

Pavani Gunadasa
Executive Coordinator of Student Services
2009/2010

Quarterly Report
March 2009 - June 2009

Introduction:

Since taking office at the end of March, nearly a month behind schedule, it has been a non-stop whirlwind of a learning experience. The Services are constantly transforming and we are faced with new and unique challenges every day. The ECCS role is very much a “learn as you go along” position with broad responsibilities, an unpredictable schedule and an infinite number of tasks that no extent of transitional support can prepare you for. My immediate impression was that the former Executive Coordinators have left some very high standards to live up to! I sincerely applaud every former ECSS and Coordinator whose innovation, hard work and unrelenting drive have brought the Services to where they are today. I am awed by their accomplishments and pledge to uphold and build upon the foundation they have created.

Apart from catching up with the roller coaster we call the Services, my priority over the last few months has been hiring of the coordinators and orienting them in to their positions. This year, we experience significant delays in hiring due to a lack of qualified applicants for certain positions, some of which we had to extend up to three times, and the hiring process beginning only days after my appointment and occurring concurrently with my transition in the ECSS role. This subsequently led to delays in the transition of the new coordinators in to their

roles and the operation of a few of the Services temporarily falling under my responsibility. However, we were finally successful in assembling a team of outstanding Coordinators and are now commencing with the Assistant Coordinator appointments.

Quick Updates on a Few Committees:

LEAP

The Learning Enhancement Academic Partnership, a network of resources to support academic learning, of which AMS Tutoring is a key player, kicked off this year with some exciting news -the program was able to secure permanent funding from the TLEF (Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund), in the amount of \$125, 000, annually. Currently, the team is exploring new ways of developing the program and the website, adding new technology and using social networking applications to help students connect to academic support resources. As an immediate goal, we are working towards clarifying and solidifying the relationship between AMS Tutoring and LEAP and further enhancing the training received by AMS Tutors. LEAP also hopes to build stronger faculty relations as they are key to the success of any academic learning support program.

Suicide Awareness Committee

The Suicide Awareness Committee is a UBC community effort to raise awareness about suicide, which consistently ranks as one the top leading causes of death in Canada, and encourage individuals to “Reach Out” for help (for themselves or their friend or family member). The Committee is composed of UBC students, faculty, staff and other community members. It will shortly be launching its “Reach Out” poster campaign to promote the 1-800-SUICIDE number and various support services on campus and in the community. We are planning to hold a Suicide Awareness Day that will coincide with Wellness Week, with activities centered around the SUB (such as a keynote speaker and a film), and a creative design challenge. The committee will be part of a larger initiative this year, one that is quickly gaining momentum, to promote a Healthy Minds at UBC.

Sexual Assault Support Initiatives Fund Committee

Now that the SASC budget is no longer required to be approved by this committee before going to Budget Committee, the SASIF Committee's main purpose is to administer the Fund. However, the Committee has not been approached for funding in the last few years and although we currently have a pending request (which has been delayed until the group is able to bring a specific proposal for funding), it is very unlikely that we will see additional requests this year unless some proactive action is taken. I feel that this lack of demand is not due to a lack of need but a lack of an effort to advertise the existence of this fund; our community is far from starved of projects that this fund could support. As such, I will be calling a Committee meeting shortly to discuss a promotional strategy for the year and immediately moving forward to put this plan in to action; advertising the Fund and calling for project proposals.

Services Progress Reports:

I strongly feel that over the years the needs of the Services were overlooked on numerous occasions and the full impact of certain decisions on the operation and future of the Services were not seriously evaluated at the time. However, what is most important is not the past but the present and its impact on the future. We should always keep in mind that our Services are not businesses and cannot be measured with the instruments. Assessing the value of our services is not as simple as comparing operational costs to statistics on the use of our Services. A quantitative approach to assessing the value of our Services does not account for:

