

# Team ETC

## 2022 Platform (Summer Review)

Eric Sikich, President

Tina Hu, VP (Operations)

Callum Robertson, VP (University Affairs)

**ERIC SIKICH**  
PRESIDENT

**TINA HU**  
VPOPS

**CALLUM ROBERTSON**  
VPUA





# Table of Contents

<b>Land Acknowledgment</b>	3
<b>Letter from President Sikich</b>	4
<b>Letter from Vice President Hu</b>	5
<b>Letter from Vice President Roberston</b>	7
<b>Platform Pillars</b>	9
<b>Pillar I: Community Building</b>	10
Pillar II: Student Engagement & Trust	12
Pillar III: Transparency & Communication	15
Pillar IV: Advocacy	18



## Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that we are uninvited guests, situated on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishinabek Nation. The opportunities we have to work, play, and learn on this land are a result of Canada's history of conflict and colonialism. We recognize that the Alma Mater Society (AMS) is a player in the colonization of this land and we will actively work with Indigenous groups on campus and in the area to conduct assessments of what areas the AMS can do to improve in regards to decolonizing the institution as a whole. Colonialism and Indigenous erasure are current and ongoing processes that create systems that benefit uninvited settlers. We are aware of our responsibility to help dismantle these systems, especially should we be elected to the AMS Executive office, by educating ourselves, acknowledging and learning from the past, speaking up, and taking action when appropriate.



## Letter from President Sikich

Hi all! My name is Eric Sikich, I use he/him pronouns and I am your AMS President. I am in my fifth year of school in a return-to-studies program. Throughout my time at Queen's I have found myself involved in quite a few things, whether clubs through ASUS, or jobs within the AMS. All which have made my time here unique and unforgettable. I am proud to call Kingston my home away from home.

The past summer has been an eventful time, full of learning opportunities and growth for myself and for the AMS. Being the President, I have learned how to interact with university administration and advocate for necessary student changes, while also representing the values the AMS was founded upon. In my role I oversee five offices directly. The Communications Office (headed by Cassie Luk), the Marketing Office (headed by Niki Boytchuk-Hale), the Office of the Secretariat (headed by Amir-Ali Golrokhian-Sani), and the Office of the Student Life Centre (headed by Hannah Fitzpatrick). With the Offices we have worked on releasing the monthly newsletter, working on visual identity standards, releasing a new website, engaging students through new marketing tactics, participating in in-person events, reviewing and putting forward new policies, re-negotiating contracts, opening new spaces for students, and much more. This summer has been one of working hard to accomplish goals, and I can proudly say that in every office we have made headway into new and exciting opportunities for all AMS members.

This summer has been an incredible success in planning for the return of students, and we have accomplished many intended and unintended goals we have set out to do, and hope to continue on with this proactive work. I know the next few months will only bring more initiatives forward, and as always, I cannot wait to continue the work we are doing to benefit the larger student population. Please feel free to reach out to my email [president@ams.queensu.ca](mailto:president@ams.queensu.ca) at any point, and I hope you enjoy the rest of the Fall term!



## Letter from Vice President Hu

Hey there! Let me introduce myself. My name is Tina, and I am the Vice President of Operations of the AMS this year. I use she/her pronouns and I'm going into my fifth year of Life Sciences. I am originally from Toronto, Ontario, however, there is something about this city of Kingston that has got my heart for the past five years.

This summer has been a blast. If I could use three words to describe what it has felt like to be the Vice President of Operations for the past four months they would be: growth, community, and action. It is so fulfilling to build out projects with my teams, to watch them build alliances with each other, and to remind them that the AMS is a place to grow and learn – not a place where they are expected to be instantaneously perfect. I am thankful for the opportunity to lead a compassionate, ambitious, and kind group of students on the Operations end of the AMS this year. My services and staff are at the heart of what I do every day, and I hope that I remind them of that as much as I should. We put our heads together to solve challenges and we celebrate together when we have wins. Cheers to Sierra Gaspari, Foodbank Head Manager, Nicole Gatzios, Common Ground Head Manager, Angela Li, Peer Support Centre Head Manager, Ben Wrixon & Julia Harmsworth, The Journal Editor in Chief & Managing Editor, Andrew Adams, Queen's Student Constables Logistics Assistant Manager, newly hired Caroline Jarrett, Queen's Student Constables Head Manager, Kate Hamil, Walkhome Head Manager, Peter Brickell, StudioQ Head Manager, Phallon Melmer, Tricolour Outlet Head Manager, and Anisa Moisson, Print and Copy Centre Head Manager for all the amazing work that you have done.

