**Santa Ono:** I'm Santa Ono, the President and Vice-Chancellor of UBC. On this season of the Blue and Goldcast, I'll be speaking with the people who are helping to shape UBCs next century. Even in the midst of COVID-19, UBCs governing institutions keep providing guidance and accountability to students, faculty, and staff. One of those institutions is the Senate. For those who don't know, both UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan have their own independent Senate. These Senate oversee academic matters. They make decisions about things like program and degree requirements, the academic calendar, course syllabi, and academic policy.

The UBC Senates are a source of meaningful power yet many students, staff, and faculty don't know much about them. Today, Dr. Jan Cioe, Dr. Jannick Eikenaar are here to talk about how these Senates work and why they matter. Both Jan and Jannick are instrumental members of the UBC Okanagan Senate. Jannick teaches Communication in the School of Engineering at the UBC Okanagan Campus. He's a two-term member of the Okanagan Senate, where he chairs the nominating committee. During the Senate's recent triennial or three-year review, Jannick chaired the committee that presented the review recommendations to the Okanagan Senate.

Jan teaches Psychology at the UBC Okanagan Campus. He's a long-standing member of the Okanagan Senate, chair of the Academic Policy Committee, and chair of the Agenda Committee. Jan has been a member of the Senate both as a representative of his faculty and as a member at large since its very inception, except for one three-year period. He takes a student-focused approach in his role as a faculty member. Thanks both Jan and Jannick for being on the show. How did you both get involved in the UBC Okanagan senate?

**Jan Cioe:** I've actually been involved in the senate of the Okanagan University College. I've been involved in Senate's primarily because of my commitment to the curriculum. It's really important, from my perspective, that the curriculum be developed by academics with great input from students, and the structure of senate here certainly provides that and I think it's been something that's been really fulfilling for me because I like to have an environment that I can have some influence. I certainly think I've been able to do that.

**Jannick Eikenaar:** I have a similar path. My interest was also in curriculum, slightly different. I did my graduate work at UBC and so I started becoming involved in various committees and task forces. A member of Senate at the time actually suggested to me that I would be very interested in joining and specifically the curriculum committee. I put my name forward, and I was fortunate to be elected and placed on the curriculum committee, and it was a great fit. It was an excellent opportunity, and I really appreciated that mentor pushing me a little to get involved

**Santa:** Let's say I'm very, very grateful that you're both serving on senate and the Okanagan Senate function's very smoothly and does tremendous work and so I'm really grateful for your roles in the Okanagan Senate. I wanted to ask the academic governance of the University of British Columbia is vested in two senates and just saying it's the Okanagan Senate really signifies that. What are some examples of how these two Senates oversee academic matters? Does it always function in a seamless manner or is there some awkwardness in having two senates?

**Jan:** There were some awkwardness having two senates because initially when we were developed as part of UBC, a principle was that everything that UBC Senate had as policy would automatically apply to us. It only made sense because we were going to start from the ground. Over the course of time, the Senate here has actually made some decisions about different kinds of processes, different kinds of policies. In a number of ways that's probably easier because we're smaller and we were in a kind of let's do things in a new way. We would look at the senate policy, some of which were in the 1990s and even earlier than that, and we'd say, "Why are you doing it that way?"

We made changes. As I understand it, some of the changes we made actually helped the Vancouver Senate to re-examine what they were doing. I think that there's a fundamental synergy between the two Senates. I've had contact with the chairs of the corresponding committee ever since I started being Chair of the Academic Policy Committee and that's worked really, really well. I think we're continuing that model even right now.

**Jannick:** Again, I'd agree, I think that it's particularly interesting to me to be involved in a system institution that has distinct Senates that is two campuses that have separate academic governance. While we inherited some very useful structures and policies and practices, I think that as the Okanagan Campus specifically has grown, and has identified and tried to meet unique challenges where we are, I think that the Senate has really taken an active role in guiding that. To me, it's fascinating. There's some differences, some divergences and yet, as Jan says, we'll hold joint meetings of our respective committees and will have very, very similar approaches. Not necessarily the same perspectives, but very similar approaches to how we identify what needs to be done, how we move forward, how do we develop really effective practices and protocols.

