

GRADUATE
STUDENT SOCIETY
UBC VANCOUVER

Compendium of Position Statements

July 4, 2017

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AMS Graduate Research Report

Policy # 2013-01

Passed: Feb 28, 2013

Expires: Feb 28, 2016

Motion

BIRT GSS endorses Cenerelli, Pierre. "Graduate Students and Research Funding: A Position Paper." Vancouver, BC: Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver, February 2013 as presented

International Tuition Differential

Policy # 2013-02

Passed: May 16, 2013

Expires: May 16, 2016

Motion

WHEREAS the Sauder School of Business has proposed the introduction of a \$12,000 tuition differential for international students in the Masters of Management programs;

WHEREAS the proposed tuition increase would make international tuition 45% greater than domestic tuition in a program where domestic student seats are not government subsidized;

WHEREAS this proposed tuition increase is not a cost recovery measure;

WHEREAS the GSS and AMS have concerns about the proposed allocation of the additional tuition revenue and the deficit in rational and assurance of direct benefit to international students;

BIRT the GSS oppose the proposed international student tuition differential for the Masters of Management programs;

BIFRT the Vice-President Academic and External Relations express the GSS's stance to the University Board of Governors through a formal submission;

BIFRT the GSS Council accepts the submission prepared by the GSS and AMS entitled "Board of Governors Submission - Master of Management International Tuition Differential".

BIFRT the GSS recommend that the Board of Governors adopt resolutions that provide a tuition guarantee for multi-year graduate programs and require that international graduate student tuition be cost recovery only.

Tuition Increases

Policy # 2013-03

Passed: December 12, 2013

Expires: December 12, 2016

Motion

WHEREAS one third of graduate students at UBC Vancouver are international students;

WHEREAS the cost of education often makes undertaking graduate studies at UBC inaccessible;

WHEREAS UBC graduate students have a vested interest in maintaining the quality of their university, their education and their degree;

WHEREAS the GSS must balance its advocacy to reflect both its members' interest in a lower cost burden to pursuing academic studies and its members' interest in a quality academic experience;

BIRT the GSS oppose any annual increase that would be in excess of 2%;

BIFRT the GSS oppose any percentage annual increase of UBC international student tuition greater than that of UBC Vancouver domestic student tuition;

BIFRT the GSS support in principle the reduction of UBC student tuition, when such a reduction would be met with an equal or greater supply of funds to UBC from non-student sources, such that UBC's academic quality would not be diminished; and

BIFRT the GSS respectfully request the UBC Board of Governors to consider the cost burden that tuition represents for graduate students when discussing potential increases to tuition and seek to, whenever possible, minimize tuition costs.

Student Representation on Tri-Councils

Policy # 2014-01

Passed: November 13, 2014

Expires: November 13, 2017

Motion

WHEREAS Canada's Tri-Council Agencies (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC) are important sources of research funding for graduate students;

WHEREAS none of Canada's Tri-Council Agencies have student representatives on their governing councils;

WHEREAS students are well-qualified to provide high-quality input, oversight, and strategic guidance on matters relating to research funding in Canada;

BIRT the GSS supports the appointment of student representatives to the governing councils of the Tri-Council Agencies.

Dual Degree Program Option Tuition

Policy # 2014-02

Passed: November 13, 2014

Expires: November 13, 2017

Motion

WHEREAS UBC has proposed a policy in which the UBC Board of Governors would grant pre-approval to the tuition of future Dual-Degree Program Options;

WHEREAS this approval would apply for an indefinite period of time to future Dual-Degree Program Options which have not yet been proposed;

WHEREAS it is the duty of a Governor to "exercise the care, skill and diligence that would be exercised in the same circumstances by a reasonable person";

WHEREAS Senate does not pre-approve Dual-Degree Program Options and instead considers each proposal individually as they arise;

BIRT the GSS is opposed to any policy which would grant pre-approval for the tuition of new Dual-Degree Program Options at UBC;

BIFRT the GSS supports the principle that that each new dual-degree program option which has had its curriculum considered and approved by Senate should be required to have its tuition proposal considered and approved by the Board of Governors.

BIFRT the GSS supports the principle that tuition proposals for new Dual-Degree Program Options should be considered as a change to tuition and therefore subject to UBC Policy 71.

Indirect Costs of Research

Policy # 2015-01

Passed: January 15, 2015

Expires: January 15, 2018

Motion

WHEREAS research grants from the Tri-Council Agencies (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR) do not cover "indirect costs" (e.g. administration of research, commercialization of research, libraries, computer networks, maintenance, utilities) which cannot be directly attributed to a single research endeavour but which are crucial to facilitating high-quality research, and

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has established a Research Support Fund (RSF) with an objective "to assist Canadian postsecondary institutions with the expenses associated with managing the research funded by the three federal research granting agencies", and

WHEREAS reports generated by the Government of Canada suggest that indirect costs are incurred by institutions at a rate of 40-60% of the direct research costs funded by Tri-Council grants, and

WHEREAS the RSF is currently funding indirect costs at a rate of less than 25% of direct research costs, therefore

BIFRT The GSS recommends that the Government of Canada increase funding for the Research Support Fund so as to achieve an average rate of 40% of the value of direct research costs.

BIFRT The GSS recommends this be achieved through the following funding formula:

Funding Level	Support Rate
Costs up to \$100,000	80%
Costs between \$100,000 and \$7,000,000	50%
Costs above \$7,000,000	37.5%

Metro Vancouver Transportation and Transit Plebiscite

Policy # 2015-02

Passed: February 19, 2015

Expires: February 19, 2018

Motion

WHEREAS a Metro Vancouver Transportation and Transit Plebis cite will be held from March 16 to May 29, 2015, and

WHEREAS this plebiscite is intended to measure public support for a 0.5% increase to the Provincial Sales Tax to be dedicated towards improvement to public transit, and

WHEREAS a large majority of GSS members participate in and benefit from the U-Pass program, and

WHEREAS the 2014 GSS Student Satisfaction Survey results indicate that advocacy for public transit should be a priority of the GSS, and

WHEREAS the improvements proposed in the Mayors' Transportation and Transit Plan will create a more robust and reliable public transportation system providing great benefits to students who participate in the U-Pass program, therefore BIRT the GSS supports a new 0.5% Metro Vancouver Congestion Improvement Tax, to be dedicated to the Mayors' Transportation and Transit Plan.

BIFRT the GSS encourages its members to register with Elections BC, and to cast a ballot in the Plebiscite.

BIRFT the GSS encourages its members to vote YES for the Metro Vancouver Congestion Improvement Tax.

Special Occasion Licences

Policy # 2015-03

Passed: May 28, 2015

Expires: At the 2018 GSS AGM

Motion

WHEREAS the BC Government has recently introduced legislative and regulatory changes affecting the administration of Special Occasion Licenses (SOLs) in the province, and

WHEREAS these changes necessitate amendments to UBC Policy 13: "Serving and Consumption of Alcohol at University Facilities and Events", and

WHEREAS a briefing note entitled "Managing BC's Liquor Law Changes: Special Occasion Licenses in the UBC Context" provides additional research and background information on this topic, therefore,

BIRT the GSS supports amendments to UBC Policy 13 which result in a more efficient approvals process for student use of UBC Facilities where alcohol will be served.

BIFRT the GSS supports the principle that UBC's approval process for the use of UBC Facilities should be completely separate from the Liquor Control and Licensing Board's approval process for SOLs.

BIFRT the GSS supports the publication of all rules and conditions on SOL applications put in place by the local police at UBC as well as the fair and equitable application of those rules and conditions for all applicants.

BIFRT Council adopts the briefing note "Managing BC's Liquor Law Changes: Special Occasion Licenses in the UBC Context"

BIFRT the President will communicate the GSS's position to the relevant parts of the university and to the local police.

Non-Institutional Housing Development

Policy # 2015-04

Passed: May 28, 2015

Expires: At the 2018 GSS AGM

Motion

WHEREAS the UBC Land Use Plan classifies faculty/staff housing as "non-institutional development", a type of development that does not form part of the university's main academic mission, and

WHEREAS the UBC Land Use Plan assigns the "Academic" land use designation to those parts of campus which are reserved for development that supports the university's academic mission, and

WHEREAS UBC has proposed building non-institutional faculty/staff housing on land designated "Academic", and

WHEREAS building non-institutional housing on "Academic" land threatens the long-term future of the Acadia Park Student Family Housing area, and

WHEREAS a briefing note entitled "New faculty/staff rental housing projects near the University Boulevard Neighbourhood" provides additional research and background information on this topic, therefore

BIRT the GSS supports the principle that without exception, all new non-institutional housing at UBC should be built fully within the borders of land designated in the UBC Land Use Plan as "Neighbourhood" or "Village Centre Academic"

BIFRT the GSS calls on UBC to uphold this principle as well.

BIFRT the President will communicate the GSS's position to the UBC President and the Chair of the UBC Board of Governors.

UBC Residence Contract

Policy # 2015-05

Passed: August 20, 2015

Expires: At the 2018 GSS AGM

Motion

WHEREAS student housing at UBC is not subject to the BC Residential Tenancy Act, and

WHEREAS the residence agreement students must agree to in order to live in UBC student housing allows UBC Student Housing and Hospitality Services to modify the terms of that agreement at any time, for any reason, and

WHEREAS a briefing note entitled "Improving Clarity and Accountability in UBC Student Housing" provides additional research and background information on this topic, therefore

BIRT the GSS adopts the briefing note entitled "Improving Clarity and Accountability in UBC Student Housing".

BIFRT the GSS supports the five recommendations outlined in the briefing note.

BIFRT the Vice-President, Academic and University Affairs will advocate for these changes to UBC Student Housing and Hospitality Services, Graduate Council, the UBC Vancouver Senate, or the UBC Board of Governors as appropriate.

Board of Governors Policies and Protocols

Policy # 2015-06

Passed: August 27, 2015

Expires: At the 2018 GSS AGM

Motion

WHEREAS The UBC Board of Governors has recently attempted to obfuscate the occurrence of Board meetings; and

WHEREAS serious allegations of inappropriate behaviour have been made against the Board Chair; and

WHEREAS The Board of Governors issued its full confidence in the Board Chair and his leadership before the conclusion of a thorough investigation into those allegations; and

WHEREAS The Chair of the Board of Governors concurrently holds a position on the Faculty Advisory Council of the Sauder School of Business; and

WHEREAS student members of the Board of Governors owe a fiduciary duty to the university and therefore are not accountable to students; and

WHEREAS the communications received by the GSS from the Board have been limited to one phone call and one letter in a period of at least three years; and

WHEREAS the Chancellor, and the Board Chair have both declined an invitation to address GSS Council.

BIRT the GSS believes that the recent actions of the UBC Board of Governors and its Chair do not reflect the university's values, which include integrity, public interest, mutual respect and equity.

