

University of Melbourne Student Union

Minutes of meeting 2(16) of the Constitutional Working Group

10:00 AM, 24.3.2016

OB Space, Union House

Attendance: James Bashford (General Secretary), Jesse Krause, Zac Power (Environments Officer), Yasmine Luu (Clubs and Societies Officer), Anisa Rogers (Environment Officer), Megan Pollock (Activities Officer)

Items discussed:

1. Department aims & objectives

The Environments officers had raised at the Ethical Sponsorship Working Group that their department's aims and objectives were not in line with what they would want them to be. This raised a broader issue that this section of the constitution has not been updated in many years and may no longer reflect the identity of these departments. OBs raised that they were not even aware of these aims and objectives. James raised a need to ensure OBs are aware of these objectives and meeting them.

James suggested sending these aims and objectives as well as relevant definitions to each department to review in consultation with their collectives and suggest any updates.

2. Sustainability

Another issue to arise from the ethical sponsorship working group was a lack of overt environmental consciousness in the constitution. While the statement of purposes covers values like non-discrimination and a commitment to free education, there is nothing about the environment. The environment dept. will work on consulting about a potential addition to the statement of purposes.

Anisa will research precedents from other organisations. It was suggested UMSU consider inserting the environment into a broader statement on the organisations commitment to ethics.

3. Wom*n's department

Adriana discussed the problematic nature of the current definition of "Woman" in the constitution and the way in which elections are conducted for the department.

The working group discussed various models for running autonomous elections and determined that there were various potential options with various pros and cons:

-Maintaining the current system where eligibility for the wom*n's dept. is based on the students gender on their enrolment.

- Opening eligibility to run to all students, contingent on the providing a statutory declaration that they identify as a woman (the system used by National Union of Students)
- Extending the current system to include the third gender option in the University's enrolment system.
- Giving all students a wom*n's ballot with polling staff explaining eligibility to vote to students as they receive it (the same system used for Queer ballots)
- Requiring students to ask for a wom*n's ballot

4. Candidate eligibility

A general discussion was held not relating directly to constitutional change on the ways in which candidates come to be preselected and ways of ensuring candidates are engaged in their department prior to their election.

It was agreed that this discussion sits firmly on the cultural side of the organisation rather than something which can or should be regulated by the constitution.

It was noted that the need for OBs to be involved prior to their election can vary from department to department. Some departments rely heavily on an established community but this shouldn't exclude candidates not previously involved in other departments as sometimes a department might need a fresh outside perspective.