**Santa:** I think it was a very good decision at the inception and the creation of the Okanagan Campus for there to be two different Senates. There are two different institutions, which are part of a larger institution but I think that it's very important, I think, for each campus to have its own identity to be shaped by the faculties input from each of those different campuses. I actually think it was the right decision. Now the Senate is composed of faculty, administration and students. Can you discuss how collegial governance or shared governance works among those three groups in the Okanagan Senate, for example?

**Jan:** The structure of the Senates here is by legislation as you know in terms of the composition. There was a conscious decision in the construction of Senates to create a balance amongst elements. The faculty I have almost a majority, I believe they actually do have a majority in the numbers. In addition, there is the administration, and then there are students. The reality is that administrators are in fact, academics first and foremost and many of them act very much in that context.

Every time we add another administrator to senate for a variety of reasons, there's a requirement that we offset that by also adding faculty members so that we don't create an imbalance. I think what that expresses is a fundamental belief that the people on the ground, students, faculty, and administrators should have real input. You've embraced that in the context of our university just in terms of the composition and we appreciate that.

**Santa:** Well, I agree that having multiple and diverse voices makes for better decisions, and it's really at the heart of what a university ought to be. Jannick.

**Jannick:** I completely agree. This point came up in a recent senate discussion, actually and it was a question about fundamentally, what is the Senate and what is the space in which it operates? There was some great discussion and I think we landed on this idea that the Senate is a discursive space. It's a place where students, staff, faculty, administrators come to share their ideas, to engage critically and to think through what really is best for the institution and the people involved. We've been very fortunate, I think, in the Okanagan, to have some very vocal students senators as well as those very vocal faculty members. I'm really confident that the Senate does an excellent job of bringing diverse perspectives into that space. Now, it's not a perfect body. We're always going to imperfectly represent the campus, but I think too, that we're very fortunate to serve with people who take their responsibilities very seriously. They do the work, they do their homework so that what they're saying in that space is well informed. I really appreciate Senate for that.

**Santa:** I agree with all of that. I should say, my sense has been, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, but my impression has been that the administration is relatively quiet in the discussions. I think that's a really good thing because I think that administrators, their responsibility, is to try to incorporate the wishes of the community into policies and programs and to bring it to the Senate. The Senate, that's a venue where there can be questions that are asked that are sometimes difficult, there can be push back. I think it's appropriate for administrators to take a back seat at Senate and to truly listen to those questions and to answer those questions and to incorporate that input into what ultimately is approved by the Senate. I think it works the way it ought to. Now the UBC Senate's recently finished triennial reviews of operations and practices. We've all agreed that Senate's not perfect, nothing is perfect in real life. What's your view on what came out of the reviews?

**Jannick:** It's an interesting question. Senate requires that every three years, it basically undergoes an internal review. One of the standing committees is responsible for reviewing the terms of reference and the function of all the other standing committees and also senate as a whole. I chaired that nominating committee during the previous triennium. Overall, I think we concluded that the standing committees and the way they function, it's very effective. Governance was productive, the discussions were productive.

While we identified some specific areas or issues that would be or should be addressed, I don't think there were many substantive recommendations regarding changes to committees or membership or the structure of Senate and the way it works. To me that was a positive conclusion because it demonstrated that I think people have faith in the Senate, they trust its operation and as Jan alluded to earlier, really, that Senate is working the way it's supposed to. It's considering changes and challenges. It's establishing policies and then those policies are being implemented by deans and heads of units and different administrators, as well as of course, faculty. Now, Jan can bring I guess, a longer or more informed perspective on those kinds of reviews. I'd be interested in hearing what he has to say given that he has experienced some more significant changes that came out of those reviews in the past.

**Jan:** I think we've done a couple of things over the course of the last couple of trienniums that's actually made it more representative in a variety of ways. One of the issues that was dealt with at Senate was the idea of how long should a chair be the chair of a committee? You probably know this even in the context of the way UBC operates, you can be a dean for 10 years and that's it because the government has basically said that's it for you. The logic behind that is not that the person is somehow going to no longer be functional but there's a concern that it becomes static and becomes just the same old, same old.

