

GOALS

So a while back when Abhi was preparing the budget, I told him about our VP Finance from 2009 who tried to warn us about deficits by telling us if we didn't get things under control the AMS could go up in flames [**AMS in flames from that old presentation**].

Abhi was interested in this VP Finance: what were his goals, he said? Oh, I said, in those days we didn't have goals. No goals, said Abhi, but what did we do then? But actually it's not entirely true: that VP Finance did have goals of a sort: he even **posted them on the website**. There they are: not very elaborate, just a brief paragraph about sustainability. He doesn't even mention the deficit.

A couple of years earlier our VP Academic & University Affairs, **Brendon Goodmurphy**, had more elaborate goals on lots of things from sustainability and housing to support for international and Indigenous students. But my favourite goal of his was to bring back the **Yardstick**. This was an AMS publication in which we published student evaluations so that students could decide which courses they might want to take – or avoid. We published this in the 90's, but in 2002 the University convinced us that they could do it much better, so we stopped – but the University did not actually start publishing such a thing at all. In 2007 Brendon said he would bring it back, but I think there were privacy issues, and so we have never seen the Yardstick again.

But all these goals were rather ad hoc and informal, not part of a system, not submitted to Council, just published on the website, even though a few years earlier, in 2004, our VP External of all people got Council to amend Code to say all Executives should include their goals in their quarterly reports. That was **Holly Foxcroft**.

Quarterly reports, I hear you say: what are those? Well, in the old days, before there was a real goals system, what the Executives did four times a year was submit a report on what they had been working on. In 2004 Code said part of each report should include goals, but I've checked a few reports and I can't see any goals in them, which means Code was not being followed, which is just **shocking [someone looking shocked: a cartoon?]**.

Even Brendon Goodmurphy, though he published a whole bunch of goals on the website, didn't put them in his quarterly reports. Oh, well.

And as my team worked to trace the goals further back, we found more of them going back into the 90's, often associated with Executive retreats. The Executives would go on retreat and come back with goals. Here's a set from **1995-96**, when the Executive said they would work on improving communication with the student body by means of Town Halls – some things never change.

By the way, those goals were submitted to Council, but not to be voted on, and it does not seem it was a requirement; the Executive just thought they would let Council know, which was nice – but to find a time when the Executive really had to come up with goals we need to jump forward to 2012.

But really before we get to 2012 we need to stop again in 2009, not to see Tom Dvorak, the flame-throwing VP Finance that year [**show Tom’s website page again and also AMS in flames**], but to check in on that year’s President, **Blake Frederick**, who was busy submitting a complaint to the **United Nations** accusing UBC and Canada of violating a UN Protocol on access to higher education.

People were not happy about that. And they weren’t happy the next year when **President Bijan Ahmadian** argued with Council about who should speak for the AMS and then posted videos criticizing his fellow Executives. So ... Council came up with a new idea: let’s try to control our Presidents and all the Executives by means of a bonus system tied to goals.

This was something first called **PAR [slide from a previous presentation]** and then **PAI** (Performance Accountability Restriction and Performance Accountability Incentive), both of which were based on whether Executives fulfilled their goals. If they did, then they got \$5,000; if not, less or nothing.

This led to **antagonism** and **tears**, and when we hired consultants to look at AMS governance in 2016 one of their recommendations was to get rid of the bonus system and the **Oversight Committee** that was administering it. This was their most popular recommendation. When it came to Council in April 2016, this was the response (I will read from the **Council minutes**):

Veronica Knott (Board of Governors rep):

- Oversight sucks. It’s time to get rid of it.

Ian Sapollnik (Arts rep):

- Only some aspects suck.

Alan Ehrenholz (Engineering rep):

- Oversight really sucks.

At which point the Speaker intervened and asked Councillors to raise the level of debate, which they did, but they still said things like Oversight had been toxic. On the other hand, they also wanted some way to evaluate the Executive. Alan Ehrenholz said Executives could discuss their goals directly with Council. Meanwhile the consultants had issued their

report [SCD355-16 cover] in which they called for a goal system integrated into strategic plans, which is what we have now.

During that same debate, while most Councillors were trashing the old Oversight Committee, one of the GSS reps said, "If this Oversight Committee hasn't worked, there could be another form of committee. Things can be improved."

And now seven years later we are trying another form of committee, the EPA. We shall see how that works out. (We did not bring back the bonus system, you will note.)

And that's your brief history of goals.