To: The Envoy

From: James Watson

Date: February 2, 2016

Subject: Proposal for Increasing Online Readership of The Envoy

**Introduction**

Established in September 2015, The Envoy is an online, editorial style publication, which features opinion pieces on a wide variety of topics international in scope. The goals of this publication are to provide opportunities for UBC students to publish their opinions and to increase political literacy and global awareness on campus.

The central platform for this publication’s circulation is Facebook and, to a lesser extent, Twitter. The Envoy’s total page ‘likes’ of its Facebook page has averaged at 521 over a 5-month period. In 2014/15, there were 11,220 students enrolled in UBC’s Faculty of Arts. Relying solely on social media for its distribution, the growth rate of this publication has stagnated and it has been unable to reach key student audiences at UBC, such as Faculty of Arts undergraduates.

**Statement of Problem**

The Envoy has been unable to gain significant traction within UBC’s student body, though its primary platform. The major implications of this problem are two: first, content providers, such as article authors, may be deterred from publishing on The Envoy as this outlet as minimal penetration in audiences they seek to engage with; second, the lack of membership, via Facebook ‘likes’, means that The Envoy’s core objective to increase opportunities and political literacy among students remains unachieved.

**Proposed Solution**

One possible solution to the problem of stagnant engagement by UBC’s student body is to increase and diversify content. So far, written contributions make up the vast majority of The Envoy’s content. Some large, mainstream outlets, like The Atlantic or Slate, rarely post their written content on social media, opting to publish engaging multimedia presentations and films. Smaller outlets have also followed suit. Diversifying content, as other outlets have done, offers an opportunity to provide exciting and novel story telling for audiences through other mediums of expression, such as film and photograph, and encourage creators in these fields to contribute.

**Scope**

To access the feasibility of developing multimedia content for The Envoy, I plan to pursue 4 areas of inquiry:

1. What multimedia products are being produced and distributed by small and medium-sized, and what are approximate costs of production?
2. How large is the demand for multimedia products within UBC’s student body?
3. Does the social media discourse contain room for multimedia products?
4. What are the costs of producing and distributing multimedia productions for authors and the Envoy?

**Methods**

My primary data source will include consultations with The Envoy editorial committee and editor-in-chief. I will also analyze The Envoy’s Facebook insights log to gather information about rates of membership or “like” growth, which occur when traditional, written and multimedia content is distributed.

Secondary sources will include a review of various small and medium-sized outlets’ use of multimedia content to determine whether the latter increased engagement. Furthermore, I will research social media strategies used by other publications.

**My Qualifications**

Since its formation, I have acted as a contributing editor for The Envoy’s editorial committee and I manage the Twitter component of their social media presence. I have gained experience in strategic communications, through my internship at the Embassy of Canada in Washington D.C., and I have also edited other publications, such as The Atlas: UBC Undergraduate Journal of World History. My association with these organizations gives me the opportunity to sample data and conduct an in-depth feasibility study.

**Conclusion**

Clearly, action is needed to increase UBC’s student body’s engagement with The Envoy – a publication that was established to articulate and amplify this group’s voice in the public discourse. By addressing the 4 areas of inquiry mentioned earlier, I hope to determine the feasibility of increased multimedia content and whether this adjustment can improve the publication’s flagging growth rate. With your approval, I will begin research immediately.