

Agenda of the AMS Advocacy Committee

9am, February 14th, 2022

Attendance

Present: Eshana Banghu, Sylvia Fernandez, Kamil Kanji, Saad Shoaib, Gabrielle Matheson, Rebecca Liu

Recording Secretary: Mimi Neufeld

Regrets: Lawrence Liu

Guests: Mimi Neufeld (Policy Advisor), Matthias Leuprecht (SaL), Ava katz (SaL), Ruby Grinberg (SaL), Hilla Kabazo (SaL), Adam Dobrer (SaL), Lucila (SaL), Gilli Cohen (SaL)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:03am.

Quorum was reached

Territorial Acknowledgement

Approval of the Agenda

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be adopted as presented

(Agenda Items)

- 1) Academic Experience Survey (Discussion)
- 2) Provincial & Federal Lobby Week (Updates/Discussion)
- 3) UNA Campaign Report for Council (Discussion/Approval and Referral to Council)
- 4) VPAUA and VPX Updates (Updates)

Meeting Minutes

Eshana: I am still in traffic commuting from Surrey (I will join via zoom in about 15 minutes). I will take this opportunity to do a land acknowledgement. As we are joining this meeting from different places please reflect on where you are calling from and what land you are on.

Amendments to the agenda

Eshana will lead the conversation on AES questions when she gets to her office

We will move Saad's items to the beginning (mostly just UNA)

Minutes cannot be approved as they were not sent out in advance.

Moved: Saad

Seconded: Kamil

UNA Report

- Saad:

- At last Council there was discussion about the UNA Campaign, specifically how to optimize spending within the Campaign.
 - To provide some context, in October/November 2021 the AMS supported students running in the UNA Board of Directors (BoD) elections. This Campaign also let us highlight student issues within the community (for example Campus Vision 2050, affordable housing, Skytrain to UBC). We were happy to get those highlights out.
 - This is the first time the AMS has supported students in these elections
 - At last week's Council there were questions and people wanted an expense breakdown and campaign breakdown.
- Eshana (9:07am):
 - Saad can you provide background on the UNA for guests?
- Saad:
 - Yep! UNA is an organization that represents residents in Chancellor Place, East Campus, Hampton Place, Hawthorn Place, and Wesbrook Place. They represent the interests of those residents to the UBC Board of Governors (BOG).
 - UNA can carry out municipal-like services (authorized by the province)
 - This year the AMS encouraged students to run to get increased engagement
 - To provide some more background on the AMS/UNA relationship, in 2020 the UNA went to arbitration to make their BoD fully elected, so now the AMS has a non-voting ex-officio seat, and the AMS can appoint a voting member on any open committee.
 - If a student member is elected, the AMS could provide recommendations to UNA on that student's replacement because it's hard to keep people for the full 3-year term.
 - UNA board terms are 3 years. This is a barrier to students.
- Sylvia:
 - Question on student replacement: so if a fully elected UBC student (who is also an AMS member) resigned, the UNA would take the AMS's recommendations?
- Saad:
 - Yes, the purpose of this is functional: if a student is elected to the UNA BoD and decides to resign/leave UBC, then this allows a student to remain in that slot until the end of the board term.
- Matthias (9:13am):
 - I found that some student candidates didn't best represent student concerns. What is happening, or what is being done about this going forward? Will the AMS screen candidates?
- Saad:
 - This is the first time the AMS has done this and it's a bit unconventional. We have learned a lot about policy/processes going forward.
 - Our report includes info on AMS involvement in UNA student campaigns going forward.

- Gabrielle:
 - What is the context of this question?

- Matthias:
 - There was a student candidate advocating for increasing police and security presence on campus (this is not in the best interests of students)

- Saad:
 - I dealt directly with that issue and I talked to the student. They were thinking more so about community-based safety initiatives, but they just didn't know how to write it. One of the things that we could help student candidates with more in the future is helping them write their platforms.
 - The candidate was Mitchell Prost.

