



Agenda of the AMS Governance Committee

(Agenda for July 5th, 2021 Meeting at 8pm | [Zoom](#))

Attendance

Present: Katherine Feng, Rebecca Liu, Saad Shoaib, Kyle Gough, Romina, Sheldon Goldfarb

Regrets: Kamil Kanji

Guests: Cole Evans

Recording Secretary: Rebecca Liu

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:03pm.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Approval of the Agenda

Moved: Saad Seconded: Katherine

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be adopted.”

Agenda Items

1. Code Change: Remote Council Attendance

- a. Cole: The wording of this amendment is convoluted. Perhaps more thought could be put into the administrative work.
- b. Katherine: Not absolutely needed to have an appeal process, but if someone has a valid reason it would be nice to have that system.
- c. Saad: Would it be the president that decides the verdict on remote attendance?
- d. Cole: What is a scenario where someone would be denied to attend remotely? Would like to see as few as possible scenarios of that happening. We don't want students to feel like they have to come up with excuses.
- e. Saad: What happens when there is a chair in the future that is more strict? In favour of the president permitting remote attendance.
- f. Cole: Of the committees, they have a chair responsible for keeping members accountable. The speaker of council is the chair of council but they are not equipped to be that individual at council. Solution: make the president the chair of the council. If we are not ready to do that, we can revisit later in the year. Maybe simply giving a reason to the chair is enough for approval, and an abiding but honour system.
- g. Jason: Understands that our code change is complex, but we added the clause in the case someone is missing multiple meetings or cannot attend due to disabilities/location inaccessibility.
- h. Cole: Speaker is here to interpret code, might not be within their responsibilities to make a decision. Is this approval and denial thing necessary? Maybe we can create a system where if one does not make an effort to provide a note we can remove them from council. Make things more passive than actively enforced.
- i. Jason: Rather than checking validity, then would it be more taking it at "face-value"?
- j. Cole: Yes! More of an administrative thing. If one does not provide reason for X number of councils, they cannot attend.
- k. Jason: If complexity is the issue, I think this would be equally as complex.
- l. Katherine: I reached out and Neal is okay with making these decisions. It is not a major decision for the chair to make. (Shared Neal's comments)
- m. Saad: Understand's Cole's recommendation; we can define what an administrator of council is and use that in the code change.

- n. Kyle: Agrees with Saad. I felt like the appeal process was irrelevant, because if the chair of HR opposes it goes to the President so the President decides anyway and the system doesn't make much sense. That step may not be needed.
- o. Sheldon: If the chair of the meeting makes a decision, someone can appeal and the council will vote.
- p. Cole: To what extent are we going to require people to be in person? Do we want to be strict or lax? (ie. if we are strict then we need someone to make a ruling, but if we decide that attendance is what we are looking for then all we need is an approval process)
- q. Katherine: Virtual engagement is generally low so we were trying to encourage more in person attendance.
- r. Saad: A realistic target is 2/3rds of council in person until the end of the fiscal year.
- s. Cole: To balance things, we could say that people have to let us know if they are attending remotely, 5 days prior to council. We are trying to prevent people from flaking on in person council. If it is under a certain number of days, we could require it to be a medical or emergency related reason. Who is determining if it is okay, and can we remove this appeal process? If you appeal, then you have to publicly talk about why.
- t. Saad: You would also have to come to council for you to appeal it (still counts as a missed meeting). Getting rid of the appeals process, removal of B and adding that an administrator of council shall permit remote attendance for good reason and add a stipulation on how many in-person council meetings they can miss.
- u. Sheldon: We could do an online appeal. Or do what Cole says and let anyone attend remotely.
- v. Saad & Jason: People would not attend. (Katherine agrees.)
- w. Cole: We may have to employ one extreme or the other (in-person or not.)
- x. Katherine: Remote attendance system in general would be good for students at large. We could give people a quota for online meetings, and if they have a specific reason then they can be granted an exception from that quota.
- y. Rebecca: In support of this option.
- z. Katherine: If we do do this, we should also fix the problem that Kyle has brought up.

- aa. Cole: Yeah! Quotas are easy to track, and still say that you must provide a reason. One must email the president and if they do not approve, then the speaker of council can have the final say.
- bb. Jason: One concern is that it is very difficult in unexpected/extenuating circumstances to enforce or justify a quota like during the pandemic.
- cc. Katherine: Could we have a temporary piece of code?
- dd. Sheldon: Section 42 exists, but we can make a code change and change it later.
- ee. Katherine: If we know what we want then we can just say it starts at a later date.
- ff. Cole: We should probably delay this until a later time, around Oct-Jan-ish.
- gg. Katherine: Does the system of sending a request/getting approval without quotas work for the meantime?
- hh. Cole: We could choose to not present this change until later, when a code change is needed.
- ii. Katherine: Not sure if that works, because of the code changes we made last Council meeting.
- jj. Sheldon: Seconds this.
- kk. Katherine: Fix 41 E. leave things as is until we need further changes. (ie. quotas etc.) What should we do to fix the error that Kyle brought up?
- ll. Saad: Would it be the president granting the request?
- mm. Katherine: It would be just the speaker.
- nn. Saad: If the chair denies, then they can make an appeal to the president.
- oo. Cole: The president as the chair, speaker is the power check.

Of the draft changes:

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Governance Committee amends Section 41(a)(b) for the President to be given the authority to permit remote attendance and (e) be amended to "if in accordance with paragraph (b) above, the President denies a request for remote attendance, the Council member so denied may appeal to the Speaker of Council".

Of the amended draft:

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Code changes relating to remote Council attendance and digital voting are approved and recommended to Council as presented”

Moved: Saad

Seconded: Kyle

This motion passed unanimously

2. Code Change: Fees in Code

- a. Katherine: Governance discussed this prior. Why did we keep it?
- b. Sheldon: Can't remember, but they kept the out of date information.
- c. Cole: Committee says that it doesn't hurt anybody, but is in favour of getting rid of it.
- d. Katherine: I emailed the VP finance and she is okay with the responsibility of putting all the fees on the website.

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Code changes relating to fees in Code are approved and recommended to Council as presented”

Moved: Saad Seconded: Romina

3. Internal Policy for Committee Review Discussion

- a. Sheldon: Shared motion from council years ago. We had created the current council system, and wanted to revisit this. The idea was that, every few years, the governance committee could review, but nothing ever came of this.
- b. Cole: In support of this idea, but bi-annual may be too often because we add new committees and responsibilities often. The senate does a triennial review and it could be valuable to do something similar to review governance is structured well/identify issues. We could review every 5 years to clean up governance. We are due for a review now anyways (last one was in 2016.) We will have to figure out the parameters of this review.
- c. Katherine: Agrees that 2 years is very quick.
- d. Saad: Seconds. At a certain point committees stop adapting, so having a review is important. The scope of the review should be something that this committee decides.
- e. Sheldon: Ava was pushing for these reviews to be similar to what we do for policies.
- f. Cole: Assign a central lead for this project and work on this with staff, not just the governance committee. We can then present proposals at the end of the year. Dana would be able to work on/coordinate this joint effort. Sheldon, committee chairs, president's office, HR would all be involved.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be on July 14th at 8pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59pm.