

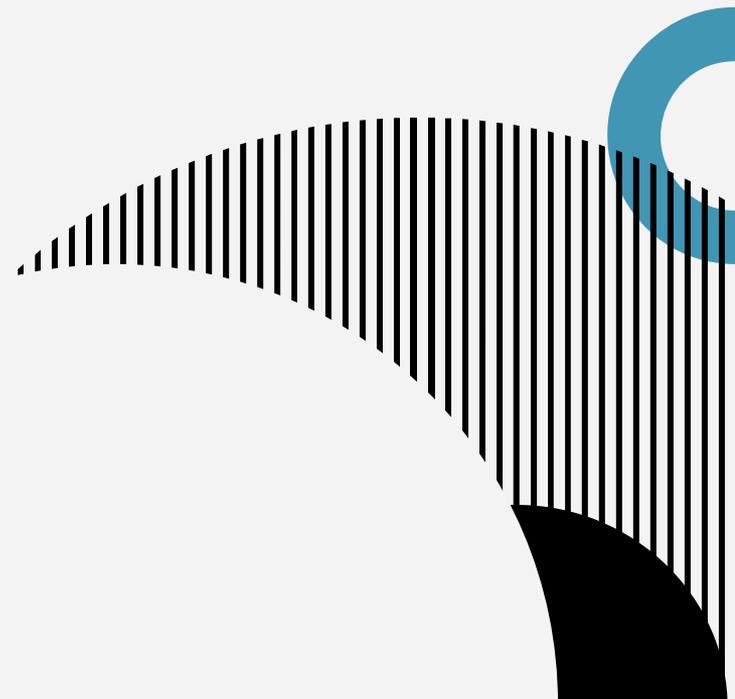
ALMA MATER SOCIETY

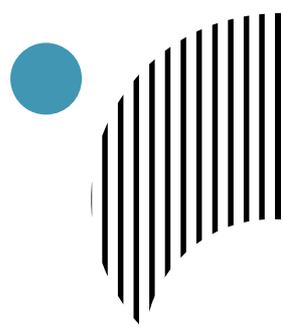
Annual Briefing

September 21st, 2021

Cole Evans: President

Eshana Bhangu: VP Academic & University Affairs





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OUR STORY

AMS Organizational
Structure and Mission

02

OUR PRIORITIES

AMS Priorities for the
year

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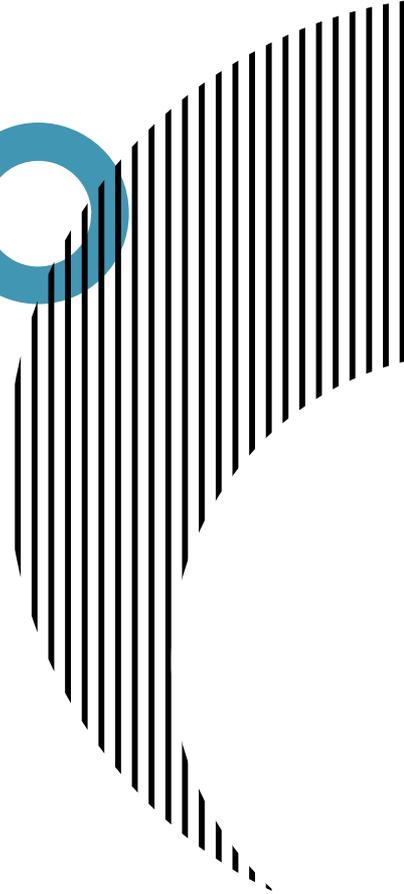
QUESTIONS

A chance for you to ask us
about our advocacy.

01

OUR STORY

The voice of UBC students.



57,000+ MEMBERS

We're the **largest independent student society** in Canada and the United Kingdom. We represent all undergraduate and graduate students of UBC-V.