- the student who was able to secure an emergency hamper of food at the last minute
- the student who finally found the courage to approach one of our peer support services for help and was treated with kindness and compassion and given the appropriate referral
- the student who is no longer dreading their Chemistry exam because they were able to find a qualified and experienced tutor
- the student who was turned away from job after job for “lack of experience” until they were connected with a multitude of volunteer opportunities
- the student who doesn't have to face a disciplinary hearing alone

- the student who can take that night course because there will be someone willing to accompany them back the the bus loop

All of the above are true scenarios and they often happen without our knowledge. Are we so insensitive to the needs of our fellow students that we would reduce them to mere numbers? It is imperative that we bring the essential Services we provide to 45, 000 UBC students (some to the entire UBC Community), to the forefront of our priorities and that Council recognizes that the Services the AMS offers are exceptional; often unparalleled by most Student Unions at post secondary institutions in Canada. Student Union Executives from other universities are often surprised that the AMS is able to offer services that are only provided by their University administration, if at all. However, if we truly value and take pride in our Services, we must work to help them reach their full potential and *not* make them the sacrificial lamb. Our Services have the potential to be something truly amazing but only if we do not hinder their progress.

The Coordinators have described here, in their own words, not only the progress of their Service, but their hopes and goals for the coming year. Please do not hesitate to contact them with your questions and comments.

Compiled by the Respective Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators

AMS Food Bank

Coordinator: Joanna Yang

foodbank@ams.ubc.ca

Pavani's Comments: The Food Bank is very underutilized at the moment, which we can assume is owing to general unawareness, misconceptions (some individuals are unaware that our Service is for UBC students) and stigma around using a Service such as the Food Bank. This year, we hope to tackle these challenges head-on. We have already started addressing accessibility issues by installing a telephone line and will shortly be significantly

increasing hours of operation from the minimum 4-hours a week it has been in the past. Joanna has some terrific ideas on how to meet these challenges and more, which she has outlined below.

Currently, the Food Bank is responsible for providing emergency relief to students, to provide nutritionally-sound hampers in accordance with the Canada Food Guide, to educate clients regarding resources available to them on and off campus, to provide a beneficial experience to volunteers, and to advocate about student hunger and poverty issues. We plan to move the AMS Food Bank into a fresh direction for the upcoming school year.

The transition from high-school to post secondary can be a rough one for students, especially those who are financially independent. This is why we believe that our services have the potential to reach out from the SUB building to student residences (Vanier, Totem, Gage, etc). By offering a free, confidential, and most importantly, an approachable service, we believe that this is quite possible.

One way the Food Bank's Executive team hopes to reach this goal is by focusing on promoting our service as a convenient and friendly one. We plan to extend our reach with the help of technology, using social networks such as Facebook and Twitter which are used extensively by students. By infiltrating those networks, we can become readily available to students' needs. Another way in which we hope to promote the AMS Food Bank is by actively engaging the student population with our projects. We also intend to continue the "Food for Fines" can drive and "Trick or Eat" which are both great initiatives.

We recognize that the issue of hunger is not one that is unique to the UBC community. As such, are eager to recruit committed volunteers for our service, without whom projects such as "Trick or Eat" and "Fines for Food" would not have been successful, and provide them similar opportunities outside of UBC (for example, an opportunity to volunteer with the Greater Vancouver Foodbank). Students will be able to take their positive experiences outside of UBC and bring them back, to help serve the student population. By providing opportunities available outside of UBC, this service can help bring awareness to the fact that there are many Vancouverites suffering from hunger every single day.

A special project we would like to undertake this year includes creating food and gift hampers for local families/students during the holiday season. This way, AMS Foodbank volunteers can become even more involved and our service will be able to fulfill our promise of providing a beneficial experience to volunteers. We would also like to start a “1800 minute famine” event where participants collect pledges and go on a “juice fast” for 30 hours in order to raise awareness about student hunger on campus. The funds collected would go towards our service.

