

**University of Melbourne Student Union**

**Meeting of the Disabilities Committee**

**Agenda**

**5 pm Tuesday 8th December**

**Meeting [1](21) (petitioned)**

**Location: Zoom**

1. **Procedural Matters**
	1. Election of Chair
	2. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Owners
	3. Attendance
	4. Apologies
	5. Proxies
	6. Membership
	7. Adoption of Agenda
2. **Conflict of Interest Declarations**
3. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**
4. **Correspondence**
5. **Office Bearer Report**
6. **Other Reports**
7. **Motions on Notice**
8. **Motions Without Notice**
9. **Other Business**
10. **Next Meeting**
11. **Close**

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| **University of Melbourne Student Union****Disabilities Department Report**Brigit Doyle |

**Actions Completed**

We received a Handover from Hue Man. She spoke about what she had done over the past year, and what she had not but would have liked to do if the pandemic had not stopped participation on campus. She discussed the success of the disability space in the first few weeks of the year as well as Summerfest. And how she went with moving things online and some of the things that went well online and what does not work so effectively.

Upon reflection the 2020 Disabilities Department did the best they could under the circumstances. Particularly the revitalisation of the disability space and there collaborations with Queer department.

And we would like to continue to improve the disability space, and improve on their promotional work in order to gain a greater audience around the university. This will be done through a few different ways, creating a mentor program, advertisement in key areas such as Unimelb disability website, SES and CAPs, as well as discussing the issues around alternate assessments.

**Actions to be Completed**

I have been working on the development of the programs: mentoring, alternative assessment and training for academic staff, promotional and awareness, details about them below. As well as organising to buy books and first aid equipment for the disability space.

For first aid equipment I have chosen St Johns as it is a very reputable first aid training provider, which is a non-profit, humanitarian organisation. These items will be kept in the disability space, the cost of these is expected Cost: $213.60 + $15 Shipping and this will come out of the 2020 budget. First aid equipment to purchase include Workplace National First Aid Kit Portable, two Hot/Cold Packs and Adhesive Shapes Various -50 pack

We will also be buying 16 new books for the disability space from Booktopia. This comes to $589 + $8 shipping and this will come out of the 2020 budget. Books to buy: Reframing Disability in Manga, Made Possible, The Power of Disability, Stairs and Whispers, The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating, Autobiography of a Face, Ugly, Sick, Ride High Pineapple, Disability Visibility, From Disability to Diversity, Working with People with Learning Disabilities, Growing Up Disabled in Australia, Learn Braille, Turtles All the Way Down and It’s Kind of a Funny Story

The books have come from a list from the Hue Man as she had planned to buy books for this space however this didn’t happen due to the pandemic. The books are about coping with disabilities, information about disabilities, and stories about characters with disabilities. This will help with creating greater awareness of the different types of disabilities, also to learn about different coping strategies.

**Future Plans**

**Mentoring program**

We will set up a mentoring program to connect students.

The idea behind this is to connect students who are just joining the disability community with others who have been involved for an extended period of time. This is particularly important as there will be a large amount of students both first and second years that will not have been exposed to the services that UMSU provides. Along with supporting individual students, this will also provide promotion and awareness about the disability department and great a greater involvement.

The idea would be to gather a list of people that would like to be apart of the program and connect them up by a questionnaire.

After an initial introduction, we would organise to have a catchup with everyone in the program once a month for the duration of the semester. Thus not just creating social connections with their specific partner but also within the wider disability space.

Key ideas being to learn from each other skills and techniques. And to build friendships in the community.

**Training material and alternate assessments**

We will create educational material on how best to support students with disabilities for professors and tutors. As well as options for alternative assessments. And how to alter assessment to fit the intended outcomes through different means. Ie creating audio pieces rather than written.

While also creating information about how to create a safe and supportive environment for all for clubs and societies as well as academic staff. This will be done by first discussing with students with disabilities some ideas for how they could be better supported. Then work with academic staff to find how they would like to be supported, before creating material and organise education for educational staff around this issue.

We would like to create

* Creating content in multiple mediums
* Creating alternate assessments in different mediums
* Creating pamphlets on how to cater for those with disabilities
* Provide training for educational staff about how to support students with disabilities

**Promotion and disability awareness.**

By making the disability department more accessible and visible to the student body. To do this we need to make students with disabilities aware that there is support available.

We will do some rebranding to make it clear who the disability department is to cater for, from mental illness, learning disabilities to physical disabilities.

This will be done through having links and signage on the unimelb disability site.

