

AUGSA Meeting: 2009-09-17

Attendees: Robbie Chernish, Amanda Nielson, Heather Clitheroe, Ron Jagmohan, David Keene, Heather Parsons, Mike Balaski, Theresa Neuman, Rob Janzen

Observer: Bethany Porter (MAIS program student)

Guest: Cory Wright, Brian Beckler (Gallivan and Associates)

Mike Balaski exited the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Rob Janzen exited the meeting at 7:27 pm.

Theresa Neuman exited the meeting at 7:45 pm.

All times in MST.

GENERAL MEETING

Teleconference Info:

1-877-385-4099 (Toll Free North America wide)

1-403-232-0994 (Calgary/Overseas)

1. Health and Dental Plan (Cory Wright, Brian ? - Gallivan and Associates)
2. Bylaw Subcommittee Group Update / Findings
3. Review of Emails communication for AU
4. Course Materials Insert Project
5. Open House Presentation / Agenda
6. Coordinator's Report
7. Next Meeting

Notes:

Bethany Porter - MAIS program student, was present to observe the GSA meeting.

Heather Parsons - MAIS program student, was present to observe the GSA meeting.

Meeting called to order at 6:05pm.

Agenda item: Health and Dental Plan presentation from Gallivan and Associates.

Health and Dental Plan presentation:

Cory Wright met with Robbie Chernish in Athabasca to discuss the possibilities of offering health and/or dental benefits to AU grad students, as well as the potential to offer a referendum option for full benefit plans.

G&A provides health and dental plans for colleges and universities in Canada, with majority of plans being offered to schools in Alberta.

Assuming a maximum of \$8 per student (per course) being collected for a health plan, G&A provided three different plans that could be offered to grad students.

First option provides accident coverage (numerous conditions covered, but only if the student is involved in an accident). This plan tends to be prevalent in student health insurance approximately ten years ago, but most student plans have since moved to a more comprehensive health plan which also allows students to opt out of plans.

Also developed a hybrid accident and health coverage for prescription drugs with an annual maximum for a prescription drug benefit (but not oral contraceptives for the first year). However, G&A has been working with Robbie to provide an accidental life insurance plan.

The Alberta drug formulary was selected as most students at AU are in Alberta, but the prescription drug formulary could also be based on a Canada-wide plan.

Option B provides lower drug coverage - the prescription drug coverage is not very extensive, but does provide coverage without collecting a large amount for the health plan.

A limited network of vision providers is available that offer services at a discount, but not part of the plan specifically.

A question was asked regarding the insuring partners (Great West Life and Manulife versus other providers). At this point, Great West Life offers the best pricing options.

G&A stressed that the coordination of plans depends on the insured person's position with other health care plans, or if they're covered as a secondary. Individual and family opt-in plans are available, at an increased rate.

A question was asked regarding US and international students: this plan is provided to whoever pays, regardless of whether or not basic care is provided. However, basic care is not provided. In the case of a US student who does not have basic care coverage, they would pay to see the physician, but would then have coverage for prescriptions. There is some question of covering international students, though, as we do have grad students who live and study overseas. G&A would work to develop a solution for these students.

Negotiations are also underway with Great West Life to make coverage retroactive to December, since dues are already being collected for AU students. However, this is still being worked out.

There is the issue that not all students need coverage (may already have it), and other students are not in degree programs. It's likely that 600-800 students would opt into a health plan.

With regards to coverage options, G&A has envisioned coverage as an annual plan, regardless whether or not the student is actively taking courses through the entire year.

A question was asked about a potential scenario if the vast majority of students opted out and whether or not this would add extra expenses.

G&A has a website as well as toll-free phone number, and can provide 24 hour turnaround for most inquiries and questions. They are pleased to work with post-secondary students, and specialize in student plans. Pay direct cards are available for services (ie: prescription). Other receipts can be forwarded into the insurance program.

G&A does have experience working with distance education programs and multiple campus locations. From a distance education perspective, they feel that they are able to provide access to the service regardless of student's location. The plans are annual in nature, and they are already working with campuses where students are off campus (ie: for holidays) or are from other areas.

If there are any questions, Cory Wright can be contacted (Robbie to provide contact info later).

Discussion: Robbie will continue to investigate options as well as follow up with Cory regarding oral contraceptives. Generally, council members were very pleased with the presentation from Gallivan & Associates, and are very receptive to the possibility of providing a health plan coverage. We were generally pleased with option 1 and 2, as presented by Gallivan & Associates, and Robbie will investigate options for tiered coverage, as well as with other insurance providers.

Mike Balaski exited the meeting at 7:02.

2. Bylaw Subcommittee Group Update / Findings

It was determined that bylaws should be reviewed by a subcommittee. First meeting last Sunday for 1.5 hours. Questions and comments regarding existing bylaws were reviewed; subcommittee will meet again. Meeting on September 27 or October 4 (Sundays). There was also a suggestion to run bylaw subcommittees on Thursdays. October 8 will be the next subcommittee meeting. 6pm MST.

3. Review of Emails communication for AU

Email from Brian Stewart, Chief Information Officer for AU, was circulated to council members. AU has concerns about spam and abuse of networks. There is a concern that AU does not want to provide email addresses to the entire student body. A point was raised that perhaps AU addresses could be provided to students that requested it - similar to the AU ID card policy.

AUGSA's position is that students should be able to opt-in to email services, and have an institutional identity. We will press this point.

AU is considering this as a pilot project. There is also interest in providing a virtual media lab for students.

Middle States (accrediting agency) is reviewing AU as part of the institution's self-study (internal review), and email access continued to come up as a concern that students expressed.

A letter will be sent to AU requesting a self-serve option for emails. If we need to move further with a petition, we will.

4. Course Materials Insert Project

This project is to include an insert (bookmark, postcard, calendar piece, etc) to introduce AUGSA to graduate students, including introduction. We should also include information on services provided, contact information, etc.

Suggested that for now, we start with an insert sheet for course packages, and perhaps look at sending out mail outs (ie: bookmark or promotional piece) once the logo competition has closed.

We will hold off inserts until the logo competition has closed.

5. Open House Presentation / Agenda

There is some concern that October 15 may be too soon for the Open House, as the website and health plans are not settled. If the meeting was pushed to the end of October, we could close the logo competition and showcase our AU grad student models.

Waiting so that we can provide logo entries will also help with engagement. Suggested that Open House be moved to November 5 (Thursday). Messages will be put in the myAU and MBA Lotus Notes.

We may also want to look at other options for providing the Open House besides teleconference. Podcast, chat, asynchronous web sessions - all are options.

We'll develop an agenda for a teleconference, and approve it at the next meeting.

6. Coordinator's Report

Robbie gave a report on his activities. He will be working on an analysis of the grad student's survey, and writing final report.

Banking changes made; three resignations of council members (Robbie - please fill this in).

Health and Dental plan research completed.

Also posted information regarding 'Don't Cut Us Out' campaign.

Sat on a financial management (?) meeting.

(Robbie - can you fill in this part in?)

7. Other Business

There are some issues with the AUGSA website and control. We haven't been able to gain FTP access to the site to be able to make changes, although AU has been looking at the possibilities of uploading html or php files for us.

Robbie has talked to Carol Lund about working to develop access to our site. We do also need to sign a security access agreement in order to be able to gain FTP access.

Robbie and Heather will discuss the website and possible style changes, and present some options to council.

8. Next Meeting

October 8 - bylaw meeting. 6pm MST

October 15 - council meeting 6pm MST.

October 22 - Open House organizational meeting. 6pm MST (tentative)

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm.