



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

AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of November 9, 2021

Attendance

Present: Cole Evans (President), Eshana Bhangu (VP Academic & University Affairs, left 12:35), Mary Gan (VP Finance), Lauren Benson (VP Administration, left 1 pm; returned at 1:25), Saad Shoaib (VP External), Lorris Leung (Senior Student Services Manager), Mitchell Prost (Student Services Manager), Keith Hester (Managing Director), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Recording Secretary: Sheldon Goldfarb

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm in Nest Room 3511.

Agenda

- The agenda was adopted (Eshana, Lauren).

Minutes

- Approval of the minutes of November 3 was deferred.

Employee Vaccination Mandate

- Cole:
 - The consensus is to keep working towards this.
 - A good first step might be an anonymous self-declaration.
 - We can send a survey to the employees, asking them their department and whether they've been vaccinated.
 - We can collect data and assess the environment.
 - If 99% are vaccinated, good. If only 70%, a concern.
 - This would be a voluntary declaration with no personal identifiers.
 - We won't be storing information, just the number of declarations.
 - Talking to the unions; if they're on board, it's easier.
 - If not, then an interesting conversation.
- Keith:
 - Before we talk to the unions, we need a policy.
- Saad:
 - We can draft a policy based on the results of the survey.
- Eshana:
 - The survey will tell us if we even need a policy.

- Keith:
 - What is the purpose of asking the employee's department?
 - It can identify the employee.
- Saad:
 - Why not remove the department question?
- Eshana:
 - There are no consequences to responding.
 - This is just to give us an idea of the percentage who are vaccinated.
 - It's just a survey.
 - We're not collecting personal information.
- Keith:
 - If only 200 respond, what about the other 200?
- Lauren:
 - It will probably give peace of mind to employees.
- Cole:
 - If there are concerns about a survey, what is the alternative?
 - Make the policy first? Talk to the union?
- Keith:
 - Introduce rapid testing.
 - All staff will have to get rapid testing.
- Cole:
 - All?
 - Even those who are vaccinated?
- Eshana:
 - The government has given us the authority to mandate vaccination.
- Saad:
 - No, it's more an open area.
- Cole:
 - Banks have introduced vaccine mandates, with the alternative of rapid testing.
 - There is precedent to set vaccine requirements.
 - I've never heard of a private company ordering rapid testing, except the NHL.
- Eshana:
 - Why not do the survey?
- Keith:
 - We need a policy first, before we go to the unions.
- Cole:
 - It'd be an HR policy.
- Eshana:
 - Council has made it clear they want movement.
 - I'm concerned that there's no movement.
 - Cole could put together a survey.

- Keith:
 - The Executive does not have expertise in HR.
 - It's a bad idea.
- Eshana:
 - There's no harm in doing a survey.
- Lauren:
 - We could just start with the student staff to show we're doing something.
- Mary:
 - UBC's policy is to declare you've been vaccinated or do rapid testing.
- Lauren:
 - We want to set an example.
- Lorris:
 - Make it clear it's for information purposes only.
 - Maybe talk to the other senior managers.
- Keith:
 - The consensus among the senior managers is that this is a terrible idea.
- Cole:
 - We want to make sure everyone is as comfortable as possible.
 - It's difficult for the Executive:
 - We're getting pressure from above, from Council and the students, to do this.
 - Then there's pressure from below saying don't do it.
 - We want to make sure not to do something the staff is not comfortable with.
 - Maybe do a draft and then speak to the lawyers about the risks.
 - Maybe the lawyers will help us come up with a solution.
 - Or maybe they'll say there are lots of serious issues to consider, legal threats.
 - We could then show that to Council.
 - I think we can make a vaccine mandate without serious repercussions.
 - We want to make the staff comfortable, but if we don't have managerial buy-in ...
 - First let's go to DLA Piper (the lawyers).
 - Let's work with our legal counsel to make sure everyone is happy and on board.
- Eshana:
 - So you won't send out the survey?
- Cole:
 - Not right away.
 - We'll get DLA to sign off.
- Eshana:
 - We need a legal opinion to run a survey?
 - It's important to get going on this.
- Cole:
 - The intention is to do it, but we're doing our due diligence.

- Eshana:
 - I'm not happy.
- Cole:
 - Not happy with the lack of progress or with going to legal counsel?
- Eshana:
 - I'm not happy with the hesitation to send out a simple survey.
 - It's beyond me why we need a legal opinion to send out a survey.
- Cole:
 - I wouldn't call it hesitation; it's due diligence.
 - If we can make everyone comfortable, that's useful.

[Eshana leaves.]

