



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

June 15, 2009

Dear constituents,

Please find my first quarterly report below. I begin by identifying the key areas in which I have been focusing on in the first quarter. I then update the progress we have made on the priorities I outlined during my campaign. To reduce redundancy and keep this document short in the hopes that people will be encouraged to read it, I have not explicitly included issues in the first section of the document that are covered in the second section.

This report is not intended to be exhaustive of the work I have undertaken as AMS President. Rather, it is meant to be an accessible outline of my progress thus far. I welcome and ask you to question me on any portion of this document to get a fuller understanding of the relevant issue. I am enjoying my role representing students immensely. I look forward to continuing my term and working towards building a stronger student society.

In solidarity,

Blake Frederick
100th President of the AMS Student Society



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

Contents:

Key Areas

Human Resources.....	3
Student/Staff/Volunteer Appreciation.....	3
External Relations.....	3
Council Involvement and Constituency Relations.....	4
New SUB Project.....	4

Campaign Priorities

Transparency.....	6
Platform Progress.....	6

Student Support

Tuition and Financial Assistance.....	7
Affordable Student Housing.....	8
Childcare.....	9
Transit.....	9

Student Representation

UBC Farm.....	10
Governance.....	11
Olympics.....	12
External Lobbying.....	12
Representation in the AMS.....	13

Campus Culture

Safety.....	13
RCMP/UNA/Student Relations.....	14
New Sub.....	14
Athletics.....	15



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

Part I – Key Areas

Human Resources

My work involving HR issues must remain confidential for obvious reasons. This is one of the most time consuming and challenging aspects of my job as president. On nearly a daily basis, it is my responsibility to act as a mediator between multiple parties when their interests do not align. These situations vary from personal to political. I have learned a lot in this area since taking presidency in February and I feel like I have had an overall positive effect on the inner dynamics of the organization on issues related to human resources.

On a different note, I have been actively involved on a hiring committee for a full-time Human Resources manager for the AMS. I was involved in the interviewing of multiple executive search firms to ensure that the AMS finds the best person for the role. We expect to fill this position by September.

Student / Staff / Volunteer Appreciation

Throughout my previous experiences at the AMS, I noticed quite starkly that student staff and volunteers as well as the permanent staff in the AMS are undervalued and underappreciated. It has been my goal to take every opportunity possible to identify and recognize both personal and organizational successes. Some examples include:

- Potluck picnic in the courtyard
- Just Desserts Awards
- Recognizing Administrative Professionals' Day
- Recognizing birthdays
- Cookies in the Courtyard event
- Student Staff appreciation lunch
- Giving thanks when publicly speaking

It will be the role of the Human Resources Manager to institutionalize these types of activities so that staff appreciation is not left up to the whim of each year's executives. I will continue to take every effort to ensure that everyone enjoys their paid or unpaid work in the AMS and takes pride in working for the student society.

External Relations

Having worked as AMS AVP External last year, I have a significant interest in the external relations of the organization. As president, it is my role to be the official spokesperson of the society and often act as a figurehead. It is also my role to work in collaboration with the AMS VP External to ensure that the AMS maintains good relations with its partners and finds opportunities to build new relationships.



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

A great deal of progress has been achieved since I began in late February. Timothy Chu (AMS VP External) and I have successfully built a cordially and meaningful relationship with the campus unions, the Faculty Association, CASA member schools, CFS member schools including UBCSUO, and non-aligned member schools. Keeping open communication with the Faculty Association and the campus unions has substantially heightened our lobbying position within the university. We have commenced talks regarding a partnership on the issue of childcare and hope to have the AMS act as the instigator of change on this issue.

I have attended two conferences of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. At these conferences, I have continuously pushed for changes within the organization to address the concerns that the AMS has outlined in the past. I've also had ongoing communication with the CASA in an attempt to address some of our concerns. These efforts have been largely unsuccessful due to the organization's unwillingness to change. This was exemplified at the recent CASA Policy and Strategy conference in Calgary where a majority of the motions that the AMS put forward were rejected by the CASA membership, including the issue of voting reform. Timothy Chu (AMS VP External) will be heading a review of our associate membership in the organization and AMS Council this year will decide how to move forward.