What we've also developed in the context, and Jannick was being kind in terms of saying that there were no major issues. There's a fundamental major issue that we still are struggling with that we have no solution for it and that's representativeness. Part of what we're doing now, I think I hope is we're trying to invite people and you were really, really good in giving us this time to do this, invite people to find a voice in Senate by putting their name forward by being willing to take on that responsibility.

**Santa:** Well, I just want to chime in and say that as chair of the Senates and as president of university, I greatly appreciate the time and significant amount of time the senators put in to reviewing quite a bit of documentation on a regular basis. It's so vital to what we do as an institution what we stand for. I want to join in with you to say that I hope that other faculty members and students will seriously consider standing for election. We need good people. It's really at the heart of what we do as an institution. I couldn't agree more and I hope that one of the outcomes of this podcast is that people will hear about how vital the work is and what kinds of things happen at Senate and we'll really consider being part of it and standing for election.

**Jan:** As I understand it, Santa, you've come from a variety of institutions that have had different forms of Senate. Maybe you could share your personal experiences as a faculty member in those contexts.

**Santa:** Yes, certainly. Thanks for that question. I was a faculty member first at Johns Hopkins University, and after that at Harvard University, and I was a full professor at University College London in England. I can tell you that what's unique about the UBC Senate is that it has real power, decisions are made. In many of these other institutions, there's a Senate or often it's just the faculty senate without students. The fact that there are students that are a part of both Senates I think is a very positive thing because they are involved in the teaching and the research and they're impacted by the policies.

It's a very positive thing that there are student senators. I think that the fact that the Senates have real power, there's a bicameral structure to governance at this institution that holds the administration accountable, that there's really three branches of government and that's a good thing. Checks and balances at an institution are very positive thing because everyone occasionally makes bad decisions or has ideas that are not in the best interest of the institution. It's really good that power is split up between, say, the executive branch and the administration and the Senate and the Board of Governors.

In other senate models, for example, in the US where that doesn't happen, mistakes are made. To answer your question, I think UBC has a right and it's an opportunity, and it's a privilege to serve on Senate. For me as the chair, it's magical to watch and listen to the conversations among Senate. I've seen sometimes a question is debated sometimes for 15, 20 minutes and it can be frustrating. That process is magical, that back and forth, listening to the pros and cons, I think that structure ensures that things are thought through in the fulsome way that the university deserves.

**Jan:** I completely agree

**Santa:** I want to ask you, so senate elections happens every three years, and they're not enough Senate seats for everyone to be involved. What can a faculty member or a student do in those in-between years, so that they can come up to speed with what's happening at the senate and how can they keep abreast of the important decisions that are being made at senate while they're waiting to hopefully be elected to Senate?

**Jannick:** If you're a student, I think you have an excellent opportunity to find out what's happening with Senate and find ways for your voice to be heard because the student senators organized themselves into a caucus. They're very, very well-organized. They do an excellent job of soliciting perspectives and opinions from their colleagues who are not on Senate, and then bringing those forward. I think if you're a student, you're both well-represented but you also have an excellent opportunity to make sure that your voice is heard because you can reach out to the members of that caucus.

Senate membership, of course, is public. All you have to do is Google it or use your favorite search engine, you'll find it. I think we have a great example too, of how faculty who are not serving in Senate can get involved and learn. We don't have to look far back. We can look at the delay of the term two start date. Certainly, when we were considering this, I heard from colleagues in a variety of academic units who wanted to share their perspectives on this. I think if you're a faculty member on the campus, find out who you can talk to. Find out who your senate representative is within your unit or find a joint faculty Senator that you're comfortable talking to, and share your opinions that way. You'll also then hear, what Senate is focusing on. What are the immediate topics of concerns or subjects that are really coming up for discussion? You'll be able to then, of course, shape some of that discourse as it moves forward.

**Santa:** The last thing I want to ask is, as we look forward to the remainder of this Senate, and upcoming Senates for each of you, is there something that you're looking forward to or maybe the university should be looking forward to coming out of the Senate in the next couple of years or so? In your crystal ball of what the Senate will wrestle with, what do you think that will be?

