



Alma Mater Society of
UBC Vancouver

Quarterly Executive Report

Tom Dvorak, Vice-President Finance

June 18, 2009 to September 23, 2009

Table of Contents

Opening Remarks

Staff Updates

AMS Committees

Hiring Committees

AMS/GSS Extended Health and Dental Plan Committee

Budget Committee (Chair)

Business Operations Committee (Chair)

Human Resources Committee (Chair)

Appointments Review Committee

Fundraising & Sponsorship Committee

Impacts Committee (Chair)

Finance Commission

Renovations Planning Group

SUB Renewal Committee

External Committees

Walter Gage Memorial Fund Committee

Aquatic Centre Management Committee

Alumni Association Board of Directors

CiTR Board of Directors

Canadian Students' Horizons Group

Opening Remarks

I stopped to blink, and here I am more than halfway through my term! My first 3 months involved drowning in a sea of learning. This past quarter has involved simply drowning in a sea of work, and finding ways to navigate my way through it all. I got to the point of pumping out 60-80 hour workweeks and nearly burning out this summer, and had to make some changes towards creating a healthy work-life balance in order to continue.

Probably the most important lesson that I've learned this quarter is that there is a life outside of my work. This is not to say that I've at all cast my AMS obligations aside. I've simply found a way to maintain my sanity and an independence where my job doesn't define me. I feel like this is a reality check and lesson that I'll benefit from for the rest of my life.

Letting go of the need to know every operational detail about our organization and all of its initiatives has been absolutely liberating. It's opened up my time and mind to take in a wealth of other experiences that have in turn helped me gain an alternate perspective that has positively affected my work at the AMS. Essentially, I'm able to be happier as a human being and contribute more to my work by spending less time directly tied into it. The AMS accomplishes more with me putting in 40-50 hours a week now than it used to when I put in 80. I just wasn't spending my time in the right places. It's quite fascinating how that works.

I'm spending more and more time on exciting initiatives that won't happen without my drive behind them, and less and less time on things that aren't essential, or can just as easily be done by someone else. I'm now conscious of just what kinds of constraints I'm working within, and what I can realistically accomplish before my term is done. I've actually dropped a number of things that would be great and exciting to do, but that I'm not certain I could finish up. I know from my own experience transitioning that if something isn't 100% complete at turnover, chances are that it won't get followed through on by the successor. Priorities and mandates often conflict and the "old" project and the work that was put into it falls to waste unless it's complete and institutionalized. I'd hate to see the AMS' investment in me fall to waste, so the focus from here on out will be on finishing.

There was a point this summer where I took a great beach day with a friend and thought to myself, "If I had \$10 million, I'd probably be doing exactly what I'm doing right now... If I can be doing this regularly when I'm older, I'll know that I've made it." There are a lot of pressures on this position, but the reality is that I'm in a very good place, and the recent challenges, victories, adventures and people in my life have made the past few months one of the greatest and happiest times I can remember.

Take care,

-Tom Dvorak

Staff Updates

A lot of the great work that comes out of my portfolio is thanks to my dedicated staff. That being said, there have been some hurdles, but after a mid-year feedback session with each of these individuals, I'm excited to see what we can achieve. There have been some changes to projects, timelines, and responsibilities to better align staff with objectives for the year. This review has been extremely valuable for me and my portfolio, and it's something I'd strongly suggest to any of my colleagues here at the AMS, as well as to other campus leaders.

Associate Vice-President Finance

Catherine Metrycki - avpfinance@ams.ubc.ca

Having worked well above her core hours earlier in the year, Catherine spent her time serving the AMS Finance Commission remotely, facilitating club and constituency budget approvals as well as fund applications from her home town. With over 300 different budgets to review and approve, she took a well-deserved vacation to round off the summer and is now back with great energy and ideas for the fall!

Financial Orientations Coordinator

Edwin Chan - finorientations@ams.ubc.ca

The sea of paperwork and tours continues as Edwin works hard to get all treasurers dialed into how to interface with the AMS back office.

Business Promotions Coordinator

Mike Brown - businesspromotions@ams.ubc.ca

Mike brought the Business Operations Committee an exciting presentation on a plan for re-branding our outlets earlier this summer, and is currently working on some follow-through items to begin that process. He's also been busy planning several promotional campaigns for the coming school year. Keep your eyes peeled for these exciting promotions!

Sustainability Coordinator

Joyce Shen - sustainability@ams.ubc.ca

Joyce has put in a great deal of time this summer of attempting to establish a benchmark of where we sit in terms of sustainability initiatives here at the AMS. With the plethora of projects that were taken on last year with dozens of parties involved, it's been a challenge to track everything down. In parallel, Joyce has been executing some of the initiatives that were planned earlier in the year around compostable containers, bottled water, IMAGINE Day awareness, and countless hours on University committees.