BIFRT the GSS believes that the Board's policies and protocols are inconsistent with UBC's values.

BIFRT the GSS believes the Board can achieve transparency and alignment with the university's values through the enactment of reforms to its policies and protocols.

Academic Freedom

Policy # 2015-07

Passed: August 27, 2015

Expires: At the 2018 GSS AGM

Motion

WHEREAS it has recently been alleged that the academic freedom of a member of the UBC Faculty Association had been infringed upon, and

WHEREAS UBC has described academic freedom as "the bedrock on which a university exists", and

WHEREAS the UBC Calendar calls on all members of the University to support, safeguard, and preserve academic freedom, therefore

BIRT the GSS affirms its commitment to supporting, safeguarding, and preserving academic freedom at UBC, as defined in the UBC Calendar.

BIFRT the GSS commends the UBC Faculty Association for the negotiation undertaken in the past two weeks on behalf of its membership to establish the fact-finding process to safeguard and preserve academic freedom at UBC.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the GSS supports the Fact-Finding Process agreed to by the university and the UBC Faculty Association.

Position Statement on Prevention of, and Response to Reports of, Sexual Violence at UBC

Presented to GSS Council on February 29th, 2016

Motion

WHEREAS the GSS “advocates for, promotes, and protects the academic, social, intellectual, cultural and recreational interests of its members” according to its Mission, and

WHEREAS the GSS values an environment that nurtures respect and equality, and provides a space where all members of the University community can work and study free from all types of violence and harassment, and

WHEREAS the World Health Organization defines sexual violence as: “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work”, and

WHEREAS sexual violence is widespread and can severely impact the physical and mental health of survivors in the immediate aftermath of such events, and in the longer term, in ways that are likely to cause the quality of life and academic performance of survivors to suffer, and

WHEREAS the University is committed to the Values of Integrity, Mutual Respect, and Equity in *Place and Promise: The UBC Plan*, and

WHEREAS current resources, processes, and offices across the University that handle allegations of sexual violence are fragmented and confusing, creating barriers to reporting and resolution, and

WHEREAS it is crucial that faculty and staff have a clear understanding of sexual violence and the proper and appropriate ways to respond to such allegations, including the processes involved and the roles of existing UBC resources (e.g. the UBC Equity and Inclusion Office), and

WHEREAS the current non-academic misconduct process is not properly equipped to handle cases of sexual violence, and

WHEREAS recent incidents of peer-to-peer sexual violence at the University have unveiled a number of failings in the administration’s response, despite good intentions, including issues “caused by the system in place, by human error and by the number of people involved,” as revealed in the Executive Summary of the *University of British Columbia Process Review* by Butler Workplace Solutions, and

WHEREAS graduate students are reliant on their relationships with peers, staff, and faculty in their departments, and therefore may be particularly wary of potential unintended consequences of reporting incidents of sexual violence, such as the risk of damaging their relationships with faculty members in their department, and

WHEREAS the GSS Advocacy Office initiated a report entitled *Strengthening Accountability Surrounding Issues of Sexual Violence: How UBC Process is Failing to Protect Graduate*

Students in June 2015 to “develop a set of actionable recommendations that will result in identifiable change at the University of British Columbia,” which was presented to GSS Council in February 2016,

BIRT the Graduate Student Society (the “GSS”) urgently recommends that the University of British Columbia (the “University”) develop a comprehensive, survivor-centred policy that specifically concerns sexual violence, and that applies to all members of the University community (students, staff, and faculty) and expands on and replaces existing policies to provide a single comprehensive and effective framework. This policy should include:

- a) Definitions of sexual violence, sexual assault, and sexual harassment;
- b) A clear description of what constitutes “consent” in accordance with the Criminal Code of Canada and explicit definitions of “force” and “incapacity”;
- c) A list of interim measures/accommodations available to students to ensure their safety prior to the onset and completion of the investigation and resolution process;
- d) A list of possible remedies, corrective actions and sanctions;
- e) A list of all support services available to students, clearly explaining the role of each service;
- f) Clearly defined reporting processes to both campus authorities and police;
- g) A statement that any form of retaliation, coercion, threats or intimidation against any individual and/or third party who reports or provides information pertaining to sexual violence will be subject to disciplinary action by the University;
- h) Guidelines for the appropriate length of time expected for the resolution of specific types of complaints;
- i) Provisions to encompass incidents of off-campus sexual violence involving UBC students, staff and faculty;
- j) Gender-neutral language;
- k) A clear description of the process for filing complaints and an outline of the investigation and resolution process, as described below.

BIFRT the GSS recommends that the University develop an investigation and resolution process to specifically address reports of sexual violence, which:

- a) Is overseen by a committee that:
 - i. Includes individuals with the necessary expertise to conduct investigative functions and who have received in-depth training and education on how to

- handle cases of sexual violence, including an understanding of how the language used may impact those involved;
- ii. Includes an objective party, separate from a Chair, whose role it is to monitor the process and ensure the fair treatment of all parties involved;
 - iii. Includes trained student members, subject to the requirement that it be appropriate to include the particular student members, or student members generally, in light of the circumstances of the complainant and the respondent in the particular case, and subject to the informed consent of all parties ;
- b) Is transparent and thoroughly understood by all involved, prior to its start, including explanations of available resources and support services, formal vs. informal reports, how each type is processed, and how and when different entities would become involved (e.g. the UBC Equity & Inclusion Office, police, respondents), and the specific responsibilities of each University office;
 - c) Is survivor-centered and sensitively considers how the process and language may retrigger survivors;
 - d) Respects the need of survivors to have complaints received without judgment or skepticism, and guarantees the right of all parties to be heard in the context of the investigation and resolution process in an unbiased and transparent manner without any form of prejudgment or prejudice to either the complainant or respondent;
 - e) Guarantees procedural fairness to all parties involved in the investigation and resolution process, and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, provides specific guarantees of adequate notice, a party's right to respond, and the right of each party to be heard;
 - f) Guarantees that the principles of natural justice will be upheld in the operation of the investigation and resolution process, and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, specifically guarantees the impartiality of adjudicators, and rights of review or appeal;
 - g) Affirms the confidentiality of the investigation and resolution process, and ensures that the privacy of all parties involved is protected pending the completion of the investigation and resolution process with respect to any given complaint;
 - h) Guarantees the right of complainants and respondents to have an advisor/legal counsel and or one or more support persons present and involved throughout their involvement in the investigation and resolution process;
 - i) Ensures that a counsellor and/or support person from the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC) is present in the room throughout the process to foster a safe space for all parties involved;
 - j) Provides all parties involved with a clear timeline for the overall process;
 - k) Notifies all parties in writing about the outcome of the complaint and any move to

appeal.

BIFRT the GSS recommends that there be extensive consultation throughout the development of this process, including active engagement with student societies/associations/unions, survivors of sexual violence who are willing to assist, on-campus groups working to promote equality and equity, undergraduate and graduate students at UBC-Vancouver and UBC-Okanagan, and community organizations whose work addresses issues of sexual violence and gender based violence.

BIFRT the GSS recommends that University leadership, including Administrative Heads of Units, their associates, and graduate/academic advisors be required to complete training on the scope and causes of sexual violence, the resources available to survivors, and how to best handle reports of sexual violence at the University. This training should be completed before the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year and should be accompanied by a clear, stand-alone resource to familiarize and guide University faculty, staff, and students through the reporting process, that is also made available online to all members of the University community. The training and the stand-alone resource should:

- a) Focus on debunking myths surrounding issues of sexual violence and the challenges survivors face in the reporting process;
- b) Explain the prevalence of sexual violence in Canada and across university and college campuses, noting the disproportionate effects on marginalized communities;
- c) Explain the impact of sexual violence on the physical and mental well-being of survivors, as well as the deleterious effects on academic performance;
- d) Provide a clear explanation of “consent,” “force,” and “incapacity”;
- e) List best practices for how to support survivors of sexual violence, including the importance of a survivor-centred approach in responding to allegations of sexual violence and the importance of the language used when working with survivors of sexual violence;
- f) Introduce readers to the bystander intervention model;
- g) List existing University policies and protocols related to sexual violence;
- h) List all support services available to individuals bringing forward allegations of sexual violence, including reporting processes outside the University that are available to students, a clear description of the role of each service in handling incidents of sexual violence, and the possible outcomes of all reporting processes;
- i) Emphasize that any form of retaliation, coercion, threats, or intimidation of complainants/respondents will not be tolerated by the University;
- j) Highlight the need for close follow-up with the survivor(s) until the danger of continued sexual violence has passed;

BIFRT the GSS recommend that the University specifically create and fund the role of ‘Sexual

Violence Prevention & Response Coordinator,' which should have responsibility for, and authority over, initiatives and responses related to sexual violence, including:

- a) Providing oversight of all allegations of sexual violence brought forward to the University to ensure the consistency and coordination of response efforts;
- b) Monitoring outcomes and tracking patterns in the University's response to reports and complaints;
- c) Addressing any negative trends identified in the University's response to reports and complaints, and assessing their impact on the campus climate;
- d) Providing oversight of all training for students, faculty and staff related to issues of sexual violence;
- e) Determining whether allegations brought forward violate the University's policy regarding sexual violence;
- f) Assigning investigatory powers and/or referring allegations to a designated team upon determining whether allegations may violate the policy;
- g) Ensuring that all reports and complaints comply with the time to resolution guidelines laid out in the policy;
- h) Informing all parties of the investigation and resolution processes available to them and clearly explaining the possible outcome(s) of each process;
- i) Informing all parties of the outcome(s) of the investigation and resolution process and providing information on the right to an appeal, if applicable;
- j) Fostering a safe, inclusive space for all students;
- k) Coordinating a Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Team.

BIFRT the GSS recommends that the University continue its awareness work and implement an annual University-wide awareness campaign that aims to:

- a) Promote healthy sexual and dating relationships;
- b) Clearly articulate "consent", "force" and "incapacity";
- c) Introduce the concept of dating/partner abuse;
- d) Explain the wide-ranging effects of sexual violence and the communities most likely to be impacted, as well as the broader context of gender-based violence;
- e) Educate students on the bystander intervention model;
- f) Focus heavily on Frosh/Orientation weeks at the beginning of the academic year;
- g) Highlight workshops on consent that take place throughout the year;
- h) Provide students with a basic understanding of equity and anti-oppression;
- i) Inform students of the different sexual violence support services available.

BIFRT that, for the purposes of ensuring action, transparency, and accountability by the University with respect to issues of sexual violence, the GSS recommends that the University:

- a) Convene a team to oversee and closely monitor all of the University's efforts to respond to systemic issues of sexual violence, including its efforts to introduce and implement the recommendations made in this position statement;
- b) Prepare and publish a follow-up report within six months of the date of this position statement that clearly identifies the initiatives taken, progress to date, and timelines for the full and complete implementation of all initiatives;
- c) Publish an ongoing consolidated annual report, including the following information:
 - i. The incidence of reports of sexual violence, through any and all university channels;
 - ii. The number of cases brought forward to the investigation and resolution process to specifically address reports of sexual violence;
 - iii. The outcome of cases brought through this process;
 - iv. The number of cases reported that did not go through this process;
 - v. The initiatives/programs underway at the University working to address sexual violence, as well as data on their effectiveness.