AMS Minischool

Coordinator: Justin Yang

minischool@ams.ubc.ca

Pavani's Comments: AMS Minischool is an incredible Service in that it is not only entirely self-sufficient but its classes are in high demand. We are happy to welcome Justin, the Assistant Minischool Coordinator for 08/09, back to the Service as the new Coordinator. Justin has some great ideas for new courses which will undoubtedly be a hit with students. Minischool registration experienced some difficulties when AMS Link was taken down but we have taken it in stride and hope to have a new, effective online registration system by the Fall.

AMS Minischool is currently in the process of administering the Summer 2009 Session, planned by the previous Coordinator, as well as planning for the Fall and Winter terms for this year. Registrations opened on May 25th and close on June 12th. For any information about our summer session, you may visit our website at www.ams.ubc.ca/minischool.

Currently in the planning stages for the Fall Session, Minischool hopes to offer the same repertoire of successful courses while also adding new courses in order to increase student engagement and participation. Ideas that have come forth include: magic workshops, healing crystals and scuba diving. All prospective courses are being thoroughly investigated for feasibility, profitability and likelihood of success at this time. Moreover, due to instructor turnover, some courses will require new instructors to be recruited: Cooking 101 and Singing

101/202.

Minischool faces the chief perennial problem of lack of promotions/student exposure which debilitates our efforts to offer a full repertoire of courses catering to different student demographics. As such, Minischool is continuing to pursue our traditional methods of promotions while also examining new marketing strategies. However, word-of-mouth is the most effective marketing Minischool has experienced and it would be highly appreciated if AMS councilors could inform their respective constituents of Minischool's course offerings, mandate or mere existence.

Any suggestions for courses, expansion of the Minischool programme or best practices may be directed to Justin Yang (minischool@ams.ubc.ca).

AMS Safewalk

Coordinator: Ben Cappellaci

safewalk@ams.ubc.ca

Pavani's Comments: The sheer number of employees alone (60-100) makes AMS SafeWalk a very challenging service to manage. Ben, a newcomer to the Service, has, in a very short time, extremely familiarized himself with the Service and has not only recognized its potential, but also identified many problems within SafeWalk (its operations and internal structure) and its place within the UBC community. He has a very positive outlook on these challenges and is already tackling them head on.

Preparations to begin SafeWalk for the 2009 – 2010 year are well under way. This year the entire Safewalk team will concentrate on the restructuring of the program internally to reduce inefficiencies with the purpose of delivering more walks to the students of UBC. A more professional attitude to the service, with a focus on professionalism in its workers as well as a bold and ongoing promotional campaign will hopefully see SafeWalk increase its call volume as well as its overall campus awareness. This being the year of the Vancouver Olympics, SafeWalk has a unique opportunity to be a representative for the AMS and UBC to

the thousands of people that will be visiting our campus for various events in the coming months. The goal of SafeWalk this year will be to revise its internal organization so that it is more efficient in its mandate of maintaining safety and peace of mind of travelers around the campus. This year will be pivotal in the development of SafeWalk's mission as it strives to change the public perception surrounding the program and become the best method to ensuring personal safety when travelling on campus.

The past two weeks have seen a major restructuring of existing processes in the program as well as cleaning and reorganization on the offices in anticipation of restarting the service as quickly as possible. Currently, a review is being conducted by the coordinator and soon to be hired assistant coordinator to analyze the hiring, training and operational practices in the program. Emphasis will be placed on creating a highly organized internal record system for each employee including application forms, interview questions, and employment documents to allow for the right kind of employees to be easily interviewed and hired. Training and job descriptions will be carefully analyzed this summer with the help of previous walkers and team leaders to ensure that the type of service that is being provided is currently the best for both the employees and the service. Lastly, the current walk tracking MIS system will be reviewed to ensure that the right type of information is being collected about the walks to better understand when and where to schedule walkers during the year.

One of the primary goals this year will be to increase the visibility of SafeWalk on campus to both existing and incoming students. An intensive campus wide promotion strategy for the beginning of the year is already in development, focusing on many first year events such as various faculty frosh events, Firstweek, Imagine Day and residence orientations. As the year progresses statistics have revealed that use of the program dramatically declines as students become more familiar with the campus. To combat this, a look at new ways of promoting the service to students who would not normally consider their safety at risk will be taken. A creative and widespread poster campaign will help keep the idea of Safewalk fresh in the mind of the campus as the year progresses. The program will also look to promote its services to students who would appreciate some of the other benefits of using SafeWalk such as flashlights, umbrellas, maps, directions, and of course the company of having someone to walk with while alone at night.

