



**ams**  
student society

**THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT**

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Executive Coordinator, Student Services

Alma Mater Society

September-November 2009

**CONTENTS**

**INTRODUCTION ..... 3**

**THE SERVICES..... 4**

    Advocacy ..... 4

    Food Bank..... 4

    Minischool ..... 5

    Safety Office ..... 6

    Safewalk ..... 7

    Sexual Assault Support Centre ..... 8

    Speakeasy ..... 9

    Tutoring ..... 10

    Volunteer Connect ..... 12

    Shinerama 2009..... 13

**COMMITTEES..... 14**

    Hiring Committees..... 14

    Suicide Awareness Committee ..... 15

    Thrive Week Committee ..... 17

    Learning Enhancement Academic Partnership (LEAP) ..... 18

    CLC/LEAP Student Advisory Committee ..... 188

**MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS ..... 19**

**CONFERENCES/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ..... 20**

**VOLUNTEERISM ..... 22**

**SERVICES REVIEW ..... 25**

## INTRODUCTION

Dear All,

I had expected the last few months to be incredibly busy, and they were, but I never expected them to pass so quickly. My desk calendar still says September, the month I feel it should be! As we enter the home stretch, I reflect on the past year and find myself amazed by all that my team has accomplished, the challenges we have faced and the obstacles we have overcome. I am incredibly privileged to have worked with such an outstanding team.



When I came in to the ECSS position in March, I knew that I wanted to pursue a career as a physician while working to improve health care services. Naturally, I had expected to gain experience in the delivery and improvement of services. What I did not expect was the profound impact that working in *student* services would have on me. Recently, I was a panellist at a discussion on Careers in Student Affairs. As I listened to my fellow panellists, all of them professionals in the field of Student Affairs, speak about why they had chosen their careers and why they enjoyed working with students, I was struck with the sudden realization that I myself could relate to many of these things.

*Never* before had the idea pursuing a career in Student Affairs crossed my mind. While much of my community service and volunteer work has involved working with students, and I literally grew up in campus environments due to the nature of my parents' work, working with students had never been a part of the "career plan" or the "future map." But from that moment forward, I haven't been able to picture a career that doesn't involve working with students in some capacity. While I am reluctant to come to any definitive conclusions, I am grateful for what this experience has opened my eyes to and I look forward to what the future holds.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Vicki Poullos, the new Support Services Coordinator of the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre. With an extensive background in education, crisis management and support, Vicki will undoubtedly be a tremendous asset to the team.

As always, if you have any questions, comments or input about any of our services, programs and initiatives, please do not hesitate to contact me at [services@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:services@ams.ubc.ca) or 604-822-9949.

Have a great holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Pavani Gunadasa

## THE SERVICES

The following are individual reports from the Coordinator of each respective Service and Shinerama. They contain updates on the progress and activities of each Service or campaign as well as a summary of the challenges they are facing or faced in the preceding quarter. I have supplemented the reports with my personal comments as needed.

## ADVOCACY

**Coordinator: Hillson Tse**

**E-mail:** [advocate@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:advocate@ams.ubc.ca)

**Tel: 604-822-9855**

### Overview

In the period of August-November, the AMS Advocacy Office was involved in seven documented cases and met with two of those individuals personally to further discuss their situation and provide advice. Issues that were encountered in this quarter were primarily a continuation of cases from the previous Spring or Summer semester involving failed standing and plagiarism/cheating. The Advocacy Office made two appearances at student hearings; one at the PACSD and one at the Senate Appeals Committee on Academic Standing. Two more hearings have been scheduled for the month of December. As predicted in the last quarterly report, case volume has been extremely low during this quarter primarily because students generally don't have failed year issues in the beginning of the year and also because students only plagiarize/cheat during or after midterms and finals. Interviews for the Assistant Coordinator position were held but the position has not been filled. Given the current case load this office is facing, an assistant would not be required until Spring semester when plagiarism or failed year cases from this current semester would be processed. I would suggest that instead of hiring an assistant coordinator, we should hire the incoming Advocacy coordinator as a co-coordinator if possible. While hiring of coordinators usually takes place in March/April, the Advocacy office experiences a huge caseload increase during the transitional period between coordinators. Hiring the incoming coordinator before the case rush would allow him/her to have some hands on experience dealing with cases instead of being left alone to learn the ropes come March/April.

## FOOD BANK

**Coordinator: Joanna Yang**

**E-mail:** [foodbank@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:foodbank@ams.ubc.ca)

**Tel: 604-827-5325**

The AMS Food Bank is currently well stocked thanks to several initiatives that occurred over the past month:

- Food For Fines: approximately 22 boxes were donated by the UBC Libraries; 50% went to the Greater Vancouver Food Bank
- Save-on-Foods (on-campus location) donates fresh bread (expires on the day of) to Sprouts & the AMS Food Bank every Monday and Wednesday
- Trick or Eat: we received 920 lbs of food (20 boxes)

The biggest event for the AMS Food Bank this quarter was Trick or Eat. Since the Meal Exchange was promoting their cause through us as well, working with them was a great way to increase our presence on our campus. In total, the event had nearly 400 volunteers (registered through the Meal Exchange website) and resulted in nearly 9,500 lbs of food donated! The Food Bank Executive team was very dedicated in terms of helping out and we spent most of our Halloween Saturday driving food donations, packing, and greeting volunteers. In terms of finances: we spent approximately \$325 on 38 pizzas from Domino's Pizza in West Vancouver.

We are now focusing on a Christmas hamper program where students will be allowed to apply for a certain type of hamper. For example, we will feature single student hampers and hampers for small families. In order to do this, we are planning to work in collaboration with various student groups and clubs. We also would like to raise monetary funds for this initiative.

## MINISCHOOL

**Coordinator: Justin Yang**

**Assistant Coordinator: Jenny Zhou**

**E-mail: [minischool@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:minischool@ams.ubc.ca)**

**Tel: 604-822-9342**

This quarter has been extremely productive for AMS Minischool; all courses that had enough registration have been running for the past few weeks without much incident. Some classes have concluded and a satisfaction survey has been sent out to gauge participant feedback.

