

SRC MEETING

21st April 2020

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Acknowledgement of Country
3. Apologies and Proxies
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Accept March Minutes
6. Office Bearer Reports
7. Wom*n's Officer Stipend
8. Open discussion regarding recent Respect Now Always Campaigning
9. Open letter to faculties for pass/fail grading system
10. Welfare information package about Government services
11. International Student Relief
12. COVID-19 Response Survey update
13. Bylaws discussion
14. General Business

ATTENDANCE

NAME	POSITION
Ahmad Mohammad	General Councillor
Ahmed Ferkh	Welfare Officer
Aidan O'Rourke	Assistant Secretary
Bella Forti	Women's Officer
Biljana O'Connor	Marketing Manager
Christina Markovska	Caseworker
Erin Dalton	Education Vice-President
Frances Dougenis	SA Reception
Harrison White	General Councillor
Jay Mukul	Observer
Jessica Hill	SA Reception
Josh Hernandez	Enviro Officer
Josh Logue	General Councillor
Juneyt Cihan	General Councillor
Lisa Windon	Caseworker
Kurt Cheng (arrives 6:30pm, leaves 7:01pm)	Markets Campus Convenor
Mansingh Jatav	Overseas Officer
Mariah Brown	Executive Officer
Mehmet Musa	Observer
Melissa Sukkarieh	Queer Officer/Councillor
Melodie Grafton	General Councillor
Miles Carter	General Councillor
Miranda Crossley	Secretary
Sam Silcock	President
Shlok Kumar	Postgraduate Officer
Tallulah Watson Moyle	Treasurer

21-04-2020 MINUTES

1. Opening of the meeting

Meeting opened at 6:06pm on the 21st of April 2020 via Zoom

2. Acknowledgement of Country

President delivers Acknowledgement of Country

3. Apologies and Proxies

Aiden Moore proxies to 1. Bella Forti and 2. Harrison White

Bella accepts

Jeylan Riza proxies to 1. Tallulah Watson Moyle and 2. Aidan O'Rourke

Tallulah accepts

Apologies from **Kurt Cheng** (will attend for item 9)

4. Declarations of Interest

Bella Forti declares financial interest for Wom*ns officer stipend motion (agenda item 7).

5. Approval of March Minutes

Motion to accept the March Minutes as a true and accurate record

Moved by: Erin Dalton

Seconded by: Tallulah Watson Moyle

Motion carried unanimously

6. Office Bearer Reports

President delivers office bearer report (encl.)

Education Vice President delivers office bearer report (encl.)

Secretary delivers office bearer report (encl.)

Treasurer delivers office bearer report (encl.)

Assistant Secretary delivers office bearer report (encl.)

Women's Officer delivers officer bearer report (encl.)

Welfare Officer delivers officer bearer report (encl.)

Motion to accept all Officer Bearer reports

Moved by: Erin Dalton

Seconded by: Tallulah Watson Moyle

Motion carried unanimously

PROCEDURAL MOTION TO DISCUSS AGENDA ITEM 12. COVID-19 Response Survey Update

- On the basis it will help give insight for many on the following agenda items regarding COVID-19

Procedural motion to discuss agenda item 12 now

Moved by: Erin Dalton

Seconded by: Tallulah Watson Moyle

Motion carried unanimously

12. COVID-19 Response Survey Update

Secretary gives details of results of survey at present

- Over 700 responses with varied demographics among respondents
- For all students, COVID-19 has significantly affected their student life and mental health
 - Significantly higher for international students than domestic students
- Strongest felt impacts surround peer interactions; engagement with learning; interactive classes; access to student services (library, gym)
- For possible UTSSA services, respondents stated they would most likely use free WiFi dongles and free food packs (followed by Centrelink advice).

