



# Minutes of the USASA Board Meeting

Tuesday 17 March 2020

Online via Zoom

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## PRESENT

Board:	Noah Beckmann Lauren Baum Jenny Chen Ned Feary Melinda Ho Rhys Peden Tim Pham Daniel Randell Lekshmi Shylaja Joshua Steele Emily Williams Arthur Siow Nick Anderson	President & Meeting Chair Mount Gambier Campus Representative City East Undergraduate Representative City West Undergraduate Representative International Student Representative Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Student Representative City East Campus Representative USASA CEO Post Graduate Representative Mawson Lakes Campus Undergraduate Representative Magill Campus Representative Legal Advisor Finance Advisor
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In attendance:	Bridget Laffy Richard Irons Carol Grech	Student Representative Support Officer Director: Student and Academic Services Pro-Vice Chancellor Student Equity & Engagement
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## APOLOGIES

**Absent** Nil

**Vacant** Whyalla Campus Student Representative

The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 6.05 pm.

## 1. MEETING OPENING

### 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Board of USASA acknowledges that it meets on the land of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to their elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land and acknowledge that these are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today.

### 1.2 Guest Speaker – Carol Grech

Carol noted that she will provide an abridged version of her planned presentation in light of the VC's email to students dated 17 March regarding the Covid 19 Novel Corona Virus Situation.

Carol noted that from the perspective of SEE, the use and expenditure of SSAF is legislated and there are specific things that it can be spent on. She noted that they distribute the money along the SSAF legislation guidelines. She noted that students are surveyed each year in how they should spend the SSAF money and that's why a large portion of it is spent on salaries, for example, Careers, as this is the way services are mostly resourced. She noted that in addition to these services, it is also used to enhance certain services such as Studiosity, Wellbeing, and Counselling, and Learning Advisers.

Carol also noted that there is also additional funding available throughout the year from SSAF that is used to fund student-led initiatives that come up from the School or Divisional level.

Noah asked whether continuous year-to-year funding on recurring initiatives should be spent on SSAF, and whether these should be considered core business.

Carol noted that this is the way it has been done in some areas, but would be open to having some core funds spent on some areas that are currently funded through SSAF.

Ned raised a question of how the Uni views the requirement that SSAF funds cannot be spent on promoting political parties, specifically in the context of politically aligned student clubs.

Carol agreed that it means that it can't be around getting certain persons getting elected or a political perspective, or say, an event on campus to fund or promote a politician or a point of view and that Ned could email her for further clarity.

Ned also asked whether there were any student-led projects funded through SSAF for students. Ned noted that he had not heard of this before.

Carol gave an example of a group of students creating a consent training video, being a student-led initiative. She also noted that it could be stuff that isn't usually funded by the University, including information about disability access and LGBT initiatives.

Carol mentioned that Daniel has seen the template for these funding opportunities and has applied for these in the past through USASA.

Daniel noted that to be eligible, it must be something new and something that hasn't been run before and that USASA have applied for these funds to run pilots and that if it is a successful initiative, they can then use it to apply to have it in their core funding in the following year.

Lex asked about the special projects in the last few years and wondering why they aren't being taken up.

Daniel noted that the big challenge for this is around how SSAF money must be sent within that same year. A challenge has been about getting the applications done and timed well so that people can actually run projects throughout the year and the timing is hard. If we give clubs the money to run a ball in SP5, it means

that in SP2 they don't run any of the bake sales or on-campus activities that they are running. Daniel noted that it has been advertised pretty well, but the timing of the initiatives has made it hard for people to engage with.

Noah thanks Carol for answering our questions and shifted the conversation to the Covid 19 situation.

Carol brought everyone's attention to the emails that David Lloyd sent out today and how the University is transitioning to online teaching and moving to social distancing practices elsewhere where possible. She noted that she briefed Noah and Daniel yesterday while the situation was unfolding and wants to preface that this is an extraordinary and unprecedented time and hoping that our staff and students can work with the University as we will not be able to do anything perfectly. Carol noted that the highest priority is the health, wellbeing, and emotional health of our staff and students. She noted that her office has been in contact with people that have been asked to self-isolate or have possibly contracted Covid 19. Carol noted that we are all in this together and that the university has good intentions around this and how we are going to work on it.

Noah noted that he has received a number of concerns from students and noted that he has passed on the emails he received from the reps to the SCMT (Senior Crisis Management Team) meetings. Carol thanked USASA for their role in providing a conduit of information to that group and that those concerns are being triaged and sent to the appropriate persons. IT is also helping the University support an FAQ on the website.

Richard noted that the SEU and Campus Central inquiries are the first port of call for student enquiries and that these should be funnelled here.

Carol noted that there would be a communication specifically for students on placements that will be sent out tomorrow (18 March).

Carol reiterated that no student will be penalised for issues arising from these extraordinary circumstances. And if they have specific questions about their courses then they should go to campus central or their course coordinator after consulting the FAQ.

Noah asked whether newly online students will still be charged the full fees on-campus enrolment.