SafeWalk has had a long standing history of ensuring that the safety and well being of students on campus is cared for by a student led organization. While the program, like any other, has had its ups and downs the SafeWalk team of 2009 – 2010 will work toward making changes and improvements that will ensure the long term success of the program at delivering a quality service to the students and visitors of UBC.

AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre

Program Coordinator: Gina Eisenhaur

Support Coordinator: Nicky Brighid

sascprog@ams.ubc.ca

sasc@ams.ubc.ca

Pavani's Comments: SASC is somewhat of an anomaly among the Services in that the coordinators are professionals, not students, and traditionally, the ECSS is very minimally involved with the Centre, if at all. This year, I hope to find effective ways in which the ECSS role can best support this Service, assist Nicky and Gina in bringing the needs of the Centre to the forefront of the AMS' priorities, help to bridge closer ties between the Centre and the UBC community, and generate support within the AMS for the amazing work that this Service does.

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.

SASC's goal over the next year is to continue to provide quality, professional sexual assault services on campus through the provision of support for survivors and through public education activities. We plan to reproduce 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.

One special project that we have planned for this year is to support the work of the Liu Institute for Global Issues, at UBC, on the Gender Security Project. The Gender Security project aims to engage community based groups in the process of collecting evidence based information on sexual and gender based violence in the conflict affected region of the Kivu provinces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). We are also planning events and activities for December 6th, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. A day that marks the anniversary of the Montreal massacre at l'Ecole Polytechnique.

We plan to put a great deal of energy towards sexual assault education on campus by providing workshops, trainings and outreach initiatives. We hope to create a new student position for a part-time outreach worker in the next year. The goal is to raise awareness of sexual assault issues, and to raise the profile of the SASC on campus. Thus we will continue to promote and facilitate workshops to on-campus groups and classes at UBC.

AMS Speakeasy

Coordinator: Nick Nagy

speak@ams.ubc.ca

Pavani's Comments: We are eager to work with other support and wellness services on campus to combat the stigma around using such services and bringing the importance of student health and wellness to the forefront of our UBC community. This year, we are fortunate to have Nick, the Assistant Speakeasy Coordinator 08/09, return to the Service in the role of the Coordinator. He has been working hard to bring more structure and organization to the Service and in particular, create a more effective training model, complete

with a detailed training manual, to be used to train volunteers each year. At this time, we have suspended the Crisis Line in favor of joining the UBC community in promoting the 1-800-SUICIDE number that connects individuals to Crisis Centers across BC, 24 hours a day.

The following is an outline of the progress of the Speakeasy Service since the transition of the program in April 2009, any questions or comments may be directed to Nick Nagy at speak@ams.ubc.ca.

Hiring of the Assistant Coordinator

- The hiring process for the Speakeasy Assistant Coordinator began the week of June 8th, (delayed to do a slight delay in the hiring of the Coordinator) and we are hoping to have an assistant in place by June 23rd.

Orienting Office

- During the first week of operations, both the upstairs and downstairs offices were organized and cleaned. The filing system in the upstairs office was redone and the electronic data was organized and updated. All financial obligations and correspondence from the 2008/2009 services year were wrapped up and submitted.

Planning of Budget

- As per the request of the VP Finance a sample budget was created, in conjunction with the ECSS, which should accurately forecast Speakeasy costs for the 2009-2010 year. Areas of note include a marked decrease in our telephone costs, and an increase in our volunteer training and appreciation budgets.

Recruiting of Past Volunteers

- Early in May, requests for past program volunteers to reapply for the 2009-2010 year went out. We are happy to report that we have 37 returning volunteers, representing a retention rate of 47%, up 43% from the previous year. This year we are estimating a volunteer base of approximately 96 volunteers and 6 team leaders.