7. Wom*n's Officer Stipend (encl.)

Motion that Bella Forti receive the full stipend of \$3705.00 for the year as Wom*n's Officer (commencing 03/12/2019)

Moved by Tallulah Watson Moyle

Seconded by Erin Dalton

Abstention: Bella Forti

Motion carried by majority

8. Open discussion regarding recent Respect Now Always Campaigning

Discussion around issues with RNA campaigns

- Secretary gives background for concern
 - Recent campaign is objectifying and makes a serious issue sound trivial
- Wom*n's officer adds further issues:
 - Non-inclusive as it is focused largely on cis-sexual hetero-sexual couples and they are not willing to translate it into languages other than English

Kurt Cheng arrives 6:30pm

- Education Vice President highlights a successful consent module at Flinders University which could potentially be used as a framework
- Queer officer expresses further concerns about RNA and lack of depth
- ACTION: For the president to arrange a meeting with Katherine and Bella

9. Open letter to faculties for pass/fail grading system

Discussion surrounding the opt-in pass/fail grading system and ways of actioning it

- EVP highlights option of sending open letters to faculty heads
- Markets Campus Convenor presents information that the Faculty of Law would likely not be in support, unless its optional
- Clarification that the intention is for an “opt in” pass/fail system and not compulsory
- ACTION: EVP to
 - Draft open letters for each faculty around obtaining their support for an opt-in pass/fail grading system, as well as creating communications to be sent to each faculty board outlining our requests for them to distribute our open letter amongst their students, as well as to support our campaign

10. Welfare information package about Government services

- Lisa Windon (caseworker) clarifies that it is not a Centrelink advisory or service

Kurt Cheng leaves at 7:01pm

Motion to move that there be a service or information package in the UTSSA to inform students about accessing government services and that the OB and the Welfare Collective work closely with the caseworkers in making this service actionable.

Motion to amend it to read:

That there be an information and support service in the UTSSA to inform students about accessing government services and that the OB and the Welfare Collective work closely with the caseworkers in making this service actionable.

Moved by: Aidan O'Rourke

Seconded by: Erin Dalton

Amendment carried unanimously

Motion to move the amended motion

Moved by: Aidan O'Rourke

Seconded by: Erin Dalton

Motion carried as amended unanimously

Final amended motion:

That there be an information and support service in the UTSSA to inform students about accessing government services and that the OB and the Welfare Collective work closely with the caseworkers in making this service actionable.

11. International Student Relief

Preamble:

“Whilst the economic impacts of Covid-19 are far reaching and affect many members of the University, international students are among the hardest hit its effects. Many international students are struggling with the day to day costs of studying in Australia on a normal day, and has become particularly tough during the current pandemic. So far the Government’s stimulus package has failed to consider international student’s and engages in dismissive rhetoric of international students – despite earning significant revenue from international students for years. International students cannot access any of the welfare safety net that is offered to domestic students. Moreover, they are often required to pay their tuition in full often with no option of deferring fees like domestic students. This has meant whilst many international students have reduced earning capacity to due Covid-19, they are still expected to pay the same tuition fee for their courses. Fees which have increased in 2020. Whilst the University has initiated some level of hardship payments for students, this is limited by its scope of application and lack of communication, meaning many international students slip through the cracks.”

Platform:

- The SRC believes that the University should refund 10% the total course fees for international students for the Autumn semester in 2020.
- This should be done as soon as practicable in efforts to reduce the financial hardship on international students.
- The SRC acknowledges SSAF fees should remain the same.

Action:

1. The President raises this matter with the relevant members of UTS management including the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Education and the Provost and requests all international students receive a blanket 10% cash back for the Autumn semester of 2020.
2. The President shall report back to the International Office-Bearer by email about the outcome of this initiative.

Discussion

- EVP recommends this motion should apply to domestic and international students
- Observer (former president) emphasises the heightened impact COVID-19 has on International students for reasons such as they are unable to put fees on HECs and access certain services that domestic students can.
- Overseas Officer expresses concern for International students particularly with greater fees than domestic students.
- Discussion ensues and disagreements arise over whether or not domestic students should be included in the motion.

Amendment A. Motion to amend Action 2. to read “The President shall report back to SRC about the outcome of this initiative.

