

Minutes of the AMS Presidents Council

December 2nd, 2021

Attendance

Present: Nina Andrascik (FUS President), Dayle Balmes (SUS President), Chelsea Bian (AUS President), Kelvin Choi (DUS President), Cole Evans (AMS President), Jason Pang (LFSUS President), Tori Rose (MUSA President), Erin Song (VSEUS President), Rachel (ARCHUS President)

Regrets: Annika Szarka (KUS President), Jessie Jeong (ESA President), Emily Reid (EUS President), Grace Lee (CUS President), Kimani Karangu (GSS), Roisin Neary (LSS President), Caitlin Purdome and Megan Cohen (LASSA Co-Presidents), Parker Nann (MUS President), Angela Chen (NUS President), Jeremy (PhUS President), Maren McBride (PSA President), Amy Deutscher (RCSA President), Shadia Qubti (VSTSA President), Sajedeh Zaki (Social Work Student Association of UBC)

Recording Secretary: Emily Covell (Executive Assistant to the AMS President)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:20pm.

2. Territorial Acknowledgement

3. Approval of the Agenda

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.”

4. Approval of Previous Minutes

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the minutes from the November 18th meeting be approved and sent to AMS Council”

5. Constituency Elections

Cole: There was an idea that came up at the AMS governance committee, to standardize when constituency elections are held.

- This was proposed because the AMS is trying to figure out how to conduct faculty/student-senator elections (on UBC senate, each faculty has a student senator). It becomes complicated because historically constituencies have held

elections for them, but with that we run into issues: essentially, some students don't have the same opportunities as others. For example, the applied science senator election is usually run by the EUS, but of course applied science is also many other faculties.

- There were some initial concerns: commerce was the most against it, because they have their elections in January (most do them in March-April timeframe), and engineering had some concerns as well.
- I don't think we will do this any time soon, but we are wondering what concerns about faculty/constituency elections there are in general, or if there are any certain things that people would like to see.
- The goal is that moving forward the AMS will run faculty/student-constituency elections – but we are still wondering when and how it will happen.

What are your initial thoughts?

Jason: My only concern is capacity. All faculties at once, with only a small group of elections committee members doing everything at once – will they be overworked? Even spread apart, there are so many issues, hands will be tied even more if they are happening at same time.

Chelsea: I'm worried that social media feeds will become clogged up with faculty campaigns. I think it will be messy, and everyone will get muted. I second the concerns for the elections team – they already do so much, and they work really hard. With all constituencies at once, they might become overworked.

Cole: Good points. We will probably run into the other option, that is more feasible, that is to run them at the same time as the AMS general elections, but the students won't want that (because people want to be able to run for both). It will get weird though, because we will have a bunch of people running for duplicate positions, making things complex.

Cole: Faculty/student election thoughts?

Tori: I don't think music has ever even got any information on that. If they're still at different times, then if there is a way to get that information out, that might help.

Rachel: I think that a lot of people do want to get involved, but have their heads down – they just aren't made aware.

Cole: As an aside, what is the situation with the architecture constituency?

Rachel: There are many different schools, and we meet as a group of just the presidents, as SALA, once a month, but we also have a lot of subgroups – someone is always complaining about lack of representation.

Cole: From the AMS perspective, it is interesting, because in council there is only one seat. The issue is that there are 3 distinct student associations under the architecture banner, but it seems like architecture just picks one to sit on council. Ideally, those would be one organization with 3 sub-organizations, so that the person on council is representing everybody. Something we need to look at is, how we can make architecture fit into one role. Do you pay fees to the GSS as a graduate student?

Rachel: I pay both.

Cole: Yeah, so technically you are also doubly represented in a way, because there is GSS representation too. Good to know the others are also a part of the GSS.

Cole: We will talk more about elections moving into next year, but before the new year starts, do people have any questions that they want answered?

Jason: One small concern I have is the lack of competition I have seen. I feel like a lot of positions that LFSUS offers are not getting filled or not having competition for proper representation.