Request of Team Leader Applications

- During the week of June 1st, a request of applications to our Team Leader position went out and is scheduled to close June 12. Presently, we are estimating having a total of 6 team leaders, who will assist in the training, development, and operation of the service.

Crisis Line

- At the direction of the ECSS and the recommendation of the Speakeasy Coordinator via a report developed in the 2008-2009 year, the AMS Speakeasy Crisis line has been terminated indefinitely as the program has been deemed ineffective, costly, impractical and a duplication of services already provided.

Development of Training Manual

- Working with Counseling Services, SASC, the Wellness Center and various other organizations on campus, we are attempting to develop a comprehensive and reusable training manual for Speakeasy. This is an ongoing process which we hope to have completed by August 2009.

Planning of Training Camp

- Based on feedback from last year's Speakeasy volunteers, we are in the process of developing a training camp for the September orientation. This will be a 2 day long retreat, where our volunteers will receive part of their training for the year.

AMS Tutoring

Coordinator: Yalda Ebrahimi

Assistant Coordinators: Mike Brown, Emily Lam

tutoring@ams.ubc.ca

Pavani's Comments: The demand for AMS Tutoring continues to grow. Under Yalda's leadership, this Service has expanded beyond all expectations. This year, Yalda and Mike (both returning to their positions), have welcomed a newcomer, Emily, in to the fold. Her energy and enthusiasm will undoubtedly be an excellent asset to the team. Yalda, Mike and Emily have been working hard to restructure and enhance the training model and support the

LEAP program. This year, we hope to provide our tutors with a wage increase in order to maintain pay equity and keep up with the competitive wages for qualified tutors teaching university subjects.

AMS Tutoring will face a few challenges in the coming summer months and winter school year. Ultimately, overcoming these challenges will help our Service reach its goals. Below, we have identified action steps we will take to achieve these goals and solve the issues currently facing AMS Tutoring.

Improved Hiring Exams:

- Some of our exams used to test and qualify potential tutors may be outdated. AMS Tutoring hopes to revamp these tests by pulling questions from the Exam Database, and seeking guidance from faculty, and lecturers/professors. The net result will be an improved test that is easier for the AMS Tutoring staff to mark and interpret.

Improved Training Program:

- Last year AMS Tutoring provided a comprehensive and complete training program. In achieving this, however, the training often overlapped between all the different components (AMS Training, Disability Resource Training, and LEAP Training).
- This year, we hope to develop a streamlined training program. One possibility is a combined AMS and DRC training, with the additional LEAP training for Online Tutors. This would likely reduce content overlap by 25%. This would also make it easier for Tutors to receive training while balancing summer work schedules.
- Moreover, we hope to prepare a “training package” which solidifies in writing for future use, some of the procedures addressed during the training day.

Raising Awareness

- AMS Tutoring has always been plagued by a revolving door of first-year students. Students who use our services in their first year typically use us very little after that. By then, a new batch of unaware students has arrived, and the process of advertising to them has already started.
- Our strongest promotional efforts last year was promoting the events at the start of the

school year (Firstweek, AMS Clubs Day, International House, Native Long House BBQ).

- We faced sharp declines in the service usage for Term 2 compared to Term 1 (however, both were still strong relative to previous years). It seems the lower usage could be due to our decline in promotions after the initial Term 1 blitz. Our goal is to strengthen our signage and postering campaign in Term 2 to compensate for the lack of campus events that we were typically able to use during Term 1.
- Moreover, we hope to build a social networking presence, most likely with Facebook. There is great opportunity to work with LEAP on this initiative, and we will investigate our options in the coming months.

Increase Services during the Exam Period:

- Our service is popular, and some students do require tutoring services during the exam period which we currently do not offer.
- To date, we have offered math and economics review sessions during the exam period which have been extremely popular. It would be our goal to set up a broader range of exam review sessions to include perhaps chemistry and physics (if the demand was apparent).
- Moreover, the run-down AMS Exam database was an initiative taken on by AMS Tutoring. We expect to have this completed so as to offer another resource for students to use as study help throughout the term.

