



AMS Assembly Minutes

February 21st, 2021

Minutes are tentative until approved at Assembly.

The meeting was convened at 6:30p.m. EST.

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: Hello everyone, welcome, we've got a short agenda tonight and we'll jump right into it. I see a hand from Commissioner Seo?

Clubs Commissioner Seo: I'd like to add a motion to the list, I forgot to submit a motion before the deadline. I'd like to request a motion to ratify a few new clubs, I believe Laura has the list of them, and this motion is seconded by VP-UA Seig.

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: Okay, onto motion one.

Motion #1 – Moved by Secretary Laura Devenny, Seconded by AMS President Zaid Kasim
Motion for Assembly to approve the agenda of the meeting of February 21st, 2021].

FOR: Unanimous

AGAINST: None

ABSENTIONS: None

Motion carries.

Speaker Amir-Ali Golrokhian-Sani: Alright I think we have a majority, so the motion has passed. Onto motion two.

Motion #2 – Moved by Secretary Devenny, Seconded by President Kasim

Motion for Assembly to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 20th, 2021.

FOR: Unanimous

AGAINST: None

ABSENTIONS: None

Motion carries.

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: Okay, moving on to Speaker's Business.

Speaker's Business

Speaker Amir-Ali Golrokhian-Sani: I'll begin with our land acknowledgment:

Cataraqui or Kingston, as we understand it today, is abundant in history and modern-day traditions of many First Nations and Metis. In particular, the Alma Mater Society would like to acknowledge that it's Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory which Queen's University resides on. These lands surrounding the Great Lakes are immersed in thousands of generations of indigenous history, including language, art, celebrations, and resilience. We recognize that it was within the Crawford purchase of 1783 that these lands were made available for settlements, and the agreements made were upheld by the First Peoples, but not the British crown or later the Canadian government. While we work on these lands as uninvited guests we actively benefit from the oppression of indigenous peoples. Because of our settler positionality, we have an obligation to listen to indigenous voices, and we must act in ways that will condemn past and ongoing violence against indigenous peoples and support positive change.

As a branch of the Society that strives to connect student leaders and facilitate positive change and student advocacy on Turtle Island, we strive to maintain the core values and teachings from indigenous peoples. We are incredibly grateful for the ability to do so. As the Secretariat Office facilitates Assembly, elections and Judicial Affairs, it is our duty to ensure the voices of indigenous and

marginalized peoples are amplified, as well as provide resources on how we can facilitate and help in advocacy that is important. We encourage all members of the Office as student leaders, to reflect on privileges that they have been afforded on this land, and use it to ensure campus safety, accessibility, and impact for all students. As settlers on this stolen land of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples, we must continue to educate ourselves and strive to decolonize every layer of our governance system and curricula, and to indigenize our learning. The resilience of indigenous peoples and their traditions should be applauded and inspire strength and kindness in us all. The Wampum belt covenant should be used as our compass as we navigate our journey of reconciliation with indigenous people of Canada. The Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee people had a mutual understanding of how to share the land and resources peacefully with one another. By living on this land, we must also abide by these values.

Guest Speakers

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: As always, please turn on your camera if comfortable, and remind only voting members to raise their hands. We have no guest speakers today, so I'll now invite President Kasim to give the President's Report.

Executive Reports

AMS President Kasim: Awesome, thank you very much. I'll try and keep it brief. One update which is in my report, but which I wanted clarify with everyone is that the AMS main offices (so our Commissioners, our Executive and our permanent staff), are finally relocating to the LaSalle building on the 28th. We've been in the JDUC for decades and decades and decades, and now we're finally moving to LaSalle building so it's a kind of moment in history here. So, if you need to find us, we're going to be over there, just a heads up if you want to stumble in and see what's going on over at the AMS.

The next thing, which again is in my report so everyone can read it a bit more thoroughly, is that the AMS has been really engaged internally and with the administration and community partners to work through St. Patrick's Day. I think the number one priority

is to make sure that we aren't overwhelming the healthcare system. We don't want tons of students to be going to the hospital if they don't need to go to the hospital. There's a lot of campaigns going on and a lot of things coming out. If you want more specifics, you can either message me or read the report.

Onto the matter of AMS elections: congratulations to Team ETC!! Very, very excited to have them on board now. It's a very exciting time for them. We're continuing to transition them and working through that process but they're very busy right now getting ready! Next thing is the Agnes Benidickson Tricolour Award, I want to let everyone know that the selection committee has been created and the nomination period has closed, so thank you to everyone who spread the word about that. It's a very exciting time. I'm excited to chair the committee and see where things go.

Also, a reminder that I do have President Office Hours. If you need to talk to me or set up a meeting with me you can find my office hour link in my email signature, or you can find it in my report. The last thing is the Rector election which is coming up very quickly in March. There's going to be a lot of information coming out from Laura and her team and the elections team. So round two of elections! If anyone's interested in running for Rector or you know anyone interested in running for Rector, spread the word because we need a Rector and it's a fun job, or so I've heard! That is all from me folks and I'm happy to take questions!