Moved by Erin Dalton

Seconded by Aidan O’Rourke

Amendment A carried unanimously

Amendment B. Motion to amend all mentions of “International students” to read “International and domestic students”

Moved by Erin Dalton

Seconded by Harrison White

Votes for: six

Votes against: eight

Abstentions: one

Amendment B does not carry.

Motion to move amended motion (amendment A)

Moved by Aidan O'Rourke

Seconded by Erin Dalton

Motion carried unanimously

Final amended motion:

Preamble:

“Whilst the economic impacts of Covid-19 are far reaching and affect many members of the University, international students are among the hardest hit its effects. Many international students are struggling with the day to day costs of studying in Australia on a normal day, and has become particularly tough during the current pandemic. So far the Government’s stimulus package has failed to consider international student’s and engages in dismissive rhetoric of international students – despite earning significant revenue from international students for years. International students cannot access any of the welfare safety net that is offered to domestic students. Moreover, they are often required to pay their tuition in full often with no option of deferring fees like domestic students. This has meant whilst many international students have reduced earning capacity to due Covid-19, they are still expected to pay the same tuition fee for their courses. Fees which have increased in 2020. Whilst the University has initiated some level of hardship payments for students, this is limited by its scope of application and lack of communication, meaning many international students slip through the cracks.”

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1. The President raises this matter with the relevant members of UTS management including the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Education and the Provost and requests all international students receive a blanket 10% cash back for the Autumn semester of 2020.
2. The President shall report back to SRC about the outcome of this initiative.

13. By-laws discussion

- President informs SRC he has sent by-law drafts to King and Wood Mallesons and is awaiting their quote (which will be taken to next SRC meeting)

14. General Business

Motion to discuss the Bluebird bags motion

Moved by Erin Dalton

Seconded by Tallulah Watson Moyle

Motion carried unanimously

Motion to approve the purchase of 2,500 bags for Bluebird take away breakfast for \$4,020.50

- Clarification the cost is just for the bags and not for the food

Moved by Erin Dalton

Seconded by Harrison White

Motion carried unanimously

Motion to approve an upper spend limit of \$25 per month for Jessica Hill for 45GB of data necessary for work duties while working from home.

Moved by Erin Dalton

Seconded by Tallulah Watson Moyle

Motion carried unanimously

Meeting closed at 7:44pm 21st of April 2020

President's Report

Over the last month I've had many things to do in my role. The first of which was to correspond the results of our constitutional amendments from our March general SRC meeting to the University secretary who will be taking the amendments to the University Council meeting in June. So hopefully our amendments will be officially passed as of that meeting – I will update everyone when I receive correspondence back from the Council.

In the last few weeks we have been trying to work out how to get the most for students in the current time – the Students' Association has made several demands and I have addressed certain issues in meetings with management.

One of my main concerns was that many subjects may have been cancelled by the university which I was given the exact numbers from the University as to that concern and am reasonably satisfied that the University hasn't cut too many subjects – the amount of subject numbers that have been cut are under 50 and many are a variation of the same subject with slight adjustments. Some subjects that have been cancelled though are the Chinese Medicine clinic subjects which will cause problems if UTS still plans on closing this subject within the same timeline – I will be continuing to request for between a 6 - 12 month extension.

There are two different methods I can see for addressing academic pressures this year being moving to a pass/fail system or to not transcribing fails. In my conversations with the University so far it seems highly unlikely the pass/fail system would be broadly accepted by the University as the executive appear to have already shot it down completely. However, if pressure is put on individual faculties it would be much more likely for action to happen on the issue as some faculties are already in revolt regarding this. In terms of not transcribing fails I see that as much easier to push for although realistically it's unlikely now that census date has passed I will try and push for it further for it to come into place before the end of semester.

The Students' Association must also provide new services during this semester and our survey which we released last week will hopefully provide some answers as to what we can do for the future of this semester and provide an easier online learning experience for students.