\$30 million

total operating budget

400+

student group subsidiaries

500+

staff and volunteers at our peak



AMS TEAM



Cole Evans
PRESIDENT



Eshana Bhangu
VP ACADEMIC &
UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS



Mary Gan
VP FINANCE

AMS TEAM



Lauren Benson
VP ADMINISTRATION



Saad Shoaib
VP EXTERNAL



Keith Hester
MANAGING DIRECTOR

OUR STRUCTURE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AMS Council

Executive

Managing Director

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Executive Staff

Business Operations

Student Services

Admin Operations

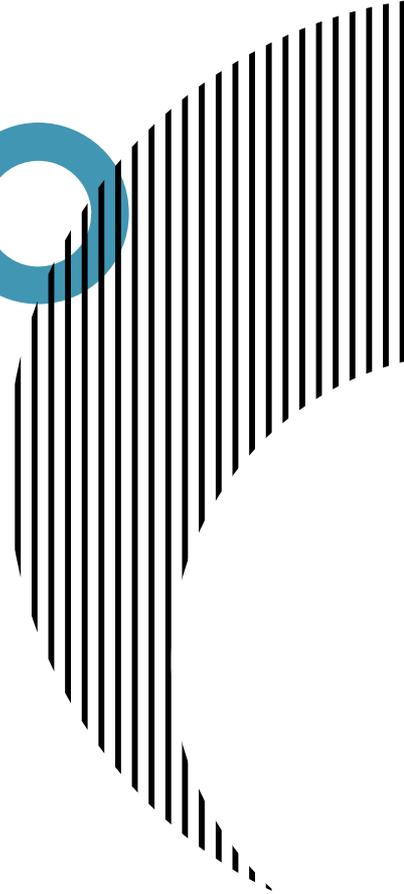
STUDENT SUPPORT STAFF

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

02

OUR PRIORITIES

What matters to UBC
students.



OUR PRIORITIES THIS YEAR



Student Support



Affordability



**Indigenous Engagement
& JEDI**



Capital Prioritization



Trust & Engagement



Student Support

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY

Seeing through the implementation of the recommendations from the review of the Sexual Misconduct Policy, before the end of the 21/22 academic year.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Combatting student concerns and lack of preparedness to enter the workforce upon graduation through additional experiential education opportunities.

ACCESSIBILITY

Renewal for buildings (academic and non-academic) to ensure access friendly entrances and maintaining access for students with disabilities as a priority for new projects proposed.





Affordability

STUDENT AFFORDABILITY PLAN

Supporting the Student Affordability Task Force's effort to create an affordability plan with tangible metrics to and identification of key areas of need for enrolled students.

FINANCIAL AID

Increasing availability of aid (and awareness on accessing). Additional need-based awards for domestic and international students.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Keeping affordable housing for students at the forefront through the update to UBC's Land Use and Vancouver Campus Plan, coupled with housing bursaries. Supporting high-density





Affordability

FOOD INSECURITY

Supplementing the efforts to create an affordability plan with continued investment to reduce food insecurity on campus until the root affordability that drive food insecurity issues are addressed.

COST ASSOCIATED WITH EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Maintaining open educational resources (OER) as an essential direction we need to take as an institution to aid students in the high costs associated with educational resources such as digital assessment tools, textbooks, and additional learning materials.

PhD TUITION WAIVERS & MINIMUM FUNDING

Tackling serious affordability issues for graduate students by a further increase in minimum funding and a greater percentage of PhD tuition waived.





Indigenous Engagement and JEDI

INDIGENOUS STRATEGIC PLAN

Implementation of the plan and keeping Indigenous voices at the forefront of the process. Actively amplifying and highlighting Indigenous voices on campus.

MUSQUEAM ENGAGEMENT

As the University begins work on Campus Vision 2050, it is a top priority for the AMS that Musqueam voices remain at the forefront and give consent to UBC projects and initiatives.

INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

Implementation of the plan and being accustomed to approaching hiring, creation of new initiatives, and overall operations with an equity lens with active work towards becoming an anti-racist institution.





Capital Prioritization

PRIORITIZING STUDENT-FOCUSED INFRASTRUCTURE

Ensuring that future capital project development is prioritizing infrastructure that is primarily student-focused, including buildings for housing, services, and enhancements to the student environment.

CAMPUS VISION 2050

Low-cost housing, Stadium Road Neighbourhood, accessibility across UBC campus, Green Academic Spaces, SkyTrain to UBC, and access to food systems.

CENTERING AFFORDABILITY

With all new development, ensuring that student affordability is prioritized throughout entire projects.





Trust & Engagement

GAP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THE UNIVERSITY

Help the administration and the Board identify where to target the University's efforts in order to re-gain students' trust (especially on issues of tuition expenditure, consultation, and communication). Increase awareness of UBC initiatives that are already in place (but are being missed by a large portion of the student body).

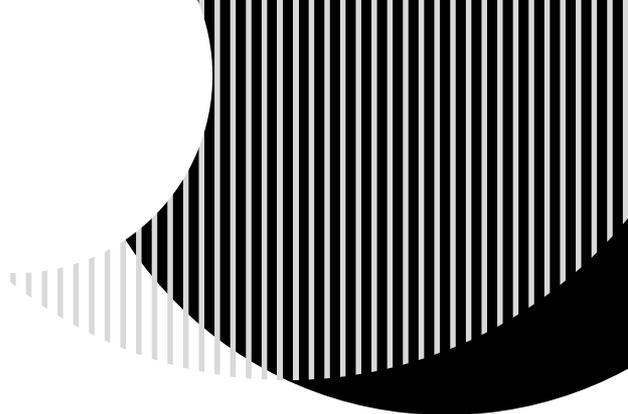
OPEN AND TRANSPARENT BOARD MEETINGS

Committing to increased open-session discussions so that students and the UBC community-at-large are aware of the Board's decision-making process, and so that those making decisions can be held accountable.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS

Ensuring that the Board and UBC Executives are working with students as opposed to "managing" them. The AMS is always willing to collaborate on real, reasonable, and productive solutions.





THANK YOU

We look forward to continuing our work with the UBC Board of Governors in our shared mission to contribute to the progress of the University of British Columbia.



2021 AMS Academic Experience Survey Report

Office of the Vice President Academic and University Affairs



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Introduction

The Academic Experience Survey is conducted annually by the UBC Alma Mater Society (AMS) to determine how the AMS can work towards improving the educational, social, and personal lives of UBC students. This year, 2,756 currently enrolled full-time or part-time undergraduate and graduate students at the UBC Vancouver campus or affiliate colleges participated in the survey between February 18th and April 6th, 2021. Below we summarize the key findings regarding UBC student's involvement and satisfaction with specific aspects of their UBC experience including campus community, tuition and textbooks, financial needs and support, post-graduation preparedness, as well as mental health and well-being.

UBC experience: a significant drop in overall satisfaction

Overall, students' satisfaction with UBC experience and tuition value has shown significant declines this year, pointing out areas that UBC could improve.

- Overall UBC experience: 56% of undergraduate students are satisfied with their UBC experience, a significant drop from the 70% satisfaction rate over the past five years.
- Value for tuition: Only $\frac{1}{3}$ of undergraduate students feel they are receiving good value for their tuition, a significant 18% drop from previous years.
The decline in satisfaction is most prominent in international students:
- Only 22% of them thinking that they are receiving good value for their tuition, a significant drop from the 42% last year; and
- 57% are satisfied with their UBC experience, a significant drop from the 75% last year.

One of the most striking findings is that only 17% of undergraduate students think that the University cares about what students think about the cost of education (28% for graduate students), a significant drop from the already low approval rate of 22% in the past years. Additionally, very few students (23%) agree that the University has been transparent and communicative about where student tuition is going towards. While these significant declines can be attributable to the remote learning caused by the pandemic, it should not be overlooked that some of the consistent dissatisfactions (e.g., cost of education) existed before the pandemic.

Campus community: decline in sense of belonging and persistent racial discrimination

The sense of campus community is examined through metrics including the sense of security and belonging on campus, well-being support, frequency of experiencing discrimination, and satisfaction with indigenous reconciliation.

- Sense of security on campus: 65% of students feel safe on campus at night, a slight dip from 73% - 80% last year, possibly due to fewer people on campus; half of the female students do not feel safe on campus at night.
- Sense of belonging on campus: while the data for undergraduate students remain stable (around 56%), a significant drop in sense of belonging is seen in graduate students, from 58% last year to 46% this year.
- Frequency of experiencing discrimination: 6 in 10 students have experienced discrimination on campus or in a UBC online course or community, with race or ethnic discrimination the most common. Among the ethnic groups, Chinese students are most likely to experience discrimination. It is to note that the high frequency of discrimination incidents has been consistent in the past 7 years.
- Well-being support: over half of the students (undergraduate: 51%, graduate: 56%) feel their well-being is supported by the University, which has been stable during the past years.
- Satisfaction with indigenous reconciliation: 40% of students are satisfied with the opportunities for in-depth learning about reconciliation on campus.

Post-graduation: unprepared going into the workforce

This portion of the survey examines student's post-graduation plans, thoughts on UBC education, awareness and use of career support services, and the usefulness of career support services.

- The majority of students are planning to enter the workforce after graduating (70%~).
- Only half of the undergraduate students feel prepared to go into the workforce after graduation (56%).
- Around 40% of students feel that they do not have adequate opportunities at UBC to decide their career path.
 - A significant decrease in opportunities for graduate students since the pandemic;
 - Students feel that they do not have adequate information when choosing their major.
- The majority of graduate students feel the need for more UBC opportunities around professional development and academic opportunities relating to their career path.
- The majority of students (75%~) are aware of and feel that career support services are useful. Yet, only 1/3 of students have used academic advising and resume/cv workshops despite high awareness.
- Significant usage of Careers Online: 40% of all students have used it at one point.

The majority of students have plans to enter the workforce after graduation (67%). A concern within the student population is the lack of professional development and academic opportunities relating to their careers/degrees on campus. On a positive note, students are well aware and have a positive perception of various branches of career support services on campus.

Personal finances: students are less independent

Overall, some students still have trouble buying basic things such as textbooks or food. This is mainly due to the high housing cost and high tuition cost. Moreover, it is surprising to see that textbooks represent on average \$600 per student per year and that 89% of the students did not use one of these textbooks.

- **Resources relied on for financial support**
 - Undergraduate students continue to rely on their parents/family members (72%), personal savings (56%), and part-time jobs (47%) for financial support during their studies. One-third rely on government student loans.
 - Most financial awards (59%) are received from organizations not associated with UBC.

- **Anticipated personal debts**
 - Fewer undergraduate students can estimate their personal financial debt at graduation compared to previous years.
 - Undergraduates' expected debt at graduation has significantly increased over the past year, with 1 in 6 expecting to have \$100k or more at graduation. The estimated average is under \$57,000 and a median amount of \$40,000.
 - International students (19%) are less likely than domestic students (37%) to expect to have debt at graduation.

- **Statement about personal finances**
 - A majority of undergraduates (60%) agree that they can manage their overall finances, but 4 in 10 agree that they experience financial hardship (due to the cost of housing and tuition).
 - 23% of students agree that UBC has been transparent and communicative about where student tuition is going towards.

- **Food security**
 - Top reasons for students to be concerned about food security: high housing cost, high tuition cost, not enough financial aid.
 - 1 in 3 students has ever been concerned about running out of money to buy food.