AMS Volunteer Connect

Coordinator: Daniel Chow

volunteers@ams.ubc.ca

Pavani's Comments: AMS Volunteer Connect has undergone some major restructuring over the last few months and there is more to come. Firstly, AMS Connect's name, while phonetically pleasing, gave no indication of its mission or purpose. AMS Volunteer Connect, on the other hand, alludes to the Service as somewhat of a portal for connecting students with volunteer opportunities. Secondly, the Shinerama campaign was moved out of the Service

entirely (more details can be found under the Shinerama section), providing the Volunteer Connect Coordinator with more time to focus on running and improving the Service. As such, we have combined the Internal and External Assistant positions and submitted it to ARC for approval. Furthermore, at the direction of the Executive, Volunteer Connect is considering shifting its mandate to emphasize volunteer involvement within the AMS and the UBC community. However, with the ongoing demand from students for internship opportunities (handled by the Internship Coordinator) and volunteer placements outside UBC, it is unlikely that we will terminate this aspect of the Service. Daniel has taken these changes in stride and has successfully created a vision for the Service that accommodates them fully.

AMS Volunteer Connect is a crucial and worthwhile component of the Alma Mater Society. As a service, our overall mandate is to effectively connect UBC students with meaningful volunteer and internship opportunities. Through the various services we provide, including our online database, one-on-one consultations, as well as volunteer fairs and workshops, we offer a 'one-stop shop' for students seeking to engage with their campus, their city, and around the world. Recognizing the benefits of co-curricular involvement, AMS Connect serves an integral function in shaping student life including and beyond the academic experience.

This year, AMS Volunteer Connect's main goal is to maximize students' potential through their volunteer experience. Therefore, our marketing campaign will also match the goal. Volunteer Connect is planning to distribute personal portfolios so students can keep track of their experiences, whether they are volunteer experiences or paid experiences. Students will be able to make use of the experience when they are applying for jobs or scholarships. Workshops will also be set up to assist students with any difficulties in looking for their ideal experiences.

Job shadowing will be one of the new services provided to students under Volunteer Connect. It will help students to better understand how the AMS functions. All UBC students are part of the AMS and many of them do not make use of the resources that the AMS provides. By creating a Job shadowing service, students will be able to work with VPs or Coordinators within the AMS. They will be able to help plan and organize events, as well as

participate and present in meetings. The services will be a win-win solution as departments can look for new ideas and energies to add their departments. Students can benefit from the program by viewing it as a stepping stone to becoming involved with the AMS in an appointment or elected position.

Even though the mandate of AMS Volunteer Connect will shift to focus more on on-campus opportunities, out-of-school opportunities will continue to be one of the important parts of Volunteer Connect due to the high demand for these positions. Volunteer Fairs and maintaining connections with volunteer organizations will still be an integral part of the service. By maintaining the off-campus opportunities, AMS Volunteer Connect will continue to be the “one stop job shop” for students who are looking for volunteer and internship opportunities. AMS Connect is here to serve the co-curricular needs of all its student members, ultimately contributing to a more accessible, reflective, and relevant Alma Mater Society.

AMS Advocacy

Coordinator: Hillson Tse

advocate@ams.ubc.ca

Pavani's Comments: AMS Advocacy is an extremely valuable Service, that with an effective “marketing” plan, would have an overwhelming caseload. The 08/09 Assistant Advocacy Coordinator's contract was extended by one week to allow for an effective and smooth transition as it was imperative that the Service remain in full operations during the post-exam season. While managing the full case load himself (an assistant will be hired at the end of August), Hillson has been investigating ways to improve the organization and efficiency of the Service. An important project we hope to undertake this year is the publication of an updated version of the Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook that, unlike its predecessor, will go through a legitimate validation/approval process.

