

Governance Review Report 2022/23

Summary of Changes

ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF UBC VANCOUVER

Council V. May contain typographical errors, the final version will be revised.



CONTENTS

- 2 Background**
- 3 Message from the President**
- 4 Bylaw Changes**
- 8 Code of Procedures Changes**
- 13 Acknowledgements**

Background

Since day one, the AMS has been committed to ensuring our governance structure and processes are robust, effective, and aligned with our strategic goals. When creating our very first constitution in 1915, the leadership emphasized it was only provisional and there would be changes coming – and there were.

Sometimes the changes were quite radical. In the late 1970's, Council was essentially split in two and campus-wide elections were eradicated (the President was elected by Council).

In 1980, the radical changes were reversed through a new set of bylaws, which restored campus-wide elections and got rid of the bicameral structure, along with changing the membership of Council.

Overtime, Council membership has often changed. In the early days many Council members were there ex-officio, by virtue of being in charge of Men's Athletics or Women's Athletics or the Literary & Scientific Department (LSD), the body in charge of clubs. Later there were campus-wide elections for all positions on Council.

In 1961, the system of electing representatives from each Constituency was introduced. These changes were implemented to address the concerns that the Constituencies were not getting enough of a voice and because it was thought they were closer to the ground of the membership.

Connecting to the membership was one of the reasons for the massive governance review, known as the CORP Report, done in 1994. It led to the creation of the Speaker of Council, the Policy Advisor, the Communications Manager, the Student Services, and the Resource Groups.

Recently there were reviews focused on repairing the split of the AMS into almost separate business and student government sides, eliminating Council committees that were redundant because their work was being done by student staff, reducing the size of Council, which was done, and revamping the Executive Goals system by eliminating the Oversight Committee.

Our latest governance review process has focused again on minimizing overlap of work and Council seats while giving Council the power to call Executives to account and even remove them, among other many changes that will further keep the AMS executives accountable and listen to students to truly be a **student government**.

Bylaw Changes

Passed with the 2023 AMS General Election

With the AMS Council's endorsement of the referendum item, the following bylaw changes were passed during the 2023 AMS General Election and Referendums with an overwhelming 85.9% of student voters voting in favour of the bylaw changes.

The following bylaw changes, as with the changes to the AMS Code of Procedures, were determined by the AMS Governance Review Committee after a lengthy and thoughtful process of how to keep the AMS more accountable to the student body and for the governing body to be more efficient yet representative of all students.

From the creation of a new Indigenous Constituency to the Council's new ability to remove AMS executives to the improvement in the efficiency of the AMS Council, the following bylaw changes stand to keep the AMS the organization we all strive to be.

CHANGE #1 NEW INDIGENOUS CONSTITUENCY

Aligned with the Indigenous Strategic Plan and the AMS Equity Action Plan, the creation of the new Indigenous constituency is essential to ensure that the AMS adheres to these equity-related goals. The creation of a new Indigenous constituency will allow self-governance for Indigenous students on campus and have the Indigenous students be a part of a governing body dedicated to them with equal amounts of power as any other constituency.

The Indigenous constituency's previous form, the Indigenous Committee, was limited in its governance system and what they could do due to the limitations put on

the Committee that were implemented on any other AMS committees. To ensure that the power and the standing of a governing body for Indigenous students are elevated, the Indigenous constituency aims to meet the goals of self-governance and supporting Indigenous students in a greater capacity.

CHANGE #2 REDUCED COUNCIL SIZE

Year after year, the issue of the AMS Council being efficient with their meetings, meeting quorums, and being as representative as possible of the student population continued to be a topic of discussion. Often there are times when representatives from inactive constituencies are missing leading to the meeting not reaching a quorum and the issue of certain student bodies not being represented by their representatives on the Council.

To ensure such issues do not continue to incur and affect the operations of the Council and ensure all students are properly represented, the following

changes were made to the composition of the AMS Council. Library-Archival, Planning, Population & Public Health, Journalism, Audiology, and Social Work seats were removed, and the representation of students in these constituencies was transferred to the GSS representatives. The three affiliate colleges' seats were combined for a strong central voice from all affiliate colleges. Finally, the seats of larger constituencies were cut according to a new representation formula to ensure an efficient Council.

CHANGE #3 REMOVAL OF EXECUTIVES

Executive accountability is set to see a new form of measure for councillors to utilize for strong and efficient governance practices and operations from the AMS executives. Such a measure is the Council having the ability to move the motion to remove a sitting AMS executive from their office by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote. The motion can be moved based on the recommendations of the Executive Performance and Accountability Committee or by individual councillors.

With the power to remove executives, on top of the continued possibilities of other options such as reprimanding the executive and censuring the executive, this measure is to be used carefully after a proper discussion and other options have been explored thoroughly.

