



## POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

2014 - 2015 # 07

Date: July 29, 2014

Time: 6:32 pm

### In Attendance:

*Stephanie Gruhlke (Chair)*

*Colin Champagne*

*Bo Zhang*

*Justis Allard*

*Surya Bhatia*

*Marina Banister*

*Kathryn Ordzuk*

*Navneet Khinda*

*Nicholas Diaz*

### Excused Absence:

### Others in Attendance:

*Cory Hodgson*

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by *GRUHLKE* at 6:32 pm.

#### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*CHAMPAGNE* moved that the *July 29* agenda be approved as *tabled*.  
Seconded by *BANISTER*.

Vote on Motion 9 / 0 / 0  
*CARRIED*.

#### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*BANISTER* moved that the *July 15* minutes be approved as *tabled*.  
The motion was seconded by *DIAZ*.

Vote on Motion 9 / 0 / 0  
*CARRIED*.

#### 4.

*GRUHLKE* announced that she was unable to book lower level meeting room as they are not open to the public yet.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The committee will also look into their class schedules in the next meeting to find a possible meeting day in Fall.

## 5. PRESENTATIONS

### 6. ORAL EXECUTIVE REPORTS

#### 1. VP Student Life

On the Affordable Housing policy, DIAZ reported nothing has changed yet, and the debrief on residences was on going. He will have a meeting with the Graduate Students Association as they have common advocacy goals related to residence.

On RHA, its president just stepped down and the new president will be Jordan Simao.

On the safety of students, there were a lot of confidential issues, so DIAZ will announce it when there is a public occasion.

BANISTER asked about making the staircase of HUB Mall more secure and asked if it was related to protecting residents. DIAZ answered that, in the Protective Services Advisory Committee, they discussed about putting locks in doors all at the bottom of HUB, but the discussion dropped as it was too expensive.

Last Thursday, DIAZ had four meetings at the same time. One of the meeting was attended by LAU to look up the blueprints developing the basement of lower level HUB where the International Students Services is located.

He also met with Scott McKeen, city councilor, and Lauren Mickel, the VP Student Life of MacEwan University, to talk about campus housing strategy and how the city can be part of that.

#### 2. VP External

KHINDA met with people from the City of Edmonton who works at the University recruitment to talk about how to get university students involved in the city, such as jobs and internships.

She also met with the all the Execs of the other five Students' Associations at Mount Royal University, Calgary. In the meeting they talked about strategizing and how should the policy come out from the government. They also discussed tuition fees.

#### 3. VP Academic

On the topics of educational materials, ORDZUK reported that she was finalizing Be Book Smart and met with people from the Bookstore to talk about various options regarding academic materials. The E-Bookshelf, which is something the University is doing in regards to online materials, will be

rolled out for trial run next year.

On the petition system, the production had started. ORDZUK decided to go with self-declare option rather than renegotiating information sharing agreement with the Registrar office to include faculties.

BANISTER asked about the meaning behind the option. ORDZUK explained that the current information sharing agreement with RO allows SU to use CCID for certain purposes, such as elections, orientation and some operational contacts to students. Initially ORDZUK thought of renegotiating it for the petition system, so that when students login it will determine which faculty they are in. But she decided that it will be easier for students to self-declare. Students might lie about it but the chances are low.

GRUHLKE asked about how much percentage of students will make the SU to look into the faulty. ORDZUK answered that the proportion will be similar to referendum plebiscite but not the same.

## **7. QUESTION PERIOD**

### **8. OLD BUSINESS**

#### I. MNIFs Second Reading

KHINDA drafted the WHEREAS clauses according to the first principles and created the BIRT clauses that reflect the first principles.

The committee started to discuss the second reading point by point.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> WHEREAS clause

DIAZ asked if the phrase “publicly funded public institution” intentional. KHINDA explained that there are private institutions publicly funded, so she wants to clarify that.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> WHEREAS clause

GRUHLKE discovered a typo in this clause. She asked if it is possible to add reasonable price to the clause as she feared the students will be charged unreasonably. KHINDA explained that it does not contradict as the SU has mechanism to prevent that. One of the BIRT clauses also reflects this spirit. Besides, she thought that “reasonable” is a vague term.

BANISTER thought that some term should be placed to define it. The committee discussed the possible wording.

ALLARD brought up the wording of “pay” might be problematic as students might think that the word “pay” implies something in addition to the MNIFs. He suggests to change it to a more appropriate wording.

The committee will come back to this clause.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> WHEREAS clause

ZHANG was unclear about MNIFs. KHINDA explained that MNIFs is in addition to the tuitions students pay. Both are mandatory but one is

instructional and one is not. ZHANG continued to ask that will the university use the money from MNIFs strictly for non-instructional use. KHINDA explained that in reality all the money goes into one pot, so SU is asking for accountability and transparency that the SU should know exactly what are the fees paying for, but currently the SU do not know.