Carol noted that students who are enrolled internally that when they move online, their enrolment will not be changed to 'online' in the system, but she noted that all of the services that the students would have in relation to the on campus students will still be available to them and therefore they will still have to pay SSAF.

Richard noted that Careers, Campus Central, SEU etc. that all of those facilities will still be running online and should still be accessible online, therefore they aren't moving to external, they are just moving to it being online and can access the other things in the interim.

Noah noted that there are still a lot of questions coming in around this and that he would like an update when the situation is more settled.

Carol also noted that she will be redeploying some staff to support students negatively impacted by this specifically, and doing welfare checks, particularly on

International Students. Noah noted that this has now affected Australian students too, and Carol agreed, but identified that International Students have been identified as a vulnerable group because they do not yet have social networks.

Daniel thanked Carol and noted that they will be doing comms around this to support students and expand our online presence. Daniel said he would get in touch with PVC SEE if there was any funding available once some ideas had been formed from our staff team.

Ned wanted to make the point that many students think that taking 2 weeks to transition to a shut down is too long a period for them to want to feel safe and healthy on campus. And that seeing other universities are doing and seeing what we aren't doing might be feeding into some anxiety that is making it worse.

Carol noted that the enormity of transitioning to things online is a huge administrative task that shouldn't be underestimated. Carol also noted that Flinders is pretty much doing the same things that we are. She also noted that we aren't shutting down. She pointed to UQ and how they are shutting down (only for a week) and that is largely because they aren't set up to switch online like we are.

Richard thanked Noah for his feedback about how students are feeling. He noted that having been involved in this process since the beginning of the process, and in the context of organisations being criticised for either acting too rashly or not quickly enough, the university has tried to do this along following expert advice. He also noted how difficult an administrative task this has been, with such a large organisation and that there are many moving parts involved.

Lauren asked whether or not the Mount Gambier campus specifically would remain open, as there isn't really any access to alternative facilities in the area and that not everyone has the internet.

Carol noted that there are still some ideas and strategies that could be done for those students, and it depends on their courses, but that depends on their specific circumstances. She noted that any student with specific need should raise it with SEU or Campus Central.

Carol left the meeting at 6:57pm

Daniel went on to update the Board about what USASA is doing:

- Carrying out USASA's Business Continuity Plan to ensure we can still provide services
- He noted that USASA has specifically planned for what to do in the case of a pandemic. This plan is originally for four weeks, but is now looking like it will be until the end of June in line with the University's approach to limiting face-to-face teaching.
- Staff have prepared WHS audits of their home workspaces and have set up appropriate connection tools such as VPNs, backing up files etc.
- He noted that things have moved very quickly over the past 48 hours and that he has been working very closely with Brendan Hughes and Scott Jones to coordinate our responses.
- Financial counselling and advocacy will be online meetings right away and that appointments are not being cancelled. These are primarily being done through Skype.

- There has been an increased demand for Emergency Grants and that he received word from Carol that we could apply for additional funds to support this in line with demand.
- All Club events have been cancelled (on and off campus) which is about 50 events in the next month.
- We are also supporting clubs to negotiate with suppliers if necessary.
- Leadership Grant recipients have been assured that they will not be out of pocket and should their activities be rescheduled, they will not need to formally reapply.
- Counters/Student Spaces will be for the rest of the week and given that there won't be any students around anyway there won't be as much demand for it. Have cancelled everything up until May and have been in touch with all suppliers.
- We will cover the pay of casual staff for up to 4 weeks, trying to make sure whether there is any special leave that they can have if they are asked to self isolate and want to make sure that we can start working from home and reducing how much we are talking to students. This will be reviewed as the situation continues.

Daniel noted that Marketing and Comms have been very busy over the past few days getting out additional comms and letting people know what is going on and who is being advertised to. Our marketing team is communicating with sport and student life to send out the same comms but with some customisation. The marketing team is also looking at how they can provide not just ongoing comms about our services, but also around how they can provide content throughout our channels that can still make students feel like they are part of a community and how they can get self care and keep involved etc.

Daniel specifically noted how good the marketing team has been and how they have taken it in their stride and their resilience in getting comms out there. Has also been very impressed and blown away with how Noah has been handling this for him and also for staff as well.

Noah thanked everyone for their patience in this and for his torrent of emails and sharpness and shortness.

Ned asked about how this will affect the requirement that Club AGMs must take place by the end of April and Daniel noted that they will be supported in holding their AGMs online.

Arthur noted that technically they aren't actually having AGMs, as they aren't incorporated, and that they are following rules set by the Board. He noted that the Board could move a motion to change the date of the AGM requirement.

Noah noted that he will get advice from the Clubs team about whether this is needed.

Jenny asked how the Covid 19 situation will affect their plans for on-campus activations and Daniel noted yes, all USASA events have been cancelled and that if reps have ideas for online content, they can get in touch with Marketing and work on it together.

Josh suggested that clubs could run remote events into like online versions of what they are doing already.

Noah noted that as long as it is following the social distancing guidelines set out by the Uni and so on than yes it will still be supported and that this could be a discussion point for the Clubs Committee.