CHANGE #4 RESPONSIBILITY OF CONSTITUENCIES TO PRESIDENT

The current responsibilities of the VP Administration, among many other things, is to take care of both clubs and constituencies. Additionally, it is important to note that constituencies represent all memberships of the student population.

To ensure that the VP Administration office's operation is not compromised by the overload of both clubs and constituency matters, the responsibility of

listening to the constituencies and managing the relationships with the constituencies are transferred to the President's office, especially with the creation of the new Constituency Relations and Projects Lead. The constituencies are to be under the highest office's (President's) role, which will allow the AMS to support constituencies to its best ability.

CHANGE #5 PRESIDENT'S POWER TO MANAGE VICE-PRESIDENTS

The AMS Code of Procedures currently has a clause that states that the President is the manager of the executive team, therefore, responsible for the actions of their Vice-Presidents.

To ensure that the Bylaws of this organization match what the Code dictates regarding the President's role in the organization in managing the Vice-Presidents, this bylaw change was

added to the referendum question and passed by the student body.



Code of Procedures Changes

Passed by the 2022/23 AMS Council

CHANGE #6 CREATION OF THE EPA COMMITTEE

The Executive Performance and Accountability Committee (EPA Committee) succeeds the previous Ethics and Accountability Committee to ensure that the executives receive proper guidance and useful performance feedback from councillors.

The usage of the entire Council to provide such feedback and guidance is not the best mechanism as proven in the past. The EPA

Committee will be better than the Ethics and Accountability Committee as it will be working with Human Resources to collect feedback on the executives. As well, the Committee will be preparing reports quarterly and upon request and have the power to recommend actions to keep executives accountable, and provide performance improvement measures.

CHANGE #7 INCREASED FREQUENCY OF AFFILIATES COMMITTEE

To ensure that the affiliate colleges' concerns are more regularly brought up and heard to the AMS' attention, the frequency of the Affiliates Committee's meetings will be increased from

once a term to once a month (monthly). This will hopefully close the gaps in knowledge and communication between the AMS and the affiliated colleges and foster stronger relations.

CHANGE #8 SPECIFIED TIME LENGTH FOR COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

AMS Council meetings have, for long, been described as excessively long for councillors, who are also students, to handle. The primary reason for the prolonged council meetings being the unlimited time length allocated to

various Council agenda items. Therefore, to ensure that Council meetings do not proceed for an unnecessary amount of time and to keep the meetings as efficient and effective as possible, the Council agenda items are now allocated specific time lengths.

CHANGE #9 STEERING COMMITTEE → AGENDA COMMITTEE

The Agenda Committee will be more effective than the previous Steering

Unlike in the past where the Council agenda items were mostly compiled by

Committee in agenda creation for Council meetings and the timeliness of the publishing of the Council agendas.

the President, with the Agenda Committee, the President will have more assistance from councillors and the councillors will be more involved in the composition of the agenda for Council.

CHANGE #10 REMOVAL OF REQUIREMENT ON BIWEEKLY MEETING FOR COMMITTEES

The requirement for all committees to meet bi-weekly will be removed for committees except for Finance, Operations, and Governance Committee. Finance, Operations, and Governance Committees have consistently saw items to be taken care of bi-weekly whereas other committees (e.g. Advocacy Committee and Student Life Committee) saw unproductive

usage of the committee members' time due to the required biweekly meetings. Therefore, this requirement will be removed for committees except the aforementioned committees.

CHANGE #11 OVERSIGHT OF IT POLICY FROM FINANCE TO OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

To keep it brief, it makes more sense for the IT policy to be administered by the Operations Committee than the Finance Committee as policies that pertain to the technological usage should be under a

committee that overlooks the operations of the organization rather than the committee that overlooks the finances of the organization.

CHANGE #12 BUILDING OPERATIONS MANAGER'S REQUIRED MONTHLY REPORT

Since the Operations Committee overlooks the building operations of the Nest, to ensure that committee members are well-informed of the status of various building operations and the conditions,

the Building Operations Manager is now required to submit monthly reports to the Operations Committee.

CHANGE #13 OPERATIONS COMMITTEE'S TIMELINES ON CLUB MATTERS

For the Operations Committee to provide clarity on the progress and deadlines on their work on approving new clubs and renewing pre-existing clubs, the

matters.

Clubs are the backbone of UBC student life and keeping the Committee

Operations Committee is now required to set timelines for themselves on these

accountable will help student life be further fostered and bloom.

CHANGE #15 INCREASED STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE POWER AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Student Life Committee now has the power to approve the goals of the Senior Manager of Student Services and the plans of major AMS events (e.g. Block Party, Welcome Back BBQ, AMS Firstweek etc.) to ensure that Student Life Committee members have more oversight on events

and initiatives that affect student life.

