

# Senate Candidate Answer Transcripts

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## Montana Hunter

### **1 - What one experience of yours will prepare you most for Senate?**

I always have problems with people who want \*one\* particular answer as there are generally so many different factors which go into ones personal preparation. If I was forced to choose one I would say it has been my experience as the Student Rep for History in the Faculty of Arts. It is very different working with students and faculty rather than just students as is the case in the AMS and AUS and I believe that my experience working on the faculty of arts has prepared me for the Senate.

### **2 - What current weakness would require the most growth to be optimally effective on Senate?**

I am fairly new to the realm of politics at UBC, I didn't get involved until this past September. I think my lack of long term experience in UBC/student politics is my greatest weakness but one that I am actively working to overcome. A lot of students are intimidated, understandably so I know I was, by student politics particularly if they haven't been engaged in them for a considerable amount of time - I want to demonstrate that its never too late to be involved in an activity you're passionate about.

### **3 - How does work get done on Senate?**

Primarily through information brought too committees, and discussed there. I'm not saying that the Senate meetings themselves are not important, but rather than they are not the primary place where work gets done on Senate.

### **4 - What are the two most critical resolutions passed in the past year on Senate and why?**

First off the later mentioned honorary degrees for interned Japanese students during WWII is without a doubt one of the critical motions. Beyond that I think that the Senate's continued work on developing course evaluations has made a significant contribution to student learning.

### **5 - What was the most critical discussion in the past year on Senate and why?**

I believe that the most critical discussion in this past year was the motion for honorary degrees for Japanese students interned through no fault of their own during the Second World War. UBC took an important step towards making peace with both UBC and Canada's past, and dealing with their reception in the future.

### **6 - How do the commitments, goals and actions in UBC's strategic plan relate to your campaign goals, and how will you leverage them on Senate?**

My goals relate quite closely with those of the UBC strategic plan. I first of all want to focus on the creation of exciting first year programs - UBC does have some innovative first year programs but I

believe that we're currently only scratching the surface with what we have. More first year programs will build on two aspects of the student learning plan - enhancing the learning experience and helping to provide students with additional enriched educational experiences.

The greater use and improvement of broad based admissions (BBA) will help to create a more well rounded and involved student population by attempting to recruit students who are developed in more ways than grades alone. This will benefit the University further down the line by recruiting students actively interested in enriched learning and a culture of involvement, two actions of the strategic plan. The University is going in the right direction with BBA but I think it still requires more student feedback and involvement to perfect the program.

Finally, I think the goal of having exams dates released at registration will serve to create a healthier student experience, improving the overall quality of our education

**7 - Allies are critical to achieving any initiative on a governing body of UBC. Which individuals on Senate will you look to support your initiatives, and to what end? Why those people?**

I think it hardly needs saying that first off I hope the student senators will work quite closely together. Beyond this I want to work with the Dean of Arts, Gage Averill as I both highly respect the strategic arts plan he has made in his time at UBC and have worked with him in the faculty of arts. Averill has in the past expressed interest in both making broad based admissions more effective and promoting the creation of exciting new courses. I personally at this moment have little personal connection to most of those who sit on Senate, however, I plan on correcting that deficiency as soon as possible.

8 - I know there are only seven questions but I thought it would be really important to add this, student appreciation of what goes on in Senate is quite low, one of the goals I am setting for my self - whether I am elected or not - is to raise student appreciation, understanding and general awareness of the Senate.

## Justin Yang

### **1 - What one experience of yours will prepare you most for Senate?**

1. Having served on Senate for the past two years. Understanding how it works and ushering a new triennium were both highlights of my past two terms.

### **2 - What current weakness would require the most growth to be optimally effective on Senate?**

2. My greatest weakness is probably a tolerance for the status quo in the way in which Senate is currently run. After 2 years of work, however, it's been frustrating to see things move at a glacial pace through Senate and enough is enough. I'm ready to tackle Senate and shake things up.

### **3 - How does work get done on Senate?**

3. Work is rarely done upon the floor of Senate proper; most work is accomplished through committees and informal conversations with other Senators.

### **4 - What are the two most critical resolutions passed in the past year on Senate and why?**

4. Resolutions affirming Sean Heisler's role as the Vice-Chair of Senate (the first student to chair a full Senate meeting) and the approval of honorary degrees for interned Japanese-Canadian students. Both are critical successes for students, both past and present, and will establish the tone for senate for the remainder of the triennium.

### **5 - What was the most critical discussion in the past year on Senate and why?**

5. It hasn't occurred yet, actually, but forthcoming discussions slated for the near future regarding the future of the College for Interdisciplinary Studies (CfIS) will be critical to the future of the University, its academic mission and approach to undergraduate education. Transitioning former CfIS units into Faculties will required a sustained and thoughtful approach to ensure that all stakeholders benefit from this change.

### **6 - How do the commitments, goals and actions in UBC's strategic plan relate to your campaign goals, and how will you leverage them on Senate?**

6. Through my work for the past few years on Senate, AMS Tutoring, and Go Global, I am deeply attuned to the student learning pillar of *Place and Promise*; I am keenly interested in holistic approaches to delivering outstanding, world-class education. I've worked at all levels of enhancing student learning, from working on enabling safe student travel abroad to working on diversifying student learning support modalities.

### **7 - Allies are critical to achieving any initiative on a governing body of UBC. Which individuals on Senate will you look to support your initiatives, and to what end? Why those people?**

7. The Senate Secretariat, of course, will be an invaluable ally in seeking to reform the ways in which Senate is currently run and to expedite processes therein. Other Senators with whom I

have worked closely include: Associate Dean Harrison, and Senators Loewen and Windsor-Liscombe. I've had a chance to meet with all three in informal settings and understand that they are truly committed to working impactfully with student senators. Of course, convocation senators such as Shannon Sterling, Erin Biddlecombe, and Darran Fernandez, will be invaluable allies -- allies with whom I already have collegial relationships and share many views.

