Goal 1: Transparency and Accountability

*Be more transparent and accountable.*

**Action Item 1:** Work with AMS Communications to ensure that quarterly updates are being posted on the AMS’ social media accounts with regards to the operations and advocacy of the Office of External Affairs.

- **IN PROCESS/COMPLETED:** The AMS Office of External Affairs has been working towards ensuring that the work that we do is being made known to students via social media. On November 10, we released a comprehensive update on what we have been working on covering our work on the 2021 federal election, Skytrain-to-UBC, provincial advocacy, U-Pass exemptions & subsidies, and international student support. Among other things, these are the key areas which we have seen significant wins in as a result of student advocacy.

**Action Item 2:** In coordination with the Vice-President, Academic and University Affairs host at least one (1) townhall where students can engage with the AMS’ advocacy and voice their concerns.

- **IN PROCESS:** We are currently working with the Vice-President, Academic and University Affairs and the UBC Graduate Student Society on organizing an advocacy town hall in Spring 2022 where students would be able to actively engage and consult on advocacy initiatives taken up by the AMS while also learning about the AMS’ lobbying efforts to the university and all levels of government.

Goal 2: Housing Affordability and Tenancy Rights

*More affordable housing and more rights.*

**Action Item 1:** Continue to work in coordination with student unions from across the province on the Leading Practices Subcommittee to ensure that student housing providers are conferring rights on student tenants.

- **COMPLETED:** We have resumed our work with the Leading Practices Subcommittee in partnership with institutional and student union partners from across the province. The Subcommittee has published its first draft for consultation by the wider population of institutional and student union partners. The draft manual covers the following areas of tenancy rights which are to be included in contracts between student housing providers and student tenants: rights and responsibilities, termination(s) of student housing agreements, procedural fairness in the appeals process, reporting issue, maintenance disruptions, housing unit moves, student housing rental increases, and contract dates.
**Action Item 2:** Commission a campaign in Fall 2021 conducting outreach and engagement for a potential AMS co-op housing project.

- **IN PROCESS:** The AMS Office of External Affairs continues to work with UTILE, a student housing development and research organization based out of Quebec, on the creation of non-profit student housing built by the AMS. After commissioning a feasibility study in 2020, the AMS and UTILE have finalized the study which proves that non-profit student housing built by the AMS is possible. As a result, the AMS will be taking this feasibility study public in the form of an outreach, engagement, and awareness campaign to highlight the project along with the clear benefits that non-profit student housing has on the student population.

**Action Item 3:** Include recommendations in the AMS’ BC Budget 2022 Consultation Submission for increased funding towards non-profit student housing initiatives.

- **REDIRECTED:** Upon consultation with the appropriate ministries and provincial officials, establishing/increasing funding for non-profit student housing initiatives has already been done. In April 2021, the provincial government announced a $2 billion investment into affordable housing through BC Housing’s HousingHub initiative. After meeting with the appropriate officials to scope the possibility of this financing being used towards non-profit student housing initiatives, it was determined that a recommendation on funding towards non-profit student housing initiatives would be redundant.

**Action Item 4:** Include recommendations in the AMS’ BC Budget 2022 Consultation Submission for the renewal of financing options for student housing providers to ensure the creation of student housing.

- **REDIRECTED:** After further discussions with officials from the Student Housing Working Group, the provincial government, and UBC, the aforementioned financing options are currently not fully exhausted as the financial mandate was to build 5,000 beds; however, that target has not been met yet. As a result, the provincial government will continue to finance student housing projects until the objective of 5,000 beds is met.

**Goal 3: Student Financial Aid**

*An equitable and affordable post-secondary education.*

**Action Item 1:** In coordination with UCRU’s advocacy objectives, ensure the inclusion of advocacy around the removal of interest rates on federal student loans in UCRU’s federal advocacy goals for the year of 2021/22.

- **COMPLETED:** With the AMS playing a large role in UCRU’s advocacy goals setting process, we successfully pushed for the inclusion of advocacy around the permanent
removal of interest rates on federal student loans. As it stands, this is one of the key goals for UCRU's federal advocacy. Recommendations around the permanent removal of interest rates were included in UCRU's Pre-Budget 2022 Consultation Submission and were also included in lobby meetings with all federal political parties. The Liberal Party of Canada and the New Democratic Party adopted UCRU's recommendations into their platform and solidified their commitment to permanently eliminate interest rates on federal student loans. Two other key commitments around student financial aid also came from the 2021 Federal Election: permanent per student increases to the Canada Student Grants and increases to the Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP) threshold from $30,000 to $50,000 meaning that no student will have to repay their student loan until they earn $50,000 or more a year.

**Action Item 2:** Include recommendations to the provincial government, in coordination with the Graduate Student Society (GSS), as a part of the AMS-GSS Lobby Week for increased investments towards the BC Access Grant and the inclusion of graduate students in the needs-based grant.