Council Involvement and Constituency Relations

The entire executive identified very early in the year the desire and need to encourage councilors to become more actively involved. At the Whistler Orientation Weekend this year, we tried to set the tone that Council should drive the agenda of the AMS by having councilors identify their priorities for the year.

I experimented with setting Friday as the deadline for the AMS Council agenda rather than Monday. This was done in an attempt to keep councilors informed and up to date by giving sufficient time to read documents and allow them to consult with their constituents before council meetings. While I was able to successfully implement this change, it received some push back, so Friday is now a preliminary deadline, although could be subject to change via the AMS Code and Policy Committee.

I have set up monthly standing meetings with the GSS to make sure that we partner on issues of mutual interest and continue to build on the strong relationship that exists between the two organizations. Once September rolls around, I plan on attending constituency meetings when possible and making myself available to support the constituencies in whatever way they need.

Since I was a student senator last year, I have taken a great deal of interest in the work of the Student Senate Caucus and the University's Senates. I have attended the SSC meetings and worked to build a stronger connection between that group and the AMS.



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

New SUB Project

For detailed information on the progress of the New SUB Project, I advise you to read Crystal Hon's (AMS VP Administration) Quarterly Report.

The New SUB Project has required an exhaustive month and a half learning curve. It was only after this period of time that I felt like I could be in the position to start making informed decisions. Currently, I feel very much in command of the relevant aspects of the New SUB Project and in the position to make this student driven project entirely change the dynamics of UBC campus. This singular project consumes about one third of my time working in the AMS and I have enjoyed it immensely. Though negotiations with the University regarding the governance structure for the project are ongoing and must be kept in confidence, suffice it to say that I am hopeful and expectant that a deal will be reached very soon with the goal of breaking ground by the end of my term.



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

Part II – Campaign Priorities

Transparency

One of my foremost goals when I decided to run for the position of AMS President was to ensure that I always maintained an exceptional level of transparency in my work. For me, transparency is fundamentally essential in order to be a successful Executive of the AMS for two primary reasons. First, as an elected official, I remain wholly accountable to those that elected me as well as those that I represent. It must be said that I exercise a large amount of discretion in the decisions that I make on a daily basis, however, ultimately it is the role of the AMS Council and more broadly the students to decide the direction of the AMS and for me to follow that direction. Second, I firmly believe that increased transparency leads to increased engagement. Students will be more motivated to engage in the democratic processes of the AMS if they are aware of who is making decisions, how they are made. Therefore they will have a reason to believe that they can play a meaningful role in the process.

Platform for AMS President and Board of Governors

Posted below is the platform that I was elected upon. I am aware that my platform may not have been the motivating factor for all of those students who decided to vote for me, but I am accountable to the principles that I espoused during the election nonetheless.

I will give a brief commentary on the progress (or lack of progress) on all of my campaign platforms. Before reading below, take a couple of notes into consideration. First, although I was elected on the points below, it is not my position to impose heavy-handed changes on the organization without the will of Council. As such, it is not possible for me to pursue action on all the points listed below. I will, however, continue to advocate for these changes within the organization. Second, I made it clear during my election that the points listed below are not meant as strict campaign promises, but rather principles that I wish to pursue. It is foolhardy to promise wide sweeping changes that are contingent on the operations of external organizations (such as the University and Translink). Changes cannot always be achieved, but the promise I have to students is to push for those changes to the best of my ability and at every opportunity I have. Third, the president's responsibility is to coordinate and support the efforts of everyone in the organization. It would be impossible for me to achieve everything that I put forth in my election on my own. In many cases, progress on the points below has been achieved with the extensive support of many individuals in the organization.

Student Support

Tuition and Student Financial Assistance

On average, tuition at UBC has doubled in the past six years. International student tuition at UBC is the highest in the country at a staggering \$18,110. Students are now graduating with an average debt of \$27,000. This is completely unacceptable. Studies have shown that higher tuition fees prevent lower income students from attending and completing university. What's more, our country is currently in blatant breach of the *UN International Covenant on Economic, Political, and Social Rights*, which commits us to the gradual introduction of free post-secondary education.