Plans are currently underway to appoint a marketing intern through AMS Internships in order to overhaul our marketing portfolio; Jenny, the Assistant Coordinator, will be taking the lead on this project with her background in marketing and promotions. We have approximately \$600 left in our promotions budget, \$350 of which will be allocated to our traditional marketing programme. The remaining amount will be spent at the discretion of the AMS Minischool Coordinator based upon recommendations from the Assistant Coordinator and the Marketing Intern.

We are currently planning for our Winter Session and are excited to introduce new courses to fulfill existing gaps in our repertoire. We welcome all input from councilors regarding potential courses. Please email all ideas to [minischool@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:minischool@ams.ubc.ca).

## SAFETY OFFICE

**Coordinator: (Hiring in Progress)**

**E-mail:** [safety@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:safety@ams.ubc.ca)

**Tel:** 604-822-9319

*(Report by ECSS Pavani Gunadasa)*

The former Coordinator left the position at the end of September 2009, after three years of dedicated service. The Safety Coordinator officially reports to the Vice President Academic and University Affairs. This unexpected vacancy was discussed at the Executive Committee meeting on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 and the Committee decided that, as per the policy, the Safety Coordinator position would be re-posted for a period of two-weeks. As VP Academic Johannes Rebane was away at the time, Services Manager Jane Barry volunteered to oversee Safety Days, in the absence of a Coordinator. As I work very closely with Jane, I volunteered to help her with this. Safety Days, which are organized by the Safety Coordinator, take place during the first week of October and are days in which various groups and services at UBC who contribute to campus safety are invited to hold tables on the main concourse of the SUB. Jane had been informed by the outgoing Coordinator that everything had already been organized for the day and the organizations attending were familiar with what takes place on Safety Days, having attended for many years previous. Unfortunately, there must have been some miscommunication as there was little turn out from groups and only for a few hours on the first day. We look forward to revamping and re-hosting Safety Days again in the new semester.

At the Executive Committee meeting on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the Safety Coordinator position was discussed once again. The Committee realized that no one was very familiar with the duties and operations of the Safety Office and that we did not have a transition report. Furthermore, last year, when the AMS Equity and Diversity Coordinator position was created, a number of the duties of the Safety Office were transferred over to this position but the Safety Coordinator position was not reviewed to determine how these changes would affect the position. There was also some discussion over whether or not the position should remain. It was decided that more information was needed. As such, Johannes and I were assigned by the Committee to investigate the Safety Coordinator Position. Based on information from this investigation, it seemed prudent that we go ahead with hiring for the Safety Coordinator position. In addition to serving various unique and important functions, while the Equity Office had taken on addressing many of the “covert” safety issues, the Safety Office still fulfilled an important role in addressing “overt” safety issues. Furthermore, it became very clear that the Safety Office was a natural fit within the Services and that there were substantial reasons to support this change in reporting structure (reasons that extend well beyond this year). I will be providing a supplementary report, citing the reasons for this operational change, and extensive supporting documentation, when the formal Code change is proposed. The Executive Committee meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009 was cancelled and I was unable bring this information to the attention of the entire Committee. However, in correspondence to the entire Committee, President Blake Frederick suggested

discussing the Safety Coordinator position offline. The issues mentioned above were discussed offline on the same day and it was determined that we would proceed with hiring for the Safety Coordinator position and shift the supervisory responsibilities for the Safety Coordinator to the ECSS through mutual agreement between myself and Johannes, until a formal Code amendment can be made.

The deadline for applications for this position was on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 (we had 15 applicants). Jane and I screened the applicants for interviews, which were conducted on November 9<sup>th</sup>. As a formal Code amendment has not yet been made, although I would be involved with the process, the Primary Appointments Committee (as opposed to the Coordinator Appointments Committee) was tasked with the hiring. I am currently in the process of conducting reference checks. We have some very strong candidates for the position and I have no doubt that we will be able to appoint a new Coordinator shortly. However, we have experienced a minor setback due to differences in the appointment regulations around the Safety Coordinator position and the other Services Coordinator positions (there are regulations around the Services Coordinator positions that prevent a conflict of interest for the appointee but there is no such regulation around the Safety Coordinator position at this time). I will be discussing this at the Executive Committee Meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

In the meantime, during the vacancy of the Safety Coordinator position, I have been monitoring and responding to correspondence sent to the Safety Coordinator and have set an “out of office” message for the e-mail account and an “extended absence greeting” on the voicemail, in which I provided my contact info if urgent assistance is required. Most of the correspondence has been from mailing lists and the Office has only received two e-mails with personal correspondence to which I made prompt replies. There does not appear to be any pending tasks assigned to the Coordinator by any committees at this time. While the Safety Office, as with any Service, will require a large investment of time and effort on the part of both myself and the new Coordinator, especially with the changes to its mandate and its integration in to the Services; I am certainly looking forward to the challenge.

## SAFEWALK

**Coordinator: Ben Cappellacci**  
**Assistant Coordinator: Dominic Yeo**  
**E-mail: [safewalk@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:safewalk@ams.ubc.ca)**  
**Tel: 604-822-2181**

Entering into the winter months, Safewalk had developed a stable operating structure to ensure consistent service going forward. Many of the planned changes and improvements outlined in the previous two quarterly reports have been implemented and the current focus of both coordinators' efforts have been centered on the stabilization of the service through human resources practices and a continued search for opportunities to further improve safety awareness on campus.

Safewalk has reached its goals for consistent operation for the semester. The initial months of the semester resulted in the hiring of a full complement of staff, which currently stands at 55 employees.

Safewalk currently operates five shifts a night between 7 p.m. and 2 a.m. Safewalk has had regular nightly service since its reactivation and from the beginning of the academic year has serviced over 280 patrons with an average of nearly 5 walks a night. Safewalk has reached its goals in its operations by having all of its radios repaired thereby eliminating the need to purchase new ones. The service is also purchasing new, lightweight, high powered LED flashlights to replace the aging flashlight fleet. Safewalk coordinators currently attend regular meetings with Campus Security to be up to date with campus safety issues. Safewalk has also issued a comprehensive poster campaign to raise awareness for the service in residences and select libraries and study areas.