- Saad (9:18am):
 - The meat of the UNA campaign budget was \$3000, which was determined by finance committee. This went to social media materials, branding
 - This was a very different kind of campaign (you can only vote if you're a UNA resident that's registered to vote).
 - Registration to vote in the UNA is quite tedious/outdated and there are recommendations about strategy for how to engage students for the next people at the AMS
 - At the November 24th AMS Council we requested a budget increase to \$7400
 - The budget came from surplus from the Student Union Development Summit (SUDS). SUDS cut down on expenses and had some left over (there is still \$5000 left in the SUDS account and this surplus will go back into the AMS operating budget).
 - The extra \$4250 went to the operating budget for the UNA campaign. There was about 77 insurable hours of work (like for communications work) and 19h of work for other stuff.
 - Advertisements came to \$1700
 - Fiscal materials came to \$1846 for 4 candidates
 - \$1000 for promotions and marketing
 - The finances for this campaign worked differently than AMS elections!
 - For this campaign student candidates came to the AMS and said "This is what I need" and then they worked with the AMS to determine the budget
 - We're recommending a reimbursement system going forward

- Saad (9:23am):
 - The campaign timeline was October/November
 - In early October we advertised AMS support to students
 - Mid-late October there were communications about getting students registered to vote (this is a main barrier)

- Saad requested an additional 5 minutes. Approved (9:24am):
 - For the voting system, each member is mailed a paper ballot. They then mail this back to the UNA

- Getting students to do this is important!
- We want UNA to move to online voting
- In November campaigning began.
- Promoting and attending in-person things, supporting student candidates
- November 29 campaigns ended
- Saad:
 - Recommendations:
 - AMS needs to move UNA voting online (it is currently inaccessible)
 - AMS should not over involve itself in the campaigns. The AMS should just support student candidates financially and help with policy development
 - We need to make sure not to market student candidates as AMS candidates (which kind of happened in this election). The AMS should just highlight those people
 - The AMS should begin messaging students about the UNA 4-5months in advance of elections (so people have enough time)
- Gabrielle (9:28am):
 - When students go through the membership process, how long is it valid?
- Saad:
 - I believe its annual (UNA membership pays UNA fees which makes them eligible to vote)
 - I will confirm this
- Gabrielle:
 - There were also concerns about lawn signs at Council
- Saad:
 - To answer some other questions about lawn signs for the campaigns: There were 2 types of lawn signs, one type for candidates specifically, and a second type for AMS lawn signs.
 - We didn't have enough operational capacity to put them all out. We did display a few out to neighborhoods but we didn't want to put them everywhere. There was a concern of over bombardment to residents.
- Gabrielle:
 - Can the same signs be used in the future?
- Saad:
 - I can check, hopefully (depends on the dates of future campaigns)
 - Student issues will likely stay the same
- Kamil:
 - Thank you for providing this info, it must have sucked to lose. I appreciate the resilience.
 - These recommendations are great.

- Can you expand on the ask for online voting?
- Saad:
 - The elections report from UNA & AMS made a recommendation to make elections online (there is already internal UNA support). Want to push for this.
 - Thank you Kamil!

9:34am **BE IT RESOLVED THAT AMS Advocacy Committee accepts the VP External's report on the UNA Campaign.**

Moved: Saad Seconded: Sylvia

Unanimous consent.

Updates on Provincial/Federal Lobby Week

- Saad (9:34am):
 - Just completed lobby week as of today (had our last federal meeting)
 - Provincially the AMS successfully lobbied 50MLAs on 4 key priorities:
 - Improving Student Financial Aid
 - Supporting Student Well-Being and Accessibility
 - Expanding Support for Graduate Students
 - Fighting Against Gender-Based and Sexualized Violence
 - Great support for recommendations for mental health (Here2Talk), especially from each caucus. We were ensured that students are a priority in the 2022 budget.
 - We're meeting with the ministry soon to review our recommendations and the viability of those recommendations
 - Federally we had 31 meetings with MPs with UCRU.
 - We lobbied on:
 - Student Financial Aid
 - Supporting Student Employment
 - Improving Mental Health Support
 - Supporting Students with Disabilities
 - There was lots of support (approximately 70% of MPs supported our asks). It was interesting where support came from, especially in terms of categories. There was support from all parties, although there was some disagreement on policy recommendations
- No time for questions

