



Submission Regarding Proposed Policy Amendment Administrative Vice-Presidents Policy (AP14)

March 18, 2024

Dear members of the UBC Board of Governors Executive Committee,

This submission is made on behalf of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) regarding the proposed amendments to the Administrative Vice-Presidents Policy (AP14).

The AMS must express, in the strongest terms, our opposition to the advancement of these policy amendments, particularly around the removal of term limits for Administrative Vice-Presidents and the effective ending of the Board-facilitated reappointment process. Both of these requirements serve as a fundamental piece of what has resulted in the University achieving its status as a Top 40 institution. These practices are pivotal to maintaining the dynamic and flexible culture required of institutions to operate in this post-COVID world. The reappointment process ensures that the Board and the institution at large can maintain accountability over its Senior leadership. Term limits ensure that we are consistently refreshing our talent pool and that we never grow complacent with a particular institutional direction. It allows us to remain nimble and consistently attract innovative talent that furthers the positive strategic directions of the University.

It is important to note that many peer institutions, including the University of Waterloo, the University of Ottawa, Western University, the University of Alberta, Dalhousie University, and the University of Victoria, maintain a reappointment process led by the Board of Governors once the terms of the appropriate (including administrative) Vice-Presidents expire. Additionally, a large number of universities, including those listed above and Carleton University, McMaster University, and Toronto Metropolitan University, have term limits in place for Vice Presidents, most at 5-years per term and not exceeding two consecutive terms. Recognizing that so many comparable institutions in the U15 utilize our current standards of appointment and extension, it only seems right that in order to keep pace with peers, we continue to engage in this best practice.

One of the most admirable exercises of UBC is the standard we set when making hiring decisions. This applies even to Deans and Associate Vice-President roles, in which UBC requires an extension of the appointment process and consists of term limits, as evidenced in policies AP8 and AP6, respectively. Considering this is the standard we apply to our senior academic leadership and other administrators, it seems in the best interest of consistency and accountability to apply the same rigour and rationale to the appointments of the most senior leaders at the University. While some cite concerns that instituting term limits reduces the quality of candidates who apply to work at UBC, we argue that evidence points to this not being entirely true as we have seen Vice Presidents who come from a diverse array of the best

institutions, governments, and corporations in the world including top 20 Universities, companies leading in STEM-based and humanities research, nonprofits, Ministerial roles, and so much more.

Ultimately, we should strive to identify candidates who exhibit a commitment towards service, the desire to be a part of the leadership team of one of the best Universities in the country, and a drive to “inspire people, ideas, and actions for a better world” (UBC Strategic Plan, 2018-2028)—not those whose considerations are centred primarily on how a term limit or reappointment process may affect personal ambitions. In fact, individuals in Vice Presidential roles should welcome these opportunities for a critical and constructive review and refresh of their work and should want to usher in a new era of leadership that can carry on their legacies while simultaneously innovating and advancing our institution in new ways.

As the representatives of the 60,000+ students on the Vancouver campus, we represent the largest stakeholder groups at UBC and sincerely value the Board’s service and commitment to working with us. The Alma Mater Society remains committed to representing students and ensuring that their voices are heard. We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure the progress and constant improvement of this University.

Sincerely,



Kamil Kanji
Vice President, Academic and University Affairs
Alma Mater Society



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President
Alma Mater Society