

Minutes of the USASA Board Meeting

Tuesday 27 October 2020

Hawke Building H5-26

PRESENT

Board:	Noah Beckmann	President & Meeting Chair
	Jenny Chen	City East Undergraduate Representative
	Arunika Dutta	Magill Campus Undergraduate Representative
	Ned Feary	City West Undergraduate Representative
	Melinda Ho	International Student Representative
	Rhys Peden	Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Student Representative
	Tim Pham	City East Campus Representative
	Daniel Randell	USASA CEO – via Zoom
	Jaisree Ravichandran	Mawson Lakes Campus Representative
	Joshua Steele	Mawson Lakes Campus Undergraduate Representative
	Diane Wilkins	Whyalla Campus Student Representative – via Zoom
	Lauren Baum	Mount Gambier Student Representative – via Zoom
	Arthur Siow	Legal Advisor – via Zoom
	Nick Anderson	Finance Advisor

In attendance: Marie Wilson
Minute Taker: Bridget Laffy

Chief Academic Services Officer – for part of the meeting
Coordinator: Governance and Student Leadership

ABSENT	Lex Shylaja	Postgraduate Student Representative
	Linus Johnston	City West Campus 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, 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 Chief Academic Services Officer Presentation

Marie Wilson spoke on her role and portfolio as Chief Academic Services Officer.

Key points were

NB

- Marie had an extensive career in IT and business before entering the Higher Education sector. Most recently, Marie was the Dean of the Business School before taking on her new role as Chief Academic Services Officer, which was new to the University in 2020 as part of the E25 Academic Organisational Transformation (AOT)
- Marie circulated some handouts to the Board, which included an organisational chart of academic services and a written summary of their role, approach, guiding principles, responsibilities, and upcoming projects.
- The beginning of Marie's new role was enveloped mostly by the COVID response from the University (circa March/Apr 2020). Marie noted that this forced her and her team to work out very quickly what their new roles actually were, what they did or did not include, and mobilised many units of the University to work together to solve problems and innovate for the COVID response.
- Beyond COVID, the next major project to be embarked by the Academic Services teams is around PhDs and a new form of PhD that focuses on teams and working relationships and making sure that the administrative processes around this are simplified for both staff and students.
- Another area of focus is Careers, where it was noted that to get the best out of the University's Careers Service in this job market is to start thinking about which jobs they would like to do, from the day they start University. This will allow them to get the most of out of the existing modules on the Careers platforms and may also be enhanced by students tapping into their personal and professional networks while they are studying.

Marie Wilson then opened the floor for questions from the Board:

- Ned Feary: What is the difference between the Provost and the CAS?
Marie noted that the Provost's role covers teaching and learning. To support teaching and learning, the CAS oversees the systems and teams such as Learning Management Systems, timetabling. For example, academic services would not be responsible for the way a PhD student is supervised, but would be responsible for how they are able to enrol, use the computer systems etc.
- Melinda Ho: Referring to Academic Services' approach, what does "reducing waste" mean?
Marie explained that this is about improving processes and systems. In this context, reducing waste would mean reducing situations where time, money, or other resources are being wasted or bottlenecked by the existing systems and processes. Marie summed up by stating the ethos of this idea is "don't repeat, rework, regret".
- Melinda Ho: A lot of students have concerns about careers, what is the University's plan for addressing this?
Marie noted that the University has extensive careers modules and is working on more ways to have these embedded in courses. An example of this being done successfully in the Business School was given, which referred to a first year course where students learn about interviews, CVs, and which electives they should do. It was also noted that the University is working on a project to identify which courses and internships can be done across the University to give students a solid basis for making connections that make a difference in the job market. Melinda noted that there are some systemic issues that make it difficult for international students (such as companies being hesitant to hire international students) and asked how these gaps are being looked at. Marie listed a range of actions taken by the University (such as hiring students and

creating local placements where students can gain local references). She reiterated that students cannot wait until a few months away from graduation before thinking about their careers and that they should tap into their personal networks to help their career progress.

- Noah Beckmann: How do you see student representation (particularly working with USASA) interacting with the Academic Services portfolio?
Marie noted that student representation is important to the University and although it has been 'spotty' at times, there are places within the uni that have strong leadership councils. There is a focus on bottom up support to build those in the Academic Units. Marie noted that this requires a culture on the academic side that is open and listening, but this needs to be done in a particular way that supports people who know how to make a point and to make that point count. Marie also noted that there is some ambiguity around what representation actually means, who is being represented, and what is being represented. There have been students throughout the years that represent themselves, and those who are good at gaining collective voices and representing those for the purpose of decisionmaking. Marie noted that much of this is more tied to the academic space and how the timing of all other priorities interact.

Marie Wilson concluded that further feedback is welcome and that she hopes the portal review will improve both the process and knowledge of it.

Marie Wilson left the meeting at 6:36pm.

1.3 Leave Requests –

Lauren Baum for the September meeting
Moved by Noah, seconded by Ned, approved unanimously.

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 pending the amendment of Rhys Peden's report to reflect that Lex was also in attendance at the meeting that discussed ENTEXT.

All were in favour and the Motion was carried.

1.5.2 Action Log – noted.

Election Timeline: Bridget noted that the election was still following the timeline set by the Board

Campus Connector: Ned noted that he has received the results of the survey but has not yet analysed them

2. MATTERS FOR DECISION

2.1 DEA Committee Convenor

Ned was appointed unopposed as the Convenor of the DEA committee without dissent.