Cole: It's becoming more and more of a problem, I have been seeing it throughout my years in the AMS – elections ebbs and flows.

- I will say that it is true now, that more and more, people aren't running for student positions, especially at the constituency level, because you're volunteers.
- More and more if you want to have elections that are successful, there has to be a significant amount of energy put in to making people want to run (ie. advertising, workshops, etc.). It takes a lot of time beforehand. It is important to encourage people to step into these leadership roles

Erin: One of the issues VSEUS is facing is that there are a lot of clubs being formed essentially to do the same jobs as VSEUS – so students end up joining/making those

clubs instead of getting involved with VSEUS. Any ideas on how we can combat this overlap? Are there any rules in place to protect the value of constituencies?

Cole: In the club applications process, we do have processes in place that make sure that the focusses are not overlapping. Do you know any specific economics clubs that this overlap is happening with?

Erin: Yes, Economics Students Association. For several years their events and programs have been very similar. They obviously don't have the same funding, but there definitely is overlap. A lot of the talent that would have been here, is ending up there. I think the scope of the ESA is the same as VSEUS.

Cole: Yes, I could foresee this happening in some of these smaller schools that used to be bigger faculties. I will put some thought into that. How long has that group existed?

Erin: I know at least 2 years but I'm not sure.

Cole: We can do some looking to see when they were approved.

Dayle: I just wanted to second your insight on advertising for elections and getting people to run. 2021 was okay for SUS elections, and I know one of our VP's put a lot of effort into advertising. We usually have like 5 or 6 vacancies and this year we only have 2 in our SUS council – I think that just goes to show that if you put in the effort the results will show.

Nina: Due to some events that happened, two of my executives, out of a team of ten, have stepped down, and we already had our by-election stuff. Until March elections, can we appoint someone to serve in one of these roles?

Chelsea: Similar thing happened to us – our council appointed an AVP into the position and we had the interim for the rest of the year.

Cole: Check your code and bylaws. I would say that you should be able to amend that procedure in council as well, unless it explicitly is mentioned that you can't do this.

Jason: For LFSUS we hired an interim representative, and a lot of people wondered why – we just said that it was an open application, so that others could also apply.

6. Open AMS-Related Discussion/Questions

Tori: For reimbursements, I know there's going to be a system change, how is that all going to work?

Cole: So the timeline for that new expense management system is that it will be introduced in February. It might take some time to roll it out to every different group as well. You're looking at probably the end of the academic year for when that will completely be done.

Rachel: Does that mean that every year, if we apply in May, we are guaranteed a credit card?

Cole: I can't talk necessarily to that, but you're a constituency, so I do not see a universe where you just don't get one. Once the new system is in place, I would foresee that yes, you will be allowed a credit card, thereafter. Hopefully by the beginning of next fiscal year, it will all be resolved.

Tori: For graduate students, is paying the GSS fee optional? There has been a lot of interest in either just having a representative on council for graduates, or maybe something separate?

Cole: All graduates at UBC pay AMS and GSS fees, because all GSS members are also members of the AMS. Do your graduates pay fees to MUSA?

Tori: I don't think so.

Cole: Good. What they can do, if they are interested in starting something, is reach out to the GSS. MUSA would exist under the AMS umbrella, and the graduate one would exist under the GSS – then they would just work together. They wouldn't have to worry about representation on AMS council, because they would have the GSS representation.

Chelsea: Every year during elections we always have to restart our votes, how do we ensure that it's not going to happen again?

Cole: I would have to know more about specific issues, but from what I know it's an AUS elections team problem, not an issue with the AMS, but I may be wrong. I would say work as closely as you can with the AMS CEO to ensure it works properly.

Kelvin: A couple weeks ago, me and my VP got an email from the CEO asking a lot of questions – I know the position is now vacant, who should I follow up with for now?

Cole: Me directly. I will direct you when there's a person in that position.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07pm.