



**THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER**

AMS Ad-Hoc Governance Review Committee

Minutes of August 18, 2022

AMS Nest Room 3529

Membership

Voting Members: Max Holmes (Chair – AMS Councillor), Eshana Bhangu (Vice-Chair – AMS President), Audrey Chow (AMS Councillor), Cynara Onyemordi (AMS Councillor), Mathew Ho (AMS Councillor), Christian Kyle (AMS Councillor), Rachel Kim (AMS Councillor)

Regularly Invited Guests: Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council), Kamil Kanji (Strategy and Governance Lead)

Recording Secretary: Kamil Kanji (Strategy and Governance Lead)

Call to Order

The meeting is called to order at 6:18 PM

Approval of the Agenda

Be it resolved that the agenda be approved as presented.

Motion: Eshana Bhangu

Second: Cynara Onyemordi

Approval of the Minutes

Be it resolved that the minutes of the August 11th meeting be approved as presented.

Motion: Cynara Onyemordi

Second: C.K

Internal Consultation Survey Questions Discussion (60 Minutes)

Kamil: The questions made in the survey are based on the conversations of the Committee and the AMS Councillor questions will be separated out for former and current Councillors.

Eshana: Send the questions to Mitchell.

Kamil: Okay.

CK: So are we going to do it bit by bit or are we just giving random feedback on the things we noticed?

Eshana: Yeah, let's go question by question, question 1, any feedback?

CK: Looks good but are we sending it to former Presidents? I thought we were doing interviews with them?

Eshana: No, it says, constituency president, okay moving on to AMS Councillor question 2.

CK: People are either happy to speak or they are not so I don't think a gradient is necessary

Mitchell: Maybe you should add a question about whether Councillors feel comfortable to speak or not.

Kamil: That is there further down.

CK: Maybe that should be moved up, also a question about Qualtrics, when they click no does the next follow-up box pop up right away?

Kamil: So, with Qualtrics, you click your answer then submit and then it takes you to the next question.

CK: Okay so with that system the survey will be like 300 pages long and people will get survey fatigue.

Eshana: No, we are not discussing formatting right now, okay?

CK: That is what we are doing, we are discussing the survey as it is the only discussion item.

Kamil: I can also look to see if there is a better way to format it.

CK: Yeah, if not, then I would say include in one question box maybe include the follow-ups as well so that it makes the survey less clunky.

Eshana: Great, moving on to the next question.

Kamil: So, for what Committees have you been on, the Committee names may have changed in the last five years so that is why there is an "other" box.

CK: I think it would make sense to explain both ex-officio and elected representative for people who may get confused.

Eshana: Great, the next question, did you feel you had influence over executive goals.

CK: I don't know if I like that phrasing, I also am unsure what we are asking here, is it do you feel like you had influence over the content of executive goals or something else.

Eshana: Yeah so I guess for executive goals there is accountability, content, and progress.

CK: Yes accountability and progress are the next two questions but if we are looking at content for this question then I would maybe rephrase it to be clear that we are asking about if you felt you had influence over the content of the executive goals and maybe if you're going to do that then have 3 of them be agree because the other 2 are disagree, you could phrase the question to say I felt like I had influence over the content of the executive goals and then have the options from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Cynara: So, clarify again what would the format be?

CK: So, you see how for 7 and 8 we have a statement and then people would pick an option between agree – disagree, we would do that same format for this question.

Eshana: Yeah so basically this question would also become an agree-disagree scale to match the other ones because with executive goals there are three pieces to it: input, accountability, and accomplishment, so we should probably word all three measures in the same way.

CK: And because there is a textbox at the bottom of one of those three questions already losing the textbox on the input question isn't that bad.

Eshana: Do we have something just about holding the whole AMS accountable because I also want to gauge how well they function as a board, they are a part of the AMS, they are holding the organization accountable not just the executives.

CK: I don't know how many people will be able to answer that.

Eshana: So I guess we will have to find a way to phrase that because it is really trying to find out to what extent did you feel a part of the AMS.

CK: I guess defining the AMS is hard but defining the executives is easy.

Eshana: What I am trying to say is that when you join a board, you are a part of the company if we use the corporate example, but at the AMS, Council is very much seen as it being Council versus the executives but some Councillors have felt like they were a part of the AMS, that is what I am asking.

Kamil: That question is there.