3. MATTERS FOR NOTING

3.1 President's Report

The report was taken as read. Noah noted that the campaign on the higher ed policy was "somewhat successful" in that although the JobReady Graduates package passed in parliament, that it created national media attention and was able to see some of their recommendations taken on board for South Australia specifically.

3.2 CEO's Report

Daniel Randell's report was taken as read, but wanted to highlight two areas. First, to thank everyone who came to the Club Awards Night on Friday. He noted that it was converted from a standing cocktail event to a sit-down event due to COVID, but that this was more in line with the ongoing vision for the event anyway. He noted some positive feedback he had received from the University about the event already. Secondly, Daniel noted that Bridget's title change mentioned in the report is a promotion and that in her 3 and a half years as Student Representative Support Officer she has changed the way we work with students for the better and that it is well deserved.

Ned asked about the Social Media growth and whether there is a known reason why this has occurred. Daniel noted that Clubfest being online gave us a boost and that we have also been hosting a lot of content for other areas of the University. He also noted that we have had a small reduction in web visits and this has seen a rise in social media engagement instead.

3.3 Finance Report

Due to Linus's absence, Daniel spoke to the finance report. He noted that a large proportion of the significant surplus was the Government's cashflow bonus. He also noted that we have received some extra funds from the PVC SEE team for the financial counselling and grants program, which is reflected in the balance sheet as income. He noted that the FC Grants have slowed down a little bit, but that it will pick up as people are now able to reapply even if they were successfully granted funds previously. He noted that we have a second FC on as a casual, but this is being monitored and evaluated how we are going to administer grants over the break. He noted that USASA will have about a 100k surplus of SSAF funds and that this will require a conversation with the University. He also noted that the financial advice received by the investment fund manager is that any extra funds are better off being spent on capital (such as the new merchandise range USASA will be doing) instead of just keeping it in term deposits.

Noah noted that the SASH policy would be voted on by Council tomorrow (28/10/20)

Ned asked Daniel how the advertising for 2021 was going or forecast.

Daniel noted that the advertising revenue for the diary was down due to the internal services of the University not being in a position to pay the fees usually associated with being published in the USASA diaries. Daniel noted that there might be another spike in revenue if we have campus fair in person (which will attract more stallholders) but that the question of whether or not it would be held physically or online was still unknown and that it would be decided on Friday (30/10/20)

Nick noted that news was out today that Australia is technically out of a recession. He noted that this was relying on the purely technical definition of a recession, and often the effects of these are not realised for up to 18 months and so not to get too caught up in the news, but that it could be a sign of things becoming good again.

3.4 Board Members' Reports –

Reports were submitted by Lauren Baum, Jenny Chen, Rhys Peden, Jaisree Ravichandran and Emily Williams

Each report was taken as read, with the following updates provided.

Rhys Peden – as a result of the ENTEXT conversations, he and the Aboriginal Student Clubs will be working with the University around how to provide support services to Aboriginal students (in addition to Wurringka Student Services) to ensure that the affects of removing ENTEXT were reduced. This would be student driven.

Noah reiterated that many people did not submit Board reports and that this was disappointing. He invited those who did not submit a report to provide a verbal update.

Melinda Ho noted that there will be some overseas students returning to Australia next month and that she has been working with stakeholders on how they can support these students, starting with their 14 days in quarantine. She also noted that the things need to be in place before the students arrive.

Melinda asked Richard whether the University had funding to support these students and international students more generally, and he noted that there will be more funds for the hardship fund, but that he does not know the specifics of other areas.

Josh, Tim, Arunika, and Ned noted their busyness in the period leading up to the Board Report deadline and did not provide additional information.

Diane noted that she received feedback that the items in the goody bags for UniTopia were not age-appropriate for university students.

Noah informed the Board that there would be a more structured approach to handover this year, that would be facilitated by Bridget. Bridget noted that this will involve one-on-ones with the incoming Board Reps and highlighted that Committee Convenors need to ensure they are putting the Committee Handover Discussion as an agenda item on the next committee meeting.

3.5 Committee Meeting Minutes

3.5.1 Governance Committee 15 September: Noted

3.6 Perpetual Statement of Advice – Noted.

Nick asked whether any of the Board had understood this report and it was noted that it was not widely understood outside the membership of the Finance Committee. He briefly explained the meaning of the document to the Board.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3.1 Job-Ready Graduates Scheme

Richard noted that while this policy was not necessarily universally celebrated, that the University would be trying to make the best of the situation for students. He noted that there is already a group talking about how the impacts of this can be lawfully reduced for students, and that there will be a focus on retention. He noted that the ability for SAS to mitigate the impacts of the policy on underperforming students would depend on how proscriptive the legislation is (once it is drafted) and that “the devil will be in the details”

Ned asked whether the NUS, UA, or the Unis more generally are still working around this and Noah noted that the NUS is, but he does not know about the others. He would consider asking about it at Council if appropriate.

Richard noted that when the time comes, he will involve students in the development of the University’s approach to this policy and that he will consult Noah for who the most appropriate people to assist will be at the time so that a student’s perspective can be harnessed.

4. MEETING CLOSE

4.1 Next meeting – Tuesday 17 November

4.2 Meeting Close – 7.13 pm