



**THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER**

AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of June 30, 2021

Attendance

Present: Cole Evans (President, left at 1:25), Eshana Bhangu (VP Academic & University Affairs, arrived 12:15), Mary Gan (VP Finance), Lauren Benson (VP Administration), Saad Shoaib (VP External), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Lorris Leung (Senior Student Services Manager), Mitchell Prost (Student Services Manager, arrived 12:14), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Guests: Rish Das (Events Manager), Eric Lowe (Communications Manager)

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 (Saad, Lauren).

Minutes

- The minutes of June 23 were approved (Saad, Lauren).

Budget

- Mary:
 - The Finance Committee has been talking about cuts in small items.
 - Questions about cutting advertising and promotion; also money for volunteer appreciation.
 - Can everyone cut their budgets?
- Saad:
 - These are cuts of \$200-\$300.
 - What is Finance Committee hoping to get out of cuts like that?
 - What's the goal?
- Mary:
 - It's just something they'd like to see.
- Saad:
 - The Advisory Board told us that little budget cuts are not the thing to focus on.

- Mary:
 - I raised that, but others on the Finance Committee differed.
- Lauren:
 - A couple of hundred dollars won't affect the overall budget, but it can make a big difference to individual portfolios; it can affect a project.
- Cole:
 - What areas does Finance Committee want to cut?
- Mary:
 - Staff appreciation, advertising and promotion, Student Council.
 - I've told them a lot of these don't amount to much.
 - They questioned the money for team building and said it would be better put into salaries.

[Eshana arrives.]

- Cole:
 - It's great to talk of paying people more, but it's not necessarily coming.
 - Appreciation is good, fun, and not a lot of money: \$200 per person per year.
 - Doesn't make sense to be nit-picking.
 - It should be items of at least \$5,000 that we look at.
- Keith:
 - I agree with Cole.
 - I'm in favour of paying people more, but it can't happen quickly; it's not imminent.
- Lorris:
 - Was anything in Services mentioned?
- Mary:
 - I don't think there were comments about Services, except to ask, Are they tracking their finances?
- Lorris:
 - Good question. Mitchell has created a tracking process for us, so we've been more diligent in tracking this year.
- Mary:
 - They don't want you to underspend.
- Saad:
 - Our student staff work very hard, so the notion of cutting appreciation is completely wrong.
- Lauren:
 - Some student staff work overtime, and there's emotional labour and stress.
 - I'm in favour of staff appreciation.
- Cole:
 - Even if you wiped out all appreciation, it wouldn't increase wages that much.

- It would be about \$10,000 divided among 50 people.
- Mary:
 - Elections and Referenda were also discussed.
 - No problem in Events because events can produce revenue and a better student experience.
 - Also no problem in Services.
- Rish:
 - Last year was a tough year in Events.
 - We were asked to cut down further and further.
 - There are definitely areas where we could spend more money.
 - Would you like me to create a new budget?
- Mary:
 - Yes, I can take a look.
- Saad:
 - Advertising and promotion: Finance Committee is looking in the wrong place.
 - We have a communication problem.
 - Cutting there would be contradictory to our aims.
 - There was some under-spending in past years, but that means making sure the spending is done.
 - These two areas are ones we're trying to fix.
- Mary:
 - There was a question about the \$20,000 for branding.
- Cole:
 - Last year we spent \$30,000 for advertising, and that included branding.
 - This year it's \$20,000 for advertising, promotion, and headshots.
- Keith:
 - Finance Committee is thinking we do all our advertising through Communications.
 - But that's not what we do: each area figures out what it needs.
 - We shouldn't reduce it to zero and put it all into Communications.
- Mary:
 - Finance Committee didn't realize all that goes on.
 - We do need spending.
 - Yes, there has been under-spending.
- Saad:
 - Maybe Exec and Fincom need to meet jointly.
- Sheldon:
 - There is provision for joint meetings in Code.
- Mary:
 - Execs can just come and talk to Fincom.
 - The budget is to go to the July 21 Council meeting, so it has to be done by July 16.

Events Renaming

- Rish:
 - This was brought up last year because we did a lot of things last year that were not events: digital media, content creation.
 - I'm not fully supportive; we have an established brand
 - But if we are doing it, we should do it soon, before Jump Start and to get new swag items.
- Lauren:
 - Is changing the name necessary?
 - Students miss familiarity, and AMS Events plays a role in that.
- Saad:
 - We could change the name, but name recognition is important.
 - Everyone knows AMS Events.
- Cole:
 - If we don't change, how are we branding things that aren't events?
 - It seems weird to have videos coming out on the Events platform.
 - But if we don't change, maybe we can put the AMS brand on things, bring Events in line with AMS fonts and colours.
- Eric:
 - I'm the one who suggested the change because Events is doing some things now that are not really events.
 - As to brand recognition, UBC has a cycle:
 - If we change the name now, first years won't know there's been a change; they won't have an emotional connection to the brand.
 - Second years are also not that connected.
 - Recognition disappears.
- Cole:
 - I agree with Eric.
 - We overvalue the name.
 - Most people don't care about the organization behind the event; they just care about the event: Pit Night etc.
- Sheldon:
 - Historically, we've tended to hold onto names or if we changed them, we changed back.
 - We tried changing Safewalk to SafeTeam, but quickly returned to Safewalk.
 - Consultants wanted us to change Pie R Squared to Boom!Pizza, but we stuck to Pie R.
- Eshana:
 - I don't think it will upset people if we change the name.
 - I like AMS Social.