GSS Position Statement on Supervisory Excellence at UBC

Motion

WHEREAS the GSS advocates for, promotes, and protects the academic, social, intellectual, cultural and recreational interests of its members, and

WHEREAS UBC recognizes that, “graduate education is greatly affected by the nature of the supervision and the quality of communication between graduate students and their supervisors,” and

WHEREAS UBC ranked below the national average in graduate student satisfaction with their supervisor in the Canadian Graduate & Professional Student Survey, and

WHEREAS less than 70% of UBC graduate student respondents in the 2015 GSS Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey agreed or strongly agreed that they had appropriate academic supervision, and

WHEREAS the UBC Senate Mental Health & Wellbeing ad hoc Committee has identified the student-supervisor relationship as a key area affecting student mental health, and has suggested the creation of stronger guidelines, standards, and requirements for supervisors, including possible mandatory training and the creation of support resources, and

WHEREAS supervisory excellence is a topic of active discussion at UBC by the Supervision Leadership Group, the Ombuds Office, and the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, requiring graduate student input, and

WHEREAS the literature on graduate supervision pedagogy reveals that excellent graduate student supervision helps produce satisfied and productive students, which in turn has a positive effect on a university’s reputation and leads to improved enrolment of high caliber students and increased research funding, and

WHEREAS defining ‘supervisory excellence’ must involve the consideration of: academic advising, structure and support, communication and availability, respect, discipline-specific skills, and a balance of direction and self-direction that fosters student growth, and

WHEREAS supervision is most successful when treated as pedagogy which includes training, continuous learning, and a commitment to personal growth, and

WHEREAS differences are natural between different individuals, disciplines and cultures, supervisory styles need to be flexible in order to accommodate the multitude of these differences, and

WHEREAS open, two-way communication between students and supervisors is essential for both academic success and fostering supportive relationships to facilitate the navigation of challenges that arise during the degree program; this includes setting clear expectations and having regular meetings with constructive feedback, and

WHEREAS addressing the unique needs of international graduate students requires intercultural fluency, and

WHEREAS graduate students face new challenges and require diverse proficiencies in the modern job market, and

WHEREAS current methods of assessing graduate student satisfaction do not effectively assess the quality of student-supervisor relationships, and this miss some of the key elements of the graduate student experience, therefore

Be it resolved that the GSS recommends that UBC develop its own definition of supervisory excellence that will guide decision making in areas surrounding graduate student education, and

Be it further resolved that (BIFRT) the GSS recommends that UBC actively foster a culture of graduate student supervision as pedagogy by implementing:

- High quality and mandatory training for graduate student supervisors as well as workshops and peer mentoring programs available for the ongoing development of supervisor proficiencies in the spirit of continuous learning,
- Methods of assessment that consider feedback from both students and peers, and
- The consideration of graduate student supervision philosophies and proficiencies in the criteria for hiring and promotion decisions, and

BIFRT the GSS recommends that UBC consider the value of and need for flexibility and different styles in supervisory training, workshops, and evaluation and assessment, and

BIFRT the GSS recommends that UBC fosters a culture of open, continuous, two-way communication between graduate students and supervisors, including the setting of clear expectations, and regular meetings, and

BIFRT the GSS Council directs the GSS Executive Committee to familiarize incoming graduate students with the resources available to support positive working relationships with their supervisor at GSS Orientations, including the setting of clear expectations, regular meetings, and written student-supervisor agreements to be developed jointly by graduate students and supervisors when and where appropriate, and

BIFRT the GSS recommends that UBC provide resources and workshops that educate supervisors on the unique challenges of conducting international graduate studies, and facilitate dialogue on cultural differences, including different learning and mentoring styles and the challenges of adapting to unfamiliar cultural norms, and

BIFRT the GSS recommends that UBC fosters a culture where all graduate student supervisors are supportive of their students' reasonable pursuit of learning and teaching activities outside the bounds of the thesis, and

BIFRT the GSS recommends that UBC investigate barriers to timely program completion and identify effective measures to decrease average graduate student time to completion, and

BIFRT the GSS recommends that UBC creates a culture that emphasizes the role of the supervisory committee as an important resource for students and endeavors to ensure committee composition is in the best interest of the student, and

BIFRT GSS Council directs the GSS Taskforce for the GSS Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey to revise and expand the sections of the annual GSS survey to better assess the quality of graduate student-supervisor relationship and the quality of supervision, and

BIFRT GSS Council directs the VP Academic & University Affairs, the Academic & External Affairs Committee, and the Graduate Council GSS Caucus to advocate for these changes with the UBC Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, Graduate Council, Senate, Board of Governors, and the UBC President, as appropriate.

Appendix: Briefing Notes

New faculty/staff rental housing projects near the University Boulevard neighbourhood

February 16, 2015

1.0 Overview

UBC is currently engaged in a consultation process over the University Boulevard precinct, an area shown in Figure 1. In this area, UBC has proposed building two new faculty/staff rental housing projects along University Boulevard. One project would be on the current site of the General Services and Administration Building (GSAB) and the other project would be on the current site of the D. H. Copp (Copp) building.



Figure 1: University Boulevard Precinct.

GSAB has already been fully decommissioned and will be demolished this year. The Copp building currently houses an irregular collection of research labs from the faculties of Science and Kinesiology but is nearing the end of its useful life.

The proposed housing projects are rather unusual and have created a number of unresolved issues in areas such as financing for building projects, land use rules, municipal representation, and the university's academic mission. This briefing note aims to explain the background of the various issues at play, to explain the mechanisms by which the projects lead to conflicts with existing rules and arrangements, and to reflect on how it may affect student interests.

2.0 Undergrad Teaching Labs Project

UBC has identified a need for new undergrad teaching labs to serve students in the departments of Biology, Botany, Zoology, Microbiology & Immunology, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, and Cellular and Physiological Sciences. These new labs would be located in the Biosciences building with the project consisting of renovations to the North wing and replacement of parts of the Centre and South wings.

2.1 Project Financing

Although it may not be clear at first, the financing plan for the undergrad teaching labs project is what's ultimately compelling the existence of the GSAB and Copp projects. The cost of new labs is estimated at \$80M, and the sources of funding are projected to be:

- \$21.25M from the provincial government.
- \$21.25M from an internal loan, paid back by UBC Central (30 years, 5.75%)
- \$37.5M from an internal loan, paid back by Endowment returns (35 years, 5.75%)

The first two portions of the funding are relatively easy to explain. In the first bullet, the provincial government gives UBC \$21.25M. In the second bullet, UBC takes \$21.25M out of its ~\$1.2B endowment, with a promise to pay it back. In essence, UBC is loaning money to itself. UBC Central (the university administration) commits to paying back the full amount, with interest (5.75%), from its annual operating budget over the course of 30 years.

In the third bullet, UBC takes \$37.5M out of its endowment, with a promise to pay it back. Again, UBC is loaning money to itself. But rather than paying back that loan from the annual operating budget, it will be paid back (with 5.75% interest over 35 years) from investment income generated by the endowment itself. This is a complicated scheme in which the endowment is both the source of the loan, and the source of repayments on the loan. The step-by-step details are as follows:

- Step 1: UBC takes \$37.5M out of its endowment to build new teaching labs. There is a promise to pay it back, with interest (5.75%), over 35 years.
- Step 2: Meanwhile, UBC leases land in the Wesbrook Place neighbourhood to private housing developers. The amount of land being leased is enough to build approximately 300,000 sq. ft. of market housing and is expected to generate \$57.3M of income.
- Step 3: UBC puts that \$57.3M into the university's endowment.
- Step 4: UBC Student Housing and Hospitality Services (SHHS) is then loaned \$57.3M from the endowment to build new student residence(s).
- Step 5: SHHS pays back its loan over a period of 35 years at an interest rate of 5.75%.
- Step 6: UBC takes a portion of the interest revenue from SHHS loan repayments and uses it to pay back the \$37.5M loan for the teaching labs.

This is undoubtedly a convoluted financing scheme. UBC is acting both as the lender and the borrower for two different loans and using the interest revenue from one loan to pay off the other. The ultimate source of funds for this portion of the new labs project is students, through

the rent paid to live in student residence.

To further clarify: the \$57.3M from the land lease in Step 2 does not provide the funds which are used to build the teaching labs. Instead, it acts as the capital needed to build residence(s). Over time, SHHS will pay back the entire principal of the loan, plus inflationary increases to the principal, plus interest. It is the interest revenue from the SHHS loan which ultimately funds the teaching labs. The payments that SHHS makes come from the revenue it collects from student rents.

2.2 Connection to GSAB and Copp projects

UBC claims that they currently do not have enough capacity left in Wesbrook Place to sell off the 300,000 sq. ft. of housing needed to enable the project. This claim does not appear to be true. 300,000 sq. ft. represents less than 5% of Wesbrook Place's housing capacity and there is at least 1,000,000 sq. ft. of undeveloped housing capacity remaining at present.

Nonetheless, UBC is insistent that they must create 300,000 sq. ft. of new market housing capacity in Wesbrook Place. They propose to create that capacity by taking 300,000 sq. ft. of housing in Wesbrook Place that is currently earmarked for faculty/staff rental housing and earmarking it for private market development instead.

According to UBC, the 300,000-sq. ft. of displaced faculty/staff housing must be built elsewhere on campus. This claim also does not appear to be true. There are no policies in place which would require UBC to find a location elsewhere on campus for the displaced faculty/staff housing. Nonetheless, UBC has identified the GSAB and Copp sites as the new locations for the faculty/staff housing which will be displaced from Wesbrook Place.

2.3 Project Status

The undergrad teaching labs plan was first proposed to the Board of Governors in February 2014 where the project was discussed but then tabled until the next meeting. In April 2014, it was granted "Board 1" approval, which signals endorsement of the project's concept and authorizes modest work on producing a more detailed proposal. In December 2014, the project was granted "Board 2" approval, which authorizes detailed design and architectural work to be undertaken. It is expected to be up for "Board 3" approval, which would authorize construction of the project, in June 2015.