Outside of my services, I have renegotiated the Bus-it program with the City of Kingston. The program launches September 1<sup>st</sup> and allows AMS and SGPS member Queen's students to ride the transit system. As an executive, we have worked with StudentCare to provide the AMS Health and Dental Plan to AMS students. I have guided the operations team through their summer budget and goal planning process. I have presented the AMS's Operating Budget to the AMS Board of Directors – and Laura Devenny, Chair of the Board, has been nothing but a pleasure to work with.



So far, this has been the most exciting opportunity that I have taken on at Queen's University and I encourage you to investigate student government and leadership if you have an ounce of curiosity.



## Letter from Vice President Roberston

Hey students! My name is Callum Robertson, and I use he/him pronouns. I'm a 4th year student in Political Studies and Computing, and for the last 5 months, I've been serving you as the AMS Vice-President of University Affairs! This role has given me so many incredible opportunities that I would never have had the chance to undertake otherwise, and I'm truly grateful to continue working for the student body.

The summer months have presented the AMS with many challenges and opportunities at the same time, where we have been asked to solve unique problems facing students while also getting used to our new roles as AMS Exec. For me, this transition has been interesting to say the least, and I've enjoyed the many new experiences that the AMS has given me. From meeting with other student leaders across campus, running events with my Commissioners, and taking part in O-Week leadership for the first time, I've had to adapt to a very challenging role that both allows me to benefit from learning opportunities, and calls me to help my fellow students in a way that I haven't had the chance to before.

In the Commissions, we've seen incredible work being done by each team over the summer. Commissioner Rolph has had great success with her AMS vegetable garden and Sustainable Action Fund initiatives, and is busy preparing for Sustainability Month in October. Commissioner Hughes has worked tirelessly to prepare for the return of in-person clubs activities, and has made the transition to new club spaces in the Rideau Building seamless for our club members. On the provincial advocacy front, Commissioner Gulati has taken the lead on our work with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (our provincial advocacy association of student unions), and has also run an incredible Sexual Violence Prevention and Response resource fair with great student engagement! As part of the changes being made to the Social Issues Commissioner role, Commissioner Umengan has been transitioning into her role, and we are excited to fully welcome her to the team in October. Finally, Commissioner Onuah has overseen the first in-person O-Week in 3 years, which has been lauded as a massive success by students across campus. We're very proud of her work on this portfolio, and look forward to her future projects!



Ultimately it has been a busy few months, but I'm excited to welcome students both new and returning back to Queen's this Fall. We've seen some great engagement with our AMS events in the past few weeks as student return to campus, and I truly believe that this precedent will carry on throughout the year as we push forward with new events, advocacy, and work. I'm so proud of what our team has accomplished, and I look forward to the many surprises and projects that will come about during the Fall term. As always, please reach out to my inbox at [vpua@ams.queensu.ca](mailto:vpua@ams.queensu.ca) if you ever need assistance or have a question, and I hope you all enjoy the Fall semester. Good luck with your classes, and I hope to see you soon!





## Platform Pillars

In this document, our goal is to continue focusing on the four pillars found in Team ETC's original platform:

- I. Community Building
- II. Student Engagement and Trust
- III. Transparency and Communication
- IV. Advocacy

Our promises for change are backed on the idea of creating open streams of communication between students, students leaders, clubs, organizations, faculty, external resources, and more, to ensure we are effectively meeting the student voice. This updated Platform represents our commitment to continually updating the student body on our work, and our commitment to transparency within the AMS.

We hope you have the opportunity to read through them all. We are keen to welcome your input, ideas, and potential concerns on our platform. We look forward to hearing more of the student voice this year!



# Pillar I: Community Building

Community is defined as “a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals”. The AMS strives to embody the feeling of ‘fellowship’ among our group and external group members. The heart of our work is to better the Queen's student experience through our services, offices, and commission, and by having a strong connection with our internal team and external group stakeholders is an imperative component of successfully accomplishing our goals.