Access to loans is not access to education. Our student financial aid system should be grant based, not loan based. In terms of providing needs-based assistance, BC is the worst province in the country. At UBC, scholarship and bursary support for students has declined by 40% in the past 4 years. I will:

- Make the cost of education an issue in the upcoming Provincial election.
 - ✓ **Status: The cost of education had some traction in the provincial election with the Greens committing to reducing tuition, NDP freezing tuition, and Liberals capping tuition at 2%. Post-secondary education as a whole, however, did not get as much attention in the election as was hoped.**
- Run a public campaign to cut the education tax.
 - ✓ **Status: This has not been possible due to the AMS Council's standing policy on tuition that accepts yearly increases up to 2%. I did, however, successfully partner with the GSS, student union at UBC-O, and the International Students' Association to oppose the University's inadequate consultative process on tuition increases. I also presented to the Board of Governors to oppose the 5% increase in international student tuition fees and to oppose the increase in tuition at the beginning of the summer semester since both proposals contravene AMS policy. The Board of Governors went ahead with the proposals but strongly warned the UBC Executive to undertake a more extensive tuition consultation process in the future.**
- Pressure the Provincial Government to reinstate the BC Student Grant Program.
 - ✓ **Status: No work has been done to pressure for the reinstatement of the BC Student Grant Program, specifically. However, the AMS has partnered with UBC to advocate for increased grants for students attending post-secondary institutions in BC.**

AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

- Pressure the Provincial and Federal governments to make a number of changes to the student loan program including lowering the interest rate, expanding interest relief, and modifying the eligibility criteria.
 - ✓ **Status: The AMS has partnered with student unions and university administrators across the province to call for the changes listed above in unison. The BC Government's response has consistently been that they are reviewing the BC Student Loan Program, despite the fact that their report was due out approximately 8 months ago.**
- Pressure UBC Student Financial Assistance and Awards to provide more needs-based support for students.
 - ✓ **Status: I have had very successful and productive meetings with the Student Financial Assistance and Awards office. We are currently assessing the most productive way to distribute needs-based support to students. This advocacy priority promises to be a successful one as I anticipate that through my efforts, students will see a vast increase in needs-based funding next year.**

Affordable Student Housing

Last year, over 2000 students applied for on-campus housing and were rejected. Meanwhile, the University was busy building condos to sell to the highest bidder. Those who were able to get into residence have seen their rent increase by 20% over the past 4 years. The importance of accommodating students who want to live on-campus cannot be overstated. Since UBC is a commuter campus, students who live on campus have more time and are better able to engage in the campus community. We all know how difficult it is to find affordable housing in Vancouver. Rental costs keep increasing and vacancy rates are near the lowest in Canada. I will:

- Call for an immediate moratorium on the construction of on-campus housing units for people with no affiliation with the University.
 - ✓ **Status: This goal has thus far been achieved as we have successfully scuttled the University's plans to build market housing on the UBC Farm. Otherwise, no new market-housing construction has been planned.**
- Pressure the University to set a target to provide housing for at least 50% of all full-time undergraduate students. The current target is 25%, but demand is still not being met.
 - ✓ **Status: I have been involved with the campus planning process for over two years now calling for this target. This goal has now been successfully achieved as the University has recently set 35% as its target with infill to house at least 50% of all full-time undergraduate students.**
- Pressure UBC Housing & Conferences to implement a cap on rental increases.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority.**



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

- Explore the feasibility of an AMS housing co-op.
 - ✓ **Status: A preliminary feasibility assessment has been conducted.**
- Oppose the construction of market housing in the centre of campus and on the UBC Farm.
 - ✓ **Status: This has been successfully achieved.**