* Having SES and CAPs connect in with our department so that when you apply for special consideration or reach out for mental health support you also connect in with the disability department. Because currently for many there is no enough support and help caps can give.
* Having events in different places around the university to build the disability community
* Having events for those who don't identify as having a disability to grow and build awareness for people with disabilities
* By running collectives with different departments
* Through the mentorship program

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| **University of Melbourne Student Union****Disabilities Department Report**Lindsay Tupper-Creed |

## Actions Completed

We have received a handover from one of the 2020 Disabilities Officers, who has highlighted the challenges and opportunities that 2020 brought to the department. Previously key to the department has been the disability space, which occurs a special place within the community. Replicating this online has clearly been a continued difficulty, and something that we will need to reflect on and explore for at least the first half of 2021.

The first week of office has been taken up by induction, which has allowed me to gain greater insight into how to be effective with UMSU. In the background, I have been working with my fellow office bearer as well as the previous officer to establish and implement a plan to complete 2020 and be in a good position as a department to move forward into 2021.

We have also met informally with some of the committee members to discuss their priorities for 2021, as well as receive input on the projects we are working on. This process will continue with the first committee meeting (scheduled for 8/12/20), as well as with our pursuits to gain input from anyone within the disabilities community who is interested in sharing their experiences. I would like to emphasise that absolutely anyone who has ideas for the department is welcome to respectfully share.

## Actions to be Completed

Handover with both previous officers needs to be completed.

Following our first committee meeting we will need to work to implement passed motions. The written motions submitted reflect a restocking of the department’s assets following use throughout the year, as well as an expansion of the 2020 Auslan program.

Establishment of a media strategy for 2021.

Further development of plans (examples below).

## Plans

It is my sincere hope that I will be able to engage as much as possible with the disabilities community this year. In doing so, we will need to continue to explore how alternative spaces are created online to replace those that unfortunately remain unavailable in person. I do believe this is also an opportunity to reflect on what the department does beyond creating safe & intersectional spaces. Below I have outlined a few projects that I intend to work on throughout the year aimed at improving how we serve those with disabilities.

### AAP Reform

Academic adjustment plans (AAP) have been a frequently raised concern within the department. The way university treats students with disabilities as well as any student with a broader need for special consideration is not up to the standard set by other universities. Throughout 2021, I intend to pursue this issue with the relevant bodies within the university and UMSU. Of primary concern are the lack of clarity about what a student is entitled to, the difficulty of registration, and discretionary rights left to the university in established AAPs.

### Re-imagining the department beyond one type of disability

The way the disabilities department is seen by and can reach students has been highlighted as unbalanced. Particularly, the consensus within the department appears to be that it does a poor job of being visible to those who suffer from learning disabilities or have issues with mental health. To address this, I am interested in pursuing a project to refine the visibility of the department to be more in line with its constitutional aims and objectives. This will be something to seek a broad range of inputs about, and it is my intention to make this a focus of one of the committee’s earlier meetings. In addition to better serving the students the department exists to serve, I anticipate this process will increase the visibility of mental health as well as be an opportunity uncovered under-represented student’s rights issues.

### A more informed department

It has come to my attention that there appears to be a lack of access to key information regarding the prevalence of and information regarding disability within UMSU’s members as well as the university’s student body as a whole. In aiming to represent students with disabilities, it is my belief that access to both greater qualitative and quantitative information will be beneficial. This information will allow us to pursue targeted advocacy where it is most needed, without having to guess at the prevalence of specific issues.

It is my intention to seek specific statistics from where they may be already available at the university or within UMSU, as well as explore how this information may be gathered in an appropriate way if necessary. Additionally, I will be seeking to expand how the disability community can have input on the department. This could take the form of periodic surveys, anonymous contact boxes, running discussion workshops, and seeking input from external disability organisations.

Preamble: The disabilities space has proven to be a fantastic space for students with disabilities. Books have been invaluable in creating a welcoming environment. This motion seeks to expand this into a resource by acquiring a selection of books that are written by, for, or on those with disabilities and their experiences.

**7.1 Use of the remaining 2020 Disabilities Department Budget – Purchase of Books**

Motion: To move $600 from the 2020 Budget Line ‘Campaign’ to purchase books from Booktopia including:

* Reframing Disability in Manga
* Made Possible
* The Power of Disability
* Stairs and Whispers
* The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating
* Autobiography of a Face
* Ugly
* Sick
* Ride High Pineapple
* Disability Visibility
* From Disability to Diversity
* Working with People with Learning Disabilities
* Growing Up Disabled in Australia
* Learn Braille
* Turtles All the Way Down
* It’s Kind of a Funny Story

Moved:

Seconded:

Preamble: The Disabilities Space seeks to be a safe place of trust. In view of the role it plays within the community, there may be cases where it is a more accessible place for the application of first aid. Considering this, this motion seeks to provide the resources required should this need arise.

