



Agenda of the AMS Governance Committee

(Agenda for June 30th, 2021 Meeting at 8pm | [Zoom](#))

Attendance

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

Regrets: Kyle Gough (student at large)

Guests:

Recording Secretary: Kamil Kanji

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:02pm.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Approval of the Agenda

Moved: Jason Seconded: Saad

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be adopted.”



Agenda Items

Note: Minutes of June 9 and 16 were approved by email vote on June 16.

1. Remote Council Attendance

Katherine: For those not at the last council meeting there were improvements suggested for the last 3 clauses that had to do with email votes. Non-voting members may not be able to raise concerns with email votes like they would at a meeting. One possibility is to make it so that email votes have to be sent to non-voting members and if they do have a concern that still is an objection that would make the item have to be brought up in council.

Everyone: Agree

Katherine: Another point brought up was making council more accessible to people who live far away or have a physical disability while still ensuring councilors stay engaged

Saad: Does this still apply to people online at hybrid meetings

Sheldon: May be different from post-pandemic

Katherine: Could explicitly list more reasons for allowing online attendance

Jason: That's a good suggestion. We could also look at the people who can't attend submitting a written statement that the Chair could read out.

Sheldon: Can add to the amendments that the Chair should allow virtual attendance for those with physical disabilities.

Jason: Lets also include written statements.

Romina: For clarity, written statements would apply for those who would miss multiple council meetings in-person long term but not for those who would miss 1 or 2, correct?

Jason: Correct.



Sheldon: We could make the code broader but we still need some more clarity.

Saad: It should be up to the Chairs discretion for allowing people to attend council meetings virtually. In terms of caps of the number of meetings missed, that should be up to the Chairs discretion because if we place a cap that may be inaccessible as well.

Katherine: Agreed. A reasonable speaker should approve request for remote attendance due to disability.

Saad: Yes current Chair is great but we may have a different chair in the future so we should have a secondary way to appeal the decision of the Chair.

Romina: Agreed. Maybe that would mean council would review the appeal?

Sheldon: If the Chair makes a ruling then currently in Council, Council can overturn the Chairs ruling if it is challenged. However, this issue would occur before the meeting. But we could still move this way where a counselor could appeal to council if the decision is made before a council meeting.

Saad: What about the Chair or Clerk of Council? Can they approve absence from an in-person meeting?

Sheldon: I see two problems. What if the two disagree? And secondly I don't really want to do that.

Jason: I like the idea of challenging the chairs ruling but I see an issue with the onus being on the person who has been ruled against.

Rebecca: I don't know if the councilor making the appeal would be comfortable enough in revealing their private matters to all of council.

Saad: What if the primary is the Speaker, the second is the Chair of HR and the tiebreaker is the President. The person wanting to miss a meeting would ask the Speaker first, then if they say no then to the HR Chair, if they say yes then the President breaks that tie.



Romina: As Chair of HR I agree.

Katherine: We also need to address the concern from Council of types of items that can go to an email vote. Minor things such as minutes approval could go to email vote but what about things like big code changes?

Saad: Defining big things is quite difficult as there are so many big decisions. I think BoG has some wording on this. Maybe Sheldon has some insight?

Sheldon: BoG does this and I wonder if they have rules limiting scope? Or rules in general? I think the BoG conducts business outside their regular meetings but what does that look like? Are we adding the word disability into code as a reason as to why the Chair might grant absence?

Romina: I would think disability is a good word to keep it broad but would it have to be diagnosed?

Sheldon: What we passed last time said good reasons such as illness, personal emergency or other reasons. Should we add disability?

Jason: I worry if we add disability then we would have to specify every possible reason for an excuse.

Agreement

Katherine: Big or small issues in email votes is a complicated issue and I think we can leave it as is since anyone can cause something to be brought to a meeting instead. One thing we should alter is the amount of time for the email vote. We should give people more time. I suggest 2 business days.

Everyone: Agreed.

Saad: These are the items not included in BoG's email votes: matters that concern any strategic plan of the organization, matters of appointment; matters of advocacy; matters of human resources, matters of risk management, matters of financial management, matters of policy changes that's what I came up with when reading the BoG manual



Katherine: That seems quite broad and someone would still have to interpret it.

Agreement

Katherine: We will aim to vote on these changes next meeting. I will move to the second agenda item if there are no remaining comments.

2. Campus Safety Vision Statement

Katherine: Sheldon brought this up but we found out that the Safety Vision Statement is now under the jurisdiction of the Advocacy committee (previously fell under Governance committee). This item is not something we need to discuss, but I have let the advocacy chair know of it since it's overdue for review

3. External Policy Guidelines Discussion

Saad: Without a policy advisor a policy manual is pretty much useless as there is no one to maintain this manual. This should be something managed by an advisor, I don't even think as VP External I am qualified to do that. Discussions about the external policy manual should only occur after we have a policy advisor.

Sheldon: We have the section of code that says we should have external policy guidelines but not the guidelines of the manual itself. Many years ago when we had a policy advisor he said we should have guidelines that demonstrate how to create external guidelines. These were soon forgotten but we did put in code that we should follow those guidelines. But we haven't followed these guidelines in a very long time so I was thinking do we need to say this in code that we need to follow external policy guidelines? Or do we wait for a policy advisor?

Saad: When the VP External and VP AUA create new external policies you have to consult with an X amount of people before you go through with it. It's pretty much already that we need to follow those guidelines. A policy advisor really needs to maintain these guidelines in order to carry forward knowledge. I think a code suspension might be in order.



Sheldon: We also don't have to do anything. I just thought if we weren't using it we could just cut it out but there is no urgency as it has been sitting there for a while. We could just wait until we have a policy advisor. I brought it up just because last year the Advocacy Committee discussed it. You might want to check with the Advocacy Chair.

Katherine: I have emailed Eshana about it

4. Fees in Code Discussion

Katherine: The fees themselves are written in code which can be confusing as they change every year and aren't updated. We may want to remove the numbers. Students probably don't read Code to look at fee amounts.

Saad: If we want to keep fees mentioned in Code then we can just remove the number but we should continue to indicate that the fees are based on a certain year's referendum. But taking out the prices definitely needs to happen.

Sheldon: Yes but are we going to depend on the university (where fees can be seen) to tell students how much they are going to pay us.

Katherine: Maybe we can refer to a fee document in code and designate someone responsible for updating every year.

Sheldon: That might be Mary but I can also just leave in what the committee suggested or remove it. At the time Code was written it was not foreseen that the prices could change but they change now every year.

Katherine: Keeping the referendum year is helpful. I will talk to Mary or Keith about adding a responsibility for updating the fees in some of their documents. Any other comments on fees? Next meeting we will vote on remote council attendance and fees, possibly have updates from advocacy committee, and decide who will update the fees.



Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be on July 7th at 8pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47pm.