Current efforts at Safewalk have concentrated on resolving internal issues of the service. The administrative office is currently reviewing files to archive and streamline storage. The Team Leader (TL) role is still under review and a recent TL meeting generated a significant amount of advice on how to improve the position. As the winter season progresses, absences due to sickness have become an increasing issue and have resulted in the development of protocols to ensure consistent management of work absences and missed shifts for Safewalk now and in years to come. Preparations are now being made to accommodate Safewalk employees for the exam season as well as the development of a strategic plan for the Olympics. Safewalk is working hard to ensure that the service continues to operate at the high level of quality and professionalism it strives to deliver daily to the students, staff and visitors of UBC.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT CENTRE

**Program Coordinator: Gina Eisenhaur**

**E-mail:** [sascprog@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:sascprog@ams.ubc.ca)

**Support Services Coordinator: Vicki Poulios**

**E-mail:** [sasc@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:sasc@ams.ubc.ca)

**Tel: 604-827-5180**

The Sexual Assault Support Centre of the AMS has been providing survivors of violence with free and confidential support since 2003. We provide students, faculty and staff access to sexual assault support services on campus. SASC continues to provide programs and services to survivors of sexual assault, as well as to their families, friends.

The services that we offer include individual support for female, male and trans survivors of sexual assault, a resource area, campus-related advocacy, police, court and hospital accompaniments, assistance with Third Party Reports (anonymous police reports), referrals to on and off campus resources, public education, workshops, community and volunteer training, and a volunteer program.

We are pleased to announce that SASC has recently hired a new Support Services Coordinator. Her name is Vicki Poulios. Vicki is a UBC graduate and has worked with the Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter. She has most recently been a teacher at Britannia Secondary. Vicki's background in



support services and her teaching skills will be most valuable in this position. Vicki started with us today and we would like to extend her a warm welcome.

We also hired a student, Emily Yakashiro to fill the position of SASC Outreach Worker. Emily started in the position in mid-October. The goal of this position is to raise awareness of sexual assault issues, and to raise the profile of the SASC on campus. We are continuing to promote and facilitate workshops to on-campus groups and classes at UBC.

SASC has been busy planning activities and events to take place November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 4<sup>th</sup>. We are also planning events and activities for December 6<sup>th</sup>, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The day marks the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, and reminds us of acts of gendered-based violence against women in Canada and around the world. As a day of action, it prompts us to take steps to end violence against women.

SASC's goals continue to be to provide quality, professional sexual assault services on campus through the provision of support for survivors and through public education activities. We have continued to produce materials from two of our previous campaigns, the 'Drink Spiking' campaign, and the "got consent?" campaign and to distribute the materials, such as, coasters, posters, stickers, t-shirts, underwear and temporary tattoos throughout campus in places such as the Pit Pub and in the Residences.

## SPEAKEASY

**Coordinator: Nick Nagy**

**Assistant Coordinator: Vivian Lam**

**E-mail: [speak@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:speak@ams.ubc.ca)**

**Tel: 604-822-9246**

### **Volunteer Recruitment**

As we come up to our midway point for this school year Speakeasy is very happy to report a 100% retention rate of volunteers. We are currently about ¾ of the way through our individual volunteer review and feedback interviews and are getting an overwhelmingly positive response from our volunteers this year. In looking at the numbers, we are forecasting an 80% retention rate for the following Speakeasy year, with most of the loss being a result of graduation.

### **Volunteer Training**

The Speakeasy training at the AMS Whistler Lodge was an amazing success. Volunteers were extremely positive in their feedback of the event, with returning volunteers stating that it was an invaluable addition to the program. We had representatives from UBC Counseling Services, SAFER community resources, and Qumunity, who provided training. There was some concern regarding the amount of

training scheduled for the two days and it was suggested that in the future a longer training period be scheduled.

January 16th-17th will be the second of Speakeasy's major training sessions. We are currently in the process of working out the logistics of the training but it will be happening at the SUB and will focus on advanced peer support skills and relationship building.

### **Desk Operations**

The Desk is operating very well with a 73% increase in the number of inquires over this time last year. We implemented a new shift system, sign-in program, and statistical tracking program which are all working very well. We have a committee of volunteers and team leaders monitoring desk activities and suggesting changes to our operational procedures. We are planning on implementing some changes to our volunteer identification, time tracking policies, and confidentiality forms.

### **Internships**

Our interns are hard at work on various projects in areas such as; event planning, charitable participation, program development, advertising, training, community outreach, and resource development.

### **Community Partnerships**

Speakeasy has been participating in many campus wide events, such as Suicide Awareness Day and Wellness Week. We are also continuing to build on our relationship with Counseling Services, the Wellness Centre, prideUBC, Access and Diversity, and Orientations.

### **Overview**

In review, Speakeasy is ahead of schedule in regards to the progress of the goals set out for this year. The program has quickly shed of many of the difficulties it had experienced in the past few years. Our volunteers our happy, the Team Leaders are doing very well, and we are getting overwhelmingly positive comments from the UBC community.

## **TUTORING**

**Coordinator: Yalda Ebrahimi**  
**Assistant Coordinator: Mike Brown**  
**Assistant Coordinator: Emily Lam**  
**E-mail: [tutoring@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:tutoring@ams.ubc.ca)**  
**Tel: 604-822-9084**

The following are some of the events that took place in September - November:

### **Promotion**

- Updated schedule and services on our website to make it more accessible to students
- Updated schedule on LEAP website to make it more accessible to students who visit the LEAP website
- Participated at the First Nations House of Learning Welcome Back BBQ to promote AMS Tutoring