Melinda asked whether reps could use the USASA socials to run an online activation and Noah said yes, we can look to talking to the marketing team about this and could collaborate with them to make content.

Lauren noted that Mount Gambier Campus Central was very busy at the moment and Richard noted that students should continue to just go to Campus Central, even if it's busy. He also noted that he very much wants to know whether there are any inquiries coming in that CC don't know the answers to and suggested that she could feed this information back to Noah.

### **1.3 Leave Requests**

#### **1.3.1 Arunika Dutta (February)**

Motion: Accept Arunika's leave request for February 2020.

Moved by Noah, Seconded by Ned.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

### **1.4 Conflicts of Interest – nil.**

### **1.5 Previous Minutes**

#### **1.5.1 Confirmation**

Motion: That the minutes of the Board Meeting of 18 February 2020 be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

Moved by Noah, Seconded by Josh.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

**1.4.2 Action Log** – Whyalla Election update provided that there was one uncontested nomination received. The item was now complete. CEO Report item now complete. Board Training has been postponed.

## **2. MATTERS FOR DECISION**

### **2.1 CampusLink Conference**

It was noted that due to the postponement of the conference and ban on interstate travel that this item was no longer relevant.

## 2.2 AGM Timeline

Ned questioned whether it is Constitutional to have an online AGM and Arthur advised that this may come down to what the Board's interpretation of "attendance" is, but noted that he will look into it outside the meeting. He advised that it should be fine so long as the meeting isn't obviously *outside* the metropolitan area.

Motion: to accept the AGM timeline, provided that it would be held online.

Moved by Noah, Seconded by Rhys.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

## 2.3 Welfare Committee Terms of Reference

Melinda noted they were proposing that the scope of the Committee should be extended to include wellbeing issues and to clearly delineate it from the purview of the DEA Committee.

Ned noted that it should say "should meet" each month, rather than "must meet".

Motion: To accept the track changes in the TOR and adopt Ned's suggestion to create the Welfare and Wellbeing Committee.

Moved by Lex, Seconded by Linus.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

## 2.4 Finance Committee Terms of Reference

Motion: To accept Finance Committee Terms of Reference, adopting the suggestion that it state "should meet" not "must meet" at least once each month.

Moved by Lauren, Seconded by Lex.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

## 3. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

### 3.1 SSAF Survey and Report.

Daniel did not want to add anything. He noted that we have been looking at this really closely prior to the Covid stuff, but that is our number one priority at the moment.

Motion: To note the Report and Survey results.

Moved by Noah, seconded by Ned

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

## 4. MATTERS FOR NOTING

### 4.1 President's Report

Noah mentioned the activity that took place in Academic Board regarding the Academic Unit Board elections and Academic Student Representation. He noted that Bridget did a great job presenting to the Provost and we are back talking to them about these programs.

Rhys asked about the Bettina Arden letter and wanted Noah to elaborate. He noted about the NUS letter we signed on to.

Taken as read.

### 4.2 CEO's Report

Taken as read.

### 4.3 Finance Report

Taken as read.

*Nick left the meeting at 8pm.*

### 4.4 Board Members Reports

Lauren Baum reiterated that the Mount Gambier Orientation was a success and it was good to have Daniel and Noah there, with around 110 new students starting.

Jenny Chen Taken as read.

Ned Feary Updated that the Activation went well and that although there some issues, they managed to talk to about 200 students.

Linus Johnston Taken as read.

Rhys Peden noted that he has been trying to get some statistics from the Uni around aboriginal student data and is finding challenges. He will be presenting about his project at a University Governance Committee. Noah thanked Rhys for how much work he has done, especially at the Student Spaces.

Tim Pham noted that he had plans on-campus that are now on hold

Josh Steele noted that he also attended an Academic Review meeting in February

Emily Williams Taken as Read.

Noah noted that reps should put their reports up on the blog, even if they are late.

### 4.5 Committee Reports

#### 4.5.1 Clubs Taken as Read



**4.5.2 DEA** Nothing to add except that we are going to continue putting pressure on the university getting the Ally network set up.

**4.5.3 Education** Taken as Read

**4.5.4 Finance** Taken as Read

**4.5.5 Governance** Will sit down with Arthur to work out a meeting schedule for how to proceed with Constitutional Review.

Noah note that all committees will now go online and we will work with Convenors during the transition.

It was note that Jaisree has joined the Governance Committee

**4.5.6 Welfare** Melinda queried whether there has been any progress with the peer language support initiative. Daniel noted that our priority at the moment in that department is fielding advocacy cases.

#### **4.6 Respect, Prevent, Respond Conference**

Noah suggested that it be taken as read but noted that the next step for the University should be moving further into the preventative space and will be hoping to link the SASH group and DEA Committee.

### **5. Any other Business**

It was noted that Rhys and Tim are now on the Clubs Committee and DEA Committee.

### **6. Meeting Closure**

Meeting closed at 8:15pm.

Next Meeting will be held Tuesday 21 April via Zoom.