## **Kiran Mahal**

### **1 - What one experience of yours will prepare you most for Senate?**

Being the President of the Science Undergraduate society has exposed me to many valuable learning experience and unique situations many of which enabled me to interact directly with UBC Faculty and Administration. My time as SUS President has allowed me to learn more about how governance at the University works and has made me comfortable in my ability to represent the interests of students and think critically about new ideas presented to me.

Being SUS President has also enabled me to interact directly with students and gain access to student opinions and feelings surrounding a variety of issues. This September SUS did its first Back to School survey which gave me a great insight into the many academic issues that students face as well as how much students at large don't know about where to go for resources and who talk to if they have issues relating to academics. My combination of experience working with students and faculty will enable me to excel as a representative for students on Senate.

### **2 - What current weakness would require the most growth to be optimally effective on Senate?**

I think the biggest weakness would be understanding Senate, the way that it works and how to effectively get things done. This is something I feel all new student Senators will face but I am confident in the ability of past student Senators to mentor and advise the new Student Senate Caucus and I am prepared to ask the right questions and talk to as many experienced Senators that I can to learn about Senate.

### **3 - How does work get done on Senate?**

As with most other governing bodies and councils- committees are the working arm of Senate. This is where the discussions take place and this is where student's voices and opinions need to be heard. As a student senator, I will make it my top priority to attend all committee meetings prepared and ready to contribute actively to discussions. In addition to committee work, informal meetings and interactions with other senators will be essential in gaining support for new issues before they are referred to committee.

For students, the major way work can get done on Senate is through a cohesive and coordinated student senate caucus that will work together to accomplish a clear subset of goals.

### **4 - What are the two most critical resolutions passed in the past year on Senate and why?**

The two most critical resolutions passed in the past year on Senate were

- 1) The awarding of Honorary Degrees to interned Japanese Canadians for a few reasons. Firstly it was an important decision by the University making an acknowledgment to the families impacted. The decision was one which can be supported by all students and stakeholders at the University and really was the right thing to do. On the other hand, it showed a great disconnect and lack of cohesion between bodies that should be working together to represent students.

AMS Council and the Student Senate Caucus were not on the same page with the status of the issues, and it does students no favours to have these bodies not act in collaboration. It showed us that it really is time for all student bodies to start working together and having a great level of mutual trust and communication because at the end of the day we are all working to represent students.

- 2) The election of a student senator to the position of Vice Chair; this was a resolution that I personally saw a lot of buzz among students who are in tuned to campus life. This shows the value that Senate places on the opinion of students and reaffirms that a student senators can make a difference in Senate as long as they are coordinate, consistent and strong in their approaches. It is important for incoming senators to leverage this win for students and use it to not only show Senate the impact that students can make, but also to show students at large that we are the ones who can advocate for their interests and will hopefully make students feel that senators are more approachable and accessible.

#### **5 - What was the most critical discussion in the past year on Senate and why?**

One of the important discussions had in Senate this year was relating to a central exam database. This is was an important starting point to further discussions that need to be had on all levels relating to equal access to exam prep resources for students. It was a critical introduction for non student senators to see why this is an issue that students are pushing for and the impact that unequal access has on the stress level and mental health of students at large.

#### **6 - How do the commitments, goals and actions in UBC's strategic plan relate to your campaign goals, and how will you leverage them on Senate?**

One of my major campaign goals for Senate is to work towards starting a dialogue aimed at establishing academic policies surrounding Mental Health and Wellness of students. Within Place and Promise, in Undergraduate Learning we can find that one of the goals is to “support student well-being, personal development, and positive affiliation with UBC through outstanding campus life programs and service excellence.” Groups such as the Mental Health Network have approached Senate to begin these discussions in the past however it is essential to have a consistent and connected voice keeping the dialogue going. Student Health Services recently introduced a plan to target systemic issues in Mental Health and Wellness. This was a well received plan and I feel that students are in a place to leverage the creation of such an essential document to further the discussion about mental health and wellness relating to academic policy.

#### **7 - Allies are critical to achieving any initiative on a governing body of UBC. Which individuals on Senate will you look to support your initiatives, and to what end? Why those people?**

There are a number of individuals I have worked closely with in my role as SUS President and with AMS Connect. My interactions with these individuals, specifically those who work in the Deans Office in the Faculty of Science have given me great insights into the value of having strong voices on the side of students. There are many senators and UBC Admin members who are willing to listen to students and

their concerns; it is up to us to send forth strong voices who can clearly articulate our messages. I have personally had a chance to interact with them and am comfortable approaching them to express concerns and ask questions.

In addition to this, the Student Senate Caucus itself has the immense power of collaboration. I know that I will not be able to sit on all committees of Senate; however, having other student senators on those committees bringing forth similar concerns will go a long way in pushing forth initiatives that are important to students.

## **Barnabas Caro**

1. Being an Residence Advisor in Vanier last year really gave me insight into the academic difficulties faced by a wide variety of students. I want to try and alleviate these stresses.

2. I think it is crucial to create dialog between student senators and other longer sitting senators. We need to cultivate trust and understanding between different academic interest group at this school so that they will not approach our concerns in a confrontational manor.

3. I believe that the Senate is such a slow moving body that the best way of going about initiating change is to develop personal trust and conversation between students and other UBC academic leaders.