



## Minutes of the USASA Board Meeting

Tuesday 19 February 2019

6.00pm Hawke Building J6-10

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### PRESENT

Board:	Grace Dixon	President & Meeting Chair
	Nida Baig	Post Graduate Representative
	Bridget Barletta	City West Campus Representative
	Noah Beckmann	Mawson Lakes Campus Representative
	Laurena Byers	Mount Gambier Campus Representative
	Arunika Dutta	Magill Campus Co-Representative
	Ned Feary	City West Undergraduate Representative
	Julie Ma	City East Campus Co-Representative
	Thanusshan Packiyarajah	Mawson Lakes Undergraduate Representative
	Harsh Rana	International Students Representative (by telephone)
	Daniel Randell	USASA CEO
	Wenona Reddaway-Worth	Whyalla Campus Student Representative
	Kate Riggall	Magill Campus Co-Representative
In attendance:	Nick Anderson	Finance Advisor
	Richard Irons	Director Student and Academic Services
	Bridget Laffy	Student Representative Support Officer
	Franco Parrella	Student Ombud (for part of the meeting)
	Arthur Siow	Legal Advisor
	Sandy Davis	Minute Taker
<b>ABSENT</b>	Puthearothsopor Tan	City East Campus Co-Representative

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*The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 6.00 pm.*

### 1. MEETING OPENING

#### 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Board of USASA respects the Kaurna and Barngarla Peoples' spiritual relationship with their country and that today we meet on the land of the Kaurna people and recognise the Kaurna people as the custodians of the land where we meet. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land and acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to these people living today.

#### 1.2 Introductions – All attendees briefly introduced themselves.

### 1.3 Apologies/Leave Requests

Puthearothsopor Tan was absent, no apology or leave request having been received.

### 1.3 Conflicts of Interest – None declared.

### 1.4 Previous Minutes

#### 1.4.1 Confirmation

Motion: That the minutes of the Board Meeting of 4 December 2018 be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

## 2. GUEST SPEAKER – FRANCO PARRELLA, STUDENT OMBUD

Franco introduced himself and the role of Student Ombud (abbreviated to avoid conflict with the state government Ombudsman), which has been instituted in 2002. UniSA is the only university in South Australia to have one, although there are about 12 nationally.

The Ombud's role is as the last port of call for students to raise complaints or concerns within the university, after all other avenues have been pursued. He encourages students to go first to USASA or other student advocates. Although paid by the university, the Ombud does not take sides and cannot overturn a decision of the university; but can make an assessment and suggest change. The role is to advocate for fairness on all sides, checking that policies and procedures have been followed. The role is responsive to complaints and proactive to address areas for improvement.

The Ombud can address issues relating to academic matters, fees and finance, failure to withdraw in time, placements, work integrated learning and practicums. Last year investigations and recommendations included the Assessment Policy Procedures Manual (APPM) in terms of timelines and formal reviews within schools, sexual assault guidelines and the operation of the My Enrolment Portal.

There are generally three main outcomes from investigations: either the university is found to have done nothing wrong; there is a conciliated outcome, or the student loses touch or goes elsewhere.

Franco tries to visit regional campuses at least once a year, but so far has not had many dealings with on-line students. The Ombud issues an annual report, which this year will be published after the May Council Meeting.

In terms of sexual assault, complaints against staff can only be investigated by the People Talent & Culture Unit (human resources). The Ombud's only role would be to check that the university has investigated complaints properly.

The university's complaint management system is an issue, as it is hard to monitor, given the many departments and avenues for redress. Richard Irons noted that there is to be a full review of the APPM this year, in which he wants to improve embedding of student voice. A centralised complaint process is also being considered.

There was some discussion about placement procedures, requirements and priorities, which can be discussed further, outside the meeting.

*F Parrella left the meeting at 6.31 pm.*

### **3. MATTERS FOR DECISION**

#### **3.1 Committee Appointments**

##### **3.1.1 Convenors**

Convenors were elected, with a ballot taken where there was more than one nomination for a position. Bridget Laffy counted votes, with Arthur Siow acting as scrutineer.

Clubs Committee Convenor – Noah Beckman was appointed unopposed.

Finance Committee Convenor – Ned Feary & Nida Baig nominated. Nida Baig was duly elected.

Welfare Committee Convenor – Arunika Dutta was appointed unopposed.

Diversity, Equity & Access Committee Convenor – Kate Riggall was appointed unopposed.

Education Committee Convenor – Harsh Rana and Thanusshan Packiyarajah nominated. Harsh Rana was duly elected.

Governance Committee Convenor – Ned Feary and Bridget Barletta nominated. Bridget Barletta was duly appointed.

##### **3.1.2 Committee Members** – Additional committee members were appointed as follows.

Clubs Committee – Ned Feary and Thanusshan Packiyarajah

Finance Committee – Julie Ma, Ned Feary and Harsh Rana

Welfare Committee – Julie Ma, Kate Riggall

Diversity, Equity & Access Committee – Laurena Byers and Harsh Rana

Education Committee – Thanussh Packiyarajah and Ned Feary

Governance Committee – Ned Feary, Noah Beckman, Thanussh Packiyarajah and Nida Baig.

##### **3.1.3 Secretaries** – It was agreed that these would be appointed by the individual Committees.

#### **3.2 Vice President Appointment**

Nida Baig nominated for the position of Vice President, and there being no further nominations, was duly appointed.