AMS Committees

Hiring Committees

Hiring was a long and grueling process this year. Thanks again to all councillors who contributed!

AMS/GSS Extended Health and Dental Plan Committee

This committee has not met recently, but there has been a bunch of work done around making opt-outs as smooth and seamless as possible through these initial weeks of school. There will be some intense work for this committee later in the year as we look at renewing our health plan contract.

Budget Committee (Chair)

The budget was completed and submitted to council back in July, completing this committee's main role for the year. Since then it's been reviewing some follow-up budget requests and making plans for an efficient structural review.

Business Operations Committee (Chair)

Lots of work on the back-end here. The committee has been looking at strategies around signage, sustainable sourcing of containers and cutlery, and entrepreneurial business models around the Whistler Lodge. On a side note, I've been doing some work in the background, researching and exploring ways to get students more involved in our business operations.

Human Resources Committee (Chair)

I'm happy to announce that we've completed our HR search and have a new Senior Manager, Human Resources. It's my pleasure to say that David Hannigan will be joining us in early October, bringing a wealth of HR experience to the table. We were overwhelmed by the quality and quantity of candidates that we were put in touch with. Over 80 individuals applied for the position, 5 of which we ultimately interviewed, and 3 of which we called in for a second round of interviews.

Appointments Review Committee

This committee will see a revival of work with our new Senior Manager, HR coming on board. Tons of issues to address around salary grade design and pay equity in general, but in particular as this relates to Workstudy positions. We have some student staff making north of \$20/hr while others are making close to minimum wage. Questions around the committee's role in an HR framework need to be answered too.

Fundraising & Sponsorship Committee

This committee has met and upon assessing our sponsorship situation, will continue to leave the task of sponsorship management to our Communications Manager given the efficiencies behind having a function with continuity take care of sponsor relationships.

Impacts Committee (Chair)

While this committee has met very little this quarter, but many initiatives have been planned and coordinated by Joyce Shen, our Sustainability Coordinator. In the interest of everyone's time on this committee, a lot more responsibility has been put on the Sustainability Coordinator this year for executing initiatives that in the past has been an operational function of the committee. Based on feedback from some of last year's members, the workload was simply too much to handle effectively. My hope that a return to the traditional planning and strategy role of the committee will set a strong path for the future of the AMS Lighter Footprint Strategy.

Finance Commission

We continue to receive and review funding and loan applications as part of the day to day. The new Rezgo system is up and running, albeit in a trial form with limited user groups. We hope to iron out a lot of the creases this term and do a full, scalable launch of this event booking system in January.

Renovations Planning Group

This committee has recently looked at proposals for upgrades to the Art Gallery as well as a proposed renovation of the self-serve photocopy space on the lower level of the SUB. If you've read this report in time for the Sept. 23rd council meeting, be the first to mention this paragraph during my executive remarks for a free lunch at the AMS.

SUB Renewal Committee

My recent work with this University has centred around coordination with the Alumni Centre project as well as the financing terms of our own building. This financing is very important, as it dictates what scale of a project we're able to undertake.

External Committees

Walter Gage Memorial Fund

This committee continues to meet quarterly to review applications for this generous source of student initiative funding. Our next meeting is on September 29th.

Innovative Projects Fund Committee

This joint University-AMS committee will be deciding on IPF applications this fall. Applications open soon!

Aquatic Centre Management Committee

This is a tri-partnered committee with representation from the University, the AMS, and the University Neighbourhoods Association. There are some basic operational decisions that are made, and we're working around the wonderful cut in student admission fees last year, making admission for students free for public swims.

Alumni Association Board of Directors

This is an exciting organization to work with, as they're just now climbing out of a complete strategic review, and are starting to see mechanisms put into place that are yielding amazing results. We recently welcomed 2 new board members, and approved an MOU with the University on the Alumni Centre project. At the recent AGM, Marie Earl, Executive Director of the Alumni Association and AVP Alumni, announced her resignation after 5 years of dedicated, valuable service. She will continue to serve until well into 2010, providing ample time to find a qualified replacement.

CiTR Board of Directors

A big milestone for CiTR this year has been the reforming of the bylaws to clear out countless archaic inefficiencies. This finally culminated with the passing of the new by-laws at the recent CiTR AGM.

Canadian Students' Horizons Group

This national group is composed of the student unions of UBC, the University of Alberta, the University of Western Ontario, and Queen's University. We met early this summer here in Vancouver to reform our constitution as well as discuss certain business dealings. Fun fact: if we were to ever consider joining the CFS, we would have to first vote to resign our seats on CSHG, as the CSHG bylaws prevent us from being a part of both CSHG and the CFS.