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: I don't see any questions, so I will move on to VP-OPS Wong's report.

AMS VP-OPS Wong: Hi everyone, thank you Amir. My report is also short. I also want to congratulate Team ETC. And I noticed that the busing referendum passed in both the AMS and STPs elections, so the next step on that is that Kingston Transit then goes to City Council and they have to approve it. Typically this is just a formality, it's harder to pass the issue in our referendum that that's why we pass it first before it goes to Council. Then we continue the negotiations for the contract, but it will look very similar to what has been in place in years past. It will stand for the next three years beginning in the 2022-23 year. Other than that, we are hoping to return to almost full operations for all of our services

once we return from the reading week. Those are all my updates. The service specific updates are all in the report, but I'm happy to take any questions now or feel free to email me as well at any time.

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: Thank you, and moving onto the report from VP-UA Sieg.

VP-UA Sieg: Thank you! I'll try and keep this really fast as well. There are three key updates that I want to speak on. First off is everything related to orientation. I've been engaged with a few of you and gotten really valuable feedback, so thank you for that, it's been really helpful. We had a meeting with the Deans group today, which is where the decision-making will be happening around orientation dates. We've kind of presented our case, we had a petition go out which had around 1,000 signatures and lots of helpful testimonials, and we're kind of waiting to see what they do with that. We've also raised it with the Division of Student Affairs and with the Provost, so we're awaiting a decision on that. For the new mask mandate, we've had some questions about how that's working. I think a lot of the new logistics for that are still being worked out. Obviously, we're returning to in-person class and the mask mandate will be coming into effect, but the information that we received when we reached out to the university about is that there will be massive distributions occurring through each faculty. If you have any questions, I recommend getting in touch with your faculty for that. I also added the hyperlink in my report for more information if you need that.

And then finally, in my report, I added something about OUSA lobbying, and I'll discuss the priorities that we brought up when we were meeting with MPs. One of our requests concerning the interest rates on student loans was actually raised in Question Period by one of the MPs and OUSA got a shout out as being the ones who are advocating for it. It's very exciting to see some of the student advocacy across the country actually making its way to Parliament and hopefully being acted on soon, so I just thought I would provide that update as well. That's it for me. Happy to answer any questions

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: I'll now move onto the Board of Directors report with Chairperson Bani Arora.

Board of Directors Report

Chairperson Arora: Hi everyone! I wanted to update you that the Student Director position application is out on AMS Apply, so if all of you could please reach out to your network and spread the word that we're looking for new directors at this time that would be greatly appreciated. That's all the updates for me and I'm looking forward to seeing you soon and you can always reach me by email.

Undergraduate Trustee Report

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: Alright, Trustee Sharma is not with us tonight but she is reachable by email if you have questions for her. And I'll move onto our report from the Student Senate Caucus Chair.

Student Senate Caucus Report

Senator Nguyen: Thank you Amir. So, the Senate is meeting very soon, I believe it's in Week 7, for our February meeting. To be honest with everyone, it's very frustrating right now. We've been trying to get a lot of answers when it comes to academics and ensuring that folks are feeling good about the exam period because we don't want what happened in the fall to repeat itself. We're trying to get clarity on academic accommodations and academic exceptions and all those things, and it's kind of like pulling teeth. We are getting a lot of run around without real answers. I believe anybody on Student Senate Caucus will agree with me there. However, with that being said, we are actually having some conversations with the Queen's Faculty Association (that's the professor group), and we're pretty aligned on a lot of the asks that we're making, such as trying to get some information about resources like central administrative support to be able to actually facilitate hybrid learning. We'll keep everyone updated. There hasn't been a Senate meeting in a while, but if anyone has anything they want me to mention in our upcoming meeting feel free to email me. The Caucus is happy to get some more input and bring that to the Senate.

Statements by Students/Question Period

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: Any questions? Well, thank you for all the executive reports. Now we can move on to the Statements by Students and question period. This is a chance for any member of the student body or Assembly to give updates of what they are up to, and there's a question period afterwards. I'm not seeing any hands, so we'll move onto New Business and motion three.

New Business

Motion #3 – Moved by SIC Commissioner Lijiam, Seconded by AMS VP-UA Seig

“That AMS Assembly approve changes to Procedures Policy as seen in appendix: RS Award Change”

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: If someone would like to speak on that motion?

Commissioner Lijiam: I could speak on it. I don't really have much to say, it's a pretty simple change. We're just advocating that when assembling the selection committee and choosing Assembly members for the Robert Sutherland Award, we need to formalize the inclusion of a representative from the Human Rights and Equity Office and the Yellow House, and also that we ought to prioritize self-identifying BIPOC students because it's an award for BIPOC students. If there are any questions, please let me know.

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: Alright, I don't see a question so all in favor?

FOR: Unanimous

AGAINST: None

ABSESIONS: None

Motion carries.