Over the summer we have worked closely with our internal team and Faculty Society Executives to ensure a clear flow of communication. Internally, each executive meets weekly with their direct reports in addition to hosting ‘caucuses’ within their umbrellas. Spanning all offices, commissions, and services, the Executive plan a ‘Senior Management Caucus’ which invites all members of Senior Management to share operational updates, raise topics of discussion, and investigate areas of growth within the AMS. Externally, this summer the AMS hosted Summer Assembly which involved Faculty societies sharing their relevant updates and raising points of discussion.

As we said in our initial platform release, you, Queen’s undergraduate students are the most important member of the AMS. How you feel, interact, and understand the AMS is tangential to the success of the AMS. As executive we promise to keep our lines of communication clear and open. As a member of the AMS, we encourage that you stay engaged with us through our website, Instagram, services, commissions, and events. The AMS is for students, by students!

## Pillar I: Community Building

### Actionable Items (being continued)

- Executive received strong results from the feedback survey distributed by the Human Resources Office on the Summer semester



- Responding in a timely manner to inquiries and concerns from students
- Promoting good team environments, individually checking in with management staff
- Encouraging cross pollination between offices, commissions, services, and clubs
  - Commission of Environmental Sustainability working closely with VPOPS
  - Revitalization of the Marketing and Communications Office x StudioQ agreement through popular 'AMSasksU' videos
  - Exploring avenues for larger discussion with more student staff through AMS Assembly, Senior Management Meetings, Commission meetings, & Corporate Caucus

## Actionable Items (being added)

- Seek opportunities to collaborate with groups on campus to amplify initiatives that meet a need not yet addressed on campus
- Internal and external 'Bookable' calendar procedure + publicize opportunities for booking
- AMS Commission Sticker campaign to be distributed through the physical retail location of AMS Services
- Distribution of AMS Services pamphlets through the physical retail location of AMS Services
- Continuing 'Friends of the AMS' event as a hub of community and discussion
- Free distribution of the StudioQ Agenda and Yearbook to students



## Pillar II: Student Engagement & Trust

Year over year, student engagement with the AMS has fallen, with the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating this downfall. This lack of engagement can be attributed to many factors from the pandemic itself, to a lack of trust in the AMS, and to new students not knowing what the AMS does and / or stands for. Team ETC knows that the AMS has a lot to do in order to rebuild that trust and engagement with students; we believe that the best way forward is a committed effort to re-connecting with students and meeting them where they are rather than expecting students to come to us.

This past summer, we've been working to increase student engagement not only in the short term, but in the long term as well. When looking at the list of actionable items below, a number of them have already been accomplished, with more on the way as we approach September:

Within the Campus Affairs Commission, we've worked hard to reform event sanctioning in order to make it easier for clubs, campus organisations, and other stakeholders to have their events sanctioned. Commissioner Onuah has worked tirelessly to make the event sanctioning form more accessible to students, and we have taken out requirements in the form that no longer apply due to changing public health guidelines. We've also created a new guide for students to walk them through the process of having their event sanctioned.

We're also happy to welcome the return of in-person club activities, which will be a crucial element of keeping students engaged with the wider Queen's community. Commissioner Hughes has been planning for the return of an in-person Tricolour Open House event, and we're excited to welcome our clubs back to AMS spaces on campus.

We also spoke in the original platform about the need to make the most of the AMS' move from the JDUC to the LaSalle building, and after a long summer of transitioning between the two buildings, we're happy to report that we have certainly taken advantage of the benefits offered by this move. We specifically see these benefits in our services, where the Tricolour Outlet, StudioQ, Peer Support Centre, Queen's



Student Constables, Walkhome Service offices, and the AMS Foodbank have seen incredible engagement from students while in their new homes. With students finding new places and ways to interact with our Services, we're finding that levels of engagement are rapidly returning to pre-pandemic levels, and we're excited to see what the future has in store for our Services.

We still have work to do on a number of our previous platform points: our Secretary of Internal Affairs is hard at work on the policies and procedures of Assembly and Elections to increase engagement there, and our advocacy on synchronous classes and OnQ pages is a year-long project. Engagement and its increase are no easy feat, and Team ETC is committed to continuing our work on this file.

