



**University of Melbourne Student Union
Meeting of the Women's Department
Agenda
Wednesday 22nd December 2021, 3pm AEDT
Meeting 1(22)
Location: Online**

<https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/83069827871?pwd=ZWtvODducTYraGZLeDIRaFpQR3ozZz09>

Password: 351801

Meeting opened at 3:08pm.

1. Procedural Matters

1.1. Election of Chair

Kraanti Agarwal nominates herself as chair, Imogen Senior seconds. Passes without dissent.

1.2. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Custodians

1.3. Attendance

Kraanti Agarwal, Lauren Scott (Scottie), Imogen Senior, Jaslyn Potter, Disha Zutshi, Mietta Stephens, Kaori Weightman.

1.4. Apologies

1.5. Proxies

Arshia Arora proxies to Disha Zutshi.

Jemilla Lister proxies to Jaslyn Potter.

Ngairé Bogemann proxies to Mietta Stephens.

1.6. Membership

Laura Cardamone has resigned from the committee.

1.7. Adoption of Agenda

Passes without dissent.

2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

3. Conflicts of Interest Declaration

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

5. Correspondence

6. Office Bearer Reports

Acceptance passes without dissent.

1. Operational Business

1.1. Introductions.

Officers and the committee introduced themselves and what motivated their involvement in the department.

1.2. Expectations.

The officers set expectations regarding attendance, conduct, respect, and use of content warnings.

1.3. Timeline.

Kraanti outlined the timeline for the next few months - Cancer Awareness Week in early February, and Scottie explained current stage of planning for Summerfest in late February.

1.4. Diversifying the Women's Room book shelf.

The officers would greatly appreciate committee recommendations for the purchase of around twenty new books. Current considerations include an increased selection of Indigenous literature and decolonial feminist theory. We will be prioritising BIPOC and First Nations authors in our final selection, which will be presented to the committee for approval in January.

Scottie provided a list of five books that they had thought of, which the committee responded positively to. They advised to either state in committee, or to contact either Officer, before next committee meeting to suggest books for the finalised list.

7. Motions on Notice

8. Motions without Notice

9. Other Business

Mietta - Do officers have ideas to promote Women's Room existence?

Scottie - Repeated lockdowns made the room difficult to promote, hopes that in-person collectives and availability of necessities (food, menstrual products, etc) will help promote awareness.

Jaslyn - Should we have set times outside of meetings to get to know each other?

Kraanti - Women's Department should be about community, agrees and hopes we can build strong relationships with each other.

10. Next Meeting

Officers will send the WhenIsGood soon, and plan to hold a meeting in early January to pass budget and expenses.

11. Close

Meeting closed at 3:37pm.

University of Melbourne Student Union
Lauren Scott
To Women's Committee 1(22)
22 December 2021

Key Activities

It certainly has been a hectic past few weeks! After a week's worth of induction and governance training, we were thrown somewhat haphazardly into the world of student unionism. Nonetheless, I am so incredibly honoured to be here representing women and non-binary people at this university, and I fully intend to give this department the care and commitment it deserves. To this lovely committee, we cannot do any of our work without you. Thank you for dedicating your time and energy into ensuring the effective functioning of this department going forward.

My relevant activities throughout the first half of December mostly involved preparation for the next year - handover, induction, preparing our department budget, and introduction to key bodies that the Women's Officers will sit on. These are elaborated below under the relevant subheadings.

Handover [cw/s: sexual misconduct (no specific detail)]

We met with our predecessors twice in the handover process, with a focus on the more practical advice and knowledge that they had gained over the course of their term. I was satisfied with the quality of handover - despite issues with scheduling conflicts leading to it occurring a bit later than expected, it was sufficiently comprehensive. We will be taking on several of their recommendations, particularly regarding our annual publication - editor payment, and gender diversity beyond the binary. By the time this committee meets, we should have also met formally with Patrick Tidmarsh, UMSU's Sexual Harm Response Coordinator. His knowledge and expertise in the field has been incredibly valued through several past officers' terms, and I do not doubt that he will continue to be a cherished ally in our fight against sexual misconduct on campus.

Induction

Induction and training for all incoming officers occurred from 29 November to 3 December, rolling into the first few days of our term. I don't have much to say on this - the main focuses and learnings were the role and responsibilities of various staff departments, effective governance, managing department finances, etc.

Department Budget

Our first regular council of the year, where our union's budget for the next year will be reviewed, has yet to be held (found out after sending notice that it's happening the day after this committee). Unfortunately, this means that we cannot present our department budget for committee approval until this happens. Figured it'd be less of a hassle to just wait until early

January, rather than subject you all to the confusion of voting to adjourn and reconvene during the university shut-down period. Nonetheless, we have been working on this since early November, and I for one am quite relieved to have sent in the final copy for council approval. We hope you'll like what you see - we're centering diversity, decolonisation, advocacy, and community in our department, and we feel this is reflected in the events and collectives we have planned for 2022. Just a selection of the events I am most excited for personally include a decolonising feminism panel with UMSU Indigenous (sovereignty must be centred in our feminist action on stolen land, always), the return of Rad Sex and Consent Week, and a celebratory event with Activities on International Women's Day featuring a plant-based BBQ and various women and non-binary student performers.