- **IN PROCESS:** As a part of the 2022 AMS-GSS Provincial Lobby Week, we will be pushing the provincial government on four key priorities: student financial aid, sexual violence prevention, graduate student support, and mental health. Specifically on the priority of student financial aid, we will be lobbying the provincial government to increase investments towards the BC Access Grant in acknowledging that the mandate of funding ($24 million to support 40,000) should be increased to support a higher number of students.

**Action Item 3:** Partner with the GSS to make certain that the BC Graduate Scholarship is expanded to non-STEM disciplines through continuous submissions to the Ministry of Advanced Education throughout this year.

- **IN PROCESS:** In our joint meetings with the Ministry of Advanced Education and earlier budgetary meetings, it was discovered that the BC Graduate Scholarship, on a case-by-case basis, already provides funding to non-STEM graduate students. However, it is essential that the Ministry of Advanced Education officializes this mandate and ensures that non-STEM graduate students are able to access the funding opportunity offered by the BC Graduate Scholarship. As a result, the AMS-GSS Provincial Lobby Week will include recommendations around officially expanding the BC Graduate Scholarship to non-STEM disciplines.

**GOAL 4: International Student Support**

*Stronger support for international students*
**Action Item 1:** Continue to meet with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills, and Training with regards to the Minister’s mandate on “strengthening the tuition limit policy” while meeting with student unions from across BC to clarify the provincial government’s commitment with regards to international post-secondary students.

- **IN PROCESS:** We continue to meet with the Ministry of Advanced Education in order to finalize a clarification for this specific mandate point. It must be understood that this mandate point is best taken in combination with the Ministry’s commitment around conducting a review of post-secondary operating grants as both mandate points directly impact the tuition revenue post-secondary institutions receive. The latter ministerial mandate point is currently being structured by the Ministry.

**Action Item 2:** Work with UCRU throughout Fall 2021 to ensure that international student fast-tracked permanent residency is a priority for the organization in terms of advocacy to the federal government.

- **COMPLETED:** UCRU adopted the AMS’ recommendation to include recommendations around allowing international students to count part-time employment experience towards fast-tracked permanent residency through the Canadian Experience Class (Express Entry) program. We also made recommendations to all political parties during the 2021 Federal Election on ensuring international students were able to count part-time employment experience towards fast-tracked permanent residency. The Liberal Party of Canada adopted UCRU’s recommendation and included it in their platform. UCRU will be lobbying the federal government during its 2022 Federal Lobby Week to ensure that the recommendations are adopted into Budget 2022.

**Goal 5: COVID-19 Recovery**

*A student-centric recovery from this pandemic*

**Action Item 1:** Work with stakeholders at UCRU to develop student employment-centred goals through Fall 2021 to ensure that students are receiving increased employment opportunities through federal programs such as the Canada Summer Jobs, Student Work Placement, and Youth Employment and Skills Strategy programs.

- **IN PROCESS:** UCRU will be including recommendations on increased investments into the above-mentioned student employment programs while also putting a focus on the inclusion of international students in these programs - specifically targeting the development of a specialized skills category for international students.

**Action Item 2:** In coordination with student unions across the province, scope the possibility of a province-wide survey which would be intended to collect data on issues of affordability, accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion by January 1, 2022.
- **IN PROCESS:** While we have begun initial discussions with BC student unions to scope the possibility of such a survey, we are going to be expanding these discussions to a roundtable where we will have to assess the financial contributions needed, the scope of the survey, and the viability of a successful timeline.

**Action Item 3:** Ensure the provincial government continues to prioritize the post-secondary operating grant review by following up with provincial officials regarding the timeline, structure, and scope of the review.

- **IN PROCESS:** We have continued to highlight the importance of releasing the consultation with sector representatives and the provincial government. The provincial government is expected to release the operating grant review to sector representatives within the near future as it is a point solidified on the Ministry of Advanced Education’s mandate letter. We will continue to meet with them to ensure that this is kept a priority.

**Goal 6: Student Safety and Wellness**

*Mental health resources and sexual violence prevention*

**Action Item 1:** Work towards the publishing of a climate action strategic plan on external advocacy by October 15, 2021.

- **COMPLETED:** The AMS BC Budget 2022 Consultation Submission included recommendations to the provincial government to provide increased funding towards sexual violence prevention initiatives in order to supplement subsequent recommendations in support of amending the *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act*. The AMS and GSS will also be including recommendations on the specific amendments in consultation and partnership with prevention professionals as a part of the 2022 AMS-GSS Lobby Week.

**Action Item 2:** Work with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training on improvements to the Here2Talk program and report progress to the AMS Advocacy Committee by January 1, 2022.

- **REDIRECTED:** The AMS, in collaboration with UCRU, UVSS, and ABCS, determined that provincially-administered mental health support programs may not be the best way to approach the improvement of mental health supports for post-secondary students. As a result, the AMS and UCRU are including recommendations around increased and matched funding towards the provinces, through the Canada Health Transfer, to provide post-secondary institutions with earmarked funds for improved mental health supports on post-secondary campuses. The federal recommendations are being made in tandem with
our provincial recommendations which aim to provide post-secondary students with lesser wait-times and culturally competent supports.

