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Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver
First Quarterly Report
March – June 2009

March

March was quite the month for me. It was my first official month as VP Admin and it felt fantastic. I gave me a really good taste of what my next 11 months would look like and I have to admit, I was (and still am) excited. The most difficult thing for me in this month was adjusting to my responsibilities and finding a way to integrate everything else in my life into my new job.

Student Administrative Commission (SAC)

Tristan, former VP Administration, put together an amazing Student Administrative Commission (SAC) who were there to guide me through the clubs portion of my portfolio. Without the help of these commissioners, who knew what to do and were patient enough to help me with any questions that I had or questions that arose, I would not have been able to devote the time and energy that the SUB project requires of me. It was a pleasure to work with the 2008-2009 SAC team.

The SUB Project

The SUB project, as expected, takes up about 90 percent of my time. It is one of the biggest projects that the AMS has taken on and because of the importance of a student driven process, the SUB project occupies many of my waking (and sleeping) hours.

The SUB Project + UBC

In March, we were dealing with the report from Partnerships BC that recommended that our project be a Public-Private Partnership. Many hours were spent going through the report, reading and analyzing the words of Partnerships BC. We issued a response to UBC regarding Partnership BC's report, explaining our viewpoint on the document. At the same time, the SUB renew negotiations team was meeting with UBC to discuss governance structure and discussing different ways we could make the governance structure something both UBC and the AMS would be comfortable with. We made a copy of the program available to UBC in order to solicit feedback and comments from them regarding the items we were planning to put in our new building.

The SUB Project + Students

Permanent display boards were made up to communicate the program to students. We went through the program and picked out the sections which would interest students the most, thus widening the reach of our consultations to students who do not have the time to read through the 137 page program. We simultaneously ran an online survey to get feedback from students with questions which would help us figure out the level of support some of new initiatives in the new building have. We wanted to know how often students would use things like the climbing wall and what new food outlets students would be most interested in having us develop in the new building. We received over 1500 responses which helped us back up the student consultations done in October 2008. March was also a month of getting with the groove with the team helping make this project possible, learning the dynamics of the SUB renew team who have been working together for a year was a big part of that.

Other

I also had the chance to attend a couple of fun events which was a great way for me to meet new people, especially other student leaders. The UBC Student Leader Recognition Reception and Just Desserts were very enjoyable; meeting other people who have done amazing things for the students of UBC is always a humbling experience. And enjoying amazing desserts made by the Women's Faculty Club never hurts!

April

April was another crazy month (when are they not crazy?). From The Great Farm Trek to Interviews for the new SAC team, from exams to the exec photo shoot (which can be found on the AMS Flickr page), April was full of running around and doing lots of different things.

Student Administrative Commission (SAC)

In the world of SAC, interviewing for the 6 commissioner positions was a task which took up a lot of time but was extremely rewarding. I interviewed many qualified people and the task of narrowing down and eventually choosing 1 candidate was not easy. I am confident that I have hired on a new SAC team who are all extremely qualified and will be able to take their positions and run with it. For this year's SAC team I've chosen Elin Tayyar as the SAC Vice Chair, Elaine Chin as the Clubs Commissioner, Kyle Lai as the Buildings and Facilities Commissioner, David Le as the Bookings Commissioner, Jeremy Jaud as the Art Gallery Commissioner, Cindy Zhan as the Special Projects Commissioner, and Sima Shoker as the Administrative Commissioner. I'm so excited to work with this group of students who each bring a unique set of experiences that will enhance their performances in each of their positions. Their innovative approaches to age old problems and the passion to serve students that each commissioner has already shown make me confident they will give SAC everything they've got.

The SUB Project

The Program

April was spent working on the Value Analysis of the program for the new SUB. Value Analysis is an important step for the project because we need to make sure that we will be able to afford our program on our budget. It tells us approximately how much our program is going to cost which will give us an idea of whether we should be scaling back or adding more to our program. The Cost estimation was done by a firm called Spiegel Skillen & Associates Limited. It told us that our program was over budget which mean that we had to decide on which things should be cut from the program. Fortunately, we do have an agreement with UBC which says that we do have the option of leaving certain items behind in the current SUB.

The SUB Project + UBC

We met with UBC to discuss our response to Partnership BC's report. After a long discussion about our report, UBC agreed to issue us a copy of their reply and allow us to comment before sending it to Partnerships BC. They agreed to take our concerns into consideration in the creation of their report.