### **Tutoring**

- Drop-In tutoring began on September 14th; AMS Tutoring offers Math, Chemistry, and Physics, Monday to Thursday, from 3pm – 7pm. Economics is offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3pm – 7pm. There are 2/3 Math tutors available everyday as it is our most popular subject. Up to October 31st, there were 867 students who used our drop-in services; out of these 48% used Math, 29% used Physics, 17% used Chemistry, and 6% used Economics. Compared to last year, the percentage of students using Physics, Chemistry and Economics has increased. The Math drop-ins are as busy as before; this is because we are operating at the same location as the Math Resource Centre, and there is a one hour overlap at which both services are operating. We are thinking about changing the Drop-In tutoring hours for next term to 4pm – 8pm, to avoid the one hour overlap with Math Resource Centre.
- Online Tutoring began on September 17th; we offer tutoring for Math, Physics, and Economics on Thursdays from 3pm – 6pm and Sundays from 4pm – 8pm. We also offer tutoring for Chemistry on Sundays from 4pm – 8pm. Up to November 1st, there were 390 students who used our online tutoring service; out of these, 54% used Math, 19% used Economics, 16% used Chemistry, and 11% used Physics. There was a 92% increase in the use of online tutoring for Math this year. Overall the number of students using online tutoring this year has increased by 4%.
- Residential Tutoring began on September 23<sup>rd</sup>; we offer tutoring for Math, Physics, Chemistry, and Economics on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8pm – 11pm at both Place Vanier and Totem Park. Our tutoring is placed in the commons block of both residences so we can attract more traffic. Unfortunately we do not have the stats for residential tutoring at the moment, but from what I have heard and seen, the usage of the service has increased this year. We met with Kate Ferguson, Assistant Director of Residence Life, to discuss possible ways to improve the service. Some ideas were: dedicated space to AMS Tutoring, more advertisement at residences about our service, and tutor bios to make the tutors more recognizable to students.
- Athletic Tutoring began on September 21st; we offer tutoring for Math, Chemistry, Physics, Economics and English on Mondays and Tuesdays from 6pm – 9pm. Stephanie Snow, Coordinator of Athletic Services, has mentioned how this year more students are asking help from the tutors as opposed to last year.
- This year we are not doing weekly tutoring for the Engineering department. Instead we have mini review sessions that have taken place throughout the term. The feedback has been good, as the mini review sessions still have the review session structure, with the tutor lecturing for an hour or so, but because of the reduced size, students get to interact with the tutor more and ask more questions.

### **Review Sessions**

- We are now in the midst of finalizing the plans for final review sessions. Last year we had review sessions for Math in term 1 and 2, and Econ in term 2. This year we are trying to have review sessions for Math, Chemistry, and Econ in term 1, and see how the turn out will be.

## VOLUNTEER CONNECT

**Coordinator: Daniel Chow**

**Assistant Coordinator: Annie Tai**

**E-mail: [volunteers@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:volunteers@ams.ubc.ca)**

**Tel: 604-822-9268**

**Internship Coordinator: Joshabelle Josephson**

**E-mail: [internship@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:internship@ams.ubc.ca)**

**Tel: 604-827-3607**

### Volunteer Connect October Fair 2009

The AMS Volunteer Connect October Fair was the main focus in this quarter. It was held from October 26<sup>th</sup> to October 29<sup>th</sup>. We had 29 participating organizations, with 4 student groups and 5 UBC departments participating. The fair was successful and we received many positive and constructive comments from the organizations. Below are some of the comments from the organizations:

*"Refreshments were a great idea and much appreciated; handbook seemed to do the trick with all the info needed to browse through."*

*"I liked the clear organization of resources, access to power, etc, location, good preparation, helpful info about parking."*

*"I think the large curtain in middle created too much of a disconnection between the two sides of the fair. I don't think that curtain was necessary. Also, it would work better for interaction with inquiring students if the tables were pushed back further so the people representing the organizations present could stand in front of their displays rather than behind them."*

The organizations enjoyed the refreshments we provided for them and appreciated the fact that everything was ready for them when they arrived. The traffic flow was great as many students were aware of the fair. However, due to the class schedule difference on Tuesdays and Thursdays, there were not as many students as expected. Also, some organizations suggested that the middle curtain should be taken down so it is more visible to students. In addition, we feel that more promotion work is needed for the fair.

We had five volunteers who assisted with the event and they were very helpful. We were usually quite busy in the morning because we needed to help the organizations to take their promotional items down from the Volunteer Connect office to the concourse, distribute refreshments, and hand out volunteer handbooks.

### **Partnership with CareersOnline**

Because the AMS Volunteer Connect database is no longer available, we started putting up postings on CareersOnline. Many students have been replying to various postings that we put up. We receive about five to eight applicants per posting. For some positions, such as the Internship Assistant and the AMS Tutoring Intern, we have received more than 10 applicants. We believe that CareersOnline has given us the opportunity to advertise volunteer postings to more students as well as keeping track of the students who are applying for various positions.

### **Internship**

As the Fall Internship Placement started, many students were already landed with internships. There are, however, some challenges when helping students find appropriate internships. There are employers who do not understand the idea of internship program, they would like to have students who have specialized skills before they are hired. This is not what the Internship Program wants. It changes the goal of creating a hands-on learning environment for students. After meeting with the Arts Internship Program Coordinator from Career Services, we learned more about their program as well as ways that we can improve our service.

We decided to hire some Internship Assistants to help Joshabelle out with creating learning objectives for students, as well as performing on-site visits so we can learn more about the employers. These positions are unpaid and they are helping Joshabelle out on daily administrative tasks such as connecting with employers and students and researching new employers who are willing to take interns. Since the assistants were only hired at the beginning of November, I cannot comment on the success of the new interns yet.

The new poster for the Winter Placement is available and we are advertising this opportunity to students. The deadline for the Winter Placement is on November 20th, 2009 and the info session will be held on Nov 12 and Nov 13.

## SHINERAMA 2009

**Coordinator: Wendy Zhou**

**E-mail: [shinerama@ams.ubc.ca](mailto:shinerama@ams.ubc.ca)**

**Tel: 604-822-9268**

Campaign Total: The 2009 AMS/UBC Shinerama ended with \$11,930 in funds raised. The money counting process was slow and painful and it took the entire Shinerama Committee a week to finish

counting and rolling all the coins collected on Shine Day. We managed to fundraise more than \$5,000 on Shine Day, our biggest event.

Campaign Wrap-up: Currently, I am at the very end of wrapping up the campaign.