CK: Yeah, there is a question about do you feel adversarial or not, I just think not enough people agree on what it means to be part of the AMS for us to ask that question.

Matthew: I feel like for the executive goal questions, I wonder if it might be useful to capture understanding for executives.

Eshana: Yeah I think we ask about that when we ask how equipped did you feel, but I think Matthew is asking how do you hold the executives accountable to their goals when you don't even know what a good job for an executive looks like, it could be phrased to say did you feel equipped to identify good performance versus bad performance of an executive, and moving on to the next question that asks did you feel Council was able to generally hold the executives accountable to students.

Mitchell: Before that, I have a question about the scale, what does the undecided value represent?

CK: If you give the neutral option, you get a really harsh central bias where people don't know, whereas if you say undecided you are actually taking that opinion out and it becomes a 4-point scale which forces people to actually pick an opinion.

Mitchell: Okay cool, so do we like the undecided option?

CK: I like it but that is just my opinion.

Kamil: I like it too.

CK: Good question when we ask did you attend AMS Council orientation, we should have a follow-up though asking if the orientation was useful.

Kamil: I thought we did have that follow-up.

CK: Well, the next question asks if you felt properly oriented, not if it was useful.

Kamil: I see, will change.

Eshana: Any thoughts on question 12?

CK: I like the question, but I don't know how much I like the phrasing, I don't think it is the end of the world though.

Eshana: Any feedback on question 12.

Matthew: For question 12, can we add goals on top of responsibilities?

CK: That is hard because goals are different from responsibilities and responsibilities encompass things related to fiduciary duty so attending Council, being active, joining Committees, etc.

Eshana: Great, any thoughts on question 13?

CK: I don't like the word efficient in question 13, is it asking about time or usefulness?

Eshana: Okay so let's add specificity to that question then, we could say productive instead.

CK: Are we trying to ask if people thought Council was too long or if people thought it was a good use of their time?

Kamil: That question was for length of time.

CK: Okay then I would ask did you find the length of Council was a reasonable amount of time for what was discussed at meetings, so yeah was the length of time justified for the number of things that happened.

Eshana: Okay let's do length for this question then we can add a separate question about usefulness if we need to.

CK: Yeah, also just not sure about efficient as the word.

Cynara: Why not keep efficient and then people have a textbox if they want to explain?

CK: That does not give us a metric, it becomes difficult to graph if everyone thinks differently about the question.

Eshana: Let's come back to this, moving on to question 14 about Council providing oversight of the executives.

CK: What does appropriate mean, maybe adequate is a better word.

Cynara: I think appropriate is fine.

CK: If we are talking about oversight are we talking about keeping executives accountable or what are we actually hoping to achieve by asking this, I know this was one of our KPI words which is why we are using it but do we want to phrase it as keeping them accountable?

Eshana: We have also asked something similar already before so with question 14 there is a level of redundancy, for question 15 we are asking about transparency.

CK: Let's say "kept".

Matthew: I feel like question 14's way of phrasing seems better than the follow-up.

Eshana: I think we should keep one or the other.

Kamil: But both accountability and oversight are themes we wanted to explore.

Eshana: That is true.

CK: We should agree on what the difference is between oversight and accountability.

Eshana: We should define oversight and accountability in the question as well because it seems like we are having some trouble defining both of them.

CK: We might want to use different words that mean the same thing, when we ask about oversight are we asking about the day-to-day, the function of Committees, keeping people from doing bad things, or is it being knowledgeable about executives' actions, maybe the question can be something like did you know what the executives were doing.

Eshana: Yes, that is good, we should ask did you feel you had access to the information of what executives were doing, if it is not that question, we should have something did you feel executives were providing you with the information you needed to do your job.

CK: Yes but I also don't know how I feel about rephrasing the question to asking about did you know what the executives were doing because the next question then asks about transparency, we are just running into an issue because we did not properly define our terms.

Eshana: What I was saying was that if it is not that question then we should still have something that outlines did you feel like you had adequate information to be successful in your role, the next question is about is Council accessible to AMS Councillors, so did Council have a good productive relationship with the executives.

CK: What does a good productive relationship mean?

Kamil: The intention there from the last meeting I believe was to discuss the adversarial relationship of Council and executives.

Eshana: Okay so that needs to be more specific.

Kamil: I think there were some larger concerns about how specific we should go.

