



Building on our Strength

UBCSUO Strategic Goals for 2019/20

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The Students' Union's bylaws provide for the creation of a strategic plan that identifies goals for the organization and creates a navigable path to their achievement. In recent years, the lack of strategic planning has resulted in a series of year-over-year decision-making models that have led to a disjointed, and at times unclear, set of organizational objectives. This instability contributed to strained internal relationships between board members and staff, and a series of governance lapses.

On May 28, 2018, the Executive Committee and full-time Students' Union staff participated in what was to become the first annual day-long planning retreat and began addressing these issues. The retreat considered the Students' Union's strengths and weaknesses, along with the possible opportunities and threats facing the organization. The mission and priority activities of the Students' Union were identified at that first planning session, and these continue to guide our actions.

The second annual planning retreat took place on May 28, 2019 with the newly elected Executive Committee and full-time Students' Union staff looking to build upon the strengths identified in the first strategic plan put forth last year. The importance of finding a balance between continuing with work begun but not completed, while also providing space for current year priorities has been recognized by the team as they look to adopt a 3-year rolling Strategic Plan. This improved plan format will allow for outstanding plans to be carried over and planned for along with current year priorities. This improved format will allow for the Students' Union to take a longer-term view to planning, increasing both stability and consistency of activity.

Students' Union Mission Statement

The Students' Union's mission is to:

- Provide accessible, high-quality services;
- Facilitate events, activities and student clubs to enhance campus life;
- Undertake advocacy to ensure students' rights are respected, and concerns are heard by decision-makers; and,
- Practice good governance in the operations of the Students' Union.

We achieve our mission by ensuring that all of our priorities fall into one of three areas of activity: Service, Advocacy, and Campus Life; all guided by strong governance practices.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

As noted above, the individual goals listed herein arise from an analysis of the Students' Union's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as examined on May 28, 2019 (see Appendix I). The Plan contains 15 separate objectives, organized into four broad categories:

- Section A Services**
- Section B Campus Life**
- Section C Advocacy**
- Section D Governance**

In an effort to begin the transition to a three-year rolling plan, each of the following sections will address:

- Priority initiatives carried forward from the 2018/19 year
- Priority initiatives and action plans for the current 2019/20 year
- Current year priorities that are anticipated to have delayed, longer-term or multi-year implementation in whole or in part

SECTION A – SERVICES

Students' Union services are a key strength of the UBCSUO, and a vital way that we can have a positive impact for our student members. The 2018/19 academic year saw the Students' Union make great strides in strengthening our existing service provision as well as addressing gaps where opportunities for growth were present.

1. Leverage BC Federation of Students' (BCFS) Services

As a member local union of the BCFS, the Students' Union has access to subsidized, or bulk-priced services that can be implemented for the benefit of members.

1.1 Student Discounts

Prior to the 2018/19 academic year, member students had access to the ISIC Discount program run through the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). As we are no longer members of the CFS, the BCFS has undertaken the development of the "Save BC" student discount App to replace ISIC. This program would see member local unions of BCFS soliciting discount providers in communities across BC for inclusion on the App, providing students with the economic benefit of discounted products and services within their geographic regions. This project is both a carry forward from the previous year, as well as an identified urgent action item for the current term.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Work with BCFS to make existing student discounts accessible to UBCO students, and develop promotional materials to advertise the existing discounts for students in the Okanagan region;
- Work in partnership with Okanagan College Students' Union to solicit discounts for the 2019/20 year to improve the number and quality of regional student discounts;
- Actively promote the App to members;
- Ensure that all Students' Union board members have the app downloaded, are familiar with it, use it, and share and discuss it with as many students as possible.

1.2 BCFS Member Engagement Tool: Ready Education Mobile App (formerly OOHLALA)

BCFS provides access to a comprehensive student engagement app at approximately 25% of the commercial price. This app is used by universities and colleges around the world, but was founded in Canada by former student leaders working with student organizations. Ready Education features social engagement tools, marketplace functions, information listing, and a full suite of integration options. It is also fully customizable, including a 'white label' option that would enable the product to be implemented as a fully branded UBCSUO platform.