Academic Experience Survey (AES)

- Eshana (9:39am):
 - There is a google doc on the AES
 - We want to finalize questions by the end of the week (please go through and edit/comment)

- Eshana shared her computer screen
- Eshana:
 - What are sections do you think are missing from this survey?
 - Two things we were looking at was one: Harm Reduction, and two: Hybrid Learning/Remote Learning (like multi-access learning beyond the pandemic).
 - About 30% of students from last year's AES said they would like recorded lectures.
- Kamil:
 - The survey looks good, but it's a bit cumbersome (its long). I agree that there's not a lot of sections on safety, and all the ethnicity questions are at the end.
- Eshana:
 - It's a long survey (it takes about 15min to complete) but it's an important tool for advocacy.
 - Past response rates are about 2700-3000 responses. This is a good response rate.
- Saad:
 - It would be nice to have more questions on transportation (not just having questions about commute times, but also having questions about regionally, like where people commute from).
 - This would be good for advocacy for other rapid transit
 - Also an expansion on mental health questions. Again, not just having questions on the usage/helpfulness, but also asking about the format and cultural competency of mental health resources/services.
 - This will help get some details for advocacy (can identify barriers).
 - James and I can write questions on this
- Kamil
 - We should include questions on physical safety (how people feel)
- Eshana:
 - Do we want to ask more questions on affordability/the university experience? Are there other things people have thought of?
 - Please look at questions about UBC in the survey and Julia's comments on the google doc.
- Rebecca:
 - We should ask questions on financial support. It's not really accessible – a lot of the information you have to dig through yourself. More transparency in this would be great.
- Eshana:
 - For sure. In terms of other groups on campus to consider, are there more questions we should be asking for international students?

- Saad:
 - For international students we can ask what does retention look like after their degrees (what are their plans for post-grad, do they leave?)
 - Maybe we could restrict these questions to people in their graduating year, like what do their employment opportunities look like
- Sylvia (in Zoom Chat):
 - Internal student opportunities to work, access to info on how to apply for PGWP/PR/etc.
- Kamil:
 - Also ask questions about research opportunities for undergrads (what options are there, what is desired)
- Saad:
 - Going back to harm reduction questions, we should probably consult on these questions
- Eshana:
 - For sure – there’s stigma on this topic and we want to make sure we get these questions right. People often ask why harm reduction is important.
- Mimi:
 - We could ask questions about “Have you used X in the last year?” with a follow up questions “Are you aware of these resources?”
- Gabrielle:
 - It’s important that we ensure anonymity so students aren’t penalized (maybe we can include a blurb clarifying this)
- Saad:
 - Would also like to ask questions on Equity based grants (we’re exploring barriers to Financial Aid). Can we have a textbox for students to input things?
- Eshana:
 - Totally.
- Giovanna:
 - Can we also ask questions about the UBC Centre for Accessibility (CFA)? It sucks (I’ve had a really bad experience with it)
- Eshana:
 - For sure, we can do a full section on the CFA (we’ve heard a lot of similar things).
- Sylvia:
 - To confirm, are response to the AES anonymous?

- Eshana:
 - Yes!!!

- Sylvia:
 - There's also not a ton of questions on equity (there's just the first blurb on it). I would want more targeted questions.
 - Also, are we asking "What do students want UBC to advocate on"?

- Saad:
 - We can ask about Climate – like what students think about UBC's role in climate action

- Eshana:
 - We can add questions like that.
 - Unfortunately, we are out of time
 - Thank you so much to the guests that came (please come again!)

Adjournment

Moved: Eshana Seconded: Saad

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10am.