Education Vice President's Report

This past month has been relatively quiet, and yet still remarkably busy. I've been working with colleagues across the country in terms of gathering information around their universities' responses to COVID-19, with particular focus on changes such as a pass/fail grading system, the removal of fails from academic records, changes to exams and assessments, including the use of third-party invigilation software which has been a significant fight at many universities. These programs, such as ProctorU and Proctorio, have numerous significant flaws to them, and are a huge invasion of the privacy of students forced to give over camera, microphone, internet browser control, and more, to these systems in order to sit for their exams. Furthermore, there are concerns around the impacts these systems may have on students with exam provisions. I would like to see UTS not embracing one of these third-party, for-profit, systems, especially in a time where institutions such as ours are in a relatively precarious financial position.

In this next month, I will be continuing to work with students as well as Council to advocate for our education conditions. I have been working with the Executive on the demands we're taking to the University, and will hopefully meeting with the DVC, Shirley Alexander, next week to raise some of these concerns. I'm also pleased to note that we've run a highly successful survey that is aimed at gathering useful information to shape our further responses to COVID-19 as the UTSSA. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, or wish to be further involved, please talk to me in person or get in contact with me at education@utsstudentsassociation.org.au

Thank you,

Erin Dalton

Education Vice-President

Secretary's report

COVID-19 has continued to be the defining feature of this year and of course for the Students' Association. COVID-19 is affecting everyone and while I'm sure we are all feeling the impacts, it's important we stay committed to standing up for the needs of students.

I've spent a significant amount of time with Biljana creating and editing the survey for how students are feeling regarding COVID-19, the university's response and what we can do as the Students' Association. I believe this is crucial to giving us a wide and detailed understanding of the needs of students at these trying times. Thank you to staff and other members of SRC for their help with this survey too. I am proud that this survey has already received over 700 responses. It is still open until this Saturday so I would encourage the rest of SRC to spread it with any other UTS student networks they may have.

We have also been having more frequent executive meetings with detailed discussion around all our possibilities as an organisation.

We have a lot of work to do as an organisation, particularly for those who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. I hope that tonight we are able to move motions and start to action important ways of helping students.

Treasurer's report

This last month was taken up with working out the kinks of the new processes we have to make in this COVID-19 world. The exec team and I have been meeting via Zoom every week to flesh out a COVID-19 plan for the foreseeable future. This plan aims to support all UTS students in as many ways as we can throughout the times their studies will be affected this year. Our first task for this plan was to create and release a comprehensive survey to gauge the scope of issues affecting UTS students and what they would like out of their Students' Association. We are still waiting for more responses as we want as many as possible so if you haven't filled it out yet, please do.

One mission for this plan that I was assigned was figuring out how we could offer students USB Wi-Fi dongles. I presented my findings at the last exec meeting and we all decided to hold off on making a final decision about them just yet and wait for the results of the survey to see who actually would benefit from having a dongle. Purchasing dongles would be a big decision and one that we will need to be confident will be useful.

Once we have a proper sample of survey responses we will collate them all and add these findings into our plan. We want to still be as supportive as we would normally be in person and make sure university life is up to scratch. I am proud of our efforts in the last month and I am more positive than I was last month, that's for sure. I hope that everyone's positivity, along with mine, continues to grow as we learn to manage this strange time. Please stay safe and healthy, and of course, you can contact me any time online.

Assistant Secretary's Report

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, my focus as Assistant Secretary has been to assist the Executive and Office-bearers in crafting a response to this crisis. There have been several issues with the University's response to the virus that I have identified. Including:

- The confused messaging by the University regarding its response to the crisis,
- The delay in that messaging,
- Anxiety from students regarding how academic transcripts will record results. The Anxiety felt by students also includes the uncertainty of which system the University will use, whether its pass/fail, fail amnesty, Usyd-style adjusted or the status quo.
- Confusion over the conduct of Exams and the stu-vac period preceding it,
- The abysmal treatment of international students,
- Lack of interactive learning through services like Zoom in some courses,
- Issues inherent in distant learning, such as connectivity and access to software and devices.

The University has addressed these issues in a piece-meal staggered manner leaving many students behind in an awkward position for the rest of the semester. Our advocacy has achieved some wins, and our continued research will further uncover flaws in the University's responses. However, I think we should be doing more in terms of the UTSSA's visibility and approach to the identified issues.