As with item 1.1, this project is also both a carry forward from 2018/19 and an identified priority for the current year.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Work with the Ready Education Community Manager, BCFS Services Coordinator, and other BCFS locals who have successfully implemented the app to develop a content and engagement strategy;
- Work to integrate the app with existing functions, services, events and structures of the Students' Union;
- Engage with clubs and Course Unions, assisting them in becoming active in using the app;
- Ensure all UBCSUO board members are familiar with the app, use it, and can demonstrate and promote to student members

Beginning in 2019/20 and carrying on into 2020/21, the Students' Union will:

- Collaborate with UBCO on the integration of institutional data or applications where applicable and appropriate (ie: grades through Canvas)

2. Improve Marketing of Existing Businesses and Services

The Students' Union's existing businesses and services are a strength of the organization; and is our main purpose and role. Increased on and off campus competition, as well as the uncertainty around what changes the move from Aramark to an internal UBCO Food service provision will bring additional challenges to our food and beverage service businesses.

This was an identified priority from both the 2018/19 and 2019/20 planning sessions. Work began in 2018/19 will continue, further strengthening the awareness of and engagement with our businesses and services amongst our membership.

2.1 Improve Membership Engagement & Awareness of SUO Services and Activities

Staff and executives have identified that despite their relative success, too many students remain unaware of the existence or benefits of many of the services that we offer.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Engage board members in seeking opportunities to increase member awareness of services: class talks, tabling, demonstrations and promotions
- Focus on solidifying recognition of Students' Union activities, projects or events:
 - Actively brand ourselves at events – tents, table cloths, banners, t-shirts;
 - Ensure awareness of Student Union initiatives – find avenues to increase the awareness that services such as WUSC, Resource Centers, Third Space, Empower Me etc. are provided by the Students' Union.

2.2. Increase Collaboration and Engagement with Resource Centers

Resource Centers provide a valuable space for students to connect and find support on campus. This is an important and under-utilized point of contact that we have with our members.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Ensure regular meetings of Resource Center Coordinators and SUO executives and staff;
- Actively cross promote our initiatives and events;
- Initiate once per semester presentations from each Resource Center to the board, allowing them the opportunity to discuss activities, challenges, needs, upcoming priorities, etc.

2.3 Develop a Business Marketing Strategy

With increased competition both on and off campus for our businesses, it will be important to actively market these services and the benefits they provide to our student members.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Investigate other Student Union best practices in business marketing strategies;
- Inventory, assess and create or refresh as needed existing business marketing materials

3. Seek Opportunities to Expand Services

With the financial stability of the Students' Union, there arises opportunity to examine current service provision and assess gaps or opportunities. Additionally, continuing changes to the UBCO present both opportunities and challenges that the Students' Union must begin to address.

3.1 Take Over the Management of the Food Exchange / Food Bank Program

In the past, the Students' Union managed the campus Food Exchange program, as is common practice on many campuses. A combination of circumstances, including lack of director and volunteer support led to the program moving upstairs to the Student Experience Office. Both parties have expressed a desire to see the program return to the Students' Union.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Work with the Student Experience Office to facilitate the Food Exchange Program reverting back to the Students' Union responsibility;
- Investigate Food program best practices from within the Student Union environment;
- Arrange space as required to house a Food Exchange / Bank operation;

- Determine internal management and operational requirements for the program and put the necessary supports, regulation and/or role description changes in place as necessary;

3.2 Introduce a Robust Individual Advocacy Support System for Members

The Students' Union currently contributes financially the campus Ombuds Office, recognizing the importance of this type of support for our students. An identified gap in this support is students have previously not had a formal advocate that could accompany them and offer more personalized assistance. While this item fits under the Advocacy pillar as well, it is included here with services as it is a new benefit the Students' Union will be providing.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Create a process supported by the VP Internal and the Advocacy Governance Coordinator that will assist students with their individual advocacy and support needs;
- Work closely with the UBCO Ombuds Office in providing student members the assistance they need in navigating University policy and procedures;
- Produce a reporting mechanism that will measure and identify the number of students assisted, in what areas/endeavors, and progress made in order to assess the success and future requirements of the program.