3.0 Regulatory and Technical Issues

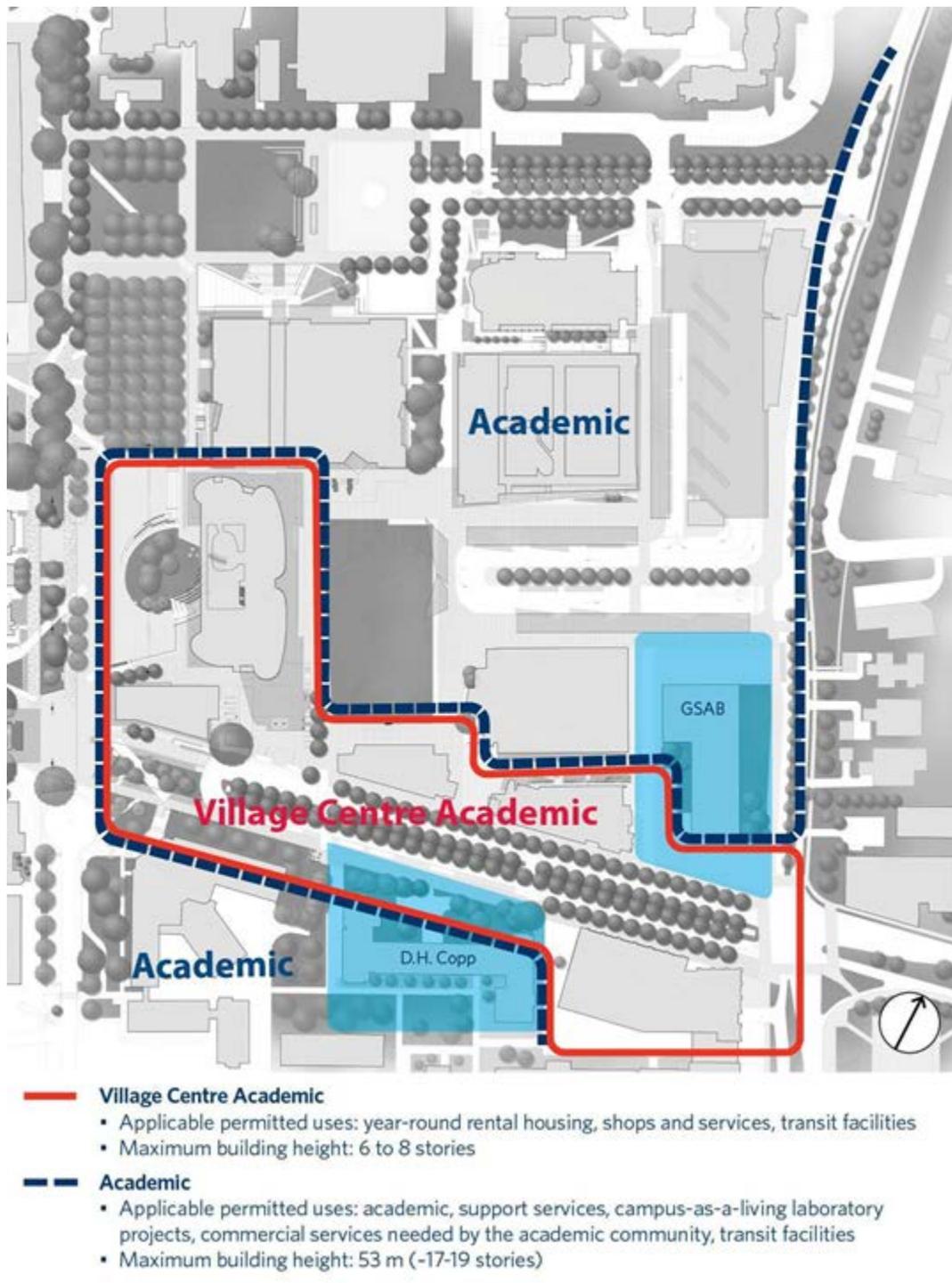


Figure 2: Land Use Policy Context of GSAB and Copp sites

3.1 Land Use Plan Compliance

The Land Use Plan (LUP) is UBC's document outlining broad rules and regulations around the development of the Point Grey campus. It sets out which land is to be used for academic activities, which land is to be protected as open green space, and which land can be used for private housing development. There are four different broad categories of land on campus. The three relevant to this project are listed below, with brief excerpts from the LUP describing them.

Academic: "The "Academic" land use designation identifies those parts of campus to be used for teaching, research, and other uses needed to support the academic mission of the university and academic life."

Village Centre Academic: "This mixed-use centre, supported by year-round housing, will have a wide range of opportunities for meeting people, relaxing and enjoying university campus life, thus encouraging people from all groups on campus to come to this area."

Neighbourhood Housing: "The Neighbourhood Housing Areas will provide a range of rental and long-term lease housing to the broader community (non-institutional housing)."

The LUP also defines the term "Non-institutional development", which provides additional clarity to the distinction between "Academic" and "Neighbourhood" land:

Non-Institutional development means development other than that for the main academic mission of UBC (teaching, research, cultural expression, support facilities). Non-institutional development includes market housing, non-market housing other than student housing, and commercial developments generally intended for non-university users.

Within that definition, faculty/staff housing qualifies as "non-market housing other than student housing" and is thus considered under the LUP to be non-institutional. Within this framework, it would appear that faculty/staff housing is not an allowed use of the GSAB and Copp sites. The GSS and AMS have both inquired about how these projects would comply with the LUP and have received various justifications.

Justification 1: Faculty/staff housing may be appropriate for Academic land because it supports the university's academic mission.

Analysis: The LUP identifies faculty/staff housing as "non-institutional development", meaning that it is not part of the university's main academic mission. Recent practice has been in line with that interpretation: all new faculty/staff housing built within the last 20 years has been within the boundaries of Neighbourhood land.

Justification 2: The GSAB and Copp sites incorporate both Academic and Village Centre Academic lands, and therefore the uses of both designations should be allowed on the site (Figure 2).

Analysis: The LUP is silent on what happens if one building is built on two different land designations and no previous examples exist; all existing buildings on campus sit entirely within a single land use designation. On both sites, the Village Centre Academic portion is marginal enough that it may consist largely of sidewalks or outdoor plazas, while the majority of the

building footprint would sit on Academic land.

The existing GSAB and Copp buildings sit entirely on Academic land. Previous site boundaries drawn for the University Boulevard neighbourhood (Figure 3) are different than those being proposed now (Figure 2). The borders of the GSAB and Copp sites are thus entirely arbitrary and could easily be re-drawn so as to sit entirely in a single land use designation.

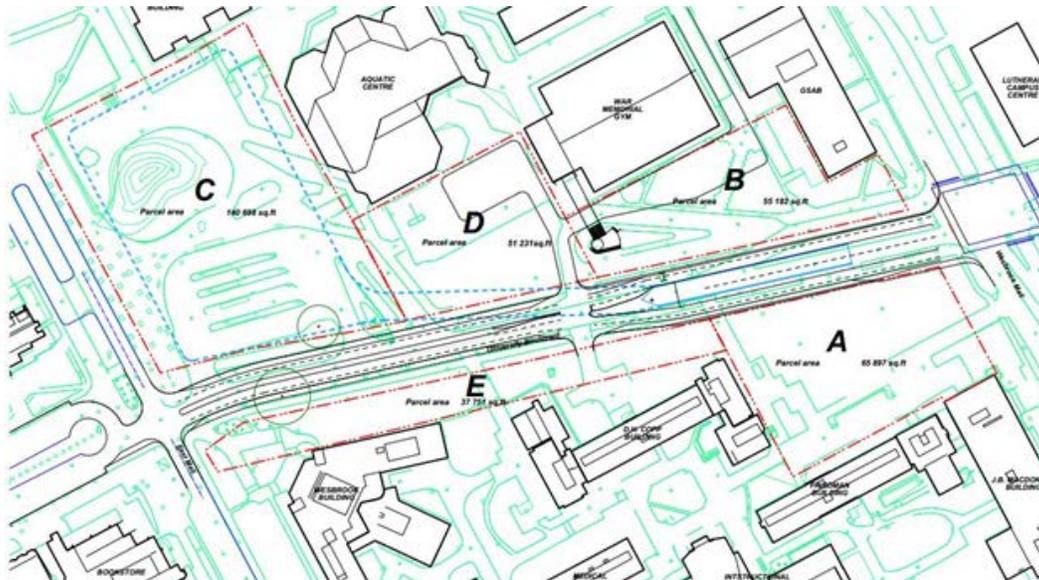


Figure 3: Plan of proposed sites in the University Boulevard Neighbourhood Plan (2003)

Justification 3a: Copp will be a Campus as a Living Laboratory (CALL) project with a strong academic component.

Analysis: The concept of “Campus as a Living Laboratory” is outlined as follows:

As a living laboratory, UBC faculty, staff and students and partners use the University's buildings and infrastructure, combined with UBC's education and research capabilities, to test, study, teach, apply and share lessons learned, technologies created and policies developed. We study our own behaviours and discoveries to advance sustainability scholarship inside and outside UBC.

Examples of CALL projects are The Centre for Interactive Research in Sustainability (CIRS), the UBC Farm, the Bioenergy Research and Demonstration Facility, and the District Energy steam to hot water conversion. Under the LUP, CALL projects are explicitly allowed on Academic land.

The research that would take place at the Copp building if it were a CALL project is unclear. Suggested research angles include “sustainable building design” and “the role of building design and operations in fostering human health and happiness”. Researchers at UBC have not identified a pressing need for a faculty/staff residential building to use as a research facility.

Instead, the university has pre-emptively attached the CALL label and is actively soliciting research proposals. The housing project is not necessary for research; it is the research that is

necessary for the housing project. There is no compelling need for this project to be considered a Living Lab initiative.

Even if related research projects are ultimately identified, there is no reason why these projects must take place on the Copp site. UBC has many other rental housing developments which could accommodate these projects.

Justification 3b: GSAB will combine housing with academic space (30,000 sq. ft. of Kinesiology space has been proposed). The housing will tie in to the academic uses. Therefore, it will be a mixed-use building, which is allowed on Academic land.

Analysis: The LUP is not clear on the topic of mixed-use buildings on Academic land. It states that there will be “a mixing of uses” which is open to interpretation. However, it appears to refer to a mixing of allowed uses, not a mixing of allowed uses with non-allowed uses.

The interpretation that a project, which mixes an allowed use with a non-allowed use, complies with the LUP is extremely problematic as it would render the Academic land designation close to meaningless. If even a small amount of academic space in a building can render a project suitable for “Academic” land then there would be almost no limitations on what can be built. Under this interpretation, a condo building with a classroom would be “mixed-use” and therefore allowed to be built on Academic land.

3.2 Implications for Acadia Park Student Family Housing

The justifications presented for why the GSAB/Copp projects are allowed under the LUP threaten the future of the Acadia Park Student Family Housing. All of the justifications are meant water down the Academic land designation and/or to create loopholes to allow non-institutional development on Academic land.