Childcare

Access to childcare for UBC students is currently at crisis levels. At UBC, many qualified students are not able to pursue their education because user-fees for on-campus child care are as high as \$1080 per child per month and the waitlist for enrolment is over three years long. The AMS and UBC have jointly applied for a Provincial Government Childcare funding to expand UBC's childcare program, but the application has been denied. The refusal of the Provincial and Federal governments to provide adequate affordable childcare spaces means that students with children, a majority of whom are female, are unfairly denied access to post-secondary education. I will:

- Create a united coalition on campus of students, faculty, and staff, especially groups like Single Parents On Campus (SPOC), the AMS Feminist Collective, Access and Diversity, and the Equity Office to pressure all levels of government to fund the creation of new childcare spaces.
 - ✓ **Status: Meetings have been held with most of these groups, as well as others, to find ways to work together. The AMS and GSS will be planning and hosting a national child care conference to be part of a larger child care awareness week on campus.**
- Increase funding for the AMS Evelyn Lett Childcare Bursary.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority.**
- Call on the Provincial Government to provide more money to student parents through the Child Care Subsidy program.
 - ✓ **Status: Child care was one of the main issues identified in the AMS' provincial election lobbying campaign.**

Transit

Public transit needs to be open and accessible. UBC residents and students have no representation whatsoever in Translink's governance structure. As a result, our demands for better transit service to campus go unheard. I will:

- Demand more buses now on busy transit routes and underserved areas of Metro Vancouver to avoid delays and pass-ups.
 - ✓ **Status: AMS undertook transit campaign to pressure Translink, which reached over 3000 students and has caught the attention of Translink.**



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

- Demand representation for UBC residents and students on the Translink Mayors' Council.
 - ✓ **Status: The AMS has partnered with other student unions to call for representation at Translink Board meetings. Action has yet to be taken by Translink on this issue.**
- Prevent the University from revoking its \$24 per student U-Pass subsidy.
 - ✓ **Status: Last year, UBC threatened to remove this subsidy. Through sustained lobbying, I have been able to successfully achieve a commitment from UBC's Trek Program that this funding will continue indefinitely.**
- Work with other student unions to expand the availability of the U-Pass program.
 - ✓ **Status: We have been quoted in the media and have advocated at all meetings with Translink that there should be a standardized U-Pass program for all post-secondary students at a price not to exceed the current UBC cost. This has been a joint lobbying principle for the AMS and CFS member schools. Though it is difficult to assign responsibility to any particular group for this success, the BC Liberals included this as a priority in their successful election campaign.**
- Oppose the proposed underground bus loop on campus, which is unnecessary, expensive, and unsafe.
 - ✓ **Status: Translink is becoming increasingly frustrated with UBC over the continued delays with respect to the University Square development program, potentially compromising the construction of the underground bus loop.**

Student Representation

UBC Farm

The UBC Farm is an agricultural oasis on campus that provides irreplaceable hands-on education for students, children, community members, Aboriginal people, and residents of the Downtown Eastside. The University administration has aggressively been pursuing the development of the Farm into high-rise condos. United student, faculty, and community backlash has been immense, but the Farm is still in jeopardy of being downsized and relocated. This issue is an example of the ability and need for groups to unite together. We will be successful in protecting the UBC Farm. I will:

- Use the momentum from the AMS Great Farm Trek to apply political pressure on the Board of Governors to protect the UBC Farm in its current form.
 - ✓ **Status: Political pressure has been successfully applied. The Board of Governors has agreed to use the UBC Farm for academic purposes only.**



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

- Work with Metro Vancouver to take the UBC Farm out of the 'future housing reserve'.
 - ✓ **Status: The Friends of the UBC Farm AMS club has been pursuing this priority.**
- Pressure the University to provide operational funding to the UBC Farm.
 - ✓ **Status: This was a part of the message for the AMS Farm Trek '09. Calls for saving the UBC Farm are always coupled with the need for operational funding.**
- Call for a major restructuring of Campus & Community Planning to ensure that students are consulted with meaningfully.
 - ✓ **Status: Preliminary conversations with Brian Sullivan (UBC VP Students) and Stephen Toope (UBC President) have occurred on this issue.**

Governance

UBC exists in a governance vacuum. Since our campus is not a part of the City of Vancouver, the unelected and unaccountable University administrators are able to make decisions undemocratically. Students are vastly under-represented in the decision-making processes on campus. Attempts to consult with students are usually superficial and our voices are most often ignored.