In terms of new projects to increase engagement and trust between students and the AMS, we have many that began over the summer months. The return to an in-person Orientation Week has provided us with the much needed opportunity to connect with first-year students, and our ORT Team has been hard at work preparing to greet the Class of '26. We're excited by the possibilities presented by this kind of event, and the return of a more "normal" O-Week cannot be understated in its importance. Within the Commission of External Affairs, we've been meeting with our student union counterparts from across Ontario and Canada throughout the summer. These meetings have given us new insight into how we can connect better with our students, and what kind of initiatives might benefit the Queen's student body, and Commissioner Gulati has been working to expand these meetings and connections. The Commission of Environmental Sustainability began their first AMS Garden this summer, and through Commissioner Rolph's hard work, we've been able to support our Foodbank with freshly grown vegetables.

Ultimately, we're only now seeing the impact of welcoming students back to campus, and we hope to continue our work to engage our student body. The success of the many events run by our services, the work being done by our Commissions, and the massive success of Orientation Week present us with a great early picture of the year to come. Team ETC is proud of the ways we've re-engaged students both new and returning, but the work must continue to make the most of our return to campus.



## Pillar II: Student Engagement & Trust

### **Actionable Items (being continued)**

- Working with the Secretariat and creating a plan to re-energize AMS Elections and Assembly
- Creating a consistent communications plan for informing students about changes to events sanctioning and club activities
- Pushing the university to ensure better standards for online academics, specifically regarding OnQ pages and synchronous classes
- Ensuring that students can connect with the AMS in accessible ways both online and in-person

### **Actionable Items (being added)**

- Expanding our work done with grants and bursaries, specifically with the Sustainability Action Fund
- Working with external partners on the creation of taskforces / committees to address student facing issues such as Housing
- Continuing to develop the new Social Issues Commissioner positions that have recently been restricted
- Collaborating with Faculty Societies to improve and advocate for Orientation Week



### Pillar III: Transparency & Communication

While we focus a lot on trust throughout our platform and building the trust of the student body, we realize this is easier said than done. To ensure we are staying true to our mandate, we believe building on transparency and communication between the AMS and all bodies is an essential first step.

This past summer we have navigated best ways of accomplishing our goals of transparency and communication, and have accomplished some of the goals we have initially laid out.

Working with the Marketing Office this year we have begun to create more consistent marketing schedules for the AMS, and have made marketing opportunities more easily accessible to commissions, services, and office within the AMS. Furthermore, through working with our Communication Office we are utilizing our monthly newsletter to communicate to all student's information about important aspects of student life.

Working with a group of AMS wide staff we have collaborated on bringing forward the new AMS website which has been a 2 year long process. This will bring forward a more up to date and accessible website which will allow students to more clearly access information. The new website also allows for relatively easy continued adaptation to meet any other goals set forth.

Recently the weekly President's Caucus meetings have been brought back to maintain communication between Faculty Societies on a high-end level. These meetings will help bring forward new ideas and comments in group discussions and allow for more cohesive advocacy to the university and other bodies when necessary.

Throughout this summer, we as the AMS have brought forward many projects which we are proud of. Example of these include the Orientation Week Mystery Concert, the new PEACH Market, the Lettuce Love Garden, and more. Collaborating with internal and external media outlets we have been keen on promoting these projects publicly to communicate better with students what we aim to accomplish at the AMS.



For the rest of the year, we as the Executive have begun to hear specifics on what students are seeking in terms of Transparency and Communication and we are committed to ensuring we complete these goals. Because of this we have added actionable items to our platform to ensure we are meeting the need of students. We are dedicated to continuing to build positive communication streams, and are continuously looking to improve upon our pillar of Transparency and Communication.

### Pillar III: Transparency & Communication

## **Actionable Items (being continued)**

- Ensure budgets, policies, assembly meeting minutes, and important meetings with faculty are being publicized and made easily accessible for students
- Ensure the Website revamp provides options for more direct lines of communication, such as offering opportunity to book meetings with individuals during office hours
- Increasing communication of AMS commissioners, services, and offices with other faculties.
- Communicate challenges faced when dealing with the University and City of Kingston
- Stand with students when advocating to faculty members, regardless of disagreements

## **Actionable Items (being added)**

- Attempting to make operations more transparent and communicating that with staff and students
  - Sending out communications to staff regarding large decisions or mistakes made





- Make the budget more transparent to students
  - Publicize more information regarding large changes being made to the budget, and potentially making the consolidated budget more accessible to students
- Creating an internal AMS newsletter for the opportunity to keep staff more up to date on AMS operations



## Pillar IV: Advocacy

Advocating for students is no easy task, and Team ETC is up to the challenge. This advocacy takes many forms: from working with students groups and clubs pushing for a more equitable Queen's community, to tackling Sexual Violence Prevention and Response (SVPR), and to promoting student wellness in both the student life and AMS environments, we understand the current failings of our institutions, and are looking for the solutions. We're committed to pushing the University for more resources for students and their initiatives, and we hope to have your support in the fight for a better Queen's University.