UBC C+CP has expressed that the future of Acadia Park is not connected to development on University Boulevard. However, it is easy to imagine that any justification used to legitimize the GSAB/Copp sites could be applied to sites in Acadia in the future. This would have the effect of further eroding the land base of the neighbourhood. For example:

- if faculty/staff housing which is deemed to “support the academic mission of the university” then it could be built in Acadia Park in place of student family housing
- if building sites on multiple land use designations are deemed ok, then building sites that sit mostly on Academic land, but include just a small amount of Neighbourhood land on one edge could be drawn along the border of Acadia Park Family Housing and
- Acadia East Neighbourhood Housing if any “mixed” use development is allowed on Academic land, then a building that contains private housing would presumably be allowed anywhere in Acadia Park, as long as it had some portion devoted to academic uses

3.3 Development controls

UBC has a Development Handbook which sets out Development and Building Regulations for Neighbourhood Lands. The handbook identifies existing and future development sites in the

Neighbourhood areas and assigns each site a specific designation (aka zoning). Each designation is defined in the Handbook, outlining the type of development that is intended, and specifying limits on things such as setbacks, site coverage and Floor Space Ratio (FSR).

The current plan for GSAB calls for a 6-storey building accommodating both housing and academic space for Faculty of Kinesiology. It is intended to accommodate 132,700 sq. ft. of housing and 30,000 sq. ft. of academic space on a 47,400-sq. ft. lot. The site coverage is estimated at 63% with an FSR of 3.43.

The current plan for Copp calls for a 6-storey building accommodating ground floor retail with 5 storeys of housing on top. It is intended to accommodate 168,800 sq. ft. of housing and an estimated 33,800 sq. ft. of commercial space on a 60,300 sq. ft. lot. The site coverage is estimated at 56% with an FSR of 3.36.

These projects, as proposed, could not have been built in the Wesbrook Place neighbourhood, where 6-storey buildings are limited to a maximum site coverage of 55%, and a maximum FSR of 2.8 (SC2A designation).

However, the GSAB and Copp sites are considered to fall outside the boundaries of Neighbourhood land and thus are not subject to the Development Handbook. By taking projects that were originally slated for Neighbourhood land (Wesbrook Place) and building them instead on Academic land, the university has exempted those projects from development controls.

4.0 Governance/Representation

UBC's campus sits on unincorporated provincial land and has no municipal government. It has developed a unique model for local governance. Academic land is overseen by the university's administration and Board of Governors. Neighbourhood land is overseen by a society called the University Neighbourhoods Association (UNA) which has been created to take on many of the functions of a municipality:

- it is overseen by a Board of Directors, some of whom are elected by residents (aka municipal council)
- it collects an annual levy based on the assessed value of your property (aka property taxes)
- it provides services like potable water and wastewater treatment, community centres, recreation, and waste removal
- it develops and enforces rules regarding things like pets, noise, and parking (aka bylaws)

At present, all faculty/staff housing is within the boundaries of Neighbourhood land, and thus residents of those housing projects pay the annual levy, receive services from the UNA, and are subject to their bylaws. However, since GSAB and Copp would not fall within the boundaries of Neighbourhood land, residents of those buildings would not pay the levy, would not receive services, and would not be subject to bylaws.

From a UNA perspective, this has the effect of eroding its membership and tax base. The issue

of whether the GSAB and Copp site would become part of the UNA has been raised and remains an open question.

From a student perspective, having Academic land subject to the UNA's bylaws and influence would not be desirable as it would impose new rules in which students have little say, and create potential confusion and conflict with the university's rules. Discussions between the university and the UNA about the fate of residents in the University Boulevard area are ongoing and should be closely monitored.

5.0 Process

The ordinary process for situations like GSAB and Copp – building projects that do not conform to the allowed uses under the LUP – is to amend the LUP to allow those uses on that site, not to find loopholes in the rules. UBC has so far been hesitant to amend the LUP as part of the approval process for the GSAB and Copp projects.

UBC has structured the undergrad teaching labs project in such a way that the going forward with the GSAB and Copp projects will be necessary in order to go forward with the new labs. In the eyes of the university, all three projects are inexorably linked. The Board has already considered and approved the undergrad teaching labs project on two separate occasions. In doing so, the Board has therefore already given de facto approval to the projects at Copp and GSAB as well. What is the purpose and intent of consultations on projects which have already been approved not once, but twice?

6.0 Conclusion

The faculty/staff housing projects proposed for the GSAB and Copp sites create a number of thorny regulatory questions. More concerning, they pose a serious threat to the future of Acadia Park student family housing.

The ordinary process for dealing with non-conforming uses – an amendment to the LUP – would resolve almost all of the problematic aspects of these projects. Assuming the procedures were followed, it would ensure the housing projects comply with the LUP, development controls would be imposed, residents would be adequately represented, and no loopholes would be created which might threaten the future of Acadia Park.

Managing BC's Liquor Law Changes

May 13, 2015

1.0 Introduction

In 2013, the BC Government undertook a comprehensive review of the province's liquor laws. After consultation with the public and various stakeholder groups, a report was issued containing 73 recommendations covering all facets of alcohol service and retailing in the province. All recommendations were accepted by the government, which then embarked on a gradual implementation of the changes. On March 27, 2015, an Order-in-Council¹ was issued containing amendments relating to the administration of Special Occasion Licences (SOLs). SOLs are a type of liquor license designed for temporary events such as weddings, festivals, or GSS laser tag, and over 500 are issued at UBC in a typical year. They are of particular importance at to students groups at UBC because it is the main mechanism through which to hold social events where alcohol is served, at gatherings that range in size from a small club social to AMS Block Party. On March 31, 2015, the BC Liquor Control and Licencing Branch (LCLB) issued a policy directive discussing the changes in a more detailed and easy-to-read way.²

2.0 Recent Legislative and Policy Changes

The changes to SOL regulations are as follows:

- Introduction of an centralized online application and approval system
 - Previous: all applications were processed on paper at local BC Liquor Stores
- Local government/First Nations have no formal role in approval of SOLs
 - Previous: mandatory local government/FN approval for public events
- Local police involvement in approval of SOLs is now entirely discretionary
 - Previous: mandatory for public events, discretionary for private events
- Advertising the availability of liquor at public events is allowed
 - Previous: the availability of alcohol could not be advertised, leading to terms like "BZZR"
- Applicants can hold up to 3 SOLs per month without needing to apply for an exemption
 - Previous: limit was 2/month
- Ability to submit a single application for a multi-day, multi-location event

¹ http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/oic/oic_cur/0136_2015

² <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/docs-forms/policy-directive-2015-02.pdf>

- Previous: such an event required multiple separate applications
- New requirements about documentation that must be on hand during the event
- Maximum price for a 5-oz. glass wine set a \$7.00
 - Previous: indexed to the purchase cost of the wine being served

3.0 Analysis

While most of these changes are minor in scope, two are worth highlighting.

Firstly, the establishment of an online application system is a fundamental change to the administration of SOLs in BC. The switch to the Special Occasion Licences Online (SOLO)³ system has already occurred. It became available to the UBC area on April 20 and as of May 4, paper forms are no longer available, requiring all new applications to go through SOLO.

Secondly, removing formal local government involvement in SOL approvals further clarifies UBC's role in the process. Local government still has a role to play but it is reduced to an advisory role in which they “may request that the [LCLB] or police place conditions on those events.”

3.1 Online Applications in the UBC context

UBC Policy 13, “Serving and Consumption of Alcohol at University Facilities and Events”⁴ outlines the circumstances under which alcohol service is allowed at UBC, and how approvals are administered. Policy 13 was last reviewed and amended in June 2014. Despite the fact that the eventual move to the SOLO system had been announced by the government at the time of the review, this change was not taken into account. Currently, it is technically impossible to obtain an SOL at UBC within the rules because Policy 13 is inflexible and contemplates only the obsolete paper-based approvals regime.

Due to requirements imposed by Policy 13, the process to obtain a SOL at UBC has typically been unique in comparison to other BC jurisdictions. As an example, consider the approvals process faced by a student organizing an 80-person gathering with beer and wine. Until the recent changes came into effect, these are the approvals required to obtain an SOL for that event at UBC or in Vancouver:

UBC

Signatures required from:

- 1) Department head
- 2) BC Liquor Store manager
- 3) Faculty dean/associate dean

4) Enrolment Services

5) Campus fire department

6) Campus RCMP

Vancouver

Signature required from:

³ <https://solo.bcldb.com/>

⁴ <http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2014/06/policy13.pdf>

1) BC Liquor Store manager

In the UBC protocol, obtaining each signature usually required dropping off paper forms at the appropriate office, then returning on another day to pick those forms up and transport them to the next office.

In response to the introduction of SOLO, UBC has proposed a compound paper/online system. UBC's approvals would still occur on paper with applicants ferrying sheets of paper between multiple offices on campus. The completed form would then need to be scanned and uploaded to SOLO at the time of application. Security plans would also need to be uploaded for events with more than 100 attendees.

(NOTE: SOLO does not currently allow document uploads for events with fewer than 500 attendees.) Almost all applications would then be reviewed by both the fire department and campus RCMP who would grant approval if they deem appropriate.

In other jurisdictions, applicants go directly to SOLO and do not need to submit additional documentation unless hosting an event with more than 500 patrons. In those jurisdictions, most SOLs are approved automatically without the need for RCMP and fire department review.

UBC's system for SOL approvals is extraordinarily inefficient. The province's implementation of SOLO is specifically designed to streamline the SOL application process both for applicants and those tasked with approving applications. It is likely to accomplish that objective everywhere except UBC.

3.2 Role of Local Government at UBC

In the Liquor Control and Licencing Act, "local government" is a defined term⁵.

"local government" means,

- (a) in relation to a regional district, the board of the regional district,
- (b) in relation to a municipality, the council of the municipality, and
- (c) in relation to a local trust area under the Islands Trust Act, the local trust committee or the executive committee acting as local trust committee for that area; UBC is not a regional district, nor is it a municipality, nor is it a local trust area. Therefore, UBC is not a local government under the Act.

In this context, UBC's local government is the board of the Greater Vancouver Regional District, aka Metro Vancouver. UBC's authority over the local SOL approval process derives solely from the fact that they are the owners of campus lands, and owners/operators of campus buildings. As owner/operators, UBC can impose whatever rules they deem appropriate in relation to granting permission for the use of their space. However, subject to lease conditions, this authority would not extend to spaces in which UBC does not act as both owner and operator (ie. private residences or businesses, the Graduate Student Centre, or the AMS Student Nest.)

⁵ http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_96267_01

The recent changes to SOL regulations clarify that only local governments (and First Nations where applicable) are in a position to request conditions be placed on SOL by police or the LCLB. Thus, while UBC retains total control over their internal policies, it should have no role whatsoever in the RCMP's enforcement of provincial statute. Similarly, the RCMP is responsible for enforcing provincial statute and should have no role whatsoever in UBC's enforcement of its internal policies.

