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 Shoaiib (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:
  o The Finance Committee has been talking about cuts in small items.
  o Questions about cutting advertising and promotion; also money for volunteer appreciation.
  o Can everyone cut their budgets?
• Saad:
  o These are cuts of $200-$300.
  o What is Finance Committee hoping to get out of cuts like that?
  o What’s the goal?
• Mary:
  o It’s just something they’d like to see.
• Saad:
  o The Advisory Board told us that little budget cuts are not the thing to focus on.
• Mary:
  o I raised that, but others on the Finance Committee differed.
• Lauren:
  o 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:
  o What areas does Finance Committee want to cut?
• Mary:
  o Staff appreciation, advertising and promotion, Student Council.
  o I’ve told them a lot of these don’t amount to much.
  o They questioned the money for team building and said it would be better put into salaries.

[Eshana arrives.]

• Cole:
  o It’s great to talk of paying people more, but it’s not necessarily coming.
  o Appreciation is good, fun, and not a lot of money: $200 per person per year.
  o Doesn’t make sense to be nit-picking.
  o It should be items of at least $5,000 that we look at.
• Keith:
  o I agree with Cole.
  o I’m in favour of paying people more, but it can’t happen quickly; it’s not imminent.
• Lorris:
  o Was anything in Services mentioned?
• Mary:
  o I don’t think there were comments about Services, except to ask, Are they tracking their finances?
• Lorris:
  o Good question. Mitchell has created a tracking process for us, so we’ve been more diligent in tracking this year.
• Mary:
  o They don’t want you to underspend.
• Saad:
  o Our student staff work very hard, so the notion of cutting appreciation is completely wrong.
• Lauren:
  o Some student staff work overtime, and there’s emotional labour and stress.
  o I’m in favour of staff appreciation.
• Cole:
  o 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:
  o Whether we change the name or not, we could set things up so it’s more like a collaboration.
• Cole:
  o There’s a problem that we’re trying to solve.
  o There’s a sense of AMS and AMS Events being different, separate.
  o It’s not a collaboration between the AMS and AMS Events.
  o AMS Events is just one platform the AMS presents information through.
  o That’s why a new name could be valuable.
• Saad:
  o Maybe a name change could be a good idea.
  o AMS Social.
• Rish:
  o We could look at other student unions.
  o 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.
  o Even if we change the name, we still have to compete; there’s still an issue.
  o We can’t stick completely to the brand.
• Cole:
  o 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.
  o AMS Events would still do actual events.
  o Or is there a way to create a brand that incorporates AMS but allows difference.
  o AMS Events would not necessarily be the same as the AMS brand, but it would still be seen as AMS.
  o Look at UBC: UBC Life doesn’t follow UBC core guidelines strictly, but you can still tell that it’s UBC.
• Eric:
  o I agree we have to compete, but there are lots of ways to do that.
  o Events has lots of Instagram followers because of great content.
  o We don’t want to change that, just allow them to broaden their scope.
• Sheldon:
  o Historically, Events has changed its name before.
  o It originally was called Programs, then changed to Events 20 years ago.
• Cole:
  o No unanimous direction, but people seem partial to AMS Social.
  o Let Rish and Eric work with Keith on this.
  o 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.
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- 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.