



**University of Melbourne Student Union
Meeting of the Constitution, Regulations &
Policy Working Group
Minutes
Thursday March 17 2022, 11am
Meeting 2(22)
Location: Joe Napolitano B**

<https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/86830739664?pwd=RmJKdXA0VkluOGdod1BmK2hHOVpzZz09>
Password: 543342

Meeting opened at 11:05am

1. Procedural Matters

1.1. Election of Chair

Motion 1: That Amelia Bright be elected as Chair

Mover: Amelia Bright

Seconded: Jesse Gardner-Russell

CARRIED

1.2. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Custodians

So acknowledged.

1.3. Attendance

Amelia Bright, Sophie Nguyen, Joanna Guelas, Charlotte Waters, Marcie Di Bartolomeo, Rook Davis, Jesse Gardner-Russell, Nancy Ciara Griffiths (minute-taker)

1.4. Adoption of Agenda

Motion: To adopt the Agenda as presented.

Mover: Chair

CARRIED

2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

N/A

3. Correspondence

N/A

4. Changes Under Consideration

4.1. UMSU International autonomy;

- Had chat with UMSUI
- Need further consultation with Intl students on how this should look

- There were changes made last year that didn't really have any concrete affect
- Factually implied that intl was completely independent from UMSU, but this is rather contradictoy
- More concerned with fair remuneration rather than complete independence from UMSU
- AGM this year would focus on cleaning up last year's changes from a factional stance
- Not really looking at huge operational changes
- Question from Jesse Gardner-Russell: are UMSUI looking at a model for their own indepence much like GSA in getting their own funding and being their own incorporation?
- Amelia Bright: No, looking more at fair remuneration. They are aware that if they ceded from UMSU completely they would be 'screwed' for SSAF, as they SSAF allocation model is coming up too quickly

4.2. Remuneration of UMSU International Office Bearers;

- What has been costed before, paying the entire student rep body would cost a massive amount (1.5m over three years)
- UMSUI is currently fully recognising that paying every single member of committee is unfeasible
- There are OBs in UMSUI that essentially do the same level of work UMSU OBs do, and they want to be remunerated for that
- What has been put forward to sec and agreed with on principle: remunerate the pres, the vice pres, sec, treasurer
 - President: 0.8FTE
 - Others: 0.6FTE
- There needs to be a much more detailed proposal put forward to the working group RE costings
- Need to also investigate the issues in paying Intl OBs at all – it can be done, is done already with OBs, but we need to ensure it's done correctly and compliant with the migration act (e.g., max work hours)
 - One such issue, need to ensure that the 20 work limit is not gone over
- Question is that it needs to be costed by our accountants and lawyers need to be consulted
- Rook Davis: if we are a union this needs to be made a priority
- There is groundwork in the constitution to pay the pres and vps an honorarium, should council issue it, but it is not mandatory
 - The treas and sec are not included
 - Amelia Bright of the opinion that the const changes required need to enshrine a mandatory honorarium

- Charlotte Waters: should there be backpay?
 - Action for Amelia Bright: check if previous council motioned to backpay and if this must be affected
- But general consensus is there should be a level of backpay

4.3. More Media Office Bearers;

- Main focus is on a Radio Fodder manager
- Really struggled in getting a manager as it is a role that really can't be unpaid
- An additional OB for Fodder would be a solution to addressing Radio Fodder
- An extra news editor: Jo has struggled with the workload, having this shared between another OB would assist in managing this
 - Potentially having a Digital News Editor and (non-digital?) News Editor
- Looking at breaking down the department into more specialised roles
- Jesse Gardner-Russell: should a Radio Fodder OB be elected separately? 5-6 OBs is a lot of officers to be elected into one department
- Rook Davis: it's been raised that the radio fodder role requires very specialised knowledge, should an election process be relied upon, would there be a risk in electing someone not qualified?
- Charlotte Waters: good point, however paying a manager separately is very difficult procedurally and within our budget. Also, every editor position so far requires a high level of skill, so is already a risk that natural falls within this department
- Sophie Nguyen: realistically if we are bringing a student into a role and paying them over the course of a year, they should be paid honorarium and therefore elected
- Rook Davis: could there be a level of training to ensure that this OB role is inducted properly?
- Charlotte Waters: def something that would be necessary
- Amelia Bright: one proposal to enshrine a 5th OB, another to enshrine a 6th at most
 - Let's action that we get this costed, 5th at least 6th at most.
- Rook Davis: we are seeing with these Constitutional suggestions a lot of payments and additional honorariums, so when it comes to costing we need to look at what the priorities are – considering that financially we might not be able to grant everything
- Amelia Bright: agreed, financially unlikely to be feasible to grant every request. At very least, the 6th OB might be the lowest priority, followed by additional Southbank OBs.