Eshana: I think I know what you are talking about it was a little more complex then that but I need to read the minutes, pin that question for now, but if we are doing productive relationship then we need to define productive, we basically need to define all our terms.

CK: I think in every question that has an ambiguous term we should write it out in plain English, I guess as well to clarify did we mean productive or adversarial?

Kamil: It was adversarial.

CK: So yeah making sure the main question asks was the relationship adversarial.

Kamil: We could even just ask it did you think the relationship between Council and Executives was adversarial?

Eshana: Great, moving on to question 18 which asks about were Committee Chairs held accountable to AMS Council, I don't know if we want to be more specific than that.

CK: If we have the format of Council did X then do, we just want to carry that down and say Council held Chairs accountable to what they should have been doing?

Eshana: So In terms of phrasing, we will change 18 to match former questions, then in the question have in brackets did they do code-compliant meetings, provide monthly reports, etc.

CK: Yep.

Eshana: Great, moving on to Committee Chair questions, question 1 looks pretty standard, I don't think we decided to include ad-hoc so that looks good, then the next question asks did you feel supported by the permanent staff on your committee, in terms of permanent staff I think we will have to define that

CK: We could switch it to AMS employees that sat on your committees.

Eshana: Yep, and then in brackets, we can include Policy Advisor, HR Manager, etc.

CK: I would say keep in mind that this is for Committee Chairs so this is the most common sense section as this is the most involved group of Councillors normally and so we don't have to be as explanatory, also when I think of student life committee it feels like we exist to support the staff rather than the other way around.

Eshana: Yeah, so for example with the HR Committee they are different.

CK: Yeah I know they are different but then I don't think it would apply to all committees, because like Student Life Committee supports the staff with their events.

Eshana: Yes and no, Student Life Committee should be providing oversight but also supporting, that one is unique in that sense.

CK: Okay so if Student Life Committee is the only Committee that functions that way then we shouldn't alter the question just for one Committee.

Eshana: Okay cool, so number 2 we will specify permanent staff, then number 3 is good as well but we will just adjust the formatting to be in line with number 2, anything for number 4?

Matthew: Do we need to ask anything about portfolio staff?

Kamil: It is there, read the rest of the document.

Eshana: Okay nothing for number 4, anything for number 5? So when I read this question I am interpreting it as how much time was spent being innovative and coming up with new things versus how much time was spent on the things that you need to do, so, for example, HR Committee needs to hire various roles but it can look at transition policy and stuff like that, so we need to reword this question.

CK: Yeah, I think we all agree on what we want out of this question, so I trust Kamil to go back and rephrase it.

Matthew: I wonder if going by 25% is arbitrary.

Kamil: It doesn't matter what number we pick, it will all be arbitrary.

Eshana: Once we rephrase the question we can look at that.

CK: Yep, I will just say though that if we say 100% then we would say 0% as well.

Eshana: Yeah, this is also weird because it asks how much is it on X versus Y but is 25% of the year for X or Y?

CK: Yeah, that makes sense.

Eshana: So, I think numbers 5 and 6 are getting at the same theme of how much are you taking the initiative, even 6 feels redundant, I get 5 being about Committee members and 6 about Chairs.

CK: Yeah, so from the last Committee 5 is a separate question and then 6, 7, 8 are all linked because they are all trying to determine what came from what groups and that is a different question from is it new or operational because a lot of the operational stuff comes from staff.

Kamil: Well because at the last meeting people thought there were 4 pieces to it, those 3 with Chair, staff, and Committee members and then that operational piece that Committees have to be doing, so I just felt like putting all 4 in the same format was the best move because they are associated in the same category.

CK: I guess then my question is are we looking at those 4 pieces all a part of the same pie chart or is it Chair, staff, and members over the operational and new stuff?

Kamil: So, the way the Committee thought about it at the last meeting was as 4 parts of the same chart.

CK: Okay I thought it was the other way, but a lot of the operational stuff comes from staff so then I think it might be worth to have those 3 questions as one group and then at the end of that ask of all the work the committee did what percentage of it was x versus y, you could do a slider for what is operational versus new work.

Eshana: So 5, 6, 7, 8 all need to be revisited, the next question is did you feel your Committee was held accountable to AMS Council.

Matthew: Add by instead of to.

CK: Also in regard to the meeting schedule question do we want to ask whether they would change the schedule or not?

