

Minutes of the USASA Board Meeting

Tuesday 15 September 2020

Hawke Building H5-26

PRESENT

Board:	Noah Beckmann Jenny Chen Arunika Dutta Ned Feary Melinda Ho Rhys Peden Tim Pham Daniel Randell Jaisree Ravichandran Lekshmi Shylaja Joshua Steele Diane Wilkins Emily Williams	President & Meeting Chair City East Undergraduate Representative Magill Campus Undergraduate Representative City West Undergraduate Representative International Student Representative Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Student Representative City East Campus Representative USASA CEO Mawson Lakes Campus Representative Post Graduate Representative – via Zoom Mawson Lakes Campus Undergraduate Representative Whyalla Campus Student Representative – via Zoom Magill Campus Representative
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In attendance:	Nick Anderson Bridget Laffy Franco Parrella Arthur Siow Sandy Davis	Finance Advisor – via Zoom Student Representative Support Officer Student Ombud – for part of the meeting Legal Advisor – via Zoom Minute Taker
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ABSENT	Lauren Baum Linus Johnston	Mount Gambier Campus Representative City West Campus Representative
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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, present and emerging. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land and acknowledge that these are of continuing importance to Aboriginal People living today.

1.2 Student Ombud Presentation

Franco Parrella spoke to his *Student Ombud Update: The role and approach, some observations and some questions*, which will be provided to Noah Beckman for circulation. Key points were

- The difference between USASA advocates and the Ombud is that he is at arm's length – but on the side of student's interests, advocating for fairness,

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and providing free and confidential dispute resolution. He cannot override university decisions, but provides an arbitration role.

- Last year recommendations were made to the University about LANTITE, HR guidelines for staff, disabled students policy, post census amendment to enrolment, and process around fees in special circumstances. Details can be found in the Student Ombud Annual Report.
- In 2019 there were: 31% conciliated agreements (change in policies, practice), 26% of the University's decisions were reasonable in the circumstances, 24% of cases students pursued themselves; in 7% specific recommendations were made following a matter, with the remainder incomplete.
- Ongoing challenges include: support for international students, more consistency in student complaint handling, and better delineation between appeal rights and complaints avenues. This year has seen a focus on COVID related matters, extra time for students with Access Plans and ENTEXT, LANTITE, placements and Post Census Amendment.

Franco Parrella then raised three issues for discussion.

- Problems / issues with Amendment to Enrolments and Fees in Special Circumstances – Key issues have been removal of grades being declined, increasingly low levels of success, clear reasons not being provided, and the impersonal nature of final letters. The Ombud's recommendations are for better information at the beginning of the process, better information on documentation required, and review of outcome letters and communications generally. He is working with Richard Irons, Director Student and Academic Services, on this.
- ENTEXT removal – He is working with the PVC:SEE on this and wants individual students who have used ENTEXT previously to contact them to obtain an appropriate level of support and information about Access Plans.
- Student Complaint Handling Policies are under review. Student complaints handling is decentralised at UniSA, meaning they are handled at academic level. There is an online portal for feedback and complaints, but it is not well known.
 - Around the table, students were generally not aware of the processes. The existence of Appian student forms is not well known.
 - It was agreed that this information should be provided to students early in their enrolment, although perhaps not on orientation day, when there is a lot of other information to take in.
 - It is quicker to make a complaint directly than to use the portal.
 - The orientation process generally needs improvement and to be less overwhelming. Daniel Randell noted that it is really a six month process, rather than a single event.
 - Students go to USASA rather than directly to the University, as they feel less powerful when engaging with the University directly.
 - There is low confidence in course review process so lack of engagement in it. My Course Experience is generally used, but without expecting any immediate effect.
 - Proposals were made for consolidation of all complaint processes, and for provision of a name of who will handle each complaint to provide confidence and follow-up.
 - Daniel Randell noted concerns about triage, lack of acknowledgement, provision of feedback and timelines with the original website, together with the absence of a strategy to communicate the complaints process to students.

- A previous communication campaign to staff had been successful and should perhaps be repeated, as students don't want to know about advocacy until they need it, and then tend to approach staff in the first instance.