This is not how the SOL approval system has functioned at UBC in recent years. University RCMP has deferred to UBC as the de facto local government and has consistently established and enforced rules which are essentially internal UBC policies.

For example, University RCMP requires applicants to submit to them a form entitled "Request for University Permission to Hold a Function Where Alcohol Will Be Served" ⁶with every SOL application.

This is a form intended for internal use at UBC. For events with over 100 attendees, University RCMP requires an "Event Safety and Emergency Response Plan",⁷ also an internal UBC form. Under provincial regulations, an emergency response plan is only required for events with over 500 attendees.

It is concerning that the RCMP would adopt the internal policies of an external organization as its own, acting not in the public interest, but in the interests of UBC.

4.0 Potential Improvements

UBC University Counsel has indicated that amendments to Policy 13 are forthcoming in light of the province's recent legislative changes. This review process could represent a rare opportunity for the GSS to improve UBC's policy and processes on SOLs. Such changes the GSS might suggest could include:

4.1 Streamlining UBC's approvals/moving UBC's approvals online

It is difficult to imagine a more cumbersome system for getting UBC's approval to hold an event than physically carrying a stack of papers to multiple different offices over the course of many days.

One idea could be the generation of an online approvals system that works in conjunction with or parallel to SOLO for UBC's approvals would eliminate the need to physically carry sheets of paper from office to office, allowing for more timely and efficient approvals.

Alternately, one of the ways in which SOLO has been designed to increase the efficiency of SOL approvals is that it establishes a single centralized clearinghouse for all SOLs in the province. Previously, that task was delegated to the managers of the province's 400+ BC Liquor Store

⁶ <http://www.students.ubc.ca/mura/classroomservices/index.cfm?LinkServID=ABFE0AA4-C295-9743-F81C3DC7F9E2FDC2>

⁷ <http://www.students.ubc.ca/mura/classroomservices/?LinkServID=326457E1-C29E-CEA0-7E428E9AE9DC029F>

locations, leading to inconsistent approval timelines.

Similarly, creating a centralized UBC clearinghouse for all UBC events instead of delegating it to the dozens of department heads and associate deans of faculties could result in a more efficient process by removing steps required for approval and giving event organizers a single point of contact.

4.2 Decoupling UBC approvals from RCMP approvals

The RCMP should not require the submission of internal UBC forms in order to process SOL applications. UBC should not require that their internal forms be submitted to the RCMP. Event organizers should be trusted to comply with all rules imposed by the operator of the venue where their event will be held, as is the case in all other jurisdictions in BC. It is not the RCMP's role to enforce compliance with UBC's internal procedures.

The argument often advanced for why UBC/RCMP approvals must be done in tandem is that the approvals process is complex. If that is indeed the case, then the better solution is to simplify the approvals system (see 4.1 above).

4.3 Clarifying GSS autonomy over Thea Koerner House

There is no question that events held in Thea Koerner House absolutely must comply with all relevant provincial laws. However, as an independent society which manages Thea Koerner House, the GSS should be able to establish its own internal procedures for events with alcohol held in the building and should not be bound by UBC's internal regulations. Clarifying this issue would be a suitable task for the GSS

Building Lease Renewal Committee to explore.

4.4 Transparency in rules

UBC, as venue owner/operator has the ability to establish and enforce their own rules for the use of their venues. University RCMP, as local police, has the ability to establish and enforce their own rules for SOL approvals. Both groups should be encouraged to be clear and transparent when they establish rules which differ from or go beyond provincial regulations.

If the RCMP wishes to institute their own rules for SOL approvals, they are within their rights to do so. Those rules should be established by the RCMP with input from the entire community, rather than a single stakeholder. These rules should be published. Those rules should apply equally to applicants from both UBC and the UEL.

This will ensure applicants are aware of the full set of rules they must comply with prior to submitting applications, and do not unwittingly break "unwritten" rules. It will also ensure that all applicants are subject to the same rules and that those rules are being applied fairly and equitably.

Improving Clarity and Accountability in UBC Student Housing

August 13, 2015

Introduction

Student residences at UBC Vancouver, operated by UBC Student Housing and Hospitality Services (SHHS), falls outside the scope of the BC Residential Tenancy Act (BC RTA), the provincial law which provides legal protections for millions of tenants and landlords in the province.⁸

No alternate protections or regulations governing tenancies in student residences exist at any level of government. Any protections for tenants who live in UBC student residences are provided at the pleasure of the landlord, SHHS, through a Residence Agreement which is published each year.

SHHS has full control over the content of the Residence Agreement and its administration. It also reserves the right to modify the agreement at any time, in any way, for any reason.

Modification⁹

During the term of the agreement, the Landlord may unilaterally change or delete any provision of this Agreement or add provisions to this Agreement by sending the Tenant an email notification (...) Changes will be effective and binding upon the Tenant on the date set out in the notification.

By most accounts, SHHS is a reasonable and humane landlord, but a governance framework in which one party is tasked with making all the rules and keeping itself accountable to those rules does create opportunities for improvement in how those rules are structured and enforced. This document will discuss some of these issues and provide recommendations.

While the GSS, through its membership in the Alliance of BC Students, will continue to advocate for the establishment of provincial regulations governing tenancies in student residences, this document will focus solely on issues which could be addressed by UBC within the current regulatory framework and which could obviate the need for government intervention.

⁸ Section 4(b): *This Act does not apply to living accommodation owned or operated by an educational institution and provided by that institution to its students or employees,*

⁹ Section 43 of the 2014-2015 Acadia Park Residence Agreement. Similar passages exist in all other residence agreements published by SHHS.

Identified Issues

Landlord Entry into Suites

In its Residence Agreements for winter-session (8-month) housing and for much of the year-round housing (including Thunderbird residence), SHHS reserves the right to enter a student's accommodation, without prior notice, for a very broad range of reasons.

By contrast, the Residence Agreements for Acadia Park, Green College, and St. John's College contain more narrow language on this topic, in which SHHS can enter without notice only in the case of emergency, or if the Tenant requests maintenance, or if SHHS has a reason to suspect that the Tenants are violating the residence agreement in a significant way. In routine non-emergency situations, SHHS must provide at least 24 hours' notice to the Tenant before entering.

The language in the Acadia, Green & St. John's Residence Agreements is relatively close to the practices encouraged in the BC RTA. Under the BC RTA, Landlords are allowed to enter without notice in emergency situations but are otherwise required to give at least 24 hours' notice which also must include providing reasons for entering. (See Appendix for sample contract language.)

Note that in Canada, there is no such thing as a "right to privacy". The BC RTA says that tenants are entitled to "reasonable privacy," but that is not unconditional and does not render certain areas of the rental premises off-limits to the landlord. All areas within the rental premises are considered equally, and there is no distinction made between space used as a kitchen, or as a bedroom, or as a washroom - the Landlord is entitled to access to the entire premises.

Recommendation: The language on room entry currently in use at Acadia Park, Green College, and St. John's College should be maintained. This language should also be incorporated into Residence Agreements for all year-round residences.

Long-term cost certainty

SHHS reserves the right to raise rents at any time, and by any amount. There have been large increases in the past, such as in 2010 when rents for all UBC residences were adjusted on a case by case basis, resulting in an average rent increase of 7.5%. In 2014-2015, UBC implemented a 20% rent increase for winter-session housing.

Graduate students, who generally live in Year-Round housing for multiple years at a time, would benefit greatly from having long-term certainty of their housing costs. They would have peace of mind knowing that they will not face an unexpectedly large rent increase in the middle of their time at UBC which might cause them to struggle to meet their financial obligations, or force them to find new accommodations which may not be as suitable to their needs.

The BC RTA allows landlords to raise rents by any amount in between tenancies, but places limits on the maximum allowable rent increase that is allowed during a tenancy. The formula to determine the maximum annual increase is as follows:

Maximum increase = inflation rate + 2%

(Note that the 20% rent increases to winter session housing announced in Fall 2014 would be allowable even if UBC residences were subject to the BC RTA. This is because all winter session tenancies end each year, and new tenancies are started by the following year's residents.)

Additionally, a significant number of suites in Acadia Park have been decommissioned or undergone substantial renovation in recent years. While these steps were necessary to address the deteriorating living conditions faced by residents of those suites, the displaced graduate students were faced with increased rents in order to stay in the community in which they and their families had become established.

In cases where graduate students wish to move back into their previous accommodations after renovations, they will also be faced with significantly higher rents than before. Both of these situations represent an increase in costs that could not reasonably be foreseen by the tenant.

Recommendations:

- 1) SHHS should establish a maximum allowable amount for rent increases that can be applied to existing tenancies in Year-Round housing. The maximum allowable amount should be calculated as the sum of the BC Consumer Price Index+ 2%.
- 2) If SHHS makes a decision to move tenants living in Year-Round housing to alternate accommodations, the residence fees assessed to the tenants for the new accommodations should be no greater than the residence fees assessed at their previous accommodations.

Graduate Students on Leave

Under UBC Senate policies V-302.1 and V-303, graduate students can apply for a Leave of Absence from their studies. There are a variety of reasons students can state when applying for leave including Parental obligations (following birth or adoption of a child), Health reasons, Personal reasons, Professional reasons, or to pursue a second course of study.

While on leave, these students do not have full-time student status and Senate policy forbids them from accessing any of the university's services, including student residence. Likewise, SHHS rules state that graduate students must have full-time status confirmed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies in order to be eligible to live in the UBC residence system.

Technically, this means that a graduate student residing in Acadia Park who takes parental leave following the birth of a child is not be eligible to continue residing in Acadia Park during the leave period. Or, that a student who must take time off from studies to receive treatment for a serious medical condition would be required to move out of residence while undergoing treatment. This is clearly inappropriate as university policy. Generally, SHHS has been extremely lax in the enforcement of these types of eligibility issues but a formal shift in policy is still warranted to ensure there is no possibility of anything like this ever occurring.

Recommendation:

- 1) Amend Senate policies V-302.1 and V-303 to clarify that graduate students may continue living in UBC student residence while on leave, despite any other sections disallowing the use of

university resources.

2) Amend SHHS's Academic Credit Load Requirements to include students on leave, stating that "Graduate students must have full-time or on leave status confirmed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies."

Summary of Recommendations

1. The language on room entry currently in use at Acadia Park, Green College, and St. John's College should be maintained. This language should also be incorporated into Residence Agreements for all year-round residences.
2. SHHS should establish a maximum allowable amount for rent increases that can be applied to existing tenancies in Year-Round housing. The maximum allowable amount should be calculated as the sum of the BC Consumer Price Index+ 2%.
3. If SHHS makes a decision to move tenants living in Year-Round housing to alternate accommodations, the residence fees assessed to the tenants for the new accommodations should be no greater than the residence fees assessed at their previous accommodations.
4. Amend Senate policies V-302.1 and V-303 to clarify that graduate students may continue living in UBC student residence while on leave, despite any other sections disallowing the use of university resources.
5. Amend SHHS's Academic Credit Load Requirements to include students on leave, stating that "Graduate students must have full-time or on leave status confirmed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies."

