

My fellow Arts students,

The Arts Undergraduate Society is at a crossroad. Indeed, after having served on the Arts Undergraduate Society council in a variety of positions over the last year and a half, I have observed this organization from a variety of angles and have come to the conclusion aforementioned. Why I'm making that statement is attributed to a number of factors that I will enumerate later throughout this message.

It is at around this time last year that I made the decision to run for the position of President of the Arts Undergraduate Society for the 2009/2010 academic year. I ran with the goal of trying my best to fix what I thought was the AUS' most important challenge: a serious lack of visibility on campus. Indeed, since the demise of ACF, the Arts Undergraduate Society has been searching for a soul, a personality, a clear mantra upon which it could drive its activities.

While I will fully agree I did not meet all the expectations that I had set for myself and this organization when I entered into this position, it certainly did not stop me from trying my best. Therefore, I am hereby proposing a project that I FIRMLY believe will launch the AUS forward for many years to come and will cement its place not only in the Arts, but as a beacon of pride for students that attend the Faculty of Arts at UBC for generations to come.

So starting today at 8h00am, and until 5h00pm on Friday March 19th, you will be asked to voice your opinion by voting yes or no on the following referendum question:

Do you support the Arts Undergraduate Society increasing its yearly student fee starting with the 2010/2011 Academic year from \$13 to:

*\$18 for the academic years 2010/2011 to 2011/2012, and to;
\$23 for the academic years 2012/2013 to 2013/2014, and to;
\$28 for the academic year 2015/2016,*

for the purpose of building a new student social and study space in an area surrounding the new Buchanan West courtyard as well as renovating the current Meekison Arts Student Space (MASS) by adding student club offices, multimedia meeting rooms, group study rooms and other student facilities as determined by the Arts Undergraduate Student Social Space Expansion (AUSSSE) committee following a consultation with the Arts students?

YES _____ NO _____

Notes:

- *The Fee would increase in each school year after the 2015/16 school year by the rate of inflation determined by the Canadian Consumer Price Index.*
- *The Fee would be levied on all active AUS members on a yearly basis*
- *The Fee would continue to be levied until the AUS has completed all its financing obligations for the new Student Social space and re-purposing of the current Meekison Arts Student Space.*

At this point, it would only be natural of you to ask why we are looking to raise the fee paid to the AUS by every Arts student on campus. If you have carefully read the question previously mentioned, then you are halfway through.

The idea of expanding the AUS' social space around the Buchanan complex came about during the current AUS executive's first meeting of the year with our very own Dean of Arts, Dr. Nancy Gallini. The concept of expanding student-managed space in order to reach Arts student more effectively was immediately supported by the entire AUS executive. Following this meeting, a committee was struck and eventually, given a terms of reference from which it could guide its preliminary work.

Over the last year, this committee, aptly named "Arts Undergraduate Society Student Space Expansion" or AUSSSE, was tasked by AUS council to look at different expansion scenarios that would tremendously increase the visibility of the AUS as well as effectively serve Arts students by giving them a substantially improved space designed to increase the level of interactivity between students.

After consultation with the Faculty of Arts, Campus and Community Planning, the University Architect's office and the Arts Undergraduate Society student council, a conclusion was reached as to which expansion idea was not only the most realistic considering the heritage value of the Buchanan complex, but also the most viable financially-wise.

Luckily, with the current Buchanan complex undergoing a series of renovations, the time was right for the Arts Undergraduate Society to join in on the renewal process. Indeed, when you step back on campus in September 2010, you will quickly notice a bundle of changes around the Buchanan complex.

Not only will a brand new Buchanan A block be re-opened to students, but a new café called "Arts Café" will have also appeared on the bottom floor where the bathrooms used to be. Furthermore, the courtyard enclosed by the Buchanan A, B and C buildings will have also been completely revamped, giving it a new life, a new appearance and an entirely new set of possible use. A semi-floating and covered performance stage as well as new seating nodes with outdoor electrical plugs for all those laptops will have been built.

What we are proposing here is to build our new social space around this courtyard. The energy emanating from this courtyard will be tremendous and will undoubtedly become the "Centre for the Arts" on campus and the Arts Undergraduate Society simply cannot be left behind without a presence around this courtyard. Imagine the Arts being able to finally express itself in one, easily identifiable location on campus? Outdoor concerts, plays, social events and other will finally be able to take place in our very own backyard.

And WE, the students should be enthralled at the prospect of having our own student-managed and run social space in this epicentre of activity...

Do this sound like you and many generations of Arts students want to be a part of? If so, then vote YES on the AUS Fee referendum question online starting March 12th and until March 19th by logging into your Student Service Centre (SSC) account and by selecting Webvote.

If you have any questions regarding these expansions plans and the Arts Undergraduate Society, please feel free to contact me by sending me a message at aus_president@arts.ubc.ca and I will be glad to answer all of your inquiries.

Thank you for your time,

Guillaume Houle
President || Arts Undergraduate Society