

Minutes of the USASA Board Meeting

Tuesday 16 June 2020

via Zoom

PRESENT

Board:	Noah Beckmann Lauren Baum Jenny Chen Arunika Dutta Ned Feary Linus Johnston Rhys Peden Tim Pham Daniel Randell Jaisree Ravichandran Lekshmi Shylaja Arthur Siow Joshua Steele Diane Wilkins Emily Williams	President & Meeting Chair Mount Gambier Campus Representative City East Undergraduate Representative Magill Campus Undergraduate Representative City West Undergraduate Representative City West Campus Representative Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Student Representative City East Campus Representative USASA CEO Mawson Lakes Campus Representative Post Graduate Representative Legal Advisor Mawson Lakes Campus Undergraduate Representative Whyalla Campus Student Representative Magill Campus Representative
In attendance:	Ali Amin Richard Irons Bridget Laffy Sam Roberts Sandy Davis	NUS Welfare Officer (for part of the meeting) Director Student and Academic Services Student Representative Support Officer NUS General Secretary (for part of the meeting) Minute Taker
APOLOGY	Nick Anderson Melinda Ho	Finance Advisor International Student Representative

The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 6.02 pm.

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

The USASA Board acknowledges that it meets on the land of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and on the lands of others who are attending from locations beyond 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 and other Aboriginal People living today.

1.2 Guest Speakers

1.2.1 National Union of Students (NUS)

Sam Roberts and Ali Amin introduced themselves, noting that these engagement meetings have been initiated to introduce the NUS and its

operations to the boards of student bodies, recognising that these change every year.

Sam Roberts explained that the NUS is the peak body in Australia, representing students in all post-secondary institutions, including private providers and campuses without student associations. It is governed by a national executive of 12 voting directors and 12 national office bearers, who do most of the national advocacy work. They are supported by a Finance & Administration and a Research Officer. Each state has a Branch President, Education Officer and State Executive. All elections are held annually.

The NUS has two main roles: national campaigns / advocacy, and advocating on behalf of and providing support to individual student unions. They advocate for increases to SSAF and other funding for student unions and run annual national and education conferences, as well as providing informal support to member organisations. This year for instance, the NUS has provided assistance with benchmarking and responses to COVID-19, and transitioning to on-line elections.

Ali Amin observed that although USASA is comparatively well funded, student leader networking and pooling of resources are also of benefit. Recent national campaigns to benefit students at all universities have been to prevent deregulation of tertiary education, on sexual harassment and support for victims, welfare and income support for both domestic and international students, and this year, COVID-19 and changes to mental health and chronic loneliness after students return to universities. There is ongoing work to preserve the SSAF, which is under threat from the Liberal Party and would be USASA's main source of income. He will email a full list of campaigns.

Noah Beckman asked whether there were plans to improve the National Conference – in terms of its length, expense and organisation. The National Executive is considering changes to the format and agenda to enable contributions to a standing policy platform. Issues of accessibility (cost and duration) can also be addressed.

Sam Roberts also advised that a more standardised funding model is being developed to avoid the current fee waiving system, although this is challenging because of the variety of sources and amounts of income received by member institutions (\$100,000 to \$16,000,000).

Noah Beckman concluded the discussion by advising that formalisation of USASA's NUS affiliation for this year and next will be addressed at the next meeting.

Sam Roberts and Ali Amin left the meeting.

1.3 Leave Requests

1.3.1 Melinda Ho

The request was declined in the absence of supporting evidence, which was noted as being required at the last meeting. Application for retrospective leave can be made to the next meeting.

1.3.2 Leave Requests

In response to a question from Tim Pham, it was confirmed that a Board member forfeits their position if they fail to attend two consecutive meetings

or any three out of five consecutive meetings without obtaining Board approval for leave.

1.4 Conflicts of Interest – Nil.

1.5 Previous Minutes

1.5.1 Confirmation

Motion: That the minutes of the Board Meeting of 19 May 2020 be accepted as an accurate record.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

1.5.2 Action Log

Return to Campuses – Richard Irons reported ongoing work on re-timetabling and co-ordination with Facilities Management to develop a complete package for return to campuses which enables effective social distancing. He will report further to the next meeting.

RI

USASA Board Reps planning / review – all Board members have met with the President, bar Melinda Ho and Lauren Baum.