It is important to note that these goals are not referring to the performance evaluation of the goals of the SSM, this refers to the goals and direction for the AMS services for the upcoming year.

CHANGE #16 TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITIES FROM STEERING TO STUDENT LIFE

As the Steering Committee is now the Agenda Committee and focused on assisting in creating Council agendas, matters such as creating orientations

for councillors and planning socials, among other things, will now be delegated to the Student Life Committee.

CHANGE #17 MORE POWER FOR STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE

Since students pay the Athletics and Recreation Fee, and the AMS being one of the major contributors to UBC Athletics and Recreation Department's projects (e.g. Rec Centre North), the Student Life

Committee is now given the power to provide input on partnerships and the relationship with the University's Athletics & Recreation department.

CHANGE #18 ALL CODE CHANGES GO THROUGH GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee's main goal is to oversee the various governing documents of the AMS and review the various documents and clauses and add, remove, or edit accordingly by the decisions of the Committee members and send it to Council for approval.

To ensure that all Code changes are reviewed by those who are dedicated to vigilant works around governance, all Code changes are now required to go through the Governance Committee.

CHANGE #19 GRAD CLASS GIFTS NOW THE VP ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility of deciding the graduating class of the year's gift to the community will now be decided by the VP Administration and their office rather

than by a subcommittee of the Student Life Committee as the process has historically not worked properly under the Grad Class Subcommittee.

CHANGE #20 EXPANSION OF THE ADVISORY BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Advisory Board's responsibilities have now been expanded to provide advice on business goals and on annual strategic planning. The Advisory Board members

have, in the past, provided insight and their experience on such matters and have been a good source of advice and opinions in general.

CHANGE #21 CHOOSING OF ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR

Historically, there were times when the Advisory Board was chaired by the AMS VP Finance. It also makes sense for other executives with more capacity in taking over chairing the Advisory Board to do so.

Additionally, this also allows the executive team to choose the executive that they may deem the most relevant when it comes to the priorities of that year's executive team.

CHANGE #22 BUSINESS REPORTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO ADVISORY BOARD

For the sake of discipline and consistency in the Advisory Board meetings and for the AMS executives to hear complete and useful advice from the Advisory Board,

business reports and financial statements will be presented to the Advisory Board.

CHANGE #23 RECOMMENDATIONS OF AVP FUNDS & AVP SUSTAINABILITY FOR SPF

As it was the practice without the Code changes, to solidify the practice, the AVP Funds and AVP Sustainability's insights and

recommendations shall be considered by the Finance Committee when approving Sustainability Projects Fund.

CHANGE #24 INCREASED FREQUENCY OF PRESIDENTS COUNCIL MEETING

The Presidents Council provides insightful feedback and brings up important concerns from constituencies to the AMS

improve relations with various constituencies and be able to be more

President, now responsible for constituency relations, and to further

aware of the needs of constituencies, the Presidents Council will meet monthly.

CHANGE #25 SPECIAL PRESIDENTS COUNCIL MEETING

To allow constituency Presidents to bring up any pertinent and time-sensitive issues that they may deem important to be discussed or bring out feedbacks from

other constituency presidents and the AMS President, constituency presidents are now able to call special meetings via the Presidents Council.

CHANGE #26 AMS PRESIDENT'S REQUIRED REPORT TO PRESIDENTS COUNCIL

To ensure the closing of gaps between the AMS operations and the constituencies' awareness of the AMS' work and various

updates on services, etc. the President is now required to provide reports to the Presidents Council.

CHANGE #27 PRESIDENTS COUNCIL VICE-CHAIR

The creation of the position of Vice-Chair of Presidents Council aims to further involve constituency presidents with the

matters of the Presidents Council and foster a greater sense of belonging for presidents to the Presidents Council.

CHANGE #28 NEW QUORUM FOR PRESIDENTS COUNCIL

Historically, it has been very difficult for Presidents Council to meet its current quorum due to the absence of various inactive constituencies and the

difficulties with finding a time that works for everyone. Therefore, the new quorum will be lowered to ensure that the Presidents Council meets quorum.

CHANGE #29 PRESIDENTS COUNCIL AND EPA COMMITTEE

To further bolster the power of constituencies and integrate constituencies' concerns with the conducts of the AMS executives, the constituency

presidents will be able to submit concerns about AMS executives to the Executive Performance and Accountability Committee.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Conducting this review was no easy feat. It would have been impossible without the hundreds of hours dedicated by our members of Council serving on the Governance Review committee as well as staff in the AMS. We would like to thank the following people for their service and work to conduct the largest internal restructure of AMS Governance systems.

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