4.4. Another Southbank Office Bearer;

- Would this be a shared position with an existing OB, or a new role altogether?
- Will need to be costed
- Need to ask SB how high a priority this is

- Joanna Guelas: what would this new OB theoretically be doing? Southbank is a large campus of course, but would be good to understand what the role would be for
- Southbank OBs not present to comment.
- Amelia Bright: we will need to ask them to provide a proposal of what the additional OB would do and what the role entails

4.5. Secretariat/Assistant General Secretary;

- There is a version where this doesn't cost anything
- At DUSA there is a committee consisting of three councillors selected by the secretary or elected by council to do tasks such as writing minutes, compiling agendas, and doing administrative work that bogs down the role
- The role is massive and there are many things Amelia Bright would do as General Secretary but does not have time for (e.g. chairing more working groups)
- Alternative would be having an assisting general secretary, as a paid OB
- Purpose is to cover off the more day-to-day administration, to lend more time to the General Secretary to improve the const, policies, regs, working groups
- Jesse Gardner-Russell: there is only so much SSAF to go around, the idea of the secretariat makes a bit more sense rather than an additional OB
 - Council is already privy to more sensitive information as the peak student decision making body, so makes sense for the secretariat to be elected from this body
 - It would be more preferable that this is elected by council from council, rather than handpicked by the General Secretary
- The General Secretary is held accountable through reporting, need to determine how the secretariat would be held accountable and how would the General Secretary maintain a level of oversight to what falls within their office?
 - The General Secretary could nominate members for the secretariat, and then Students' Council could approve/reject. This way the secretariat still falls within the General Secretary delegation and is reporting back to them, but Students' Council maintains a level of oversight.
 - Action: Amelia Bright will take on board the feedback and will draft a fuller proposal for future working groups

4.6. Media committee;

- Was touted previously to Amelia Bright, wanted to hear Media's thoughts
- Charlotte Waters: we're still undecided, would be good in many ways to have a selected group of people to help out and make decisions, and hold the OBs accountable
 - Main worry is that because it would be all elected positions, it could become factional
 - Want to protect media from factional politics and maintain independence from the other tickets

- Joanna Guelas: other concern, having a committee adds a workload – holding committee meetings, writing minutes, etc. OBs currently don't have that capacity
 - Charlotte Waters: agreed, we are already overwhelmed with work. If there was a 5th OB it could be more possible? But even then
- Amelia Bright: historically the reason why the dept doesn't have a committee is because they are not a representative dept (as advised by Phoebe Churches)
 - Agree that a committee stacked out with factional tickets sounds 'grim'
 - How about this can be revisited next year, if/when an additional OB is introduced
- Marcie Di Bartolomeo: would there be other models of committee that sit out of the election processes that could work instead?
 - Amelia Bright: could potentially be something to look at

4.7. Affirmative action requirements;

- Key change: to not set a minimum number of women, but to set a minimum number of women and non-binary people
- Wording: could change to “non-cis man” or “people identifying as a woman or with women” (this is used by other universities)
- Regarding concern for cis-men claiming to identify as NB or a women for AA purposes, not worth entertaining playing into this notion
- Rook Davis: personally believe that non-cis man is a better phrasing, as a trans dude's standpoint is that not all non-cis men will benefit from male-privilege, so their inclusion and representation should be protected.
- Jesse Gardner-Russell: should cis be defined, for those not knowing the meaning?
- Amelia Bright: yah, this could be included in the nomination and election forms
- Charlotte Waters: could the phrase 'non-cis men' be misinterpreted? Point of clarification needed for the exact phrasing
 - Amelia Bright: the wording would be instead of “must be a woman” to “must not be a cisgender man”