While students fund over 40% of the University's operating budget, we are only represented by 14% of the seats on the Board of Governors. The majority of the Board is comprised of unelected provincial appointees out of touch with the student experience. I will:

- Pressure the Provincial Government to make changes to the *University Act* to require that all Board of Governors representatives be elected.
 - ✓ **Status: The UBC Faculty Association cautioned me against advocating for this point because an opening of the *University Act* could lead to other undesirable changes. AMS Council will decide whether to move forward on this issue.**
- Call for student representation on the Board to be increased to 40% of the members.
 - ✓ **Status: As above.**
- Call for transparency and accountability from UBC's developer Properties Trust.
 - ✓ **Status: Significant success has been achieved. The BC Information and Privacy Commissioner has ruled that Properties Trust is not a private entity, but rather an ancillary of UBC that is open to public scrutiny and accountability. I have been quoted in several media sources on this issue. I have also successfully obtained the budget of Properties Trust from Pierre Ouillet (UBC VP Finance),**



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

requested student representation on the Properties Trust Board, and filed several *Freedom of Information* requests.

- Call for increased student representation on University committees.
 - ✓ **Status: I have successfully lobbied for increased student representation on the Joint Board of Governors and Senate Committee.**
- Work with City Councilors to examine the options to incorporate with the City of Vancouver or incorporate as a separate municipality.
 - ✓ **Status: Brian Fixter (former AMS AVP Academic and University Affairs) has prepared a comprehensive report for the AMS reviewing all potential options. The AMS Campus Planning and Development Committee will continue work on this priority.**

Olympics

During the 2010 Olympics and Paralympics, the UBC Thunderbird Winter Sports Centre will serve as a venue for the Games. While the Olympics only last for a couple of weeks, there will be disruptions on campus for nearly four months. Westbrook Mall will be closed, which will block access to 8 transit routes coming into campus. This closure will also seriously affect access to fraternities and sororities. With the Olympics approaching fast, neither the University nor Translink have any plans to deal with these problems. Students have not been consulted during the entire process. I will:

- Pressure the University to consult with students on the changes to campus during the Olympics.
 - ✓ **Status: Significant effort has been put into this priority. The University has been extremely uncooperative, even to the extent of barring the AMS from key meetings. The AMS has had a preliminary meeting with the security departments. I have successfully lobbied for a commitment from Classroom Services to not schedule any exams on May 1st.**
- Launch an awareness campaign to inform students of upcoming disruptions.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority.**

External Lobbying

CASA is currently the national lobbying organization of the AMS. Although the AMS spends over \$70,000 per year for CASA membership and conference fees, students receive little in return. The AMS has little say over the direction of CASA, which decided to not to run a public lobby campaign during the past federal election. Besides, provincial lobbying is the best use of resources, not federal lobbying. I will:

- Undertake a comprehensive and consultative review process of the most effective way to achieve the AMS's lobbying priorities and goals.



AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

- ✓ **Status: I have attended two CASA conferences and have had a working relationship with both CASA and CFS affiliated schools, as well as non-aligned schools. Timothy Chu (AMS VP External) and I have had several official communications with CASA to advocate for changes in the organization. A full review has yet to be conducted.**

Representation in the AMS

Women, visible minorities and international students are underrepresented in the AMS. In order for the AMS to truly be an effective student organization, it must adopt more of an attitude of inclusivity and make more of an effort educating students on how the AMS functions and encouraging them to get involved. Over a year ago, AMS Council agreed to undertake a major independent review of the ways in which systemic discrimination are being perpetuated in the organization, but this review still has not been done. I will:

- Prioritize an independent review of systemic discrimination in the AMS.
 - ✓ **Status: The AMS Equity and Diversity Coordinator has been hired and will be commissioning this review. A preliminary request for proposals has been conducted.**
- Enhance and institutionalize the AMS Equity Officer program.
 - ✓ **Status: The AMS Equity and Diversity Coordinator has been hired and will be working to strengthen the program in the coming year.**

Campus Culture

Safety

Approximately 20-25% of college-aged women are sexually assaulted during their post-secondary career. Safety on campus does not receive as much attention as it should and it's statistics like these that should remind us that the consequences of perpetuating an unsafe campus are devastating.