Kamil: How do you mean?

CK: Well I could see someone who was Student Life Committee Chair asking why the Committee was meeting frequently and that it should have met less often at the same time maybe we want to have a general feedback box at the end with question 12.

Matthew: Also, do we want to gauge if they met biweekly or not?

CK: We can just look at it online.

Eshana: So number 9 we need to rephrase, we're done with numbers 10, 11 and 12.

CK: I think as well we should maybe clarify the question about orientation because orientation and transition are two different things, for the transition question you could just ask did you receive proper transition documentation and then for the other one were you properly oriented in your position.

Eshana: Okay moving onto AMS executive questions, for number 1 let's just remove President.

CK: Maybe we should keep it.

Eshana: It is not the end of the world which is why we are not going to spend a lot of time on it, moving on to number 2, it looks good so do 3 and 4.

CK: Is saying issues for number 5 the right word?

Kamil: We could just say the problems you were having.

Eshana: Yeah, so basically the goal with this question is to determine whether you are using Council as a tool to advise you.

Matthew: Wondering about phrasing of number 4?

Eshana: Yes, we will just match this to the same phrasing we used for Council.

CK: Do you just want to copy all three of the executive goal questions because for Council we asked three, we asked if there was input, if the presentations held them accountable, and if the executives achieved their goals, do we just want to ask them the same three but rephrase them?

Eshana: I really think it is that did Council have input and influence over your goals, okay awesome, number 6 is good as well, moving on to number 7.

CK: For question 7, we should add not in front of supportive, also another thing, the difference between effective and supportive is obvious but do we want to tie them to the same question?

Kamil: Yeah, that was literally just done because it was getting long.

Eshana: Moving on to number 8.

CK: I think this should just be a text box, we should also for the next question separate out transition and orientation for executives.

Eshana: Okay so number 11, I believe this came from you feel more comfortable talking to some Councillors than others.

Kamil: It came from a conversation at the last meeting where people were talking about how you can only get ahead if you're schmoozing the executives, or it was something like that.

Eshana: Okay but I think this is really like relying on specific Councillors.

CK: I think asking if you knew Councillors before coming into your role changes the question fundamentally, if we are going to ask did you develop personal friendships with Councillors then that is different.

Kamil: We can also just scrap question 11.

Eshana: Great, moving on to question 12 just use the word adversarial.

CK: Yeah, also maybe just flip the subject and object for questions 12-14.

Eshana: Awesome moving on to question 15, I like it but I need to give more thought to it.

Cynara Onyemordi assumes the Chair.

Cynara: Any thoughts on question 16?

CK: I would bump the student services question above predecessors because it seems like predecessors pulls at the advisory board, so I would say Managing Director, Student Services Manager, then predecessors and then finally advisory board, and maybe even bump staff performance before predecessor as well.

Cynara: Thoughts on question 17?

Eshana: Question 17 is good.

CK: Do we want to phrase the stuff about the Student Services Manager and the MD the same way?

Eshana: We should ask Keith about his thoughts on the MD questions.

Matthew: For 15-18, is yes or no the best approach?

CK: I think all of this is fishing for a long answer.

Matthew: Okay because it says only long answer if they answer no.

CK: I think we talked about it at the beginning where we would open textboxes for all of them, with the MD questions I think even before showing it to the MD we should just rephrase it better.

Eshana: I think the thing is though we don't manage the SSM, the MD does.

CK: Okay maybe let's just rephrase it that way though.

Cynara: Great, let's move on to the advisory board questions.

Eshana: The questions about the advisory board are good but let's add a text box.

Cynara: Great, I guess 21 is good as well.

Eshana: We should add a question that asks did you feel you had the training to now manage staff, lead a team and in HR, also add a question about VPs' feeling if Council was worth their time.

CK: So I guess what is the question you are looking to ask, did the VPs feel comfortable enough to speak at Council or something else?

Eshana: Not sure now, I will have to think about it, I think basically just asking them if it was a good use of their time.

Cynara: Great, moving onto question 1 in the next section, looks great.

Kamil: Yep, also the student staff section was meant to be short.

CK: Is this open to staff from multiple years?

Kamil: I think just staff from this year, and we are opening it up to staff from last year if they would like.

CK: Do we want to ask if they are current or former?

Kamil: We ask that all the way in the beginning and then it takes them to a specific question set.