Of course, we have also been tentatively planning for Summerfest, but it will be difficult to present a solid plan until we have a clearer understanding of our financial capacity going into the next year. Projected SSAF decreases have been quite the damper on our ambitions, unfortunately.

Respect at Melbourne [cw/s: sexual misconduct (no specific detail)]

The Respect Taskforce, the university's strategic body in preventing and tackling sexual misconduct on campus, is in the process of being rolled over into a new structure. At this stage, the Women's Officers will sit on the Respect at Melbourne Reference Group as a consultative body for the Respect at Melbourne Committee. On Friday 17th December, I sat as UMSU's representative in lieu of the President in the interview panel for a role within the Committee. While I feel tentatively optimistic in the role this initiative will play in the implementation of survivor centric strategy, it is important for the university to approach tackling sexual misconduct understanding that while action plans and advisory bodies certainly have their place, it is clear, tangible outcomes that will garner the trust of students. We can expect more information on this committee in the coming months, with a tentative commencement in February.

On a final note, can we as a committee manifest us receiving access to our department inbox before Wednesday? Almost three weeks without access is not ideal, I have to say, and is starting to limit our ability to do our work effectively.

Action Points to be completed by next report

1. Present department budget for committee approval.
2. Open nominations for SA/SH Working Group in council and convene first meeting.

Refer to this link for further information:

<https://umsu.unimelb.edu.au/communities/women/umsu-sexual-assault-and-harassment-working-group/>

3. Make further progress with Summerfest.
4. Finalise selection of book purchases for the Women's Room.

University of Melbourne Student Union
Women's Department Report
Kraanti (Aashi Agarwal)
To Women's Committee 1(22)
22rd December 2021

Key Activities

From the other side of the table, seeking opportunities and raising my concerns as a vulnerable international student in a whole new country, to leading one of the most important autonomous departments at the University of Melbourne, I knew it was a dream come true. The past few weeks have been quite exhausting especially because I was overseas and had very little time to collaborate with my co-officer and other staff members. Yet, I managed it quite well. I am excited to travel back to Melbourne soon and finally start my term as the Women's Officer and work with the incredible team of Women's Committee Members.

My prime activities since the start of my tenure have been mostly about handovers, induction, completing training modules, setting my staff and department inbox (which we haven't received yet), preparing the department budget with my co-Officer, brainstorming ideas for collectives and most importantly the "Cancer Awareness Project".

Induction and handover

Not how much I hated the timings for the induction, I really appreciate Ciara's efforts to make it as accessible as possible for the OBs overseas. I did manage to complete all the training modules and recordings, which indeed was very helpful. We also met Women's OBs from 2021 during our handover which took place in two halves. They shared a lot of insights and points to remember while working as OBs and importance of looking after our mental health which is really appreciated. We have also scheduled a quick catch up with Dr Patrick

Tidmarsh (UMSU Sexual Harm Response Coordinator) which will be helpful in getting our heads around especially with key priorities the department will be working on for the coming year.

Women's Department Budget

Both Scottie and I had been working hard to draft the department's budget which will help us to fund all the incredible collectives and events we've planned for far. This will be approved after discussions and negotiations at the first budget council, ie., scheduled for Thursday 23rd Dec. Once approved, we plan to present this to the committee soon (sometime during January, hopefully I will be back in Melbourne by then). We are quite disheartened by the SSAF decrease but are hopeful to run some important campaigns and events. Unfortunately, we will be able to present this to the committee only after the council approval.

Collectives and Events

This year department plans to introduce some new collectives in collaboration with Creative arts and UMSU Intl to run monthly collectives aiming to provide activism through art and creating a safer community for international women and non-binary students, respectively. Other than that, we've been in touch with Queer OBs and POC OBs to plan a list of events and collectives. Moreover, during the Cancer Awareness Week (4th February), in collaboration with UMSU Welfare and Disabilities department, Women's plan to host an event and online campaign. I have been working for a past few days on this which involves meeting with the Events team to finalise speaker payments and lists, Comms team for the resource formation support and Design team to help us prepare designs for our online campaign.

Action Points to be completed by next report

1. Present budget for committee's approval
2. Finalise speaker list for the Cancer awareness project and open registrations for the in-person event
3. Liaise with the Ida bar Manager to book venue and request staff for the Cancer Awareness Project
4. Prepare first cut of dept intro video
5. Finalise selection of book purchase for the Women's Room
6. Open nominations for the SA/SH working group, send out notice for the first meeting and convene the first meeting before the end of this month.