Motion #3 – Moved by Clubs Commissioner Seo, Seconded by AMS VP-UA Seig

“That AMS Assembly approve the following clubs to be ratified (clubs displayed on screen)”

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: If someone would like to speak on that motion?

Commissioner Seo: I’ll speak on it. This is the third and the last ratification that we will be doing as a part of the 2021-2022 academic year. As you can see, we have 18 clubs that are being ratified, some being re-ratified and some new. One thing that I would like to draw attention to is Exhibit Change because our lovely Speaker Amir is one of the founding executives of Exhibit Change and I had the pleasure of interviewing him. If there are any questions about any other clubs feel free to shoot me a message, but they will be getting integrated within the clubs’ realm and now we are standing at 354 clubs at the end of this academic year. So yeah, happy to take any questions

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: Alright, I don't see a question so all in favor? And I’ll note that I have a conflict of interest here, so if there is a tie, I can’t rule on it.

FOR: Unanimous

AGAINST: None

ABSENTIONS: None

Motion carries.

Discussion Period

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: Discussion period is where members of Assembly and the executive can put forward issues and potential future motions for discussion, to get advice or opinions on a subject and also to introduce important relevant matters directed to Assembly. Today we’ll start with VP Edwards.

ENGSOV VP Edwards: I just wanted to bring up something that came to my attention a short while ago in discussions with our faculty concerning the discussion of special dates. So when the session dates were approved, and when they were out for voting, at least for engineering students, the information that was provided to us was that the day of Truth and Reconciliation would be a holiday across the university, that it would not be included as a sessional date. Apparently that is no longer the case and that the faculty and the university is considering it as a half day. That was news to me and I just wanted to know if anyone else had heard about that. Also I'm hoping to work together on some advocacy to the university because the reasoning they provided was that there would be an educational piece. However, I'm sure we all know from dealing with our faculties that it very much depends on the professor when it comes to delivery and when it comes to having those conversations. And when I spoke to the faculty their answer seemed to be that they don't want to have the training. Is this news to anyone? Does anyone have advice or suggestions on how we find valuable learning resources?

AMS President Kasim: Thanks Kaija. Actually I did not know that it's going to be a half day. I thought it was going to be a full day as well, so that is good to know. I haven't been involved in any conversations where the day was brought up so that is very, very good to know. I would imagine that one of the reasons they probably came to this decision is that in an academic year you have to have a certain amount of days. However, I don't think that's enough reason for us not to have a meaningful observance of this day. If there's an educational piece, I think it needs more care as well.

President Bissell: This is interesting to me because the Truth and Reconciliation Day was factored into the Fall Term and that decision also impacted decisions about Orientation Week. Some days were freed up to be used for classes, so they should either revert back to T&R Day being no classes or actually put in the resources for it to be educational. Thank you.

VP-UA Seig: Yeah, I just want to reiterate that again when determining sessional dates we also have to factor in Orientation and Labour Day and the pre-exam period and things like that, so I think that if we were to advocate for this, it would either eat into that pre-exam

period or into the orientation period. We could double check that for sure. And I just wanted to clarify, was that the sessional dates specific to the engineering society or was it all faculties?

ENGSOC VP Edwards: That was not made clear. My understanding from the discussion with the Dean was that it was going to be across the university, although he didn't say it explicitly, so I could be mistaken. Where most of my confusion arises is the fact that when orientation dates and other sessional dates went out and were approved, the sole messaging that we received was that it would be a full day, so I'm concerned that they haven't put enough thought or resources into doing something with this day. I'm not sure that it's the entire university but I imagine it is, because the Dean seemed very adamant that it wasn't a decision he made, it was a decision that was made above his head.

ENGSOC President Bissel: I was on the faculty board during these discussions and we were told that Truth and Reconciliation Day was not a sessional date, that there would be no classes on that day. I remember some of the conversations we were having concerning the sessional dates. I remember even in consultations that our Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning had with us that was something that they had mentioned that again, when we're discussing the reading break, after implementing T&R Day, reading week would have to be reconsidered as well. So I do also worry that if that was the case, then often a lot of the outreach and feedback that they did get on the proposed sessional dates wasn't necessarily completely accurate because students may have been misinformed in terms of the way they were going to approach it. So yeah, that is something that I'm happy to reach out to Arts and Science and get some information on as well, to see what approaches have been taken in making sure that again, the significance of T&R Day is being considered.

AMS President Kasim: I'll set this as an action item for myself and I'll report on it next Assembly, but I'm happy to reach out to my counterparts at the other universities in Ontario because I would like to have a better idea of what their institutions are doing. Because if Queen's is an odd person out, then it'll be good for us to know this and we can maybe reassess as a group and figure out where we go from there. I can report on that next Assembly.

Speaker Golrokhian-Sani: I see no further hands, so I'm calling on a motion for adjournment.

Adjournment

Moved by AMS President Kasim, Seconded by VP-UA Seig.

FOR: Unanimous

AGAINST: None

ABSENTIONS: None

Motion carries.

Assembly is adjourned at 7:00 EST.