- In October, the UBC Bookstore presented us with a cheque of more than \$9,000. The money was collected during the Bookstore Round Up which took place in September.
- With the help of AMS Graphic Designer Bill Matthews, we created Appreciation Certificates for our committee and sub-committee members.
- The funds raised will be shipped to the National Shinerama Organization in the form of a cheque by November 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- The Press Release draft is under evaluation by Kelli Seepaul, the AMS Communications and Design Services Manager.
- We are about to print out photos of volunteers helping out on Shine Day. Along with the photos, Certificates of Appreciation and thank-you letters will be sent to the sponsors.
- I am in the process of writing up the Thank You Letters to sponsors, reference letters for committee members, as well as the Transition Report.
- Pavani and I will meet for a final wrap-up meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

## COMMITTEES

### HIRING COMMITTEES

I would never have imagined that these Committees would be active this late in the year! A new round of hiring started in October due to the departure of Nicky Brighid, the Support Services Coordinator of the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre (a permanent staff position), who had held the position for a number of years. We had an overwhelming response to the posting from numerous well-qualified applicants. We experienced a number of setbacks that delayed the hiring process but we ultimately decided to offer the position Vicki Poullos, who will begin orientation on November 16th, 2009. Vicki has extensive experience in education, crisis management and support work and we are certain she will make an excellent addition to the team!

Last year, AMS Advocacy budgeted for salaries for one Coordinator and two Assistant Coordinators or "Advocates." However, only one Assistant was hired. Even then, the caseload throughout most of the year was easily managed by just a Coordinator. For this reason, this year, we only budgeted for one Assistant Coordinator and delayed their hiring until the fall (as the caseload over the summer is very light). We had also intended for this Assistant to focus more on the special projects being undertaken by the Advocacy Office this year. In October, we carried out a round of interviews but were unable to find a suitable candidate for the position. Rather than re-open the posting, considering that the caseload was very light, the Advocacy Coordinator recommended that it was unnecessary to hire an Assistant at this

time. Therefore, we have decided to postpone the hiring for this position indefinitely. The Coordinator will be working on the special projects that would have been assigned to the Assistant.

Finally, I have been involved in the hiring of the Safety Coordinator, who is appointed by the Primary Appointments Committee. The reasons for this have been detailed in the Safety Office section. We conducted interviews on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009. I am in the process of conducting reference checks. Although we had expected the hiring of this position to run smoothly, we have run into some difficulties due to current differences in the regulations around the appointment of the Safety Coordinator position and those for the appointment of the Services Coordinator positions. A formal change in Code may be needed, to sync its hiring procedures with that of the other Coordinators, before this position can be formally hired. As such, the hiring process will be suspended until I am able to bring this to the attention of the Executive Committee on November, 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

#### SUICIDE AWARENESS COMMITTEE

Planning for the first Suicide Awareness Day at UBC, November, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, began back in June/July of this year. The Day consisted of a Kick-Off event with a guest speaker, two film screenings, one in the Norm and one in the Vanier Residence, a panel discussion and an information sharing booth on the Main Concourse of the SUB. While the guest speaker, Lloyd Craig, the film, *Drawing from Life* and the venues had been confirmed over the summer, the weeks leading up to the events kept the Committee busy with last minute details. One of the most important things I learned is that putting together an event is not as simple as booking a theatre and turning on the lights. From promotions to the logistics, it can be a complicated task. I also learned that all the planning and preparation in the world cannot prevent unexpected challenges the day of the event. Needless to say, all the events ran fairly smoothly and I am extremely thankful to all the dedicated Committee members and volunteers who helped make this Day a success. We look forward to making this an annual event.

Lloyd Craig, an award-winning advocate for mental health and the recently retired President and CEO of Coast Capital Savings, attended the Kick-Off event as the key-note speaker. The topic of his address was mental illness (depression, bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia) and The Changing Agenda of Mental Health in BC. He spoke about his personal experience of losing his son to suicide, the work being done around bringing mental health to the forefront of our province's and nation's agenda, workplace mental health, and the increasing amount of research being conducted in the field, which he argued, is key to defeating the stigma around mental illness. Mr. Craig, having worked in the financial services industry for over 30 years, spoke mainly from the perspective of the workplace, giving numerous examples of what a good employer should be doing to protect the mental well-being of its employees. In hindsight, the Committee felt that his presentation would have been highly beneficial and relevant to individuals in HR management at UBC and there have been suggestions that we invite Mr. Craig back to a Committee meeting to further discuss some of the topics he addressed in relation to our campus community.

I found Mr. Craig's talk not only inspiring and encouraging but very informative and thought-provoking. I have always thought of mental wellness at UBC as it relates to academics and academic success; this experience encouraged me to think about mental wellness in an entirely different context; the workplace. The AMS is an employer to hundreds. Although I discussed wellness, balance and the dangers of chronic stress with the Coordinators during orientation, I am eager to explore how a model of mental wellness can be incorporated in to the Services and expanded further to affect the larger organization. Not only can these management/leadership opportunities be very stressful and demanding, it is difficult to balance these responsibilities along with a second job and full-time academic studies; not to mention all the other aspects of one's life. As evidenced by various transition reports, burn-out is historically, clearly, not uncommon among Coordinators, particularly in September. While I am extremely happy that the team has not encountered this problem this year and there is no indication that they will, I feel there needs to be some mechanism in place that is constant from year to year, to ensure the wellbeing of our staff throughout the year. There needs to be as much focus on mental wellness as there is on physical wellness.

*Drawing from Life*, a production of the National Film Board of Canada Filmmaker-in-Residence project, is a documentary film that follows a six-week group therapy workshop for individuals who have attempted suicide one or more times. The NFB provides the following description:

*"A hybrid of vérité documentary and animation, this unusual film's visual metaphors illuminate the thoughts and feelings of its participants. This candid portrayal of twelve people who together, for 20 weeks, take on their fears, their behaviours and their ghosts to move towards life and away from suicide. It's a surprisingly uplifting and universal story about what it means to be alive."*

<http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/collection/film/?id=56744>

The film was first brought to our attention by a broadcast e-mail forwarded to one of our Committee Members, from the NFB, encouraging communities to host film screenings nation-wide on World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The Committee had always been interested in screening a film and had been sorting through various mainstream and educational films to find a film that carried the "Reach Out" message the Committee promotes. We found that the mainstream films, which are usually made for entertainment value, did not always carry the right message, that many of the educational films seemed more targeted towards mental health professionals and that, in general, many of the films seemed only loosely related to suicide or did not carry a message of *hope* (not to mention the royalties that would have to be paid to screen these films to the public). When we read the description of *Drawing from Life*, it seemed like the ideal film. Shortly after I contacted the producer, we were sent the film to pre-screen with permission to screen it on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009. After viewing the film, the Committee members agreed on *Drawing from Life*, which was introduced and debriefed on Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> by counseling staff from UBC Counseling Services.