- Saad:
 - If we're doing a survey, don't ask about departments.
- Cole:
 - DLA can answer that question.
- Keith:
 - This survey will put added stress on employees that's not needed at the moment.
 - Also, we're in a public building, where it's hard to enforce a vaccine mandate.
 - We can require it of the employee selling the coffee, but not of the customer buying it.
- Cole:
 - The point is well-taken; from a risk perspective, it doesn't do much if employees are vaccinated but others are not.
- Lauren:
 - But there's the principle of standing by the vaccine mandate.
- Cole:
 - If we get feedback of legal risk, this will be a question for Council.
- Saad:
 - If we could be sued, we need to tell Council.
- Cole:
 - There are different legal takes on this.
 - It hasn't been ruled on in court.
 - I'll coordinate with DLA.

Business Staffing

- Cole:
 - A few people have left the Gallery, and hours are being reduced.
 - Can we have an update?

- Keith:
 - There's a knock-on effect.
 - We've had trouble finding culinary staff.
 - It's not just us; it's the marketplace: people don't want to do this anymore.
 - Had to cut down hours.
 - The bar people are not getting evening hours, which meant a loss of gratuities.
 - That's why they left.
 - The fraternities frequent the Gallery on Friday, so we're going to open the Pit on Fridays.
 - It's a liquor primary outlet, so it's easier to open than the Gallery.
 - Additional compensation is another suggestion: we're doing a market review.
- Cole:
 - Some employees say tips here are below industry average: students tip less.
 - Maybe 8% instead of 15.
 - Maybe increasing compensation is something to consider.
 - I don't think they're leaving because of bad blood.
 - It's just that people were burned out and ready to move on.
- Saad:
 - Maybe we need a survey to gauge concerns; it would be good to engage.
- Lauren:
 - I second the survey idea.
 - A lot of people like to go to the Gallery in the evening, from 4 to 8:30.
 - At lunch it's empty, but it's packed in the evening.
 - Could we open later and end later?
- Keith:
 - People want to work 9-5.
- Mary:
 - How can we increase compensation when we're in deficit?
- Saad:
 - What if we were to increase prices at the Gallery by an amount that covered wage increases?
 - Example could be increasing prices by a dollar to increase salaries by a dollar
- Keith:
 - You'd have to change other salaries too; there's a Tier system.
 - Salaries went up in June and will go up again next June.
 - It's not just minimum wage; we're doing increases every year above that.
 - The only way to increase wages more would be to increase student fees, but we don't want to do that.
 - Currently no fees go to the businesses; businesses pay for themselves.
- Saad:
 - How do we stay competitive?

- Mary:
 - Execs need to cut their budgets.
 - If they did, then we could increase wages.
- Keith:
 - But then you'd be using student fees to pay the businesses.
- Saad:
 - There's no way to increase salaries?
- Keith:
 - We did put wages up 50 cents an hour in June.
- Mary:
 - If we increase more, we'll have problems down the road.
- Saad:
 - We're losing employees to other businesses.
 - What will HR's response be?
- Mary:
 - We have a deficit.

Executive Updates

- *Lauren's update:*
 - Exhibit at Hatch Art Gallery.
 - Thingery.
 - ISC promo videos.
 - Nest reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2022.

[Lauren leaves.]

Global Fund

- Mary:
 - Money in the AMS International Projects Fund goes to UBC's Go Global.
- Lorris:
 - We'd like to use money from it to provide culturally diverse food at Food Bank.
 - But it may not be part of the mandate of the fund.
 - Also SASC wants to run a cultural event to target immigrant students.
 - Can we use the fund?
- Mary:
 - Code says: "In accordance with the referendum of March 2011, the Fund shall be used to finance student projects on the UBC Vancouver campus that have an international focus."
 - The referendum said the fund would be: "A fund in collaboration with UBC to support student projects on campus with an international focus. These projects would

include conferences, speakers or events that promote global dialogue and understanding at UBC.”

- Cole:
 - This is a student project.
 - If it’s meant for students, it’s a student project.
 - We can send it to Council.
 - Bring it to the next Executive.

[Lauren returns.]

Managing Director’s Update

- Keith:
 - Q2 report.
 - All-Staff Meeting on November 23.
 - Working on budget for 2022-23.
 - Pie R Squared:
 - Difficulty finding staff for it.
 - Thinking of closing it and converting it to a brewery.
- Cole:
 - Would that not mean we’d be competing with ourselves?
 - There’s a lot of alcohol in the Nest.
- Keith:
 - Output would go to the Gallery and Pit.
 - There would also be a tasting room.
- Saad:
 - I like the brewery idea.
- Cole:
 - I’m skeptical about whether there could be a successful business model.
 - Would want to see a business plan.
 - Our student experience survey is asking about food in the building.
 - But if we’re doing this, it should be done soon:
 - It will affect whether we ask a brewery question in the referendum.
 - I’m not opposed to closing Pie R; there’s so much pizza in the area.
 - But I’m not sure about a brewery.
- Lauren:
 - How about a pasta place?
- Sheldon:
 - We used to have a pasta place called Tortellini’s.
- Cole:
 - I need to see numbers about a brewery.

Executive Updates II

- *Saad's update:*
 - AMS-GSS Provincial Lobby Week in January.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:32 pm.