DIAZ thought that this clause is not about where the money should go but to distinguish about what the fees advertise.

#### 7<sup>th</sup> WHEREAS clause

GRUHLKE thought this clause is highly disputed. ALLARD suggested that to put it “a high number of predictable cost associated with education” to differentiate. CHAMPAGNE thought that the clause talks about education not instruction.

DIAZ suggested to flip clause 5 and 6.

ZHANG asked about whether the MNIFs are broken down or a large lump sum. KHINDA answered that some of them are broken down but the SU does not know what are they pay for. The committee discussed the wordings for the third WHEREAS clause.

*BANISTER* moved to amend the third WHEREAS clause to read: “WHEREAS undergraduate students are willing to pay a reasonable fee for services that benefit them.”

The motion was seconded by *ZHANG*.

Vote on Motion 8 / 0 / 1

*CARRIED*.

The committee went on to discuss the BIFRT clauses.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> BIFRT clause

*BANISTER* did not like the wording of this clause; she did not understand that why is it only for all Alberta students instead of all students. Personally, she thought that this clause is for all the students not just for all Alberta students. *BHATIA* had the same thought.

*KHINDA* intended to make this clause includes all the students in Alberta, not just Albertan students, and did not notice the wording may have caused misunderstanding.

DIAZ suggested to change it to “students in Alberta.”

*ORDZUK* asked if MNIFs a problem in the other provinces but it has the biggest problem in Alberta. *ZHANG* suggested to bring this issue to Federal level. *KHINDA* explained that MNIFs are controlled by provincial government, so it has nothing to do with Federal government.

The committee debated about the wording. DIAZ suggested that the committee does not need to specific that in the clause. *BANISTER* thought that there are more cons in being specific. *CHAMPAGNE* asked what cons will it have. *BANISTER* answered that it sounds like not including

international students and students from the other provinces. ALLARD suggested to move the fourth BIFRT clause up then this clause will not need to be specific.

KHINDA explained to the committee that if the clause is not restrictive then all people can interpret it as all students in anywhere, and she explained the order of putting the clauses. DIAZ had the same idea and reminded the committee that, when they were talking about affordable cost for post-secondary education, it was for whom.

KHINDA explained the spirit behind this clause: having regulated MNIFs provides students affordability.

DIAZ thought that the wording not only defines the scope of the clause but also defines SU's relationship with potential lobby partners.

BANISTER moved to remove "Alberta" in the second BIFRT clause. The motion was seconded by ZHANG.

Vote on Motion 2 / 6 / 1  
DEFEATED.

KHINDA suggested dropping all the part after the word education. ZHANG agreed. But CHAMPAGNE disagreed as it will not specifying to students anymore, which he thought is bad because he will include anybody, and more importantly, it will no longer specify whom will enjoy affordable cost of education.

The committee continued to discuss possible wording. BHATIA suggested changing the wording to "all students studying through Alberta institutes." DIAZ agreed as it was a specific term.

CHAMPAGNE moved to change "Alberta" to "all current and potential" in the second BIFRT clause to read: "BIFRT the University of Alberta Students' Union advocates for an affordable cost of post-secondary education for all current and potential students."

The motion was seconded by DIAZ.

ALLARD concerned about defining the students.

DIAZ thought that it naturally puts the SU in the purview of the province of Alberta.

BANISTER liked the change as it includes students coming from other places to study in Alberta.

Vote on Motion 8 / 0 / 1  
CARRIED.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> BIFRT clause

ALLARD thought that it was better to flip clause 3 and 4. KHINDA explained the order of the clauses: the first 3 BIFRT are general in terms of the cost of education; then it goes to the regulation of MNIFs. The current

MNIFs are unaffordable, unaccessible, unpredictable and not transparent education, so she wanted these principles in place first, then talked about MNIFs.

BANISTER suggested changing students facing “cultural and financial barriers” to “cultural and/or financial barriers.” KHINDA agreed. ZHANG asked if there is a better term to encompass both terms without limiting to both terms. KHINDA explained the reason for using financial and cultural barriers by using a finding of a survey. ALLARD understood the reasons but he concerned that the others might not know the definition and might find it limited to certain barriers.

KHINDA suggested a solution by putting a footnote to explain what cultural barriers are. ZHANG liked this idea as there was no alternative to these terms. DIAZ thought that if people are unclear about the definition of cultural barrier, they can divert to the Council for explanation. ZHANG imagined that a student might not think that cultural background will be a barrier. CHAMPAGNE thought that if students do not recognize that they have cultural barrier, they will not be affected by such barrier. ZHANG feared that a student might have certain barriers but they are not included in this policy. DIAZ thought that the policy is not written to cater the majority but to take care the people who are in needs.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> BIFRT clause

DIAZ suggested putting the specific name of the regulation.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> BIFRT clause

DIAZ thought that this is the opportunity to tie SU to its external or internal advocacy. KHINDA explained that in this BIFRT the advocacy can go both ways.