Franco Parrella concluded that further feedback is welcome and that he hopes the portal review will improve both the process and knowledge of it.

F Parrella left the meeting.

1.3 Leave Requests – nil.

1.4 Conflicts of Interest – Nil.

1.5 Previous Minutes

1.5.1 Confirmation

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

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

1.5.2 Action Log – noted.

Election Timeline: Nominations close on 18 September and there has been a good response.

Letter to VC re Campus Connector has been drafted by Emily Williams. Ned Feary is preparing a student feedback survey.

2. MATTERS FOR NOTING

2.1 President's Report

Noah Beckman's report was taken as read, and he gave an update on implementation of the ASR program. It is hoped that funding will be provided for a university-wide program.

2.2 CEO's Report

The report was taken as read. Catherine Politakis has been appointed to the Events Management role.

2.2.1 Clubs Showcase Marketing Report – noted.

2.2.2 Clubs Monthly Report – noted.

2.3 Finance Report

Daniel Randell spoke to the report, as circulated on 15 September, noting the ongoing surplus result, together with the reallocation of \$150,000 to the financial counselling program as approved at the last meeting. He will investigate and report back on the over-budget expenditure for Publications and Subscriptions.

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2.4 Board Members' Reports – Each report was taken as read, with the following updates provided.

Jenny Chen – The snack stand received a very positive response, reaching about 200 students in person plus 1200 on line at a cost of \$300. A repeat event is being planned and Melissa Ho reported that these had been requested by other campuses.

Education Committee members were encouraged to attend Committee Meetings, as a quorum was not achieved for the last meeting.

Lekshmi Shylaja gave updates on the Women's Safety webinars and her work with UniSA STEM.

Diane Wilkins has been working on the University's diversity equity and inclusion framework.

Rhys Peden reported that he, Lex Shylaja and Noah Beckman had met with the Provost and PVC:SEE on ENTEXT. The best possible outcome appears to be the loss of extra time, but retaining the use of a dictionary at the discretion of Course Co-ordinators, and the University undertaking to promote literacy and language proficiency services. The PVC:SEE is to continue to work with Rhys Peden on Aboriginal students' needs. Noah Beckman added that although ENTEXT is gone, Access Plans will continue and this is an opportunity to build in appropriate provisions.

UniSA has suspended its Kaurna dual naming signage project pending resolution of a cultural invalidation complaint by the only Aboriginal student on the project.

Tim Pham and Linus Johnson had not lodged reports.

Melinda Ho had not lodged a report, but advised of a meeting about communications for the international returning students pilot program, for which language, social and financial support was being planned. Students are expected mid-September, but this has not been confirmed.

Josh Steele's report was uploaded today.

2.5 Committee Meeting Minutes

2.5.1 Clubs Committee – 26 August 2020 Minutes noted.

2.5.2 DEA Committee – 27 August 2020 Minutes noted.

2.5.3 Education Committee – 17 July Minutes noted.

2.5.4 Education Committee – 18 August Minutes noted.

2.5.5 Finance Committee – 13 August Minutes noted.

2.5.6 Welfare and Wellbeing Committee – 1 September 2020 Minutes noted.

2.6 UniSA SSAF Report – Noted.

Daniel Randell drew attention to the new section (suggested by Noah Beckman) on student proposals for new initiatives (p 12), and in particular the need for support for online students, which is relevant to SSAF, but also to USASA. Noah Beckman added that although there is more work to be done on the SSAF, UniSA is becoming more transparent about the use of SSAF funding.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3.1 Non-graded Passes

It is not formally known, but this option is only likely to be available this semester if there is another lockdown in South Australia. Adelaide University has it, but their approach to study in lockdown was different to UniSA's.

3.2 Text Book Exchange Program

In response to a query from Melinda Ho, Daniel Randell advised that this has been tried unsuccessfully in the past. USASA has a second-hand arrangement in place and is discussing text books with the University, with a view to reviewing the need for text books across all programs, improving the process on advice and access to text books, and aiming for online books wherever possible. This is work in progress, with an unknown implementation date.

4. MEETING CLOSE

4.1 Next meeting – Tuesday 20 October – location TBA

4.2 Meeting Close – 7.29 pm