Over the past few months, the AMS has been running multi-media campaigns that promote different advocacy issues: from personal pronoun pins for our team, to participating as an organization in Orange Shirt Day, we're proud of the work done by our Marketing and Communications teams, as well as our Services, Offices, and Commissions for their part in these efforts.

We've also understand that advocacy doesn't stop at the doors of the LaSalle building, where the AMS needs to continue it's internal efforts to create a more equitable workplace. It starts with our policies surrounding Human Resources, where we're working with permanent staff to ensure that we have a comprehensive list of policies that ensure AMS employees feel safe and respected in their workplace. We're also continuing to hold HR Caucus meetings, which allows for further internal discussions on best practices and supporting our employees.

We have also newly introduced Console through StudentCare. Console is a program for ALL AMS membership fee paying members, even IF you choose to opt out of the AMS Health and Dental Plan. It provides access to counselling, self-directed therapy, 24/7 crisis support, and other wellness resources on mobile or the web. We believe in the benefits of console as a multi-step platform that allows the individual user to choose what level of support to best meet their needs.

The current student wellness services on Queen's campus have provided the start to addressing good mental health practices on Queen's campus. We understand that more accessible resources are needed to address the needs of students. Access to



proper mental health resource and support will improve the daily lives and outlook on life of Queen's students, and can even help save lives.

Over the past few years, we've seen the amazing work being done by the AMS Social Issues Commission on a number of fronts. From the walkout in support of Western students against sexual violence, to their Social Issues Month, Team ETC believes that more can be done to support our student leaders on their fight for a more equitable Queen's. This means paying for the emotional labour that goes into EDII work, and increasing the autonomy of the SIC itself so that it can more easily speak for students. In this vein, we have been proud to announce earlier last month that changes are coming to the Social Issues Commissioner role. This year, the role will be split between two new portfolios: the Internal portfolio and External portfolio. These two roles would take the place of the current SIC role, along with the two Assistant Manager positions that exist within the SIC (with the possibility of bringing these back later on). With the re-structuring of the Commission's leadership, we are dividing labour more equally between the Commission's leaders, which is crucial to their mental and emotional well-being. Each year we hear that the SIC is in need of more support and more space to delegate tasks, and through this re-structure, we will be more evenly dividing work within the commission, and giving AMS employees more points of contact for their equity-based questions.

Ultimately, our work on the advocacy front represents a long-term vision for a more equitable and open AMS, as well as working to expand this sphere at the university. Team ETC is proud of these first steps we've taken over the summer months, but we are committed to continuing this work throughout the academic year.

## Pillar IV: Advocacy

### **Actionable Items (being continued)**

- Allocate resources to the SVPR Taskforce to enhance service
- Continue conversations around SVPR with students and staff on campus to identify best ways to educate and support students



- Continue conversations around Student Wellness Services to identify what current services benefit students
- Integrate CES initiatives more broadly into the AMS as a whole to promote a more sustainable university
- Creating transparency within the executive
  - Office hours
  - Budget review more accessible for students
  - Newsletter
  - Website (more accessible)
- Hosting an internal HR Caucus
- Holding Consent Awareness Week in September
- Working with external partners on our AMS Healthcare plan regarding the Console (Medical Accessibility) program
- Queers 4 Peers

## Actionable Items (being added)

- Revise demerit (and general) HR policy
- Walkhome Service is planning a Take Back the Night Walk in collaboration with Sexual Assault Centre Kingston in November
- New SIC role, SIC external review
- Indigenizing space (local art) within the AMS Offices
- Review of marketing and comms policies



# Thank you for reading our Summer platform update!

In February, we told you that we put a lot of thought into how we want to best represent students, and we promised to re-invigorate the AMS so that it better represents every member of the student body.

Throughout the summer months, we've worked hard to make that goal a reality, and the work isn't done yet. As we enter the Fall semester, we are committed to accomplishing the goals found above, and updating you in December on our progress once again.

Team ETC is proud of the work done by our AMS team this summer, and we're excited to see what the Fall holds for our organization and the student body. Thank you for your time, and we hope to see you on campus!