- **Textbooks**
 - Estimated spending on textbooks shows a significant increase in those spending less than \$200.
 - Similar to last year, just over one-quarter of undergraduates estimated spending \$600 or more.
 - The average amount spent was \$893, with a median of \$400.

- **Frequency of participation in textbook activities**
 - 90% of undergraduates have used Open Education Resources.
 - 89% bought a textbook or other course resource and **didn't use it**, or rarely used it, throughout the term.
 - 79% of undergraduate students have been assessed in courses through online portals that require paid access codes.
 - 65% of undergraduate students went without a textbook or other course resources due to cost.

- **Student housing**
 - 72% of students live off-campus with parents, friends, or partners, an increase likely due to Covid-19.
 - Fewer than 1 in 10 students report ever having lacked an adequate nighttime residence while a student at UBC. The most common reason for lack of adequate nighttime residence while at UBC is lack of affordable housing (24%) followed by a lack of available housing (18%).

Mental health/wellbeing

UBC students generally are well aware of all the available mental health/wellbeing services offered at UBC. However, a standout statistic was that only 10% of students have ever visited the foodbank. This is concerning as 42% of students have reported having some sort of financial issues relating to food insecurity.

- Services offered by the Enrollment Service Advisors were most widely used by students (70% of students); a significant increase in usage this past year due to easier access to advisors online.
- Only around 10% of all UBC students have used the food bank. However, 42% of all students have been concerned at some point regarding financial resource to purchase food
- UBC Student Health Services, Enrolment Service Advisor, and AMS Safewalk are considered the most helpful services (all 70%+).
- Significant increase of helpfulness regarding Nurse on Campus.

Sexual misconduct at UBC

This section of the survey examines student perception of sexual misconduct on campus and the University's response to sexual misconduct, as well as personal experiences of sexual assault and other sexual misconduct by a UBC community member.

- 38% (increased) UBC students would know how to respond appropriately if they witnessed a sexual assault or other sexual misconduct.
- Almost 1 in 6 undergraduate students have experienced sexual assault or misconduct during their time as UBC students.
- The LGBTQ2PA+ demographic is more likely than hetero to be concerned about the prevalence of sexual assault (LGBTQ2PA+: 62% vs. hetero: 47%) at UBC.
- 53% of undergrads would feel comfortable accessing support resources from SVPRO (Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office) and SASC (Sexual Assault Support Center).
- There were also significant declines in agreement that UBC has clearly communicated resources
- As well as feeling comfortable reporting incidents to campus officials or representatives.

AMS experience

Perceptions of the AMS have remained stable, but overall rating and awareness have declined.

- The AMS continues to receive positive overall ratings from just under half of undergraduate students (45%), which is a directional decline from a peak in 2019.
- Undergraduate students' awareness of the services that AMS offers has significantly declined this year (47% - 41%).
- There has been a relatively stable agreement since last year that the AMS represents student equity and inclusion (47%) and mental health/well-being (45%).
- When it comes to AMS representing student financial interests, students continue to be more likely to disagree (33%) than agree (27%) as well as when trusting AMS to spend their money wisely (37% disagree, 25% agree).

The results have shown that more information should be communicated to the student body about AMS services and access to them, where their fees go, and how AMS advocates for their interests in terms of mental health, equity, academic, and financial. Coming September, connecting better with students about the AMS services in both online and offline settings will be important in improving the AMS overall rating, especially for first-year students.

Conclusion

Taken together, the results above have revealed significant gaps in multiple areas of student experience and services during the 2020/2021 school year. As was expected, the decrease in student satisfaction with many domains of campus services and experience was due in part to the pandemic. However, there were also pre-existing issues that the University needs to address in a more proactive approach, for instance, with regards to the tuition value, racial discrimination on campus, as well as food and housing security. It is especially important that the University continues to make efforts to understand students' needs and address the challenges to improve students' UBC experience.



Eshana Bhangu
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Alma Mater Society