Minutes of the AMS Governance Committee
(Minutes for February 7th, 2022 Meeting at 12pm | AMS Nest: Room 3259)

Attendance

Present: Kamil Kanji (Chair), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist and Clerk of Council), Saad Shoaib (VP External), Alina Bhimji (Vice-Chair), Cole Evans (President), Rebecca Liu, Katherine Feng, Teddy O’Donnell

Regrets: Romina Hajizadeh

Guests:

Recording Secretary: Alina Bhimji (Vice-Chair)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Approval of the Agenda

Moved: Saad Seconded: Teddy

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be adopted.”
Agenda Items

1. Introductions

2. Approval of Minutes

Moved: Cole       Seconded: Teddy

“BE IT RESOLVED the Governance Committee meeting minutes of November 22 and January 28 are approved”

3. Election Items

NOTE: Council discussion that people running in the upcoming election should not participate in the discussion regarding election items due to conflict of interest. Saad and Kamil will recuse themselves from the discussion. Defer to Alina.

Alina: Two code changes, are there any concerns for the code changes?

Sheldon: We no longer want to require approval for campaign material

Cole: We are saying that if the elections committee is making a decision after the fact then it is left up to them in future years, so things are not up for appeal?

Sheldon: Any action by the elections committee or CEO can be appealed to the committee

Cole: I am okay with that

Sheldon: Yes it has been clarified, if the elections committee thinks there is something wrong then they can impose penalties, we should cut out Article 8(f) last line, the right to appeal still remains

“BE IT RESOLVED that the Governance Committee accept the report entitled "Code Changes 2022 Campaign Material" and thus recommend Council adopt the code change as amended.”
Moved: Teddy          Seconded: Alina

Unanimous consent.

Alina: move to poster change.

Sheldon: It was pointed out that the elections com can still have posters but candidates can't. We suggested that elections com can make posters to advertise candidates. At council they discussed adding candidates bios but council and govcom is not in favor of that, govcomm wants poster to be much more limited

Cole: It is hard to define what is advertising for the candidates, it is still not clear what the information is, if we are going to put a limitation then we should be specific about what it should not contain, I think it should be in the hands of the elections committee still in a limited sense and am always hesitant about overprescribing in code

Teddy: Maybe code should be changed to include brief advertisements

Cole: To simplify the whole thing you could say poster is not allowed but the goal of them is to provide information on who the candidates are but not advise them, you can have a photo, have platform points and smaller points

Katherine: We could provide links to websites of candidates rather than summarize, what is an example Cole has?

Cole: If they want to put up posters then it could be picture, year, program of study, and top 3 platform points that will be on each candidate section or they may say that each candidate can submit a poster that will be put up in these specific locations

Katherine: Is that a lot of work for them?

Cole: No one is requiring them to do that, if they think they can do that then it is up to them, they can decide to not do posters at all

Katherine: That makes sense

Sheldon: Do we want to limit the amount of posters they can put up?
Katherine: I would like to see some provision that limits the amount of wastage of paper and a limit is a good way to do that.

Sheldon: May use posters in a sustainable way is something I could add.

Katherine: That makes sense.

Cole: Do we want code to say in a limited way or in a sustainable way?

Sheldon: We can say both.

Katherine and Cole: That works.

Sheldon: Postering is not allowed in elections but elections committee may use posters in a sustainable way to promote information about candidates.

Cole: This gives enough information to meet the sustainability objective.

“BE IT RESOLVED that Governance Committee accept the report entitled “Code Changes 2022 Postering” and thus recommend Council adopt the code change as amended.”

Moved: Teddy Seconded: Katherine

Unanimous consent.

4. Bylaws Discussion

Cole: quick overview of changes to bylaws.
-clarification to associate members’ privileges
-reallocation of duties from VP AUA to other executives
-remnants of the historic role of AUA where they were more of a secretary
-in the current form, there is no reason to do that so we want to move things around to a more relevant executive
-change for notices for general meetings
-clarify quorum for general meetings
-other idea: hit quorum at any time during the meeting means you can transact all items on the agenda even if you lost quorum throughout the meeting
Saad: I would say 50% is fair for that.

Cole: if you actually care about the motions as a member you should stay for the motions.

Saad: Just as a fail-safe we should have a threshold.

Cole: We should because what if there’s only three people left at the end. Things could be easily manipulated.

Katherine: First, I think we have quorum for a reason. I understand the rationale but the reason for quorum is that when making decisions, we need people to be there. I am concerned about lowering the number of people when it comes to voting. If the intention is to make it so less people can make the decision, it’s not really in line with why quorum exists in the first place. There are other things we could do to keep people at AGMs and stay till the end when motions are passed. Eg. increasing engagement.

Cole: I would be happy to keep it as written if people aren’t happy with this choice. For the future we definitely should look at quorum for AGMs. It is very difficult to reach the current quorum.

Saad: would we rather lower quorum or implement a threshold of 75-80% of what it originally was?
I understand Katherine’s concern and it is tough for us to get people to come to AGM and maintain quorum till the motions. Having the threshold would be helpful. We could also specify what motions can be passed with the threshold.

Cole: we could do that in the referendum and I do think we need to look at that in the future.

Katherine: a lot of the power of passing advocacy motions at AGMs is the fact that so many people voted to pass the motion. When you reduce quorum you have less people voting on advocacy motions so does that give the decision less power?
I understand we want to get things passed at AGM so I wonder if we can look into other ways to encourage people to come besides just lowering the quorum.

Cole: (more bylaw changes)
-referendum petition to president
- council can reject referendum questions if they will cause significant financial harm to the society (bylaw 4(2f))
  - example: cutting AMS fees
  - this can probably be stretched, but a lot of the referendum requirements could be stretches
  - seems important to include and make it clear for students submitting questions

Saad: it's the same for dissolution I think

Sheldon: this is changing it to the fact that Council has the power to reject things before they even get run.

Cole: Council can say no this isn't going on the ballot. The key word is financial. Sheldon and I might want to clarify the word financial so people won't have issues with it. This will be taken to Council next meeting.

- giving Council power to delegate its power to remove people as appointed
- changes for potential inclusion of Indigenous constituency
  - waiting for green light on it

I think we should remove

Kamil: Would this open the door for other cultural groups to want their own constituency?

Cole: We specified that Council will recognize a constituency for Indigenous students only.

Saad: it's more like we think other groups will want their own constituents too

Cole: At that point it's the future of the AMS because it would require a bylaw change so I don't think we need to worry about it opening a door right now. It would be challenging to make the changes necessary to establish that

- new things for executives
  - ban slates in bylaws

Kamil: we should remove “groups of candidates”
Cole: we should change it so that Council can define slate themselves but its still in the bylaws

- temporary absences in exec offices
- new duties for VP AUA
- small change for Council meetings – ⅓ voting members
- deleting proxy bylaws
- minor change to managing director
- clarifying language for budget
- Indigenous student association change to constituency
  - may not make it but they seem on board
  - need to maintain flexibility with it

Katherine asked: has keith been consulted on managing direction change

Cole: I haven't brought it up with him directly but we can talk about it this week at exec com.

Katherine: I think it would be good for him to be aware before its presented.

Cole:
- fee clarification 14(6b)
- clarify language for bylaw 18 and 19

5. SSM/Non-Voting Members on AMS Committees

TABLED

6. Elections Appeal Report

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Next Meeting

The next meeting is Feb. 14, 2022 @ 12 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05pm.