3.3 Determine a Long-Term Vision for the Future of Operations in the UNC Building

With the Nechako building construction underway, the Students' Union must embark on long term planning and strategizing in order to be prepared to meet opportunities for growth or expansion that will accompany this change to the campus landscape.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Conduct a minimum of three planning sessions solely on this topic;
- Provide numerous opportunities for members to contribute to the longer-term planning through workshops, meetings, surveys etc.;
- Liaise with campus partners on planning discussions.

In 2020/21, the Students' Union will:

- Be prepared to offer UBCO administration a proposal representing several options for future use of the UNC building

SECTION B – CAMPUS LIFE

Campus life is a multi-dimensional concept designed to summarize the unique set of experiences, social interactions and lifestyles made possible by the various events, activities, groups and environments of a university or college. Campus life is what occurs outside the classroom, and creates valuable relationships and memories that travel with students for the remainder of their lives. The UBCSUO has a strong history of engaging in campus life through the hosting of hallmark events and the provision of a campus pub; however, elements of campus life facilitation have been undervalued and lacked necessary investment.

1. Investigate and Plan to Create a Student Leadership/Volunteer Program

A volunteer program will help to engage members across the campus and provide opportunities to be active in the campus community. Volunteers can be engaged to host information tables, work on advocacy campaigns, participate in university consultations, undertake classroom speaking and other memberships engagement functions. This is a carry forward from 2018/19 that has been identified as a priority for this year as well.

In the coming year the Students' Union will:

- Gather examples of students' union volunteer/leadership programs operated by other organizations in Canada;
- Determine who is responsible for the creation of the program, and strike a working group to facilitate;
- Present a program structure to the board for approval

2. Better Define Events and Seek to Fill Gaps in Event Offerings

Last year saw the Students' Union successfully bring event costs under control, which was a driving priority for the 2018/19 term. UBCSUO also worked diligently to ensure that event planning was in line with its governance systems, with proper approval and accountability measures in place.

During the 2018/19 planning session, it was recognized that UBCSUO-sponsored events tend to follow a common profile, and that profile may not be speaking to all members of the campus community. Last year's team began the process of considering and implementing a wider variety of events, including speakers, constituency events, professional development and academic events and this is an area that will continue to be a focus in the current year.

In the 2019/20 year, the Students' Union will:

- Introduce "Adulting 101", a series of free workshops, talks and activities
- Seek feedback from our members on the types of events that they would most like to see, as well as feedback on current offered events
- Continue to collaborate with campus partners on event planning, marketing, and execution;
- Continue to investigate new and unique event offerings;

- Bring speakers of interest to campus;
- Increase the number of well-being initiatives offered to members;
- Seek opportunities to engage with Clubs and Course Unions in event planning. Based on their interests and mandates, there may be opportunities to partner or co-sponsor events, find volunteers, or help cross promotion

3. Develop a Comprehensive Engagement Strategy

Active, meaningful engagement with membership is a struggle common to many Student Unions. UBCSUO in the past has lacked a thorough plan or map to ensure consistent and participatory communication with its members. This is one of the last outstanding recommendations from the 2017 MNP Governance Report, and an area the Students' Union will focus on in the upcoming year.

In the 2019/20 year, the Students' Union will:

- Create a Social Media plan to ensure we are speaking in one voice, have clear messaging, and are providing regular postings on both informative and entertainment issues;
- Re-brand "SUP" to "SUO Events" to alleviate brand confusion
- Seek opportunities to engage personally with students on a regular basis through forums, meetings, tabling, and events
- Consistently seek feedback from members on the performance of the Students' Union through online surveys, suggestion boxes, mobile apps etc.

Beginning in 2019/20 and carrying on into 2020/21, the Students' Union will:

- Investigate a website refresh
- Investigate re-branding possibilities

SECTION C – ADVOCACY

2018/19 saw the Students' Union's re-embrace its strong advocacy history, and begin to shift from a strong government relations focus to a more balanced approach where on-campus, community, provincial and federal based advocacy are recognized as a vital component of our mission and mandate. Engaging in advocacy work elevates student voices, and teaches members how to be agents of social change. The pro-student government in BC currently offers increased opportunity to help shape our system of public education through those voices.

