybe we can find a way to find the roots of mistrust.

- There's no way I want to condone online hate, but some comments are more nuanced.
- We need to think about how we as a Society engage in online space.
- The Equity Plan may help.
- There's a lot more to talk about, to discuss with the Communications team.
- We're in a new era.
- Public reputation does depend on what's being said online.

Cole Evans:

- Good point about the Equity Plan.
- Going to present on it next Council.
- We did a Town Hall on it last week, and one of the big things, one really big barrier, is a communications piece: people don't feel they're being kept up to date.
- Should we be doing more Town Halls?
- We got good feedback from our online AGM: it was a fun way to engage our students.
- What are we doing to be not just the student leaders on the top floor of the Nest without connecting to our members?
- Probably good to create some actionables.
- We could vote to accept the report and make changes to it.
- Or we could work on a community statement.

5. MOVED SEBASTIAN COOPER, SECONDED MATHEW HO:

"That Council accept the report of the Ethics and Accountability Committee on the VP External's apparent conflict of interest."

... No objections

Katherine Feng:

- I think it would be useful to give the VP External a date to have an apology done by.

Cole Evans:

- The committee could do that.

Katherine Feng:

- I suggest by next Council, April 28.

*There was consensus on this.*

**F) Next Meeting:**

Next Meeting: April 28, 2021

**G) Adjournment:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:54 pm.

**H) Social Activity:**

**Council April 14, 2021  
 Votes & Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Refer to Governance</b>
	Speaker		
Cole Evans	President	X	
Georgia Yee	VP Academic		
Sylvester Mensah Jr.	VP Admin	X	Y
Kalith Nanayakkara	VP External	X	Y
Lucia Liang	VP Finance	X	Y
Ian Stone	SSM		
Ruby Barnard	Architecture	X	Y
Carter MacLean	Arts		
Joshua Kim	Arts		
Lawrence Liu	Arts		
Mathew Ho	Arts	X	Y
Sherly Prince	Arts		
	Audiology		
Georgia Yee	BoG		
Max Holmes	BoG		
James Chen	Commerce	X	Y
Kristian Oppenheim	Commerce		
Varada Saha	Dentistry		
Ryan Wong	Economics	X	Y
Alison St. Pierre	Education		
Emma Dodyk	Engineering	X	Y
Nadir Nurali	Engineering	X	Y
Alexandra Arbelaez	Forestry	X	Y
Ashni Gill	GSS		
Jackson Schumacher	GSS		
Nevena Rebic	GSS	X	Y
	GSS		
Laura Beaudry	Indigenous Seat		
	Journalism		
Annika Szarka	Kinesiology	X	Y
Sebastian Cooper	Law	X	Y
Rachel Chan	LFS		
Jeremy Zuo	Medicine		
Christian Bailey	Music	X	Y
Emily Masse	Nursing		
Kevin Kang	Pharmacy		

Kiera Vandeborne	Planning	X	Y
	Population & Public Health		
Chris Sundby	Regent		
Danny Liu	Science	X	Y
Jimmy Kim	Science	X	Y
Katherine Feng	Science	X	Y
Ray Hua	Science		
Anisha Sandhu	Senate		
Eshana Bhangu	Senate		
Anissa Meghji	Social Work	X	Y
Agam Gill	St Mark's		
Daniel Martin	VST		
Oluwakemi Oke	AMS Ombudsperson		