The SUB Project + The Musqueam Band

We also sent letters which expressed a formal invitation to the Musqueam Band in potentially participating in the SUB project in the form of a position on the Joint Committee, amongst other options. We are still waiting for a reply, but students have expressed that it is important to honor the Musqueam.

The SUB Project + The Alumni

We are looking into potentially working with the Alumni and their planned Alumni centre, possibly sharing some spaces which will benefit our students in the sense that we would be sharing the cost of building these spaces with the Alumni. Some of the space under consideration is the ballroom and the council chambers. We received a copy of the Alumni's Alumni Centre Program which gave us a better idea of what they are trying to achieve in their space as well as what is planned. All this information will help us figure out if we want to share space with the alumni. We can also use it to find a partnership which will benefit and make sense for the students.

May

A major part of my May was all the convocations I had the privilege of attending. But my favourite event in May was the whistler retreat. It was a lot of fun; it gave me a chance to get to know some of the councilors better. It was also a chance to see how council envisioned the upcoming year.

Student Administrative Commission (SAC)

One of the problems identified by previous SAC commissioners was the fact that the hours they were expected to work was not equal to the amount of hours they are paid. In order to help alleviate some of the pressures on the commissioners, ARC (Appointments Review Committee) brought a motion to council to raise some of the hours that some of the SAC commissioners were working.

The SUB Project

The SUB Project + UBC

As promised, UBC sent the AMS a copy of their reply to Partnerships BC. While we were pleased to see UBC's report, we were disappointed by the length of it. We were also upset that UBC did not incorporate our report with theirs. Partnerships BC's report was 19 pages, our report outlining our concerns was over 3 pages long, UBC's response was close to 1 page. We are currently working with them to have more of our concerns inserted into their letter and are tailoring our report to UBC so that it is suitable to be sent as an attachment to be read by Partnerships BC. In terms of a response to our program, UBC responded with a 4 page report which outlined all of the things they identified as a concern.

The SUB Project + GSS

We were able to sit down and have a chat with the GSS regarding some of their concerns regarding the new SUB. It was an extremely useful exercise because it allowed us a chance to gain a better understanding of what the GSS is looking to do in the future and also to understand some of their current operations better. We also were able to look at the results of the grad survey that the GSS sent out regarding the SUB project, giving us an idea of how much grad students use this building.

The SUB Project + SUBmersion

Myself, Guillaume Savard (MHPM) and Bronwyn Jarvis (SUB Renew Coordinator) were given a chance to give a quick SUB presentation at SUBmersion (the part of the retreat that happened at the SUB on the Friday). It was a great way to give councilors who may not be too aware of the SUB project a quick overview of what has happened and what will happen.

The SUB Renew Coordinator

Bronwyn and I sat down and looked through all the applicants for the position of SUB Renew Coordinator. After interviewing many very qualified candidates, we choose Jensen Metchie. Jensen and Bronwyn will be doing transition and working together until July. This will ensure the continuity of the student driven process and give them a chance to work on some of the initiatives.

Renovation Planning Committee

The Renovation Planning Committee brought a couple of projects to council including renovations to the Whistler Lodge (including replacing carpet in the dormitory, painting the walls and caulking all the beds) and some renovations in the SUB to create two new offices.

June

The SUB Project

The Program

After analyzing all the data from the survey we did two months ago and comparing the results to our program to make sure both aligned, the SUB Renew Coordinators (Bronwyn and Jensen) wrote up a report which put words to all those numbers. We are currently reviewing it as a committee to come up with a conclusion and finalize the document. Look forward to seeing it sometime in the near future.

The SUB Project + UBC

A negotiations meeting with UBC has been scheduled for Friday, May 19th. At this meeting, the matters of Public Private Partnerships and governance structures will be discussed. I am optimistic about this meeting because I am confident we will be able to receive some indication of where the negotiations are going and the future of the SUB project.

The SUB Project + Alumni

A meeting between the AMS and the Alumni took place last week and we have agreed that the best place to start exploring a partnership is to look at what we each need from the spaces we are considering sharing (the ballroom and the council chambers). To ensure that we are accurately reflecting what each party needs, we are also drawing up different scenarios of what would happen if we were to engage in different levels of partnership.