1. Continue work in BCFS Campaigns and Government Relations

Over the past year, UBCSUO participated in the BCFS campaigns to tackle student debt, increase investment in open educational resources, and to limit tuition fee increases for international students. It is recognized that work such as this is not limited to a single academic year or executive term, and this important partnership with the BCFS campaigns will continue going forward.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Continue to engage in campaign outreach in partnership and collaboration with the BCFS and other member locals;
- Host information tables and distribute materials on campus to promote campaign work;
- Through our more intentional and strategic Social Media and membership outreach work as already discussed herein, ensure that students are aware of government relations and advocacy work that we are doing;

2. Increase Campus Collaboration and Member Engagement in Advocacy Work

The enrollment numbers at UBCO are expected to exceed 10,000 for the first time with the 2019/20 academic year. This large and consistently growing student population gives us a voice not only in our own community but on the larger provincial and federal stages. Increased student engagement in the issues affecting students and education can and should be driven by the Students' Union.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Seek endorsement and engagement for campaigns and advocacy work from Clubs and Course Unions as it may pertain to their interests and mandate;
- Consult with members about topics we are lobbying. This builds credibility when we go to governing bodies or the institution with requests for change;
- When undertaking advocacy work on campus or within our local community, communicate with campus partners that may wish to collaborate on these issues and drive change;
- Through our more intentional and strategic Social Media and membership outreach work as already discussed herein, ensure that students are aware of government relations and advocacy work that we are doing.

3. Develop a Local Campaign on Sustainability

In 2018/19, campus sustainability was identified as an area that the Students' Union could continue to demonstrate leadership in, specifically waste reduction and energy conservation. Work began in the past year, which included looking at our packaging and service practices, and will continue as a priority for the 2019/20 term.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Continue to be an active member of the UBCO Waste Reduction Committee;
- Use Students' Union businesses and services to both promote any campaigns or changes that may arise through that committee, and model the desired sustainable behavior;
- Seek opportunities to add the student voice to local initiatives and concerns;
- Continue the commitment towards sustainability in its own operations, such as continuing to reduce plastics, packaging and waste, banning the sale of bottled water, or other such measures.

SECTION D – GOVERNANCE

By far the largest area of goals for last year arose from governance and finance issues. The majority of the Students' Union's work in the 2018/19 year was in addressing these topics that were reflective of the analysis provided by staff and directors at the planning retreat, but also of the issues identified by MNP in its 2017 governance review. The issues addressed reflected a desire to both execute best practices in governance and financial management, and ensure the Students' Union's adherence to regulatory requirements. Out of nine priority goals identified, seven were completed and the remaining two are currently in progress.

Carried forward from last year:

1. Election Reform

Election functions at a students' union are vital to its system of governance and its reputation among members, as well as the campus community. The Students' Union made several preliminary changes to its election regulation for the 2019/20 election, and these positive changes will be continued into the current year.

In 2019/20 the Students' Union will:

- Continue to review its election process against other such processes at students' unions across BC and in consideration of best practices for campus elections; and
- Prepare and present revisions to the bylaws and election regulations as required to improve election oversight, increase candidate education, update campaigning rules and better promote election participation.

2. Planning Processes

The past year has seen a resurgence in the Students' Union's use of strategic planning and has once again given the organization a direction and clear focus. A constant challenge in the students' union environment is the yearly turnover of elected officials, which can often lead to disjointed, inconsistent, or impulsive planning and direction. Identification in 2018 of the three pillars of service, advocacy and campus life that guide our mandate was the first step in combatting this unique challenge. A further support to ensuring consistency and focus is the implementation of multi-year planning. To that end, this carry forward from 2018/19 is highlighted.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Develop a model for the creation, implementation, regular review, and amendment of organizational plans to ensure that short-, medium- and long-term goals are identified and achieved; and
- Create measures to provide for the development and implementation of a multi-year strategic plan.

3. Board Engagement

An engaged and active board is the cornerstone to the success of the Students' Union. Despite individual best intentions, this is often as difficult as it is important. Board responsibilities compete with a number of other individual priorities, including academic and employment commitments, family and social pursuits, and limited time and energy. Time invested in building a strong team will pay dividends in the impact that we are able to make.