**Jan:** I think you have personally set an agenda which senate is embracing and that's the idea of acknowledging and actually acting on a premise of inclusivity and a recognition that diversity is not just something we have to live with. It's something which is incredibly valuable. We want to follow that through the strategic plan with respect to indigenous issues that fell out of the commission I think it's going to have a variety of real impact at Senate because Senate is the vehicle through which many of those suggestions are going to be made, and we're going to have discussions and debates.

Hopefully, we're going to be able to do the best thing for it because we have a historical wrong we need to fix. I think generally speaking, all the senators, recognize that. We want to move this forward, and in addition, the strategic plan that you were partly responsible for developing has a variety of other key elements that have to be included. One of which may very well be a greater connection between the two campuses with respect to what's best for the students. Because right now we operate different programs and those different programs each have different requirements, but there may be possibilities for synergies.

Of course, for example, in Vancouver typically only gets 10 people, 15 people, and maybe there are 5 people here who might want to do that course. It's not that much of an extra load on the faculty member, and it could be an enrichment element, especially in that direction, because they're more faculty. Similarly, we have some specialties here that may also be of interest to Vancouver students who could tap into what we're doing, that sharing between the campuses is actually really important.

I'll give you a historical perspective on this, the campus at this Okanagan did not develop from the ground up, it developed from the top down. I think it's taken a while for the two faculties in the broad sense to come and recognize that there are in fact similarities. There are in fact equal elements in terms of productivity, equal elements in terms of creativity and that element takes time.

Over the course of the 15 years of this campus, I think that there's been a greater acceptance of the fact that both campuses are integral to the overall integrity of the University of British Columbia because it is a single university which has given this campus a huge boost in our ability to attract high-quality individuals, both as students, but also as faculty members. While I was ahead, the fact that I could put UBC down as the place you were coming to made one heck of a big difference before when when we were dealing with the precursor institution.

**Santa:** Jannik?

**Jannik:** For me, I think over the next few years, we're really going to deal with issues of growth and there I'm thinking of the size of the campus. The physical constraints, what's an ideal population for the Okanagan campus. I think the Senate is going to have to grapple with a lot of the implications and issues of dealing with that growth and trying to determine that. What is an optimal function for our campus? I think the other really challenging area for the Senate will be shaping our engagement with local communities.

Our recent expansion into really the heart of Colona is a huge step forward. I think that over the next couple of years, we'll start to see the effects of that and the impact of that as well, and whether it's the academic building and resource committee, the policy committee, curriculum committee, all of these committee standing committees of Senate are going to play significant roles in shaping that growth.

**Santa:** Thanks to both of you for your time today. This has been a really wonderful conversation, especially the last responses that really, I think, highlight things I'd like to see happen. The fact that they have to be discussed at Senate really underscores the importance of Senate to the functioning of the university. Thank you so much to both of you for being part--

**Jan:** I want to thank you also because the truth of the matter is your leadership has been significant in the context of certainly the elements that I've alluded to. On behalf of me as a Senator, a longstanding Senator, I want to thank you personally, for your contributions to this campus.

**Jannik:** I'll add my thanks because for me I really value transparency in governance. I think that you've shown that you're committed to that, that you're committed to everyone at UBC being well-informed and aware of what the institution is trying to do and where it's trying to go.

**Santa:** Well, thanks to both of you once again.

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Jannik Eikenaar teaches Communication in the School of Engineering at the UBC Okanagan campus. He is a two-term member of the Okanagan Senate, where he chairs the nominating committee. Jan Cioe teaches psychology at the UBC Okanagan campus. He's a long-standing member of the Okanagan Senate, chair of the academic policy committee, and chair of the agenda committee. That does it for this month's episode, you can find links to our guest's work as well as previous additions of the show at blueandgoldcast.com. You can also find us on your favorite podcast app like iTunes or Stitcher.

Our email is blueandgoldcast@ubc.ca. You can tweet at me at @UBCprez. That's prez with Z. I'm Santa Ono. Thank you for listening. [music]

**Jingle:** You have been listening **[inaudible 00:26:05]**

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