- Lauren:
 - Whether we change the name or not, we could set things up so it's more like a collaboration.
- Cole:
 - There's a problem that we're trying to solve.
 - There's a sense of AMS and AMS Events being different, separate.
 - It's not a collaboration between the AMS and AMS Events.
 - AMS Events is just one platform the AMS presents information through.
 - That's why a new name could be valuable.
- Saad:
 - Maybe a name change could be a good idea.
 - AMS Social.
- Rish:
 - We could look at other student unions.
 - When AMS Events shifts away from the AMS brand, that's because I'm looking at what others on campus are doing: we have to do something better to attract students.
 - Even if we change the name, we still have to compete; there's still an issue.
 - We can't stick completely to the brand.
- Cole:
 - Another option: Instead of changing the AMS Events brand, if we're still seeing a value to promoting events, is there room to create a parent brand: AMS Social.
 - AMS Events would still do actual events.
 - Or is there a way to create a brand that incorporates AMS but allows difference.
 - AMS Events would not necessarily be the same as the AMS brand, but it would still be seen as AMS.
 - Look at UBC: UBC Life doesn't follow UBC core guidelines strictly, but you can still tell that it's UBC.
- Eric:
 - I agree we have to compete, but there are lots of ways to do that.
 - Events has lots of Instagram followers because of great content.
 - We don't want to change that, just allow them to broaden their scope.
- Sheldon:
 - Historically, Events has changed its name before.
 - It originally was called Programs, then changed to Events 20 years ago.
- Cole:
 - No unanimous direction, but people seem partial to AMS Social.
 - Let Rish and Eric work with Keith on this.
 - Brainstorm names.

Communications

- Eric:
 - “UBC for Introverts.”
 - For some students loneliness and isolation are an issue.
 - How do we help students who aren’t as socially outgoing?
 - Students ask, How do I get out more and connect instead of just going to class and watching Netflix?
 - We offer clubs; there’s intramurals. But for some that’s not what they want.
 - We have a diverse population.
 - Some are happy on their own, not looking for how to make friends, but still looking to expand their social circle.
 - One suggestion is to use Social Media for solo events (scavenger hunts, going to museums) and group activities: low-key clubs, volunteer opportunities, small sports (not big sports).
 - Another is a Pen Pal Program:
 - Old-fashioned letter writing.
 - Students would write to each other, connect with others who share their interests.
 - They could drop off their letters.
 - They’d fill out a form listing their interests.
- Saad:
 - We’d have to monitor the penpal program for safety etc. There could be risk.
- Eric:
 - We wouldn’t read the letters; can’t control what they say.
- Cole:
 - When they sign up, we could mitigate risk by saying, Here are resources to turn to if someone writes something inappropriate to you.
- Eric:
 - We can do that.

[Cole leaves. Eshana took the chair.]

Managing Director’s Update

- Keith:
 - Looking to see what to call the Test Kitchen.
 - Signage.
 - Best Buy location.
 - New lease potential.
 - Booking policy for Constituencies.

- Lauren: That was discussed at Operations Committee, but there's been no final decision.
 - In-person reviews with direct reports.
 - Collective bargaining discussions.
 - New events for the fall: Rish will update Council. A mini Welcome Back Barbecue.
 - Audit.
- Saad:
 - Policy Advisor?
- Lorris:
 - Five potential candidates. Interviews.
- Saad:
 - Will the auditors be speaking to us?
- Keith:
 - No, unless you have any concerns: you can bring those up.
 - They will speak to Mary.
- Mitchell:
 - Do they even need to be recommended for the fully vaccinated?
- Keith:
 - For privacy reasons, we're not making distinctions between those who are vaccinated and those who are not.
 - One rule for everyone.

Executive Updates

- *Mitchell's update:*
 - Funding for eHub from e@UBC: MoU for \$6,000.
 - Receiving two new vehicles next Wednesday for Safewalk. With partitions.
- *Mary's update:*
 - Budget.
 - Repayments for clubs.
 - Club budgets.
 - Health and Dental reports.
- *Saad's update:*
 - Working with Sheldon and Lauren on an MoU with Regent College to get student lists.
 - Post-graduate permits for students at Affiliate colleges.
 - Climate Action Strategic Plan.
 - Utile housing project:
 - Requesting money from BC Housing for seed funding.

- BC budget consultation submission. Working on:
 - Funding for Indigenous language programs.
 - Mental health program improvements.
 - Sexual violence prevention recommendations.
- Keith:
 - For that signage project for the Nest, we may want a Musqueam name.
 - Need to discuss with the Indigenous Committee.
- Saad:
 - Have to work with the Musqueam on that.
- *Lauren's update:*
 - COVID-19 dashboard research done. Up on the website this afternoon.
 - Sensory Room.
 - Talking with UBC about prayer space.
 - 50 clubs have applied for Jump Start.
 - CampusBase: Transferring data to a Canadian server: all data will be in Canada.
- *Eshana's update:*
 - Still pushing for mandating vaccines in student residences.
 - Cole and I met Santa Ono this morning about messaging about the return to campus.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:46 pm.