4.8. Southbank voting access;

- Found at the previous elections that the Southbank polling booth hours have been limited and that sometimes Southbank students have had to be sent to Parkville to vote
- Unfortunately this actually falls to the university, they have the power to control the polling hours, rather than our constitution. RO cannot affect this
- However, the introduction of mixed mode voting means that students at Southbank don't need to be redirected to Parkville to vote anymore, but rather just online
- Amelia Bright: don't foresee constitutional changes required

4.9. Plain language electoral regulations;

- No const changes, just requires a document to be written to make the electoral regs more accessible
- Would need to be drafted before elections but after constitutional changes are made
- Who would be tasked? Amelia Bright, Phoebe Churches and Ciara Griffiths can discuss
- Jesse Gardner-Russell: Could it be translated into other languages?
- Amelia Bright: there was a translation working group last year, fell to the wayside. Not that there isn't an appetite, but rather we need more time.

4.10. Student email campaigning;

- Amelia Bright: Currently ballots can be sent to student emails in an online election, personal opinion is that in this regard the inbox is their polling place
 - Whether consensual or not, students have been receiving election materials and campaigning to their inboxes
- Question is if their student emails count as their polling place, then having campaign materials landing in their inbox is inappropriate
 - Jesse Gardner-Russell: the polling place realistically is the link followed in the email to the website
 - Students still consent to opening a campaign email, or choosing to ignore/delete it
 - Important to consider the importance of fair and informed voting. All students have access to email, it is the one shared platform to all students. Therefore, for campaign information and how-to-votes to come into student emails it provides maximum opportunity to participate in umsu elections
- Rook Davis: first thing that comes to mind - not all tickets have the same access to the email database, for it to be truly fair, all tickets would have to have the access. Last year there was concern over where tickets were getting their data from.
 - Last year students were getting really upset over the level of contact received regarding student elections. For students who don't want to be involved, the constant contact does feel non-consensual
- Amelia Bright: when it comes to informing voters who they can vote for, the best means for that is through independent means – the best format being from the Farrago and their UMSU election guide.
- Jesse Gardner-Russell: banning one kind of campaigning could be a slippery slope into restricting many aspects of campaigning.
 - Re-iterated that students can choose to ignore any campaigning online
 - Want to ensure that every student is able to be reached for campaigning
 - As long as all messages and campaigning is approved by the RO, there shouldn't be an issue
- Rook Davis: it still feels that there is an implication there than tickets have access to the same data (aka all student emails)

- Amelia Bright: do you know where tickets sourced these emails?
 - Jesse Gardner-Russell: yes, but I don't have to tell you
 - Amelia Bright: fair enough
- Amelia Bright: looks like we cannot come to a decision, lets table this for further discussion at a later point.

4.11. Ticket spending regulations;

- There seems to be an appetite from student to have a clear reporting procedure from tickets as to where their funding is coming from and what it is being spent on
 - E,g, out of pocket, from political parties, through fundraising
- Jesse Gardner-Russell: where would the administrative burden fall for this?
 - Amelia Bright: the RO
 - Jesse Gardner-Russell: there are merits to this, my concern is that would the administrative cost actually outweigh what the union can afford as compared to other financial needs?
 - Own understanding is that most tickets are funded out of pocket through students
 - Amelia Bright: we could determine this by asking OGL if this would increase the cost of their services?
- Ciara Griffiths: consider this isn't within the scope of what we have currently contracting OGL to do this year, and mightn't be something that an RO would do. Rather might fall back onto the tickets to report.
 - Amelia Bright: perhaps this is something that the registrars report to the RO, that gets distributed in the election report
 - Ciara Griffiths: no harm in asking
 - Sophie Nguyen: keep in mind protecting student information, students mightn't want to publicise their names or how much they donated
 - Amelia Bright: okay, eg. How about breakdown of how much funding a ticket has, number of donors, etc
- Jesse Gardner-Russell: what evidence would a ticket need to provide? Would it be good faith, or need to provide receipts?
 - Amelia Bright: requiring all evidence is good in theory and with transparency, but in practice requiring tickets to have all the infrastructure is not feasible and disadvantageous to smaller tickets. Also, puts back a lot more work on the RO which falls back into the contractual issue
 - So whilst imperfect, a good faith basis might be better. Instead, inviting tickets to submit a funding report to the RO for the election report, and then if a ticket doesn't this gets published as well.
- Charlotte Waters: Farrago would be quite interested in this data

