

THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



AMS Student Society
6138 SUB Boulevard
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1
www.ams.ubc.ca

AMS Executive Oversight Committee

Minutes of November 12, 2009

Attendance

Present: Kyle Warwick (Arts/Chair), Laura Silvester (Commerce), Ekaterina Dovjenko (Commerce), Jimmy Yan (Science)

Guests in Attendance: Tom Dvorak (VP Finance), Pavani Gunadasa (Executive Coordinator of Student Services)

Regrets (Invited Guests): Blake Frederick (President), Johannes Rebane (VP Academic and University Affairs), Tim Chu (VP External), Crystal Hon (VP Administration)

Regrets (Committee Members): Joel Mertens (Senate)

Recording Secretaries: Kyle Warwick (Arts/Chair), Ekaterina Dovjenko (Commerce),

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:36 pm.

Introductions

Approval of Agenda

Agenda approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

No minutes to approve, as most recent minutes agreed to via email.

Followup on Censure Debate

Kyle- Although censure motion failed, clear majority of councillors expressed at least some degree of dissatisfaction with bus loop press release. I'm not sure what further steps should be taken, but clear that we should look for tangible action based approach, not excessive discussion, as agreement of existence of problem is already clear. One possibility is additional

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requirements for Communications Planning Group (CPG) to screen press releases before sent by President.

Laura- The fact is we cannot trust the President's leadership. The question is how to set a strong precedent and move forward. The process and policy is probably not the problem- the actual President is.

Laura- If we cannot trust the executive, that is an issue beyond the Oversight Committee or CPG.

Kyle- Oversight can provide advice, directions. Shouldn't write off possibility of problems also being on government/institutional side, but agree that bigger than policy issues is clear lack of trust.

Interview with Tom Dvorak

Kyle- How has the team dynamic/culture within the exec progressed/changed over the year?

Tom- From outset, clear recognition that exec made up of very different people. Determined effort at first to "make it work",

Tom- First major deterioration was with CASA update. I had to be contacted by someone else to get full info. The exec did not hear about a relevant letter from CASA, result was disorganized appearance before council. Similar incidents have happened again and again.

Tom- Major low was a period of 8 weeks with one full length exec meeting. Another major low was Whistler Lodge motion: an exec posted on a Facebook group that I was attempting to "steal the lodge" – not the appropriate way to work out problems and concerns.

Kyle- Definitely is noticeable as a councillor that issues are not worked out in advance before council meetings.

Laura- Totally unacceptable.

Tom- Your question is off the mark to be asking how team dynamics are. Fundamentally we are not a team. Concerns with the President and VP External are negatively impacting my job performance.

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Tom- Additional concerns: are all the execs putting in enough time in the office, Alumni Association coordination re: SUB Renew.

Kyle- Would these sort of concerns normally be things that would be discussed at the Executive Committee?

Tom- Ideally they should be, but regular meetings haven't been happening.

Laura- How have team dynamics changed since the censure motion?

Tom- No difference, the rift was already there before.

Ekaterina- What impact does this culture have on job performance?

Tom- I no longer get upset about all this- I'm just disappointed, tired of fighting. Creates an atmosphere where no incentive exists to go above and beyond. Primary focus is now on business operations projects, back end stuff. Execs are each working in own silos. Rift began to develop/deepen over the summer. Especially serious since August- no regularity of exec meeting times.

Tom- However, very key point, although cooperation badly decreased, within silos, each exec is still doing valuable work.

Kyle- For remainder of year, what steps do all of you recommend to facilitate cooperation?

Laura- This is impacting council decisions. Are we essentially doing the executive's job? We should not initially hear about motions when we are at council. The exec meeting for ½ hour immediately before council is not sufficient, no unified executive front is presented.

Laura- Council should not meet if the exec cannot meet before hand. Should we create a motion to this effect?

Tom-To what extent is council aware of these problems?

Kyle- Generally council only sees outcomes (disunity), not background/reasons for it.

Jimmy- We see clear symptoms of non-communication

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Tom- Many of these problems accepted as a given. Didn't realize council would be shocked by extent of them.

Kyle- Casual default attitude displayed by execs in public when guard down can be problematic. Tricky to solve, but should avoid disparaging with no problem solving purpose.

Tom- This year a partial write off. Key is to keep getting day to day tasks done, and devise methods to prevent this in the future.

Interview with Pavani Gunadasa

Motion to move in camera: Moved Kyle, Seconded Ekaterina

Motion carries unanimously.

In camera discussion.

Motion to stay in camera fails.

Kyle- Thanks for coming to talk with us.

Review and Planning

Laura- Clear that fundamental problems lay at top of AMS organization.

Jimmy- Simply a bad HR practice for President to put personal agenda ahead of the team. My single biggest task as SUS President is making sure team is working together. Blake has been too focused on external lobbying.

Kyle- Indeed, surprising/disappointing, as while Blake was definitely elected on a very externally focused mandate, he has expressed clearly the importance of internal elements of job. Incidents highlighted suggest his follow through not satisfactory.

Laura- To what extent are the President's duties explicitly codified? To what extent are the requirements simply common sense? Should look this up. Nonetheless, clear that exec must meet somewhat regularly: absolutely bare minimum to ask.

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Jimmy- Before too much further action we need to know basic information. i.e. code requirements, number of meetings etc. Nonetheless, we already know enough to know that sufficient meetings aren't happening.

Discussion regarding AMS Ombuds Office

Motion to move in camera.

Moved Kyle, Seconded Jimmy.

Motion carries unanimously.

In camera discussion.

Motion to remain in camera fails.

Tasks Assigned

Kyle – Research number of exec meetings that have taken place, bylaw/code descriptions of President's job, draft motion for next council meeting requiring regular executive committee meetings – Due November 16

Next Meeting

Another meeting may not be needed before this committee folds due to committee reform. Agreement to work by email, and meet in person based on demand.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 pm.