#### 7<sup>th</sup> BIFRT clause

ALLARD suggested it is better to say “change” instead of “increase” because if the university decreases MNIFs, it might remove a service which students might want to keep.

DIAZ concerned that it might create a potential conflict when the university does not wish to provide a service anymore and take money from students, the students still want to retain the service. ALLARD, however, concerned that this policy might not be consistent with the other policies when this situation happens. He did not want this policy to specify to increase. ZHANG thought that the SU should have input when the university wants to reduce its service to students. KHINDA suspected that the university will not decrease any fees and she personally thought that the change will also weaken the sentiment behind it. ORDZUK agreed her point of view.

*KHINDA* moved that on the recommendation of the Policy Committee the Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees Policy as amended be brought to the Students’ Council.

The motion was seconded by *GRUHLKE*.

Vote on Motion 8 / 0 / 0

*CARRIED.*

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

### 10. DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS

#### I. Changing Standing Order

GRUHLKE did not email SUMAR. The issue was tabled until next meeting.

#### II. Affordable Housing Policy

The policy was tabled until the end of August when the researches are completed. DIAZ will bring it off the table when he is ready.

#### III. Health & Wellness Policy

Neither Natalie nor Kareema could come to this meeting. They completed a survey regarding the policy but the data was lost. The committee had to start the policy from sketch.

#### IV. Student Loans and Other Student Finance Related Policies

The committee had start the discussion through email.

KHINDA addressed to CHAMPAGNE's major concern of not wanting to consolidate the policy because it will lose its meaning when simplified. She understand his concern but disagreed. She did not attempt to make the policy simplistic but to make it easy to understand. She did not like the separation because it does not allow the committee to discuss the relationship between the different policies' goals. On its own, the policy advocates for more funding, but in reality it reaches its goal by taking resources from the others. This happens between merit-based awards and need-based awards. Having one comprehensive policy will allow the committee to discuss the relationship between the policies' goals.

GRUHLKE concerned that if the committee will have the decision to accept or decline the result of the research team. KHINDA explained that the work of the research can be used as starting point.

ZHANG hesitated as the policies are not simplistic that it can be rewritten into a comprehensive policy. The principles of the policies cannot be applied to the each other. He thought that policies are not made to be easy to understand but effective. They are to give the Execs the appropriate tool to advocate.

DIAZ commented that the Execs did not agree that the current policies give them the tool to advocate. KHINDA thought that the current policies are not clear as they have to look at four different pieces to figure out the stance of the SU in regards to students' financial aids. One will not get the full picture.

GRUHLKE and BHATIA thought that it will not harm the committee if the research team proceeds. DIAZ agreed and wanted to see the differences between money students paid into the financial aids and the money students could get from the financial aids.

ZHANG concerned that the effort of the research team will be wasted if the committee does not agree with the result. He also concerned that the clauses of one policy will not be relevant to the others.

KHINDA found out that there are a lot of same WHEREAS clauses in these policies which made them redundant. She also pointed out that the new policy can have a new heading such as Student Financial Aid and list up the WHEREAS clauses of different policies depending on the stances of the SU. In addressing to ZHANG's concern, she stated that the research team is eager to work.

DIAZ added that the goals of the staff of the SU are the same to the Exec's goals. He also thought that the difference between the policies is caused by the fact that they are separated and there is a potential to consolidate them.

ZHANG thought that it is impossible to have one stance for four different things as one policy already has many variables to consider. He also against to have anybody to work on that. In respond to ZHANG's concerns, KHINDA used the example of Internationalization Policy which is a diverse policy to advocate a lot of different things. She thought that the same can be done to the student financial aids policies. She also believed that the committee has the ability to analyses the new policy and the old policies, and the work of the researchers will not change the stance of the Council as they are tools to save time for the Execs and the Council.

BANISTER agreed to let the research team to proceed as they are paid to do so and are experts in this matter. The research team already agreed to do the research and it will not do harm to anything.

DIAZ stated that the Execs have a lot of staff to help them in their advocacy goals. So this situation will be the same as the others.

GRUHLKE moved to send the four financial policies to the research team.

Vote on Motion 5 / 1 / 1  
*CARRIED.*

GRUHLKE asked KHINDA to give a report on the research team in the next meeting.

## **11. REPORTS**

## **12. CLOSED SESSION**

**13. NEXT MEETING** *August 12th, 2014 @6:30pm*

**14. ADJOURNMENT** GRUHLKE moved that the meeting be adjourned.

Vote on Motion 7 / 0 / 0  
*CARRIED.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.