CK: We should have 3 lines of questioning because they could say they are current, former or both.

Cynara: Great, moving on to question 4.

CK: What is the difference between being trained and onboarded?

Eshana: I agree, make trained and onboarded one question.

Cynara: Any thoughts on number 5?

Eshana: How about instead of operations, we ask did you feel you had a say in the decision of your VPs.

Cynara: Anything for number 6?

CK: I would maybe rephrase this to say that when I had an initiative or project instead of idea.

Cynara: Isn't this the same as having a say?

CK: Well, having a say is different than having your own initiatives and ideas.

Eshana: Yeah, I guess it's also more about did your VP care about what you had to say.

Cynara: Okay we are going to move on to number 7.

Kamil: Max had suggested that 5, 6, 7 address functionality of the portfolio, executive ability to understand, and then did you feel like you contributed what you wanted to contribute.

Cynara: Great, next question.

CK: I feel like with the way this is worded people will just say no I want more money.

Eshana: I think for question 8 it was about were you working proportional to the number of hours you were paid.

CK: Yeah, I think phrasing that is important because are we trying to figure out did they feel got paid or are they overworking?

Eshana: I think overworking

CK: Then we should clarify because using the word paid everyone is just going to say that they should be paid more.

Eshana: What we are trying to track here is the amount of work but I need to think on this more.

CK: I think it is about did you feel had enough work to do, did you need more work or did you have too much work, it could also just be a scale question.

Eshana: Ultimately did you feel like your hours corresponded with your work, if no were you overworked or underworked, and it should be a slider.

Cynara: Number 9 is good, but do we want to define a professional work environment?

Eshana: I think it is pretty clear cut.

CK: But do we want to ask did you feel you were respected in that environment because that is different than was it professional.

Cynara: Great, moving on to Presidents Council questions.

CK: We should rephrase question 1 of Presidents Council to say when we needed AMS help did they/could they help because we don't ask the AMS for help in all our initiatives, I would just have a blank textbox which would be for whether they agree or disagree.

Cynara: What about question 2?

CK: We should ask specifically about reimbursements because otherwise that will be all over the survey, ask do you have any feedback on the AMS reimbursement process and just have it as a textbox, just say this is the place for reimbursements and do not carry it throughout the survey.

Cynara: Moving on to question 3.

CK: Clarify who in the AMS to contact because we say AMS everywhere else.

Eshana: Numbers 4, 5 and 6 all look good to me.

CK: I would say though if you are going to ask the biggest challenge also have a question for what was the biggest asset the AMS provided you, also ask a question about what could the AMS provide you with that it doesn't currently provide.

Cynara: Number 5?

CK: Say, relevant Vice-Presidents who were supposed to liaise with the AMS.

Cynara: Moving on to number 6.

CK: Clarify question 6 by adding AMS executives, maybe for the next question we could ask did your personal relationship with the executives correlate to the service you received at the AMS.

Eshana: I think how it is right now is pretty clear.

Cynara: Number 7 also looks good for everyone, anything else we want to ask Constituencies?

CK: We could ask what can AMS do for your constituency, I also really think we should consult Presidents Council about this before we send it out.

Eshana: We can also just send the draft Presidents Council section to them.

CK: I think it would be more useful in a meeting, we could also ask do you think the AMS understands or values what you do as a constituency.

Eshana: Yes so do you feel connected to the AMS, that is a good idea, I want to know if they feel a part of the AMS.

Cynara: Great, moving on to permanent staff questions, number 1 looks good how about number 2?

CK: What is the difference between being non-voting and invited?

Kamil: Not sure.

CK: Okay cool I like how it is now.

Cynara: Number 4?

CK: 3 and 4 sound similar.

Kamil: I think based on conversation with permanent staff, the expectation piece is what they are looking for more.

CK: Yeah, their role in Code is pretty set out.

Cynara: Thoughts on 5, 6, 7?

Eshana: Executives and Councillors should be separate because they expect different things from permanent staff.

CK: Maybe we should change it further from Councillors to Committee Chairs.

Eshana Bhangu reassumes the Chair.

Eshana: I think we are good now for the first draft, I think between now and the next meeting let's have the final draft sent out to Committee members, once the changes are made, put it on a google doc for feedback which Councillors on the Committee will give and we will also make a tester survey.

Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned at 7:41 PM