In 2019/20, the Students' Union will:

- Use the committee structure adopted in the previous year to assist in optimal distribution of tasks;
- Appeal to the personal interests and passions of board members when looking to delegate tasks;
- Invest time and energy in social functions to help build the team outside of a work environment;
- Ensure adequate time for meeting and event preparation is given;
- Mindfully and intentionally delegate tasks to members of the board using personal, individual requests and ensuring that expectations are clear and attainable; follow up as needed to maintain engagement;
- Increase Campus Collaboration through consistent and informed communication with our Board of Governors and Senate ex-officio members

CURRENT BOARD AND STAFF

The Board of Directors for the Students' Union is comprised of three types of positions, and the elected officials for the 2019/20 year are indicated below.

Full time current staff are also noted below, and with the exception of the excluded General Manager, all are unionized with BCGEU.

The Students' Union also employs several casual, part-time student staff who assist with provision of front-line service in the Students' Union's several businesses.

Executive Members

Romil Jain	President
Taylor Dotto	Vice-President External
Nimrah Pannu	Vice-President Finance and Administration
Holly Denby	Vice-President Internal
Ali Poostizadeh	Vice-President Campus Life

Faculty Representatives

Kebbie Brown	Irving K. Barber School of Sciences Representative
Cody Isaac	Irving K. Barber School of Arts Representative
Kyle Kliss	Faculty of Management Representative
Kaila Spencer	Faculty of Applied Science Representative
Sage Cannon	Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies Representative
Cassidy Wallace	The College of Graduate Studies Representative
VACANT	Faculty of Health and Social Development Representative
VACANT	Faculty of Education Representative

Directors At Large

Emilio Freire	Director At-Large
Tashia Kootenayoo	Director At-Large
Michael Gauld	Director At-Large
Kyle Lee	Director At-Large

Staff

Lori Stevenson	General Manager
Aaron White	Project Manager
Leanne Smiles	Finance Manager
Sarah Furgason	Advocacy & Governance Coordinator
Elizabeth Rusch	Membership Outreach Coordinator
Micheal Ouellet	The Well Pub Manager
Stephanie Patterson	Green Bean Coffee and Catering Manager

APPENDIX 1 – SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths of the Students' Union

Top Responses (those that received votes in the dotmocracy process as areas for focus – number of votes indicated in parentheses)

- Diversity in campus life initiatives – different Well events, more collaboration with other staff and execs and university partners – less individual ownership on events (5)
- Well: good space for student engagement, entertainment, event space, not a drain on revenue – generates a profit, provides student employment, space of student groups and clubs to host events, can host all ages events (3)
- Teamwork and collaboration (3)
- Large student population gives us voice in the community, population is consistently growing (2)
- Relationship with BCFS, being a member of the larger organization gives us a larger voice. Services that they provide, guidance and assistance (days like today, orientation), advocacy work (2)
- Adherence to budget, improve approval process, tighter controls, more communication and collaboration (1)
- U-Pass: value for the students, popular, inexpensive (1)
- Ombudsperson contribution – we are seen as the natural partner to that service, gives more than one access point for students to receive services (1)
- Campus culture impact – our contributions through clubs and course unions, good relationships with these groups as we fund and resource them (1)
- We have the desire to improve and enhance relationships with UBCO (1)

Remaining Responses

- We don't have to actively fight for our revenue every year
- Healthy reserve to see us through the tougher times
- Captive audience, one campus
- Recognized by the institution and gov't as the official governing body of the students on UBCO campus
- Good core services: U-pass; Well – event venue, entertainment, employment for students; Green Text – consignment bookstore for our students to resell used textbooks – good return for students (better than the UBCO bookstore), provides student employment; Green Bean – best lattes on campus, employment opps for students; Health & Dental plan – usage is up, good plan with solid service offerings
- Good, fresh and nice spaces – we are not in a dilapidated space, we have good space for our offices
- Lease businesses – provide revenue and additional student employment opps, more options for food choices
- Our sub-organizations – WUSC for example - provide service, positively viewed
- Staff experience – many years of service from all of the staff members, very loyal
- Relationship with AMS – we have the ability to draw information, knowledge from these individuals, yet have the autonomy, we are not “under” them