**Goal 7: Climate Action**  
*A clean environment for a better tomorrow*

**Action Item 1:** Work towards the publishing of a climate action strategic plan on external advocacy by October 15, 2021.

- **REDIRECTED:** The AMS has determined that such a plan should be expanded to student unions across BC to ensure that we are collaboratively pushing the provincial government towards better climate action. We will be initiating conversations to expand the scope of the plan in mid-January to ensure that we are able to make significant movement on this point before the end of the executive term.

**Action Item 2:** Use the results of the UCRU Climate Survey to determine the direction of federal advocacy on climate action.

- **IN PROCESS:** We have begun decoding the results of the 2020/21 UCRU Climate Survey, which the AMS took part in, to determine the direction of federal advocacy on climate action. We will be coming out with a report on the survey within the next few months as a way of determining the direction of federal advocacy on climate action.

**Goal 8: Transit Solutions**  
*Reducing commute times and adapting to affordability needs*

**Action Item 1:** Continue to meet with the UBC Rapid Transit [team] to determine the scope of advocacy regarding the Skytrain-to-UBC including but not limited to lobbying Translink’s Mayors’ Council.

- **IN PROCESS/COMPLETED:** The AMS Office of External Affairs continues to meet with UBC’s Rapid Transit team as the project progresses. In September 2021, the provincial and federal government committed 80% to the project’s business case as a result of continuous advocacy by the AMS and various other stakeholders. Alongside the relevant stakeholders, we are working towards evaluating what next steps are required in order to further advocacy around the Skytrain-to-UBC.

**Action Item 2:** Work with the UAC throughout the summer to ensure increased exemption limits for the U-Pass for Fall 2021 to make certain that students not able to attend in-person instruction are being given the option to exempt from the program.
Continuing the status quo from last year, the AMS continues to offer students options to exempt from the U-Pass if they reside outside of Metro Vancouver and if they are only taking web-oriented/distance-learning courses. This special exemption will be available to students for Term 2 as well. We have also been working jointly with the Office of the Vice-President, Finance to ensure that students facing financial hardship are able to receive a U-Pass subsidy.

Goal 9: Indigenous Student Support

*Improving access to education for Indigenous students*

**Action Item 1:** Work with Indigenous representatives, students, and staff, to understand the concerns of Indigenous students with regards to provincial and federal student financial aid.

- **IN PROCESS/COMPLETED:** The Office of External Affairs has been working with Indigenous advocates for several projects including the AMS Budget 2022 Consultation Submission where we made recommendations to establish standing funding for the revitalization of Indigenous language programs at post-secondary institutions across BC in acknowledging the scarcity of such programs and in alignment with calls from the Assembly of First Nations. We will continue to work with Indigenous stakeholders to support their advocacy and partner with them on provincial and federal advocacy.

**Action Item 2:** Include Indigenous student representatives as a part of the AMS’ provincial and federal lobby weeks.

- **IN PROCESS:** We are looking to identify Indigenous student representatives who wish to be a part of the AMS’ external advocacy initiatives. The integration and onboarding process, due to the intensity of lobbying, would be quite extensive and so as a result, this is a key item that we will be focusing on prior to our January lobby weeks.

**Action Item 3:** Work alongside the Office of the President and the Vice-President, Academic and University Affairs towards the creation of a formalized partnership process with Indigenous students.

- **IN PROCESS:** We will be working with the Vice-President, Academic and University Affairs on scoping out what an official partnership would look like and how it can be best executed. We will be beginning discussions with the AMS Indigenous Committee to make certain that such a partnership is drawn out before the end of the executive term. We aim to include specific points on advocacy.

Goal 10: Equity-based Grants

*Supporting marginalized communities and students*
**Action Item 1:** Renew the partnership with SEEDS through the AMS-SEEDS Memorandum of Understanding by May 2021.

- **COMPLETED:** The AMS signed and executed the annual Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Summer 2021. A key focus on the MOU was to continue to explore the landscape of equity-based grants while also ensuring that the relationship between the AMS and SEEDS UBC is solidified as the relationship allows for the AMS to commission detailed research used by its advocacy efforts and capital initiatives.

**Action Item 2:** Establish a research program with faculty and students to investigate the financial barriers that students from marginalized backgrounds face when pursuing a post-secondary education.

- **IN PROCESS:** The AMS is currently working with SEEDS to commission a research charter which would set the stage for equity-based grants research continued on from 2020/21. Under the direction of the Associate Vice-President, External Affairs, the AMS will be working with a graduate-level class to execute the final research phase of equity-based grants. This phase will cover interview-based consultations on the impacts that marginalization has on a person's pursuit for a post-secondary education.

**Action Item 2:** Publish a revised policy paper to advocate for the establishment of equity-based grants on a provincial level by April 15, 2022.

- **IN PROCESS:** In order for the policy paper to be completed, the research phases must be completed so as to provide the provincial government with not only quantitative data, but also qualitative data supporting the development and provincially-commissioned research into the viability of equity-based grants.