MH, LB

2. MATTERS FOR DECISION – Nil

3. MATTERS FOR NOTING

3.1 President's Report

The report was noted and taken as read. Current work is with Daniel Randell on the SSAF survey and understanding how the money is spent; with Richard Irons and others on the Academic Policy Procedures Manual (APPM) Review of chapter 7, Special Considerations; and with Jaisree Ravichandran on the Student Academic Policy Advisory Group (SAPAG).

Student Hardship / ISSP

\$3,369,000 has been paid from the SHF. 5,628 applications have been received. The average payment is \$2,238.85, with the range being from \$120 to \$3,500. 74% of payments have been made to international students. Total year to date SHF funding is \$7,213,000, but the full commitment is \$7,600,000+. The SHF is to be paused for approximately one month for the SP break to ensure funding is available for students commencing in the new study period. In cases of extreme hardship or emergency, applications will still be considered during this period.

Of the \$3m state government ISSP, approximately \$1.3m has been committed to 2,622 students. This fund will not be paused, as any funds not spent by September are to be refunded to the government.

In total, approximately \$9m has been made available to support student retention, living costs and wellbeing. Going forward, Noah is keen to maintain this type of support, which works in tandem with USASA's Financial Counselling Service.

Richard Irons added that 8,000 extra emails have been received and addressed within standard time limits.

3.2 CEO's Report – taken as read.

The CEO and President have met with the PVC SE on the **financial counselling** grant pool, of which \$47,000 has been spent this year. An additional \$20,000 has been confirmed for June and this will be reviewed monthly. USASA is very grateful for these funds, which have come through donations to the university.

The **USASA Merch Proposal** was noted and Daniel Randell reported that the meeting with the university's Chief Marketing Officer went well. A longer term contract with regular review has been proposed and will be drafted by the UniSA legal team. Website development is underway, with the online store to possibly commence with SP5, though this timing may be but optimistic. The marketing team will conduct a student survey on what sort of clothing and products (including sanitiser) are wanted.

Return to office commenced this week, with the goal of having most staff on campus on a regular basis from 27 July. This timing is subject to the arrival of the required technology. COVID-Safe measures continue, including social distancing with rosters, sanitiser and signage.

Opening of the **Whyalla Campus student space** is being discussed with a view to having a good space for students soon. It should be alright for up to 14 students for meetings or study, but timing and social activities are yet to be clarified.

Participants are still needed for the one hour **focus group** on 19 June. Another may be possible after exams.

3.3 Finance Report

Linus Johnston spoke to the Finance Report, noting a surplus of \$187,000, due largely to the impacts of COVID-19 and not being on campus, adding that this is expected to change from SP5. The investment portfolio is stable at present, but the Finance Committee is working with Perpetual to revise the investment policy for the next few months. Work has also started on the next budget.

Daniel Randell stressed that although the cash position is currently good, spending will increase with the return to campus. The investment portfolio is a key focus, with a possible deficit return of \$30-40,000 and consideration is being given to improving income, which is currently about 1% below inflation.

3.4 Board Members' Reports – Each report was taken as read. Several were noted as missing, and the following updates were provided.

Jenny Chen – Now uploaded to the website.

Ned Feary's application to join the DEA Committee has been received and implemented. He clarified that reference in his report to the "odds . . . against international students" reflects formal enquiries and other issues.

Rhys Peden reported further on National Reconciliation Week (NRW). His Q&A with Noah Beckman had the most views of any event (1500). There has been a positive response to online presentation, with feedback that this should continue in future, as it enables much wider engagement. The survey outcomes will be circulated.

Rhys was commended for his efforts on NRW. A group is now planning broader student engagement through Wurringka for next year.

Lekshmi Shylaja is investigating PostAc, a subscription based app promoting non-academic employment opportunities.

3.5 Committee Meeting Minutes

3.5.1 Diversity, Equity and Access Committee – 28 May 2020 Minutes were noted.

3.5.2 Governance Committee – 19 May 2020 Minutes were noted as having been slightly amended, with the Dropbox version to be updated.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noah Beckman reported that he and Lekshmi Shylaja had attended **University Council**, at which a presentation was requested on the impact of COVID-19 on students. Board and broader student input will be sought, as this is a big opportunity to present the student context, possibly framed around the hardship fund / ISS / job security and study disruption. Ned Feary volunteered to participate. Noah will reach out shortly for more formalised input.

5. MEETING CLOSE

5.1 Next meeting – Tuesday 21 July at 6 pm – Zoom or in-person to be advised.

6.2 Meeting Close – 7.08 pm