



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

AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of October 7, 2021

Attendance

Present: Cole Evans (President), Mary Gan (VP Finance), Saad Shoaib (VP External), Lauren Benson (VP Administration, left 10:45), Mitchell Prost (Student Services Manager), Lorris Leung (Senior Student Services Manager), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Regrets: Eshana Bhangu (VP Academic & University Affairs)

Recording Secretary: Sheldon Goldfarb

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 9:25 am and took place in person (in Nest Room 3529).

Agenda

- The agenda was adopted (Saad, Lauren).

Minutes

- The minutes of September 22 and September 29 were approved (Lauren, Saad).

Financial Report

- Keith:
 - We did quite well financially despite it being a horrible year last year.
 - We have assets of \$125 million (mostly from the Nest lease) and liabilities of \$88 million (mostly from the Nest building loan), for a net of \$37 million.
 - Our liabilities also include money we have to pay to our Clubs and Constituencies; also the capital contribution from UBC to the building of the Nest.
 - We had a surplus last year of \$5.58 million, the highest in our history.
 - This was mostly because Health and Dental fees were under-utilized:
 - Our Health & Dental Plan follows the refund accounting model.
 - If premiums are not used, we get money back.
 - We also made money (\$2 million) from the government wage subsidy.
 - And the equity market went gangbusters: we made good investment income, but it was unrealized (because we didn't sell our investments) and it's mostly gone now.

- The businesses under-performed; many were closed or just open as a service, not to make money: we lost money on those.
- Our funds were under-utilized:
 - Clubs were not active.
 - The Capital Projects Fund was not as much used.
- Bad news is that there's still a deficit.
- It dates back to before 2016 and jumped to \$5 million when we renovated the Life Building, which we had to finance ourselves (the fee for building the Nest did not apply to it).
- We also lost money operationally in 2020 because of COVID.
- In 2021 we made a surplus because of investments and under-spending.
- The overall deficit now is \$3.9 million; it is going down, but the surplus did not eliminate it, because it stays in the relevant funds: e.g., the Health & Dental fund keeps its part of the surplus.
- Cole:
 - That \$5 million surplus looks super huge.
 - We will need to explain the nuances.
 - The investments performed well: that's the main reason, along with the Health & Dental surplus.
 - People will say we were projecting a loss and they'll wonder what happened.
- Keith:
 - There's the mental health subsidy we're looking into; we also need to look at the Health & Dental benefits.
- Cole:
 - We're still giving the \$1,000 psychology benefit?
- Keith:
 - Yes, and we've doubled the amount available for Health & Dental subsidies from \$50,000 to \$100,000.
- Mary:
 - Studentcare is talking about additional services:
 - Legal
 - Digital teleconsultation for health care:
 - Could look into piloting this to see if it works.
 - You would be able to speak to a doctor online.
- Keith:
 - The legal service came up before.
- Mary:
 - Both would be opt-outable.
 - But if we're able to do the pilot by just charging the reserve fund, then we could add an opt-outable fee later.
 - I think lots of students might appreciate a service like this for \$30 a year.

- That's the way to use up the surplus in the fund.
- Keith:
 - The deficit decreased by \$264,789 last year because of the unrealized gain on investments, decreased spending, and the wage subsidy.
 - The deficit repayment plan (for the remaining \$3.982 million):
 - To be repaid from excess business contributions starting in 2023.
 - We're still experiencing COVID effects, for instance on conferences: there have been cancellations because of international travel problems.
 - The plan is to reduce the deficit to zero over four years.
 - Meanwhile we have a debt of \$55.762 million.
 - Originally we were paying interest of 5.75%, but we refinanced and started paying 3.2% on \$70 million (which was up from the original \$68 million because the building went over budget).
 - As of 2018, we've been paying more back per year: paying more of the capital and less interest.
 - We're now paying \$3 million a year, and it will take us another 14 years to repay the loan.
- Saad:
 - Is our deficit something to be concerned about? Is it bad?
- Keith:
 - We can't just keep increasing our deficit.
 - The bank and UBC could say we were not financially healthy.
 - The University could cease to recognize us and withhold our fees.
 - The bank could call in their loan, close our accounts, not give us credit cards, etc.
- Cole:
 - We should be proactive about developing a spending plan.
 - We have lots of money in our funds.
 - We're going to work on ways to spend it.
 - With some funds there's difficulty getting money out.
 - Part of the issue is how to manage funds.
 - The other issue is a fund restructure. Some funds may not need such a large fee.
 - We should develop a proposal to send to Council.
 - Maybe we should ask Council to pass a motion referring the issue to the Executive and the Finance Committee: how to spend the money in the funds.
- Mary:
 - Club recovery benefits.
- Lauren:
 - Yes, looking at that.
 - Changing focus: not so much videoconferencing as PPE and debt, getting clubs back on their feet.
- Keith:
 - From the Clubs Benefit Fund.

