

Minutes of the AMS Advisory Board

(November 15th, 2021)

Attendance

Present: Lauren Benson (AMS VP Administration), Cole Evans (AMS President), Mary Gan (AMS VP Finance), Keith Hester (AMS Managing Director), Jerry Jim (Professional), Mitchell Prost (AMS Student Services Manager), Louis Retief (Professional), Alessia Rodriguez (Student), Nicolas Romualdi (Guest), Ron Gorodetsky (Professional), Saad Shoaib (AMS VP External), Dana Turdy (AMS Strategy and Governance Lead)

Regrets: Samantha So (Professional), Eshana Bhangu (AMS VP Academic and University Affairs)

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm.

2. Territorial Acknowledgement

3. Approval of the Agenda

4. Approval of Previous Minutes

5. Introductions

Cole: Updates,

- Just last council meeting finally passed our Advisory Board code, so we are running with our new changes now. Biggest change is that there are no more formal approvals of minutes and agendas (just quick checks).
- Lots of things going on in the AMS: committee review, strategic plan, and some labour shortages.

6. Strategic Plan Presentation by Nicolas

Cole: Nicolas is the individual that we have contracted to lead our strategic plan development progress – he is well acquainted with UBC and everything about it.

Nicolas: Thank you Cole and thank you for the introduction.

We are headed into a strategic plan development as part of a strategic plan process. The AMS wants a strategic plan that provides one vision for the entire organization.

- We are currently negotiating how to harmonize all of the different aspects of the business.
- We are looking to make it like a tool, not a mandate over the organization – it is there to support the functioning of the organization.
- We are trying to focus on all aspects of the society.

We have done a bit of a preliminary approach, where we looked into the past to see what worked and what didn't. In the past, if we go far back enough in time (thank you Sheldon for this timeline) the AMS has had a strategic plan, and it operated quite effectively. This tells us that it is possible for the AMS to have a strategic plan, and it is possible for it to be used in a multi-year way.

- The AMS has tried many different things... Strategic framework: it turned out to be a bit too vague to be useful. Because it was too vague, they moved all the way to a business plan: that makes sense, but unfortunately there was no success in creating the plan, and it got abandoned. Eventually, a bit of a more serious idea of creating a plan existed, covid hits, and it gets paused – now we are here.
- Too vague, and too strict plans don't work, and trying to plan 30 years in the future doesn't work. Board approval does make a huge impact in whether the plan succeeds.

We are thinking that a completed strategic plan cycle would be somewhere between 3 to 5 years, and the involvement of the executive and board is crucial. We will have to take some time to think about how implementations are going to take place until we reach the time to make a new plan.

One thing that we have identified is that we have to clearly find what the plan is to do. At the end of the day, the plan is not going to be able to solve every problem, but it will be there as a tool to see if things are going in the right direction.

We are hoping to have a draft plan in February, and looking for approval in April.

Any questions at this point?

Louis: Question about the timeline – I am curious why the governance review wasn't included in the research phase of this.

Nicolas: It was, and I did look at it. We just focused here on how the strategic plan has progressed in the past. The objective of the timeline is to outline what works and what does not work in terms of having a plan and implementing it.

Jerry: I don't think I have been involved in a strategic plan that has been implemented for over 5 years, so I applaud the fact that we are going to make it shorter.

Nicolas: I would strongly agree with you.

Jerry: What will the governance around the strategic plan be like?

Nicolas: The one key aspect in how we are building the plan is in the hopes that future administrations will see this as something that will help them, not as something they have to fight.

Cole: I think that because our annual executive goal setting is based on campaign promises, this can be a tool that executives use when they set their goals every year (when you go through your goal setting process, see which goals align with which core values in the strategic plan), and then that extends to council.

Nicolas: In terms of the AMS mission and values, we do not want to rewrite the values of the AMS, we just want to go ahead and put them on paper. Next Thursday we are taking a look at the values that come from the mission statement, to make it clear what the organization wants with each of them. Then drafting the mission and values, and taking this to council. We are not looking to completely restate the mission statement, just polish it so that it is more useful for decision making. Any questions?

Jerry: When you mention feedback from the membership, who is that?

Nicolas: Every UBC student, and those of the affiliated colleges.

Jerry: What governance model do you envision?

Nicolas: Every board member is invited to participate, then the board approves, then it goes to the membership for feedback. Every board member who wants to participate, will participate in drafting.

Nicolas:

- I would say consultation is difficult because of the large amount of students, and there are many aspects that need consultation. It will be helpful that in every step it goes back to the full board.
- I tend to think of organizations in terms of processes instead of hierarchy – roles can change, the organization can change, there can be changes in talent, budget constraints -- but that doesn't mean that values change.
- What we are interested in are the corporate processes and governance processes (we have mapped the processes of the organization). One thing that came up that is very interesting was that communication may actually be a core value.
- We want to nail down what the organization does, harmonize them with bottom up objectives, and harmonize all of these objectives.
- I think that this strategic plan will be a lot about aligning the organization, and the next one can be a bit more ambitious. We are not looking at such a big change in mission and values right now.

Jerry: What happens if a project does not align?

Nicolas: We will look and see if it actually serves the AMS mission. I do not anticipate that many will stray far. What will be useful is seeing which can have an impact on the core values.

Louis: How can we be helpful?

Nicolas: You have already been helpful! It's helpful to know you exist, the Advisory Board. Your honest feedback, moving forward too – I am hopeful that it will add value to the organization.

Ron: I meet biweekly with the current student services manager, and I think that one thing that they would really benefit from, is actually a deeper consultation with them. When looking at the longer term, seeing as there are a lot of employees, I wanted to stress the importance of giving them additional consultation.

Nicolas: Would you be open to participating? I think it would be useful to have a historical perspective.

Ron: Yeah for sure – I would love to give my time to that, more than happy.

Nicolas: You have some great guide barriers up, be strict about them, they are great!

Cole: Thank you very much Nicolas. I can imagine we will probably bring this back, to this body, maybe in like February (once we have more concrete items). By then we will probably have made a lot of ground.

7. Labour Shortage Situation

Keith:

- It's mainly in the culinary area. Pre-covid there was full employment in those areas, but since the covid period, lots of people who lost their jobs aren't wanting to come back to them (they just found better things).
- We, alongside a lot of people over here in Vancouver, are feeling this.
- We are unable to reopen some things because of this. We are re-looking at benefits for part-timers, looking at making partnerships with certain places – absolutely open to any ideas that you have.

Ron: Can you share any or centralize any kitchens?

Keith: We already operate under that model, we have a commissary kitchen, which serves all of the outlets (only a couple actually have their own kitchen).

Ron: Is the university having similar problems ?

Keith: Yes, some, but they also have a lot of workers that are unionized.

Jerry: What's the scope of magnitude (how many open headcounts)?

Keith: Culinary exclusive about 15 that we need, and in hospitality we need probably another two dozen.

Jerry: Do you use an agency?

Keith: We are exploring agencies too, though they are having difficulties too.

Jerry: Is there an opportunity to partner with other groups around campus?

Keith: We are trying but there are not many.

Louis: Is it more students that are needed, or?

Keith: Mostly cooks.

Louis: Can we get students in there and train them?

Keith: Yes we have tried that, the thing is, being a cook is kind of a full time job.

Ron: Have you thought about relocation hiring?

Keith: That's a great idea.

Louis: Circulate a spreadsheet to target those places that have had huge layoffs.

Jerry: Also be careful about who is left, retention of staff that you still have is important.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.