The AMS Advocacy Office is a service that provides representation and guidance for UBC students that are involved in conflict with the University. AMS Advocacy is a critical tool

for students who may be facing very difficult circumstances which may result in severe consequences and repercussions. Some of the cases which the AMS Advocacy Office encounters include appeals on academic standing, admission appeals, accusations of academic misconduct, parking appeals and housing appeals. As of June 2009, there are a total of twelve open cases (an above average case volume) of which six were carried over from May. Throughout May and June, this office has also given informal advice/guidance to over fifteen individuals.

For this upcoming academic year, the AMS Advocacy Office has several goals and projects that it would like to see realized. At top priority is a review of the AMS Advocacy Office mandate and procedures. As of this moment, the AMS Advocacy Office is only mandated to provide its services to current AMS/GSS members in good standing. This poses difficulties in cases involving individuals who may not be UBC students, are no longer UBC students or are prospective students. For such individuals, there is ambiguity as to whether or not the Advocacy Office is obligated to provide assistance or representation. Another area where clarification is required is in regards to when the AMS Advocacy Office can cease representation of a client. The current policy is that the AMS Advocacy Office can at its discretion cease representing a client if it is deemed that such representation would bring the Advocacy Office into disrepute. Such an option is not mentioned in advocacy waivers and should be clarified as to avoid any future conflicts.

A project this office is pursuing is the secure digitization of case files in order to enable faster archiving of old materials and a more secure method of handling documents. Old case files will be scanned and stored on an encrypted drive while all paperwork will be archived on a more frequent basis. A database will also be created in order to facilitate better case file management and accessibility to old files. Finally, this office is also reviewing the Student Rights and Responsibility Handbook which was in a draft stage from previous years and will try to get a revised draft out for AMS/UBC approval.

Shinerama

Coordinator: Wendy Zhu

shinerama@ams.ubc.ca

Pavani's Comments: In April, an Executive decision was made to move the Shinerama Campaign out of the AMS Volunteer Connect portfolio. Last year, the Connect Coordinator had co-chaired the Shinerama Committee with the Shinerama Co-Chair. Shinerama, a fundraising campaign for the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, clearly did not fit within the mandate of Connect and for several months, completely removed the Connect Coordinator from their responsibilities within the Service. The campaign and the position remained in limbo for a few weeks until an attempt was made to fit a scaled-down version under AMS Events. After this seemed ineffective, I agreed to take the campaign and the Shinerama Coordinator under my direction supervision. In May, Wendy traveled to the national Shinerama conference. She recently assembled her core team of volunteer leaders and they are quickly moving forward with organizing the 2009 campaign.

As a national student-run fundraiser to help fight against Cystic Fibrosis, Shinerama is celebrating its 45th birthday. Being an active player organizing campus campaigns to fund raise for the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation since the 1990s, UBC Shinerama is preparing for another big success. Our 2009 Shinerama Committee is thrilled to be working on the campaign and eager to see UBC students -first-year to sixth-year, domestic and international, all shine with the spirit of teamwork, a great passion for volunteerism, and bright smiley faces!

Conclusion:

As I am compiling this report, I am attending CACUSS (the national conference of the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services) where I am learning a great deal about everything from an innovative First-week orientation performance pioneered by the University of Waterloo, to how to make our Services more accessible to marginalized groups such as International and Aboriginal students, to community outreach to commuter students, to how to conduct a quality assurance review process of Student Services. I believe that the information I am gathering here on specific topics, which I was shocked to find

speaks *directly* to the three goals I alluded to in my first Executive blog post, will allow me to make great strides in facilitating the improvement of our Student Services and furthering the mission of the AMS to enhance student life. Attending the presentations and participating in discussions on the same issues that concerned me long before stepping in the ECSS role has greatly assured me that these challenges are not unique to our campus; it has greatly motivated me to continue working towards making much needed positive changes within our Services and our campus community. I am eager to return to UBC and I look forward to making presentations to Council on my experiences, our Services and our vision for 2009/2010.

As always, I welcome any comments or questions. Please contact me at services@ams.ubc.ca.