I-7A (mask policy)

- Lauren:
 - A couple of fitness clubs are asking about requiring masks during workouts.
 - The Provincial Health Order doesn't require them, but our policy does.
 - It's up to us; we could continue to require masks, but the fitness clubs would prefer not to.
- Saad:
 - We should support them, but they should ensure other measures like social distancing are in place.
- Lauren:
 - Council could amend the policy to say we're going to follow whatever the PHO says.
- Cole:
 - That would be the same as getting rid of I-7A.
 - But we had a mask requirement even when the PHO said no.
 - We could just make an addition to create an exception for high-intensity and low-intensity workouts in the building:
 - Participants would not be required to wear masks as long as social distancing and other safety measures are in place.

Executive and Services Updates

- *Lauren's update:*
 - Vaccine communication to clubs.
 - Carbon Offsetters meeting.
 - Clubs & Societies working group starting up to approve new club applications.

[Lauren leaves.]

Mission Statement

- Saad:
 - The AMS Mission Statement doesn't mention our affiliates.
 - It says we're to improve the lives of the students of UBC, but doesn't include the students at Regent, VST, etc.
 - We could make a small addition.
 - I spoke to the VST rep, who really liked the idea.
- Cole:
 - Do we want to wait till the constitutional change?
- Saad:
 - We can do it anyway.
 - It's just a Council motion.

- Keith:
 - What about saying something about the Musqueam?
- Cole:
 - If we're going to open up the Mission Statement, we should look at other aspects of it.
 - We could tell Council we're looking at the Mission Statement.
 - Maybe that could be part of the Strategic Plan process.

Managing Director's Update

- Keith:
 - Interviewing for the HR Manager position, but not going that well yet. More interviews tomorrow. May need to use a recruitment agency.
 - Going to Finance Committee about getting an espresso machine for Blue Chip Express.
 - Going to do a review of compensation through Dayforce.
 - Conferences and Catering Senior Manager (Christine) is back from maternity leave and her return is going well.
 - There's a new union rep and we don't have an HR Manager, so collective bargaining is being delayed.
 - Gallery furniture.
 - Financial system replacement.

Executive and Services Updates (continued)

- *Mary's update*
 - Fee opt-outs done.
 - Montreal visit to Studentcare: ideas for Health & Dental.
 - Hiring.
 - Finance Committee starting soon.
- *Saad's update:*
 - SUDS:
 - Sending out email, need volunteers.
 - Waiting on confirmation for one speaker.
 - David Suzuki to do a livestream presentation.
 - 104 delegates.
 - Will be transporting them from their hotel to campus by bus shuttles.
 - Using the Pit and the Gallery, extending Nest hours.
 - UCRU lobby week on financial aid, removal of interest on student loans, grants, mental health, international student support.

- *Lorris's update:*
 - Safewalk moving away from its current software; looking at a new process.
 - Food Bank hiring an assistant coordinator.
 - Peer Support:
 - Workshops, training on overdoses and Naloxone.
 - Dialogue nights.
 - Advocacy moving away from current software.
 - Tutoring is seeing success in its group sessions.
 - Housing has been running in-person support sessions out of the Safewalk office, and will be receiving physical marketing materials soon to increase visibility.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 am.