- Third Space – service for students that the university can't meet, allows practicum opportunities to counselling students to gain their experience
- Can use our services to advocate – ie. Sustainability (through our re-usable mugs, utensils, etc)
- Attractive to potential sponsors
- Staffing structure changes – Advocacy & Gov Coord – we have set ourselves up for success to take advantage of the opportunities. Executive roles restructured to reflect our pillars, staff + executive partnership to support us in our initiatives
- Commitment to positive changes / momentum
- Committee structure changes – support our staff, exec, and pillars of service
- Event planning/communication and collaboration through the process
- Excited and passionate first year student energy – they want to get involved

Weaknesses of the Students' Union

Top Responses (those that received votes in the dotmocracy process as areas for focus – number of votes indicated in parentheses)

- Weak engagement with members – students are not aware of what we offer (8)
- Social Media – lack of strategy; lack of voice, clear message (6)
- We don't commit to our own initiatives – board engagement (4)
- Lack of comprehensive volunteer program – hard to successfully engage student helpers, also helps feed the ladder of engagement to greater involvement (3)
- Lack of engagement with resource centers – don't really have a mechanism for scheduled check ins, reporting to board etc; lack of knowledge around their basic activities; lack of verification that there is value to students being provided through the funding that we provide (2)
- SUP – lack of accountability, no terms of reference – why are they here, what is it vs what should it be? Confusion around structure, event “ownership” (2)
- Lack of marketing strategy, proactive versus reactive (2)
- Reputation with the university administration and with the student body as well (2)
- No long term vision or plan (2)
- Inability to say “no” – trying to do it all or do too much (1)

Remaining Responses

- We don't use/promote some of our services as well as we could ie. Empower Me, we make a change, but don't follow up with the appropriate education and awareness of changes/additions, etc.
- Always fighting the 80/20 rule – how do we change that culture on campus?
- Campus media – are we in touch, do we have regular meetings with the editors etc so that they are more aware of what we are doing, always submitting information TO THEM about our events, activities
- Lack of communication / collaboration in transition
- Political organization – we are going to have haters no matter what we do, there will always be critics and they are usually louder than the ones that agree with us
- Lack of community outreach; organizational goodwill

- Outreach to the members – not where we would like it to be
- Party focused events – we need to balance out events and appeal to the higher level students as well as first and second year students who attend the large parties
- Executive structure can create the perception of hierarchy; maintain review of exec roles and responsibilities
- Fear of being the bad guy – saying no, united front
- UBCSUO mobile app
- Lack of Graduate student representation / engagement – not doing enough for grad students

Opportunities for the Students' Union

Top Responses (those that received votes in the dotmocracy process as areas for focus – number of votes indicated in parentheses)

- New building opening space in existing UNC building = potential for expansion (5)
- Better understanding of the events that people want (5)
- Adulting 101 – tapping into existing and forming new relationships to bring workshops/talks/information to students (4)
- New discount app (3)
- Create short and long term plans (3)
- Pro-student government in BC right now allows for increased opportunity to be pushing for change at that level. Same at the municipal level – our council and mayor are receptive to the power of our population and voice to drive positive local change – we need to ensure that we can mobilize public appreciation and support to ensure that changes like this are sustained (2)

Remaining Responses

- Staff role and BCFS partnership = better campaign outreach and ideas for outreach; continuing to build each year on the gains made in previous years
- Increased collaboration between our own existing committees
- Administration recognize the fact the role of SUO re: advocating
- Website – bolster communication capabilities and efficacy
- Relationships with UBC -> greater SUO representation on Committees
- Collaboration with administration – both financially and expertise/service wise
- Increased enrollment at UBCO = new opportunities for new initiatives

Threats to the Students' Union

- UBCO taking over the food services – unknowns with future of the meal plans, new chef coming in
- New brew pub opening up on Academy Hill
- Angry club members who are very vocal on social media
- Power of UBC admin
- Instability of minority BC government
- UBC development taking away event space

APPENDIX 2 – Progress Tracker

Progress meetings to be held twice per semester. Tables to track progress will be inserted at those times.