The film screening was followed by a panel discussion with seven panelists representing various departments and services on campus as well as community organizations. These included Residence Life, Health, Safety Environment, Counseling Services, AMS Speakeasy, the Josh Platzer Society, Going Bananas, and QPR (Suicide Prevention Program). In addition to answering various questions from the audience regarding topics such as confidentiality, referrals, and the diversity of individuals in support roles, the panelists spoke about what is being done within the UBC community around mental health and suicide prevention and what resources are available to students, staff and faculty. One of the most important topics discussed was how to recognize suicide warning signs and get help for someone we think is suicidal. The discussion could easily have continued beyond the time frame we had allocated and I hope that we can host a similar panel again in the future.

One thing that surprised me greatly was some of the peripheral affects of the events. I realized that the impact of these events, in terms of raising awareness and defeating the stigma around suicide, extended beyond those who attended the events. Suicide is not a topic that has ever been discussed openly among my co-workers or my friends but mentioning Suicide Awareness Day opened the door to some interesting discussions around suicide and mental illness. We had broken the silence. I was surprised by how many people felt comfortable sharing how suicide had touched their lives. The *Ubysey* also covered and published an article about the Day's events which I hope will reach many more members of our community and encourage them to openly discuss and educate themselves and others about suicide or even get involved with awareness raising campaigns.

The activities of the Committee have wound down for the year but January brings more possibilities in terms of events/activities in the fifth year of the Suicide Awareness Campaign.

#### THRIVE WEEK COMMITTEE

Due to scheduling conflicts, I did not become involved with this planning committee until the fall semester. However, I am glad I had the opportunity to have even some small involvement in this Committee and this highly visible and successful initiative. Thrive Week was an initiative that came out of the UBC Healthy Minds campaign (a presentation was made to Council about this campaign on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009) and is an extension of the annual Wellness Week/Fair. A presentation about Thrive Week was made to Council by Suzanne Jolly, Health Promotions Programs Coordinator, Department of Health Safety and Environment, on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009. To quickly recap, Thrive can be described as a series of free events for UBC students, staff and faculty that encourages them to invest in their health and:

*Lead balanced lives*

*Encourage their UBC colleagues and peers to make healthy choices*

*Challenge the stigma associated with mental health issues*

*Participate in new health activities and develop new healthy routines*

*Endeavor to create a healthier campus culture for all*

<http://blog.students.ubc.ca/healthyminds/ubc-thrive/>

Suicide Awareness Day had always been planned for the same week as the Wellness Fair and it seemed natural to tie its events in to Thrive Week. From the Breakfast Kick-Off event with Professor Toope to goal setting workshops for students and staff, it was a busy week. The AMS Food outlets, along with a number of other food outlets on campus, each featured a healthy Thrive menu item for the week. I hope to see even greater AMS involvement in the future revivals of UBC Thrive.

#### LEARNING ENHANCEMENT ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP (LEAP)

The new LEAP website has been doing very well since the beginning of the academic year! The following are statistics provided by Cindy Underhill, Learning Resource Designer of the Office of Learning Technology:

*LEAP site stats from Sept. 13th - Nov. 5th (less than 2 months)*

*\*16,949 visits - 119 countries! (majority from Canada and the US)*

*\*approx. 11,000 unique*

*\*approx. 6,000 returning*

*\*17% are direct traffic (they know the URL)*

*\*33% are from referring sites (this is good news - others are linking to us - top 10 sites: 8 are from UBC, Facebook and Google)*

*\*49% are from search engines (people are finding us through searches)*

#### CLC/LEAP STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

I am very excited about this new Committee! The following is a description of the Committee as provided by Margot Bell, Associate Director of Student Development and Co-Chair of the LEAP Committee:

**Background**

*The Chapman Learning Commons (CLC) and the Learning Enhancement Academic Partnership (LEAP) are initiatives that provide access to learning support and enhancement resources. Core to these initiatives is the involvement and leadership of students in resource development and service provision. Although many aspects of these initiatives are strongly influenced and driven by student input, there is a need for a more formal vehicle for consultation and communication to ensure broad student representation in future development.*

**Purpose**

*The CLC/LEAP Student Advisory Group will advise on how to best support and enhance student learning and help shape strategic directions for the development and provision of learning resources. The Student Advisory Group will help shape existing and potential resource development to best meet the needs of our diverse student population.*

I am highly in support of the initiative to create this type of a committee as there is currently no existing group that formally directs these two initiatives with broad student input and consultation. I think this is an important step in the right direction in terms of coordinating these two initiatives and bringing out the full potential of each to ensure maximum benefit to the needs of the student population. As I have been discussing with Margot since the beginning of my term, the role of the ECSS in relation to LEAP is not clearly defined and considering that there is already representation on the Committee from AMS Tutoring, I have been confused as to what the ECSS, *as ECSS*, can offer to LEAP. I have often felt very out of place being a part of a committee that is highly focused on developing and expanding the LEAP website. When the idea for this Advisory Committee came up, I immediately felt that the ECSS could serve a much more beneficial and appropriate purpose as part of this committee. While the appointments have yet to be finalized, we have discussed the idea of the ECSS co-chairing this committee.

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, I brought this proposed committee to the attention of the Executive Committee and it was agreed that we would take a motion to the Council meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009, to appoint 8 students (Council members and/or students at large) to the Committee. The Terms of Reference were sent out to all the Councilors, all the Constituency Presidents and the Student Senators. I am eagerly looking forward to the Committee beginning its activities.

## MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

The Services have all been very busy carrying out individual marketing and promotional campaigns; what I will describe here is marketing and promotions for the Services in general. As mentioned in my

previous report, the Services attended a number of Orientation and “welcome back” events during the month of September and have continued to have a presence at numerous events including Suicide Awareness Day and the Wellness Fair. I am so glad we had our updated and newly designed rack cards ready to go for the new academic year! The zap banners we designed and purchased this year have been terrific; not only is set up and take down simple; they are durable and very eye-catching. We have been placing the general AMS Services zap banner in front of the glass doors to the Services offices on the Second floor when it is not being used elsewhere. Many individuals have seen and asked where we purchased our zap banners. The only down side to zap banners are that they catch the wind like a sail when they are placed outside. Therefore, during Imagine Day and all the other outdoor information fairs, we used heavy bags of rocks to weigh them down. Hauling around these bags is something I will never forget!

We booked space on the Main concourse of the SUB earlier this year for the Services to take turns tabling (once or twice, per semester) to maintain a visible presence throughout the year, instead of only during the first week of the academic year. For the month of November, we rented big board advertising space in the Aquatic Centre for a general Services advertisement. In January, we plan to experiment with Facebook ads, feature general Services ads in Zoom Media spaces in the SUB and possibly rent more big board advertising space in the Aquatic Centre, the REC Centre or the Thunderbird Sports Centre. The TV screens on the Main floor of the SUB and the AMS Insider section in the *Ubysey* have been a great ways to promote events or messages from individual Services and the Shinerama Campaign. Earlier this year, I thought it would be a great idea to have a Services banner to hang down the side of the building. We designed a banner and installed it off the second floor balcony on the North side of the building. I recently found that this banner has not been holding up well to the Vancouver winds and there is damage to the face of the banner from flipping over and rubbing against the side of the building. While it is not beyond repair, I removed it to save it from further damage until we have a way to secure it from the bottom. Finally, with the pending integration of the AMS Safety Office in to the AMS Services, we will be working on rebranding and purchasing various promotional materials for the Office. The Office has not been rebranded in years and could use some advertising and promotion. I look forward to working with the Coordinator to make some serious upgrades to increase the visibility of the Office in its role as a service to students.

## CONFERENCES/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators are student leaders and managers and providing them with ongoing professional development opportunities, relevant to their roles, is very important. I had planned to involve them in part of the Speakeasy volunteer training retreat that takes place in early September as there are many valuable workshops that are conveniently delivered at one time and in one location. However, as this was not very cost effective (the training was at the Whistler Lodge) and very few Coordinators would have been able to attend (many indicated they would prefer to attend

training on campus), we decided not to pursue this option. However, we are currently looking in to holding QPR and Positive Space training on campus. Safewalk Coordinator Ben Cappellacci has been helping me with making these arrangements and depending on the facilitators' and the Coordinators' availability, we hope to hold these training sessions before the end of the semester. Once the Coordinators have undergone this training, I will encourage them to offer this to their staff and volunteers as well.

I have provided a short description of each training session below:

### **QPR Training**

*QPR stands for Question, Persuade, Refer. QPR Gatekeeper Training is a suicide prevention program that provides the knowledge needed to reach out to a friend, peer, student, family member, or colleague who may be experiencing suicidality and connect them to resources that will help.*

*QPR Gatekeepers are those in a position to recognize the warning signs that someone may be contemplating suicide. Once trained, Gatekeepers will have the knowledge needed to assist someone in crisis.*

<http://www.students.ubc.ca/counselling/qpr/>

### **Positive Space Training**

*The Positive Space Campaign is an initiative intended to raise the visibility of safe and supportive places for lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, transexual, two-spirit, inter-sex, and questioning (LGBQTTI) people and issues on campus. It aims to foster a welcoming atmosphere on campus for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities by identifying spaces where sexual and gender diversity is supported and valued.*

*Resource Persons display their Positive Space posters at their UBC work, living or study environment to let others know that these are places where anyone can turn for support, resources and referrals on a wide variety of LGBQTTI issues. Before receiving the poster, every volunteer Resource Person participates in a training session to strengthen their understanding of issues related to homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, queer culture and local resources. Additionally, Resource Persons have the opportunity to participate in further specialized training, should they so desire.*

<http://www.positivespace.ubc.ca/>

We are also eagerly looking forward to taking part in workshops conducted by the new AMS Equity Office and the Student Leadership Conference in January, 2010.

*“The Student Leadership Conference is UBC’s largest student-run conference, providing over 1100 delegates with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills through engaging workshops and speakers.”*

<http://slc.ubc.ca/>

While this will be an excellent learning and networking opportunity for the Coordinators, I also felt that as strong student leaders themselves who manage entire Services offered to their fellow students, the Coordinators have a great deal of knowledge and experience to share with others. Therefore, time permitting; we would like to put together a workshop for the SLC which will take place on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Sponsoring the Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators as delegates to the SLC will most likely be the last professional development opportunity I am able to offer my team before the end of my term as ECSS.

## VOLUNTEERISM

In my July post to the Executive Blog, I spoke about volunteerism in the AMS. As the blog is no longer active and there is little merit in paraphrasing my own words, I have reprinted it here as a preface to my update:

*“The AMS was once mainly a volunteer-run organization. Over time, many of these volunteer positions have been converted into paid positions. But there is still tremendous potential to create a strong volunteer base within the AMS.*

*Our Society and the services we offer are constantly expanding and more and more staff support is needed to effectively and efficiently run the AMS. But creating new positions can be costly and draining on the Society’s resources in the long run.*

*Volunteerism is mutually beneficial in that it’s a cost-effective way to ensure the smooth operation of the Society, gives students a “taste” of the AMS without requiring a long-term commitment, encourages greater student engagement within the AMS through the creation of new positions, helps develop highly sought-after skills, and it’s an opportunity for students to give back to their peers. As a life-long supporter and advocate of community service and volunteerism, I believe reintegrating volunteerism within the AMS is not beyond our ability.*

*Are students interested in volunteering with the AMS? I would argue yes. I have heard this in dozens of interviews and post-interview follow-ups from many applicants who were eager and willing to support Services in a volunteer capacity.*

*Possibly the greatest demonstration of this is the “Shinerama” model. The Shinerama team, which is responsible for coordinating the annual Shinerama campaign to raise funds for cystic fibrosis research, is comprised of a paid coordinator who works 10 hours per week, several volunteer campaign leaders, sub-committees of volunteers, and a larger pool of one-time volunteers dedicated to specific event days. All of them were recruited without much difficulty.*