Women are not the only group affected by safety issues. This year there have been very serious incidents involving homicide threats. Unfortunately, UBC has shown that it is not prepared to respond to campus wide threats. I will:

- Launch a campaign to educate students on the services the AMS provides to enhance safety, such as AMS Safewalk.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority.**
- Ensure that UBC's text message based Emergency Response System is operational.

AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

- ✓ **Status: This priority has been successfully achieved as UBC has confirmed that the Emergency Response System is fully operational.**
- Ensure that the Emergency Blue Lights are working in an effective manner with quickened response times.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority.**
- Educate students about the risk of sexual assault, especially in residences. The responsibility should not be on the 'potential victims' to keep themselves safe, but education is necessary for reducing risk.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority.**
- Work to establish a positive relationship between students and the RCMP, as students will only feel safe when they trust those whose responsibility is to protect them.
 - ✓ **Status: Johannes Rebane (AMS VP Academic and University Affairs) has been developing a positive relationship between the AMS and the RCMP.**

RCMP/UNA/Student Relations

University isn't just about academics and career preparation. Students must have the opportunities to engage both socially and politically in the UBC community. The campus culture of social activities and political activism has been eroding due to the unfair treatment of students by the RCMP, University Administration, and the University Neighbourhood Association. I will:

- Liaise with the RCMP, students, the University Administration, and the UNA to encourage cooperation and communication between all groups.
 - ✓ **Status: Johannes Rebane (AMS VP Academic and University Affairs) has been working on this priority.**
- Encouraging increased transparency from the on-campus RCMP's procedures regarding noise complaints and liquor licensing.
 - ✓ **Status: Johannes Rebane (AMS VP Academic and University Affairs) has been working on this priority.**

New SUB

Last year, students voted in a referendum to begin the construction of a new SUB. Since then, much progress has been made towards determining the program of the new SUB. Despite all the work that has been done so far, the AMS must still consult with students to ensure that the new building will be inclusive, sustainable, and reflective of students' needs. I will:

- Improve communications for the New Sub Project.
 - ✓ **Status: The AMS has received thousands of responses on a final survey sent to all students asking for feedback on the program of**

AMS President's First Quarterly Report 09-10

the new SUB. In addition, the AMS has had a presence promoting the project at events such as the Alumni Weekend.

- Assist the VP Finance and VP Admin in a fundraising campaign for the New Sub Project.
 - ✓ **Status: The SUB Renewal Committee has deemed that a comprehensive fundraising campaign is not viable. We have preformed a full cost assessment of the SUB program and have been able to stay below the \$110 million financing limit for the project.**
- Advertise the SUB fee subsidy so that students with financial hardship aren't adversely affected.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority. Promotion to begin in early September.**

Athletics

UBC students pay some of the highest athletics fees and facility user fees in the country. The mandatory athletics fees plus a gym pass cost students over \$455. As a result of this price gouging, UBC Athletics is projecting a 2.6 million dollar surplus this coming year. Despite the high cost of athletics, many facilities are inaccessible to students due to private use bookings. I will:

- Pressure the Board to give the AMS autonomy over the \$186 Athletics and Recreation University fee.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority.**
- Reduce or eliminate the \$21 Athletics and Intramural AMS fee.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority.**
- Pressure UBC Athletics to provide students with better accessibility to its facilities.
 - ✓ **Status: Progress has yet to be achieved on this priority.**
- Demand transparency, accountability, and student representation in UBC Athletics' budgeting process.
 - ✓ **Status: A preliminary meeting has been had with Bob Philip (UBC Athletics and Recreation Director) and I have made this request.**