- General opinion is that this lends a level of transparency, voter education, and good faith.
- To work on: drafting clear expectations of the registrars on what details to provide in a funding report

4.12. Clearer separation of online ballots;

- Basically the risk of having the ballots all together online, the paper forms its very clear it is a ballot per position – especially clear for autonomous positions. Based off of anecdotes from last year’s online ballots, it was less clear. E.g., text advising to only vote for autonomous depts if you identify as such.
- Based off of last years voting stats, 60-70% of votes for President also voted for Queer Dept, implying this percentage identified as queer. We cannot obviously determine if this is the case or not, but to protect the autonomous depts from accidental voting in future we should ensure that the language and presentation is clearer on the ballot
- Jesse Gardner-Russell: perhaps there should be a checkbox asking if the voter identifies as part of an autonomous group, that then leads to that ballot?
 - Amelia Bright: agreed
- Amelia Bright: looks like no dissent here, lets pursue

4.13. Southbank representation on Creative Arts committee;

- Marcie Di Bartolomeo: noted that the constitution notes a requirement of a minimum two Southbank students on the Creative Arts Committee
- Amelia Bright: matter then to raise with the RO to ensure this is followed in upcoming elections

4.14. Attaching autonomous council representatives to autonomous committees;

- There is a bit of disconnection between councillors and autonomous committees – understanding is that council has ultimate authority, and therefore the autonomous representatives on council have same authority
- Proposing that the autonomous reps on council are made defacto non-voting representatives on the committees
 - Alternatively, committees have power to co-opt up to three non-voting committee members already within the const.
 - Question is if there is more value in ensuring the council reps are made automatically a non-voting member or leave as is
- To protect from factional politics, perhaps better to err towards defacto membership

4.15. Standing Orders requirement for every second chair to be a woman;

- To Amelia Bright, if the General Secretary is a man then this means that 50% of all Councils cannot be chaired by the General Secretary. Understand that it is not enshrined that the General Secretary must chair Council, but believe that there is more value in the General Secretary chairing Council than not

- Amelia Bright also noted the requirement that every third speaker must be a woman – this would be adjusted according to the previously discussed AA change
- Seeing no discussion, seem to be in agreement. Just requires deleting a clause

4.16.OB attendance requirements for Students' Council.

- Some students have very intensive courses (e.g. Southbank) that impacts the time they have to attend council
- Amelia Bright: not for taking out the attendance requirement, and the reason for the requirement is to keep OBs accountable to the student body
 - However, opinion is that the reports do serve this purpose, but missing the opportunity to question the report is a concern
- Middle ground: Extending the consecutive attendance requirement to three Councils over two
 - Unsure if this should be extended to councillors
- Are people amenable?
 - Marcie Di Bartolomeo want to acknowledge that there are no Southbank OBs present to speak on their own thoughts
 - Amelia Bright this can be further discussed at future working group, can also discuss with them directly
- Consensus with the three missed Council limit. Could also follow up with the university special consideration circumstances for elected reps, to allow for leniency from the university towards reps
 - Sophie Nguyen and Amelia Bright can follow up with the University at Elected Reps

5. New Change Proposals

5.1. Constitution

- MB been talking to Erin about the Student Theatre Groups Council, there has been historically low interest and it hasn't run in a while. Should this be re-enforced, or pealed back?
 - Amelia Bright opinion is that while there may be low engagement currently, this shouldn't mean it gets pealed back. Perhaps worth workshopping ways to increase engagement?

5.2. Electoral Regulations

No discussion

5.3. Standing Orders

No discussion

6. Actions from Previous Meeting

7. Next Meeting

8. Close

Meeting closed at 1pm