*This year, Volunteer Connect is taking the lead on creating internships and volunteer opportunities within the AMS. The AMS Services will be the centre of a pilot project I will be facilitating to experiment with creating internships where there would generally be paid positions. In the next few weeks, we will be recruiting interns for tasks such as marketing and promotions, special projects, and liaising with the University on campus-wide projects.*

*We are aware that this is an ambitious project that will come with its share of challenges and although we will be simultaneously creating other internship and volunteer positions within the AMS, I believe if we are able to develop a successful model that can be executed effectively, adapting it structurally into other areas of the AMS next year will be less tumultuous.”*

I took the idea of Volunteer Connect working with various AMS departments to create volunteer and internship opportunities within the AMS to the Executive Committee in early summer for feedback and direction. It was determined that directing this initiative would be best to task to the Appointments Review Committee (ARC). I do not think that the Committee has been able to make progress on this yet. However, we did proceed with creating new volunteer and internship positions within the AMS Services. Before I discuss that, I would like to update on some of the Services that already worked with a large number of volunteers:

The largely volunteer-based Shinerama team completed a very successful campaign with \$11,930 in funds being donated to the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Over 200 volunteers helped out with Shine Day. Like the Shinerama Coordinator, the Food Bank Coordinator also only works an average of 10 hours per week. However, the Food Bank is highly active and has maintained a presence at all orientation and “welcome back” events. Joanna Yang, the Food Bank Coordinator, has mentioned that she has a very enthusiastic and dedicated team of volunteers. A strong volunteer base is key to the success of this Service. This year, the team has been able to up hours of operation from two days a week

to five days and recently began offering bread donated by Save-on-Foods two days a week. Joanna and her team are right on track with the goals she set out at the beginning of her term. Working with a volunteer base as opposed to a group of employees has *not at all* hindered this progress. Furthermore, as you will read in Joanna's report, nearly 400 volunteers helped out with the Trick or Eat event this year. Clearly, not only is volunteerism not dead, the student population is interested in engaging in the activities of the AMS in a volunteer capacity.

Speakeasy is another Service that is mainly staffed by volunteers (one employed Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator and approximately 60 volunteers). This year, we had to take away the honorariums for Team Leaders due to employment regulations. While we directed additional funding to staff appreciation, I was concerned about the affect this would have on our ability to recruit and retain Team Leaders. I spoke to a number of the outgoing team leaders in May regarding what they thought the affect of removing this monetary incentive would be on recruiting volunteer team leaders or their accountability. They informed me that they did not think that *not* providing an honorarium would adversely affect the Service or our ability to recruit Team Leaders as most individuals find the experience itself extremely rewarding. They were right; not only did Speakeasy have an unusually high retention rate from last year; they had an overwhelming response from highly qualified applicants wanting to volunteer. At one time, the Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator were interviewing and narrowing down 60 applicants to fill the remaining 9 volunteer positions. Furthermore, not only have the numbers of drop-ins increased, Speakeasy retained its entire original volunteer team, who all went through the training program together, throughout the fall semester. In addition to these volunteers, Speakeasy also has a number of interns working on special projects. The AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre also has a number of volunteers that help out with the Centre and its activities throughout the year but volunteer training has been delayed to January 2010, this academic year, due to the transitioning of permanent staff.

As planned, a number of Services that traditionally do not work with volunteers or interns have experimented with incorporating them in to the program. AMS Tutoring is in the process of finding an intern to help out with the Tutoring component of LEAP and has had a good response in terms of the number of applicants responding to the position posting. AMS Minischool is recruiting an intern to help with market research for the Service. AMS Safewalk, with its large employee base, does not have much need for volunteers, but the Coordinator has and will continue to recruit focus group participants to provide feedback about the Service. AMS Volunteer Connect recruited several volunteers to help out with the Volunteer Fair, the Information Sessions and a number of ongoing projects. The Internship Office also now has 3 interns helping out with various activities. A wonderful team of volunteers was also recruited to help out with Suicide Awareness Day (I actually found that we had far more volunteers than we needed!). AMS Advocacy is the only Service without volunteers; Advocacy cannot work with interns or volunteers due to the nature of their work and the need to maintain strict confidentiality with student information.



Over the next quarter of my term, I will work on updating the Volunteer Guide, creating a general Volunteer Contract (I cannot stress enough how important this is), and the Coordinators and I will continue to evaluate the success of these new positions. I am also planning to host a major volunteer/staff appreciation event for everyone involved in the Services, in January 2010, in appreciation of all the valuable contributions they have made to the AMS Services this year. Based on all of the above, I would say that incorporating volunteers into the AMS Services has been highly successful and I eagerly look forward to a similar course of action from ARC in terms of integrating more volunteerism throughout our Society.

## SERVICES REVIEW

While I had initially envisioned slightly modifying an existing assessment model for reviewing our Services, I have decided that it would be much more effective and cost-efficient to come up with our own model that is well-tailored to student services run by a student union and draws from various in-house resources for various components of the Review. These resources could include the Communications Department, which will likely begin conducting market research next year or the new HR department and the committee/group that will be responsible for reviewing appointed positions. Unfortunately, this requires a *great* deal of planning to ensure the optimum efficiency and effectiveness of the Review. I had always known that conducting a review of the Services would be a long, complicated, and time consuming task but I had not considered the extensive planning process that would be required. Even without all my other duties as ECSS, there is not enough time to complete the crucial planning *and* conduct the Review, before the end of my term. Therefore, between now and March, with the assistance of an intern, I will focus on mapping out the Review and identifying the resources that will be essential to ensuring the success of this process.

As detailed in my Second Quarterly Report, I attended the annual conference of the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) in June. On December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009, I will be attending a workshop on “Assessment in Student Affairs and Services,” presented by CACUSS and the Student Affairs and Services Association (SASA), which I hope will provide me with a much better understanding of the assessment processes commonly employed at post-secondary institutions. As the activities of the Services wind down greatly during December, I will be able to use this time to focus mostly on designing the Review. I look forward to updating Council on my progress in January 2010.