Wom*n's Office Bearer Report

This past month all UTS students have had to adjust quite quickly to online study and an altogether new lifestyle whilst the world deals with the COVID-19 pandemic. Dana and I have placed significant importance on encouraging members of the Wom*n's collective to follow safety rules and to engage in self-care whilst being in isolation and very likely dealing with several stressors.

We have had two meetings since going online, both being through zoom and both being quite successful in attendance as well as conversation had during these meetings. The first was on 31/03 where we discussed Intersectional Feminism 101 (mainly looking at terms and concepts currently used and talked about in these spaces), as well as discussing ways in which people can take care of themselves and those around them during these times.

Our second online meeting took place on the 14/04, prior to this meeting I had the great privilege of talking to Academic and higher research student Denise Beckwith who identifies as a woman with a physical disability. Her research and thesis is about sexuality and women with disabilities and the many nuances of that, she was able to give me invaluable information and insight into not only her experiences as a disabled woman but into her research, and I was able to summarise this information into a document which I shared on the collective socials and discussed in depth during the meeting. This is a very complex topic with many nuances and different experiences which the collective has expressed interest in continuing to investigate so I will be organising a follow-up interview with Denise.

All things considered I feel that it has been a successful month for the Wom*n's collective and am excited for the rest of semester.

Welfare Office Bearer Report

Its no secret that these trying times are having a direct impact on the financial situations and livelihoods of students. It's times like these where we must work extra hard to do the right things by the students of UTS and by each other. That is why about a week ago, I had the idea of starting an information service in the UTSSA, to help students navigate Centrelink. I would like to really thank the caseworkers, Christina and Lisa, for putting their hands up to provide that service. The Welfare Collective is dedicated to make this service an effective one so that we can do right by assisting the Students who are in tough economic circumstances.

The Welfare Collective is working very hard to run its campaign to improve Faith rooms at UTS. We have posted a petition online, and we will be working towards writing an article and open letter to the University Management. I would like to thank Biljana for her assistance with the advertising of this campaign. These are tough times, and the UTSSA has a lot of work on its shoulders, but I hope that my Collective we can work together with the executive to negotiate with the University, and to keep this very important campaign running, for the sake of all people of Faith and no faiths, at UTS.

I would also like to set a precedent for OB's to acknowledge their negatives/ weaknesses in their reports. Due to the unprecedented circumstances we find ourselves in, I have not been able to meet the goals I had for this year regarding improving mental health on campus. But nonetheless, I acknowledge that this crisis has also impacted the mental health of students. You don't have to look fare on UTS Confessions to see a post about the Mental toll Social Isolation and Online Learning takes on students. In the future, I promise to work hard to make sure no student with mental illness is left behind, and to make sure they have access to the Mental Health services they need.

Agenda item 7. Wom*n's officer Stipend – updated motion

Stipend Motion

Bella Forti to receive the full stipend of \$3705.00 for the year as Wom*n's Officer (commencing 03/12/2019)

Preamble

The role of Wom*n's Officer is entitled to receive the full stipend of \$3705.00 for their time as Wom*n's Officer.

My role as Wom*n's Officer commenced on the 3rd of December 2019, as Wom*n's Officer up to this point I have fulfilled all of my roles and responsibilities as well as maintained a fairly active collective, Dana and I work quite closely in planning and facilitating the collective to be strong and to serve its purpose.

Receiving the stipend will allow me to dedicate a bit more of my time to the collective and planning side of things.

Agenda item 10. Welfare information package about Government services

Motion to move that there be a service or information package in the UTSSA to inform students about accessing government services and that the OB and the Welfare Collective work closely with the caseworkers in making this service actionable.

Agenda item 11. International Student Relief

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General Business

Bluebird motion:

Motion to approve the purchase of 2,500 bags for Bluebird take away breakfast for \$4,020.50

Staff data costs motion:

Motion to approve an upper spend limit of \$25 per month for Jessica Hill for 45GB of data necessary for work duties while working from home.