Appendix: Sample contract language about Landlord Entry into Suites

Winter session and Year-Round (Fraser Hall, Marine Drive (buildings 1,2,4,6), Ponderosa Commons, Thunderbird)

Room Entry

Authorized personnel of the University may enter your accommodation, without prior notice, for any of the following reasons: to ensure health, safety or general community welfare, to make deliveries, to make repairs to your accommodation and the equipment servicing it, to inspect the condition of your accommodation, and to investigate compliance with and possible breaches of this Contract. In addition, authorized personnel of the University may enter the common areas of your accommodation to deliver housekeeping services described in Section *[about Housekeeping]*

Acadia Park Contract, Green College, St. John's College

Landlord's Right of Entry

- a) The Tenant acknowledges that the Landlord has the right to enter the Residential Premises at any time without notice in the event of an emergency for the purpose of investigating and taking the necessary measures to address the emergency, or when the Landlord has a reasonable belief that the Tenant is in breach of a material term of this Agreement, for the purpose of investigating the allegation of a material breach.
- b) Except when otherwise permitted pursuant to Sections *[regarding pests and vermin]* and *[regarding maintenance requests made by the Tenant]*, the Landlord will provide at least 24 hours' notice to the Tenant prior to entering the premises for the purposes of conducting renovations, alterations or repairs (other than emergency repairs) which in the sole discretion of the Landlord are necessary or desirable.
- c) The Landlord may enter the Residential Premises from time to time throughout the Term for the purpose of inspecting the condition of the Residential Premises and the Landlord's property therein, provided that the Landlord provides at least 24 hours' advance notice to the Tenant.

Residential Tenancy Act

Landlord's right to enter rental unit restricted

29 (1) A landlord must not enter a rental unit that is subject to a tenancy agreement for any purpose unless one of the following applies:

- (a) the tenant gives permission at the time of the entry or not more than 30 days before the entry;
- (b) at least 24 hours and not more than 30 days before the entry, the landlord gives the tenant written notice that includes the following information:
 - (i) the purpose for entering, which must be reasonable;
 - (ii) the date and the time of the entry, which must be between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. unless

the tenant otherwise agrees;

(c) the landlord provides housekeeping or related services under the terms of a written tenancy agreement and the entry is for that purpose and in accordance with those terms;

(d) the landlord has an order of the director authorizing the entry;

(e) the tenant has abandoned the rental unit;

(f) an emergency exists and the entry is necessary to protect life or property.

(2) A landlord may inspect a rental unit monthly in accordance with subsection (1) (b).

Policies and Procedures of the UBC Board of Governors

A stakeholder's perspective

August 26, 2015

Introduction

UBC, like all public universities in BC, operates under a bicameral governance model established in the University Act.¹⁰

In general terms, this means that UBC has two separate governing bodies: the Board of Governors and the Senate. Each body holds ultimate authority over the institution, though their duties have been divided. The Board oversees the university's property, revenue, and operations, while the Senate oversees the university's academic policies, curriculum, and enrolment.

The actions of UBC's Board of Governors have recently been the subject of increased scrutiny since it was announced on August 7, 2015, that Arvind Gupta had resigned as UBC President and Vice-Chancellor.

This briefing note aims to explain the role of the Board, discuss their internal governance processes and offer a stakeholder's perspective on those governance processes.

Structure and Role of the Board of Governors

Many aspects of the UBC Board of Governors including its composition and the powers granted to it derive from Part 6 of the University Act, some of which will be outlined below.

Composition of the Board

The Board has 21 members:

- Chancellor

- President and Vice-Chancellor

- 11 members appointed by the provincial government

 - 3 members elected from among the students (2 from UBC-V, 1 from UBC-O)

 - 3 members elected from among the faculty (2 from UBC-V, 1 from UBC-O)

 - 2 members from among the staff (1 from UBC-V, 1 from UBC-O)

The Board appoints a Chair from among the 11 provincially-appointed members

The Board also has 5 regular standing committees and 4 special standing committees.

¹⁰ http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_96468_01

Powers of the Board

In the words of the University Act, “The management, administration and control of the property, revenue, business and affairs of the university are vested in the board.” This Act also contains a lengthy list of specific aspects of the university’s operations that are the purview of the Board. The Board has no jurisdiction over academic matters at the university, as authority over those has been delegated to the Senate

The Board is also given full authority over its internal governance with the power “to make rules for the meetings of the board and its transactions.”

Role of the Board

The Board and the Senate are not intended to be involved in direct day-to-day management of the university. That type of management falls to the university administration, which in turn sets the direction for the university’s staff. The roles of the Board and Senate are supposed to be geared towards high-level oversight and strategic planning. Put another way, the Board and Senate do not exist to nitpick over details. It is expected that most proposals that come before those bodies will have been carefully vetted by committees, administrators, or other university staff as appropriate.

Meetings of the Board

As they are not involved in ongoing university operations, the Board schedules only 5 regular meeting per year. Each meeting actually entails two full-day meetings approximately one week apart. On the first day, the Board’s regular standing committees meet to discuss the agenda items related to each committee’s purpose. (The special standing committees meet irregularly.) However, typically all members of the Board are invited to be present for every committee meeting, similar to a committee of the whole. On the second day, the full Board of Governors meets and formally approves the resolutions in front of them

Informally, the UBC Board operates using a model in which the members aim to reach consensus on every matter placed before them. It is uncommon, though not unprecedented, to have members vote against resolutions; it is completely unheard of to have resolutions fail. In instances where matters placed before the Board generate controversy or significant disagreement between its members, those matters will often be withdrawn from the agenda in order to work towards a compromise rather than a divisive vote.

Existing Policies and Protocols

The University Act grants the Board the ability “to make rules for the meetings of the board and its transactions”. Some of these rules are formally recorded. Others are not, as will be outlined below.

Student Representation

The Board has three members elected from among the student body, two originating from the Vancouver campus and one originating from the Okanagan campus. Once those students become members of the Board, they owe a fiduciary duty to the university. The Code of

Conduct for Members of the Board of Governors describes it in the following way:

A Governor elected or appointed due to position or familiarity with related or stakeholder interests and concerns is not a delegate or democratic representative of any interest or group. While such a Governor may express and take into account those interests and concerns, nothing in this Code, or in the circumstances of a Governor's election or appointment, relieves any Governor from the duty to act in the best interests of the University and with a view to advancing its welfare.¹¹

Regular Board Meetings

The University Act requires the Board to meet at least once every 3 months. The Board typically holds 5 regular meetings each year, one of which takes place on the UBC Okanagan campus. Agendas and materials for the open portions of committee and Board meetings are usually published on the Board's website 3-7 days prior to the meetings. Agendas are subject to change up until the meeting.

Public attendance at Board and committee meetings is allowed. Seats do not need to be reserved in advance, and attendance is limited only by the seating capacity of the room in which the meeting takes place.

Closed Board Items

UBC Board meetings are typically divided into two portions: *Open*, where the public is allowed to attend and observe and *Closed*, where only Board members, senior administrators, and invited guests are allowed to attend and observe. UBC Policy #93 "Closed Meetings of the Board of Governors" enumerates some of the features of closed meetings.¹²

It also lists some of the considerations that go into whether an agenda is considered to be open or closed. These considerations include things like contractual obligations, ongoing legal actions, ongoing negotiations, human resources, and personal privacy. For Board committee meetings, the discretion to decide whether an item should be considered in closed session rests with the Committee Chair. For Board meetings, that discretion lies with the Board Chair.

Business Conducted Outside of Regular Meetings

Although never explicitly stated, it is a known fact that the Board does conduct business outside of its regular meeting schedule. For example, The Odyssey recently reported on an unannounced meeting of the Board which occurred on August 17, 2015.¹³ The existence of this meeting was not disclosed publicly and was instead discovered by newspaper staff. The extent to which extraordinary Board meetings are scheduled is unknown, as the Board discloses

¹¹ http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2010/08/BOG_Code_120309.pdf

¹² <http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2010/08/policy93.pdf>

¹³ <http://ubyssey.ca/news/secret-board-governors-meeting-took-place-today/>

meeting details and agendas only for its regular meetings.

In early 2010, it was revealed that the Board of Governors had also been approving items between meetings via email.¹⁴ Student Board members at the time revealed that email votes were not uncommon. The results of email votes were not published, nor were they recorded in Board minutes. The question of whether the Board is even permitted to approve resolutions videomail under the University Act was raised, but was not resolved.

Following this revelation, the Board did publish one report on their website of an item approved in between meetings.¹⁵ Since that disclosure in July 2010, the Board has not reported any other items which were passed in between meetings, via email or otherwise. Whether this process continues to occur is unknown.

Photography and Recording

The Board has no explicit rules around taking photographs or making recordings at its meetings. In June 2015, a resolution was introduced which proposed banning all photography and “recording of any kind” at meetings. The resolution articulated that this ban was not in response to any actual harms resulting from those activities. Its purpose was to address a series of potential harms. The Board secretary was granted a full exemption from this policy. Amid public scrutiny, the motion was withdrawn from the agenda before the meeting.

Stakeholder Perspective on Board Policies and Protocols

While the Board repeatedly and emphatically states its commitment to transparency and accountability, there are many instances where its actions seem to speak far louder than its words.

Student Representation

The fact that all board members, students included, owe their primary duty to the university is entirely appropriate. However, it does mean that student members of the Board are not representatives of students in any traditional sense. The degree to which student Board members advocate for student interests varies widely with each year and each individual member.

In the past three years, contact between the GSS and the Board has been limited to a single letter and a single phone call. The GSS’s primary means of contact with the Board is through writing formal letters. Once sent, the GSS has no way of knowing whether that letter is disseminated, read, or considered by Governors.

There are also instances in which the positions of the GSS, or other stakeholder groups, have

¹⁴ “UBC uses “secretive voting procedure” The Ubyyssey. January 18, 2010.

http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubyssey/UBYSSEY__2010_01_18.pdf

¹⁵ <http://bog.ubc.ca/files/2010/10/National-Research-Council-of-Canada-Amendment-No.-1-to-Contribution-Agreement-for-TRIUMF.pdf>

been grossly misrepresented by university staff in their reports to the Board. The GSS has no way in which to remedy this misrepresentation.

Consistent with UBC's values, the GSS is committed to ensuring an open, respectful relationship with the Board. Establishing and maintaining such a relationship is exceedingly difficult under the current framework of indirect and infrequent communication.

Regular Board meetings

The practice of publicly posting meeting dates, agendas, and background documents for Regular Meetings of the Board is highly commendable and efforts should be made to preserve and strengthen this practice. Allowing public attendance at Open portions of committee and Board meetings without the need for prior sign-up is equally commendable and should be preserved.

