

Date: January 18th, 2023

Participants: Eshana Bhangu, Mathew Ho, Rachel Kim, Thomas Dunsmore, Audrey Chow, Cynara Onyemordi, Sheldon Goldfarb

Recording Secretary: Joshua Kim

Meeting called to order at 7:10 PM

Eshana: Did everyone read the MNP recommendations document?

All: Varying responses, but yes.

Eshana: We skipped some of the integral parts of the committee. Going through what is the problem with the AMS around the room. I think we can do more for gov review and I haven't seen any recommendations addressing the issues of the organization that was discussed by the committee. The organization has failed to inspire councillors.

Audrey: I think we could do more, but time. Some of these recommendations would definitely help.

Eshana: You are not wrong and we are not starting from scratch. There is a better way to look at these. Anyone looked at the survey results, U15 scan, and recommendations and saw any correlations?

All: Either skimmed or haven't looked at it at all.

Eshana: We can do more. Most are Code changes or "Eshana does it" rather than bylaw changes. We should be, on Saturday, to prioritize what needs to be done through bylaw changes. Code changes and other stuff, we have until April to complete. Bylaw changes, we have until Feb 15th to get them completed. Also, to explore crazy ideas that have not been/been discussed in the past that can change the structure of the organization. Go through each recommendation and we can go from there. Think, from all these issues, which of these issues is a multi-year problem? Issue 1.

Cynara: Councillors are less engaged. Kamil talks about how people were more engaged back then.

Eshana: It's not that councillors don't care this year but also that the execs are taking advantage of talking with councillors. In the past, execs have not utilized councillors as board members and advisors outside of board meetings. Proper engagement between execs and board members is important.

Thomas: Councillors do care, but also the representation of this room is AUS, CUS (and traditionally AUS, CUS, EUS talks in Council). Shows how people don't have their own opinions in council.

Eshana: Executives have failed in extracting advice and actually building relations with councillors that will help them succeed in their work. Adversarial relationship vs. Kamil's censure motion. If executives gain advice from councillors on how to better do jobs, that'd improve exec competency.

Mathew: I feel like there are some valid things that councillors can bring in and talk with councillors. If councillors can talk to other councillors to work on things, that'd be good, but it rarely happens.

Eshana: Previously, people might have assumed groups of councillors working together as conspirators instead of being a group of helpers for execs.

Audrey: A big problem – lack of information. People don't read the booklet. Also, if you have not been on council before, councillors that are newly elected are lost on what to do. If I was a smaller constituency rep, I would feel very lost and therefore have no motivation to be a part of the council.

Cynara: The important discussion items or 2/3 consent agenda items or EA appointment items to not be discussed in council before being voted in shows that people are not reading the minutes and not asking questions is a problem. This shows the negligence of the council to not ask questions on important issues and decisions made by the organization.

Audrey: Why didn't people bring up questions? Thomas and Cynara were in the discussion process, and I knew about the process through Cynara. 5 people who normally talk have sway over the council.

Eshana: Previous years, Ryan Wong found a 25k budget error in Lucia's year. If we have a council that is controlled by a small group of people and execs doing shitty things then that is a grave error in our system. Before COVID, it used to be better.

Thomas: I wonder if sometimes it is better to allow less important/flawed things in the council agenda because if everything is quick and clean, then people develop this sense of trust and kind of slack off.

Audrey: If some councillors have extra conversations and knowledge on agenda items with executives, it seems unfair to other councillors.

Eshana: It's not that some councillors receive extra packages of information. All councillors give me feedback personally as well. They will come up to me and talk to me and provide insights.

Mathew: How AMS interacts with members at large. Students don't care too much about AMS issues unless it's something controversial.

Eshana: In-camera discussions helped the organization and the board with more communications and knowledge available for board members and effective work being done.

Cynara: What is the point of council if one only speaks to a couple of councillors and others don't have these conversations?

Eshana: What's the point of council? For debate or to progress as an organization?

Thomas: Giving councillors more engaging work to do on a committee level.

Mathew: Advocacy committee, items are brought up by the execs. There are a lot of ideas within individual councillors but never brought up at the committee level.

Eshana: I think when councillors have ideas, it is something related to taking stances on geopolitical issues.

Cynara: Revising committee's TOR to set the kind of work they'd like to do every new year.

Eshana: Issue: council turnover. No value is seen in committing that much time to be a councillor. Go through issues and then recommendations. Recommendation on reducing council size – how to go with this will need to be hashed out. For example, no redundancy in representation between GSS seats and graduate program seats separately represented. Issue 2: council environment. More socials, proper orientation, Speaker's more active role in council sessions, etc. would be important recommendations to adopt. What are other systems that can be put in place with keeping execs accountable?

Thomas: Having a smaller space to provide feedback is much more valuable for execs. Council every two weeks, in-camera sessions are less efficient than smaller space for feedback. How can the AMS help foster productive and efficient AMS representatives?

Eshana: Need to find a way for an objective performance analysis for execs.

Cynara: Nurture the councillors to be efficient councillors. More veteran councillors – have current councillors enjoy being on council.

Eshana: Mentorship – something that died over the pandemic.

Sheldon: Thought about oversight a lot – relatively newly developed concept.

Thomas: Councillors are elected from the constituency-level yet expected to put their primary fiduciary duty with the AMS.

Eshana: Understandable as to why would one care about AMS governance when constituency people are in debt because of the AMS. Reforms on council meetings. None of the reforms require bylaw changes.

Audrey: I don't think we should remove the exec oversight committee right away. I think there is some value to having one. A method to engage councillors and to encourage councillors to become a better councillors.

Eshana: We are not getting rid of it – just keep an eye out for correlations between reforms. Removing VPs as voting power is good – they normally hold a $\frac{1}{3}$ voting bloc when quorum is barely met. Exec accountability – 3 reforms are reliant on the creation of exec oversight committee. Exec removal by $\frac{2}{3}$ council vote. Other reforms are good too – committee structures need to be revamped. Terrible idea for committees to be structured based on AMS operations (food outlets for example). Councillors should not interfere with day-to-day businesses.

Audrey: Not sure if it was necessarily everything the business does is passed via motion but just advices.

Eshana: It's not a good idea – will elaborate later. Business and Audit Committee – not sure if we need this since we are a student organization. (Conversation on not overshooting with exec accountability with the committee). No strong opinions about transparency – not sure of need for policies but there is a Board policy that we can model after. Mixed feelings on advisory board – none of the recommendations will fix the problems with Advisory Board.

Audrey: Concerns with Audit and Business Committee – thinks like it's not a bad idea.

Eshana: VP Finance is the one responsible for auditing and communicating with our auditors.

Audrey: Not sure if the VPF as a student will have much capacity to successfully perform their job in auditing.

Eshana: Will discuss further later.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