**7.2 Use of the remaining 2020 Disabilities Department Budget – Purchase of First Aid Equipment**

Motion: To move $230 from the 2020 Budget Line ‘Maintenance’ to pay for the purchasing of First Aid Items from St John Ambulance including Two Hot/Cold Pack, Workplace National First Aid Kit Portable and Adhesive Shapes Various -50 pack.

Moved:

Seconded:

Preamble: The Disabilities Space has a Nintendo Switch which has proven popular. However, with only two controllers this limits the collaborative nature and accessibility of the system. Additionally, with only a small subset of games, a lack of variety restricts the audience of the system.

**7.3 Use of the 2020 Disabilities Department Budget – Purchasing Disabilities Room Items**

Motion: To move $245 from the 2020 Budget Line ‘Maintenance’ to pay for the purchasing of a range of materials required in the Disabilities Space from JB Hi Fi including Two additional Joycons, Overcooked 2 and Mario Tennis Aces.

Moved:

Seconded:

Preamble: Software subscriptions enable more effective implementation of work where required. Design tools can be used for the creation of branded material if working with the Comms department is excessive. Task management tools can assist officers to collaborate more efficiently and transparently.

**7.4 Use of the 2020 Disabilities Department Budget – Subscription for 2021 Disabilities Department**

Motion: To move up to, $170, from the 2020 Budget Line ‘Campaigns’ to pay for the purchasing of That the department spend $170 on an annual subscription for Canva to be used to create material for the department and $100 on annual subscriptions for Todoist for both Office Bearers to be used to conduct business relating to the department.

Moved:

Seconded:

Preamble: 2020 has seen significant challenges to the way this department can engage with its community. Providing online beginner Auslan classes has been one way to bridge this gap. The program saw a significant excess of demand, with over forty people who applied missing out. Additionally, an opportunity has been presented to help the department reach a wider audience by collaborating with the Welfare Department for additional places.

**7.5 Use of the 2020 Disabilities Department Budget – Expansion of the Auslan classes Program**

Motion: To move $5000 from the 2020 Budget Line ‘Events’ to pay for the purchasing of additional 50 spots for students to attend Auslan classes through Learn Auslan Online.

Moved:

Seconded:

**7.6 Selection of the Participants**

Motion: For the Disabilities and Welfare committee to select the Auslan attendees using the UMSU Travel and Conference Policy. With the questionnaire comprising of the following questions:

* + Why do you want to attend Auslan Classes?
	+ Why is learning Auslan important to you?
	+ In what way do you plan to apply the skills and knowledge you learn from the Auslan classes in your life and in the student community at UMSU?
	+ Do you have any healthcare or other concessions cards?
	+ Do you currently receive any financial support?
	+ On what basis are you employed?
	+ Do you have any accessibility requirements to attend these classes?
	+ How did you find out about Auslan classes?
	+ Do you have any other information that you want to add?

Moved:

Seconded:

**7.7 Adoption of a regular meeting schedule**

Motion: that the following schedule be adopted for meetings of the disabilities committee, to be held at 4pm unless otherwise notified:

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| Date | Context |
| 6/1 |  |
| 3/2 |  |
| 24/2 | O-Week |
| 10/3 | Week 2 |
| 24/3 | Week 4 |
| 7/4 | Week 6 |
| 21/4 | Week 8 |
| 5/5 | Week 10 |
| 19/5 | Week 12 |
| 23/6 | Third Week of Exams |
| 21/7 |  |
| 4/8 | Week 2 |
| 18/8 | Week 4 |
| 1/9 | Week 6 |
| 15/9 | Week 8 |
| 29/9 | Week 10 |
| 13/10 | Week 12 |
| 17/11 | Third Week of Exams |

 Moved:

 Seconded:

**9.1 Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations of all Members of the Disabilities Committee**

Within the Disabilities Department, we treat one another with care and respect during and outside of our meetings. Everyone’s voice and valued and everyone is entitled to have a say in the management of this department. No one should be made to feel intimidated or feel that they are not able to voice their concerns. It is the responsibility of all members to ensure that all decisions being made are done in the best interest of the members of UMSU and adhere to the UMSU Constitution.

Voting members are to miss no more than three in-semester committees in a row or in total. Not meeting this requirement will result in removal from the committee.
The Disabilities Office Bearers are responsible for organising no less than one monthly meeting outside of semester, and fortnightly meetings, during the semester.

**10. Next Meeting**

1. **Close**