AMS Council update – August 5, 2020

* Meeting agenda, presentations, and documents discussed in Council can be found [here](https://www.ams.ubc.ca/how-we-run/council/#!/tab/agendas-presentations-amp-minutes-2020/).
* The meeting minutes of August 5, 2020 is not uploaded as of August 22, 2020, but could be found in the link above when available.

Key takeaway from the meeting:

* There is surplus University funds that resulted from UBC tuition increase. UBC is seeking advice from the AMS on how to use those funds.
* AMS Campus base is launching.

For more detailed information, please refer to the Council Summary (August 5, 2020) written by Sheldon Goldfarb, Archivist & Clerk of Council (in black) below. The original article could be found [here](https://www.ams.ubc.ca/news/council-notes-from-the-meeting-of-june-24-2020/). Additional background information is provided in purple.

“Here are notes from the regular AMS Council meeting of **August 5, 2020** (held virtually on Zoom):

**Omnibused Motions:** Council approved a number of motions en masse, including:

Endorsement of a Statement of Principles for a [Just Recovery](https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/084-21-Advocom-Motion-to-Endorse-JustRecovery-Principles.pdf) after COVID.

Approval of $44,646 to replace the current surveillance system server.

Approval of a revised MoU with the University about access to student information.

Approval of a delay in the submission of a report from the Governance Committee on

discipline.

**COVID Effects:** Georgia Yee, the VP Academic & University Affairs, reported on a COVID survey which showed that issues affecting students include layoffs, housing insecurity, access to technology for online courses, and mental health.  She said international students had been disproportionately affected.

[**UCRU**](https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/103-21-UCRU-Presentation.pdf)**:** VP External Kalith Nanayakkara presented on UCRU (Undergraduates of Canadian Research-intensive Universities), an informal coalition of student associations from nine of the largest Canadian universities.  He said there are plans to make UCRU into a more formal, incorporated organization with bylaws and procedures.

[**CampusBase**](https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/104-21-CampusBase-Presentation-Council-Edition.pdf)**:** Nicolas Williams, the AVP Administration, updated Council on CampusBase, the new AMS platform for managing AMS clubs, which it is hoped will be something that all campus groups will start using, not just the clubs, to help create a virtual community and a social network.

**Appointments:** Council appointed Nevena Rebic and Joshua Kim to the new working group for implementing the AMS Equity Plan.

* [UBC AMS Equity Plan Proposal](https://www.ams.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/112-21-AMS-Equity-plan-proposal_presentation-deck-1.pdf)

**Systemic racism:** VP Georgia Yee said there is a large conversation going on about this, focusing on empowering survivors of incidents such as the recently reported one of a female Asian UBC student who was allegedly assaulted on a Vancouver bus.

**Indigenous Lounge:** Indigenous representative Laura Beaudry said the Indigenous Committee is talking of opening an Indigenous Lounge in September.

**Talkative Students?** Student Senator Alex Gonzalez reported that Student Senators were told they talk too much, but the Senator who made the comment has since apologized.

**Who Shall Chair the Finance Committee?** After much debate, Council approved a Code amendment to allow Councillors other than the VP Finance to chair the Finance Committee.  (The amendment will also allow Councillors other than the VP Administration to chair the Operations Committee.)  The debate focused on the need for oversight versus the need for experience.

**Surplus Funds:** AMS President Cole Evans shared a document on proposed distribution of surplus University funds resulting from tuition increases.  The University is proposing to spend money on COVID aid, a U-Pass subsidy, upgrades to the Graduate Student Centre, upgrades to the Norm Theatre, new vehicles for Safewalk, and graduate student aid.  There is still money left over that could be spent on emergency student aid, AMS-operated housing developments, Indigenous capital investments (including Indigenous art in the Nest), and investment in equity-related areas.

Some Councillors suggested focusing the student aid on mental health services.

* This [Ubyssey](https://www.ubyssey.ca/news/between-the-motions-aug-5/) article outlines some other priorities Councillors, including myself, have suggested these surplus should go to: e.g., mental health, tuition aid.
* The AMS is mandated to advocate against tuition increases.
* UBC increases tuition, but proceeds to seek advice from AMS how to use its surpluses, **which resulted from tuition increases.**

**Next meeting:** The next regular Council meeting will be held on August 26, 2020.”

If you are interested in joining future Council meetings (through Zoom), please visit the [website](https://www.ams.ubc.ca/how-we-run/council/) and look for the link for the corresponding date in the table titled "Here is a list of upcoming meetings for 2019-2020". Meetings are usually long (~3-4 hours), so please feel free to only stay for what genuinely interests you!

Also, the AMS Portfolio is starting to increase awareness of various topics regarding the AMS and student life on Instagram and Facebook. Stay tuned to those.

If you are interested in learning more about Council, or have any other questions, please feel free to email me (Rachel Chan) at lfsus.amsrep@landfood.ubc.ca. Looking forward to chatting with you! ☺