Closed Items

A common practice at recent Board meetings is one in which agenda items are denoted as closed during committee meetings, then denoted as open during Board meetings. If no legitimate basis exists for classifying those items as being closed during Board meetings, it seems reasonable to posit that there is also no legitimate basis for classifying those items as being closed during committee meetings. The result of this practice is approval of resolutions with little information, discussion, or debate. The impression left is that the Board is using its closed sessions as a convenient way of avoiding public scrutiny rather than one of legitimate necessity.

Business Conducted Outside of Regular Meetings

In the Ubysey's recent account of discovering an unannounced meeting, the newspaper's reporter initially inquired with Board Secretary Reny Kahlon about the meeting. Ms. Kahlon responded to this inquiry with an attempt to mislead the reporter by saying: "what meeting?" The Ubysey also reported that the venue of the meeting was also moved after it had been discovered. According to a Global News report of the meeting, the attempts at deception continued until the end of the meeting, when a distraction was created with the intent of allowing the Board Chair to avoid questions and leave unnoticed.

There are many matters on which the Board is justified in excluding the public from their deliberations. However, these unannounced meetings and undisclosed email votes are an attempt to deny the very existence of Board deliberations. Holding unannounced meetings and undisclosed email votes creates the impression that the Board is conducting a series of activities in parallel to its regular meetings, and that even the mere existence of those parallel activities are zealously shielded from the public eye.

Simply put, the practice of holding unannounced meetings of the Board is unacceptable. The attempts to conceal it once discovered were comical and disgraceful.

Photography and Recording

UBC's University Counsel and UBC's Board Secretary have acknowledged that no actual harms

are caused by allowing photography and recording at Board meetings. It is even acknowledged by the Board Secretary that recordings are a useful tool to ensure an accurate record of the Board's proceedings is generated. As such, the Board's recent consideration of prohibiting a useful practice that causes no demonstrated harms is quite peculiar. The impression left is that this is once again a strategy to limit public scrutiny rather than a genuine necessity.

Briefing Note on Academic Freedom

August 26, 2015

Introduction

Academic freedom has been a topic of substantial discussion at UBC over the last few weeks. The catalyst for these discussions is Dr. Jennifer Berdahl, a professor in the Sauder School of Business who has made allegations that her academic freedom was jeopardized by John Montalbano. Mr. Montalbano is the current Chair of UBC's Board of Governors, sits on the Sauder Faculty Advisory Council, and is also the donor who endowed the funds to create and support Dr. Berdahl's position as a UBC Professor. This briefing note will attempt to provide some relevant background information, a straightforward timeline of events, and reflections on the how these matters affect the GSS.

Academic Freedom

The UBC Vancouver Academic Calendar, which is the university's official record of academic policies and procedures, defines "academic freedom" as follows:¹⁶

The members of the University enjoy certain rights and privileges essential to the fulfilment of its primary functions: instruction and the pursuit of knowledge. Central among these rights is the freedom, within the law, to pursue what seems to them as fruitful avenues of inquiry, to teach and to learn unhindered by external or non-academic constraints, and to engage in full and unrestricted consideration of any opinion. This freedom extends not only to the regular members of the University, but to all who are invited to participate in its forum. Suppression of this freedom, whether by institutions of the state, the officers of the University, or the actions of private individuals, would prevent the University from carrying out its primary functions. All members of the University must recognize this fundamental principle and must share responsibility for supporting, safeguarding and preserving this central freedom. Behaviour that obstructs free and full discussion, not only of ideas that are safe and accepted, but of those which may be unpopular or even abhorrent, vitally threatens the integrity of the University's forum. Such behaviour cannot be tolerated.

An identical definition of academic freedom appears in other official university records, including the Collective Agreement between the university and the UBC Faculty Association(UBC FA).¹⁷Documents such as the UBC Vancouver Academic Calendar, or a Collective Agreement, are the result of careful deliberation over long periods of time by many concerned individuals with varied viewpoints. As such, the idea behind, and importance of, academic freedom at UBC is not some marginal idea of concern to only a small group of academics. It is a widely-supported idea which applies not only to students, faculty, or staff at

¹⁶ <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0>

¹⁷ <http://www.facultyassociation.ubc.ca/docs/CA2012-2014.pdf>

the university, but all those who interact with it in any meaningful way.

To underscore this point, UBC recently released an official statement signed by both UBC Acting President Angela Redish and Interim President Martha Piper in which academic freedom was identified as “the bedrock on which a university exists.” It is clear from the vivid and unambiguous words of Dr. Redish and Dr. Piper that academic freedom is an idea of paramount importance at UBC.

Timeline of Events

On August 7, 2015, UBC published a media release announcing that Professor Arvind Gupta had resigned as President and Vice-Chancellor of UBC, effective immediately.¹⁸ Professor Gupta had been appointed to a 5-year term as UBC President starting July 1, 2014; his resignation after 13 months was unexpected. Although the release contained no direct quotes attributed to Professor Gupta, it described his motivations for resigning as follows: “Dr. Gupta has made meaningful accomplishments in his tenure as president, but has decided he can best contribute to the university and lead Canada’s innovation agenda by resuming his academic career and leadership roles in the business and research community.” There was a distinct lack of communication from Professor Gupta regarding his decision to resign and a general paucity of useful information on the topic from the university. As such, in the following days and weeks, it was common for members of the university community to be confused about or speculate on what factors may have motivated the president’s resignation.

On August 8, Professor Berdahl published an article on her own website entitled “Did President Arvind Gupta Lose the Masculinity Contest?”¹⁹ Her article discussed Professor Gupta’s premature departure as UBC President and reflected on whether it had anything to do with losing a “masculinity contest” against a foe or foes she did not identify.

On August 16, Professor Berdahl published another article on her website entitled “Academic Freedom and UBC”.²⁰ In it, she alleged that she had been contacted by a number of people at UBC regarding her August 8 article. She reported feeling that the purpose of this contact was to discourage her from speaking out further. A central person in her account was John Montalbano. In addition to being the donor of the funds which endowed her professorship, he also sits on the Sauder Faculty Advisory Board and as Chair of the UBC Board of Governors. Berdahl also reported having been contacted about her article by her Dean, Associate Dean of Faculty, Associate Dean of Equity and Diversity, and Division Chair.

On August 17, the UBC Faculty Association Executive Committee (UBCFA EC) wrote a letter to its members addressing the confusion and speculation resulting from the UBC President’s unexpected resignation.²¹ In this letter, the UBCFA EC stated that they had lost confidence in Mr. Montalbano as the Chair of the Board of Governors, though did not explicitly call for his

¹⁸ <http://news.ubc.ca/2015/08/07/ubc-announces-leadership-transition/>

¹⁹ <http://jberdahl.blogspot.ca/2015/08/did-president-arvind-gupta-lose.html>

²⁰ <http://jberdahl.blogspot.ca/2015/08/academic-freedom-and-ubc.html>

²¹ http://www.facultyassociation.ubc.ca/docs/17August2015UBCFA_web.pdf

resignation. Professor Berdahl's allegations formed some of the basis for this loss of confidence, but were by no means the only factors cited by the UBCFA EC in coming to their conclusion.

Later that same day, UBC issued a Statement on Academic Freedom, signed by UBC's Acting President Angela Redish and Interim President Martha Piper.²² The statement re-affirms UBC's commitment to upholding academic freedom at the institution and stating in regards to Professor Berdahl's allegations: "The facts will be gathered and all parties will be heard before reaching any conclusion. We welcome this process and it would be entirely inappropriate to comment further on the allegations until this process has been concluded."

On August 18, UBC issued a Media Statement on behalf of Mr. Montalbano in his role as Chair of the Board of Governors.²³ Without disputing any of the allegations made against him, the statement acknowledged the fact that Mr. Montalbano's had placed a phone call to Professor Berdahl in order to discuss her article. Mr. Montalbano gave his account and impressions of the phone call. He also granted interviews to a number of local media organizations including the Ubyyssey, the Globe and Mail, CBC, and Global News where he also spoke on the topic of the allegations against him.

Later that same day the UBC FA EC wrote a letter to UBC's Acting President Angela Redish, calling for the immediate resignation of John Montalbano as the chair of the UBC Board of Governors.²⁴ The reasons cited for this position revolved largely around the fact that Mr. Montalbano was speaking about Professor Berdahl's allegations in his role as a governor of the university, and using the university's communication channels. The UBCFA viewed this as a conflict of interest and an abuse of his position.

On August 19, UBC FA president Mark Mac Lean wrote a message to members outlining and expanding on their reasons for writing to Angela Redish and for calling on John Montalbano to resign²⁵.

On August 21, UBC FA president Mark Mac Lean stated "Dr. Redish invited UBCFA to meet about the concerns we raised in our letter. We accepted. We are in ongoing productive discussions."²⁶

On August 25, the university and the UBC FA released a joint statement announcing they had agreed to a process through which Professor Berdahl's allegations would be investigated.²⁷ The Terms of Reference for a fact-finding process were struck, and Lynn Smith, a retired BC Supreme Court justice, was appointed as the Fact Finder.

²² <http://news.ubc.ca/2015/08/17/statement-from-ubc-on-academic-freedom/>

²³ <http://news.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Chair-of-BOG-Statement-August-18-2015-FINAL.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.facultyassociation.ubc.ca/docs/LT%20Redish%2018%20August%202015-signed.pdf>

²⁵ http://www.facultyassociation.ubc.ca/docs/19August2015NotetoFAMembers_web.pdf

²⁶ <https://twitter.com/marktmaclean/status/634631271067480064>

²⁷ <http://president.ubc.ca/featured/2015/08/25/joint-statement-from-ubc-and-ubc-faculty-association/>

Relevancy to GSS

No one involved in the current dispute about academic freedom is a graduate student. The two parties who are directly involved –the UBCFA, which represents Professor Berdahl, and Acting UBC President Angela Redish, which represents the university –have stated their desire for this dispute to be resolved through established labour relations channels.

These channels are set out in the Collective Agreement established between the parties. Academic freedom, and the parties' determination not to interfere with it, is explicitly laid out in the preamble to the Agreement. Protocols for filing a grievance in the case that one party alleges that the other party has breached the Agreement are also contained within. It is through this grievance process that any alleged violation of a faculty member's academic freedom would be investigated and resolved.

Prior to reaching this stage, both parties have agreed to await the results of a fact-finding process undertaken by a respected former judge. The results of that process are likely to be disclosed to the public.

The GSS has no role to play in the fact-finding or grievance processes. It would be highly unusual for the GSS to attempt to insert itself as a third party into these processes, or to make demands of the parties that fall outside of those processes. This does not mean that the GSS must be a completely uninterested observer, but in taking any position on this matter, the fact that the GSS has no formal role to play in this dispute should always be kept in mind.