#### **3.3 Academic Board Appointments**

Nominations for the five Academic Board positions had been called for and received via Facebook from Noah Beckman, Harsh Rana, Bridget Barletta, Nida Baig and Grace Dixon. There being five nominees for the five positions, Noah Beckman, Harsh Rana, Bridget Barletta, Nida Baig and Grace Dixon were duly appointed as the USASA representatives on the Academic Board.

### 3.4 Aboriginal Student Representative By-Election

Bridget Laffy spoke to the paper.

Motion: That the Board appoint Debra Arnold as Returning Officer for the 2019 Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander Student Representative By-Election.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

Motion: That the Board appoint Bridget Laffy as Assistant Returning Officer for the 2019 Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander Student Representative By-Election.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

Motion: That the Board approve the timeline set out in the Board paper.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

### 3.5 USASA Comment on Government Response to Contract Cheating

Kate Riggall introduced this item, her paper being taken as read. Discussion ensued, including whether the purchase, as well as the sale of contract cheating documents, should be a criminal offence. There were no strong views on this. The views of Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), and the Council of International Student Associations (CISA) were unknown. Additional points made were that

- although TEQSA has recognised the reasons students engage in contract cheating, it has not addressed how these can be resolved;
- language and cultural barriers can separately or in combination impede understanding of the principle of academic integrity;
- the disparity between the English language skills required for university entry and for graduation have also been recognised by TEQSA, without addressing how this can be resolved; and
- the above points represent an opportunity for TEQSA to recommend that universities provide language support, particularly for fee paying students, to help them feel supported rather than exploited.

Motion: That the Board endorse the statement on pp 14 and 15 of the Board papers as representative of the view of the USASA, including amendments to be made by Daniel Randell in line with the four dot points above; that it be submitted on behalf of USASA to the Higher Education office of the federal government; and that the National Union of Students (NUS), CAPA and CISA also be invited to endorse it.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

## 4. MATTERS FOR NOTING

### 4.1 President's Report

Grade Dixon's paper was taken as read. The meeting noted that it is assumed that all Board members have read the papers prior to the meeting.

The October NUS conference report and the February Summit report will be included in next month's papers.

#### 4.2 CEO's Report – taken as read.

The first sexual assault and harassment policy steering group meeting focussed on policy and investigation, without addressing the expected formation of a safer communities working group. Kate Riggall, Daniel Randell and Grace Dixon subsequently met with the new Pro Vice Chancellor to advance this recommendation. More information will be circulated with the next meeting papers.

DR

#### 4.3 Finance Report – noted.

Nick Anderson explained that the \$3m invested with Perpetual is UniSA's "insurance policy" for USASA, but that it is also a tool for the Finance Committee and Board to learn about risk and return.

Daniel Randell explained that the income variance to budget reflects a timing difference. Each month's budgeted income is one-twelfth of the annual income budget, but as revenue is principally generated by advertising and ticket sales, its receipt does not necessarily coincide with the monthly budget figures.

#### 4.4 Board Members' Reports

Ned Feary had not submitted a report, his appointment having only been formalised on 15 February. The reports of all other Board members were taken as read.

#### 4.5 Committee Meeting Minutes – None for this meeting.

#### 4.6 Strategic Planning 2019

The *Board Retreat Strategic Planning 2019* paper was noted.

#### 4.7 Board Charter 2019

Grace Dixon summarised the purpose and key values of the charter. Arthur Siow queried the lateness provisions, in particular the legality of precluding latecomers from voting, and suggested that the constitutional consequences for lateness and non-attendance were sufficient.

It was agreed to amend the charter for signing at the next meeting, by removing "Member can attend but not vote" from the accountability section, and providing that "10 minutes late from the actual start time of a meeting will be treated as a non-attendance" (rather than 15 minutes) for the purposes of the relevant provision of the Constitution.

GD

Puthearothsopor Tan's absence from today's meeting was noted, and that retrospective leave may be granted.

#### 4.8 2018/19 SSAF Report (Office of Pro Vice Chancellor: Student Engagement & Equity)

Concern was expressed that these documents have been broadly circulated despite containing significant bias (as acknowledged by the Pro Vice Chancellor and Director of the Student Engagement Unit) and do not truly represent the operation of the USASA. It was also felt that the survey could have been promoted more on regional campuses.

It was agreed to invite Prof Carol Grech, the report's author, to attend a USASA meeting to discuss these issues.

DR

A further point was noted, being USASA's present inability to communicate with all students, as it is only issued with email addresses for 20,000 of the 36,000 students.

## **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Foodbank**

Kate Riggall proposed that USASA, through the Welfare Committee, be affiliated with Foodbank, as a means of addressing student financial poverty. There is an annual membership fee of \$55, but no other funding is requested at this point. Arthur Siow recommended, as standard procedure, that the Board consider the legal, financial and reputational risks. The Flinders University Student Association (FUSA) has previously been affiliated without difficulty.

Motion: That the Welfare Committee be authorised to apply for USASA to become affiliated with Foodbank.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

## **6. MEETING CLOSE**

**6.1 Next meeting** – 19 March 2019 at 6.00 pm at JS6-13.

### **6.2 Meeting Close**

The Chair thanked all participants for their contributions and the meeting closed at 7.39 pm.