

University of Melbourne Student Union

Minutes of meeting 1(16) of the Constitutional Working Group

12:00 PM, 18.3.2016

OB Space, Union House

Attendance: James Bashford (General Secretary), Adriana Mellis (Wom*n's Officer), Ivan Xie, Caleb Triscari (Media Officer), Yan Zhuang (Welfare Officer)

Items for discussion

1. Introduction

James introduced the purpose of the CWG and outlined the proposed timeline to finalise changes by week 6 in order to pass them in time for a semester 1 SGM.

In establishing the CWG, Students' Council identified Affirmative Action, a People of Colour department and office bearer honoraria as priorities to be examined.

James raised casual vacancies as another area in need of amendment. Amendments had already been discussed in previous years regarding the procedures for casual vacancies in offices with two OBs. Currently the constitution does not allow a replacement if only one OB resigns or is removed, meaning the other OB must take over as sole OB unless they also resign in order to be reappointed with a new co-OB.

Caleb raised the eligibility for VCA elections as an issue as many students who have most of their classes at VCA but are technically enrolled at Parkville can't vote or run for VCASA. Caleb suggested extending eligibility to any student enrolled in the VCA and MCM faculty. James raised his concern that this would create essentially a faculty department rather than a campus department. He suggested contacting the University to clarify who is and isn't considered a VCA student.

James also raised a need for general housekeeping changes to update anachronisms, mismatched numbering etc. This includes outdated references to MUOSS (now called UMSU International).

2. Affirmative Action

Issues raised for potential reform included the eligibility of trans women in voting for Women's positions, raising the AA threshold from 50% rounded down to rounded up and the idea of AA requirements for election tickets (eg: 50% of ticket candidates from each ticket must be women)

Adriana raised concerns that AA on tickets could lead to pigeonholing of women who want to be involved.

In terms of any AA changes, there is a need for CWG to facilitate rather than lead discussion and to allow the Wom*n's collective to take the lead in developing any changes.

James said there was a need for all autonomous collectives to be engaged in the CWG process.

Adriana identified increasing the AA threshold and inclusivity of trans women in the wom*n's department as priorities. AA on tickets would not be a priority as this would be a controversial issue that needs broad discussion before any changes could be developed.

3. People of Colour

It was agreed that the People of Colour collective should take the lead in determining the aims and objectives of a possible POC department, the definition of POC and eligibility for voting and running for election. This requires significant work over the next few weeks and will also need to include consultation of other collectives such as Wom*n of colour and queers of colour.