

MINUTES

MEETING: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

HELD ON: 28 February 2020

TIME: 1:06pm to 3:30pm

LOCATION: Cullen Room

USU BOARD

Connor Wherrett, President

Lachlan Finch, Vice President

Maya Eswaran, Honorary Treasurer (until 3:06pm)

Decheng Sun, Honorary Secretary

Yinfeng Shen, Director

Zizheng Bai, Director (via audio link)

Nick Forbutt, Director

Ruolin Ma, Director

Caitlin Brown, Director

Di Wang, Director (via audio link)

Jane Drummond, Senate Appointed Director

Marie Leech, Senate Appointed Director

USU STAFF

Alexis Roitman, Chief Executive Officer

Dane Luo, Board Secretary

GUESTS

Professor Philippa Pattison AO, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

OBSERVERS

Elinor Stephenson

Jossie Warnant

MINUTES

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| 1. Opening |
| <p>The meeting opened at 1:06pm.</p> <p>The President delivered the Acknowledgement of Country.</p> |
| 1.1 Apologies and Leaves of Absence <p>A request was received that Zizheng Bai and Di Wang attend via audio link.</p> <p>Resolved B001/20 That Zizheng Bai and Di Wang be permitted to attend via audio link. Mover: Yinfeng Shen Seconder: Nick Forbutt 12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain</p> |
| 1.2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting <p>Nick Forbutt noted that Liv Ronan's name was misspelt and requested that it be amended.</p> <p>Resolved B002/20 That the Minutes of the Board of Directors held on 29 November 2019, as amended, be approved as a true and correct record. Mover: Ruolin Ma Seconder: Yinfeng Shen 12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain</p> |
| 1.3 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest <p>No conflicts disclosed.</p> |
| 2. Meeting Administration |
| 2.1 Business Arising from the Minutes Not Addressed Elsewhere <p>No business arising from the Minutes not addressed elsewhere.</p> |
| 2.2 Open Question Time <p>No questions were asked.</p> |
| 2.3 Motions on Notice <p>No motions were placed on Notice.</p> |
| 3. Matters for Decision |
| 3.1 Confidential Business |

Resolved**B003/20**

That the Board move *in camera*.

Mover: Ruolin Ma

Seconder: Jane Drummond

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

The Board moved *in camera* at 1:09pm.

Resolved**B004/20**

That the Board move *ex camera*.

Mover: Yinfeng Shen

Seconder: Lachlan Finch

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

The Board moved *ex camera* at 2:02pm.

Suspension of Standing Orders

Connor Wherrett and Alexis Roitman invited Professor Phillipa Pattison AO, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), to come to the Board meeting and discuss the priorities of the USU and University.

Resolved**B005/20**

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent Professor Phillipa Pattison AO from addressing the Board.

Moved: Yinfeng Shen

Seconder: Ruolin Ma

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

Connor Wherrett said the USU is going through a year of strategic planning and we want to know how to do this best. The USU will be in step with the University so that we are working together for the student community and improve the student experience, including on student mental health. We know that students who are engaged in clubs and societies are less likely to feel a sense of isolation, and their education and mental health improves. The USU is in the business of 'preventative medicine' and we have a duty of care.

Marie Leech added that there is a major change from the University that took a 'hands off' approach and it has been driven in a speedy way.

Professor Pattison addressed the Board and thanked the Board for an opportunity to speak. The USU is a key partner in the student experience. Whilst the USU and University act independently, we should agree on foundational principles on what is a good student experience. The University does not want to replace what the USU does. Rather, we want to help the USU reach more students than at present. Hopefully we can find ways to work together, especially reaching students who currently feel left out. The University wants them to have many choices and opportunities to follow both similar and different interests, and the club and society program is important to that.

Professor Pattison noted that in the Student Experience Strategy, the University has many initiatives to improve the student experience. The University has organised our thinking to focus on getting students involved, assisting transition into University and also the way we provide advice to students. A big piece of work is looking at the operating model for student support, particularly around academic

advice. We hope there can be human layer to get help students quickly through staff in Faculties and centralised specialist layers. This will be enabled by a technology platform so we can best find out what is working.

Professor Pattison said that the Coronavirus outbreak has had some impact on the University and we have gone through a process to reschedule some of the things we are doing depending on the finances. Overall, we are pleased that the Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor are committed to working on the student experience.

Liliana Tai noted that critical relationship between the USU and the University is SSAF funding. In recent years, there has been some changes in base funding and there may be been some impacts due to the Coronavirus outbreak. She asked whether there will be any changes in SSAF allocation.

Professor Pattison said that there will likely be some impact due to changes in enrolments. The University hopes to make sure every organisation get their base funding next year. But there are issues with how we get contestable funding. The USU can be assured that the University does not want to underfund student organisations to fund staff activities. Only a relatively small amount of SSAF funding goes to staff projects and we have now funded Student Support Services from elsewhere. It has been very positive to allow SSAF funding to make USU membership free.

Alexis Roitman asked what will be the impact of a change in Vice-Chancellor to the USU-University relationship. **Professor Pattison** said that Michael Spence was committed and supportive of student organisations and the Student Experience Strategy. At this moment of transition, the Chancellor and Senate are very committed to student organisations and the strategy, and this commitment will be considered in the selection process.

Professor Pattison thanked the USU on Welcome Fest and enjoyed walking down Eastern Avenue with the Board. Congratulations to Welcome Week Coordinator Dane Luo on the festival and on his new role.

Caitlin Brown said that the University's support for free membership has had a massive impact on many students, including herself. Without the USU, she would not be sitting here today. She came from a small school in Western Sydney and purchasing ACCESS membership for \$75 in her first year was impossible whilst on Centrelink, and didn't know about clubs and societies. This is the far reaching corner of students that free membership and the strategy should be reaching out to. Whilst students can choose to be uninvolved, the USU should focus on helping those students access the opportunities. **Professor Pattison** agreed and said that the mission is to connect with every student by creating as many opportunities as possible. Students are academically more successful if they are connected.

Ruolin Ma said that she can relate to Cady's scenario. Without the USU, she would not be on campus every day. The University's and USU's priorities are very similar and the two organisations should collaborate more. **Professor Pattison** said that if there is anything that is not good, please let the University know.

Connor Wherrett said that if Professor Pattison needs the USU to do anything for students affected by the coronavirus, please let him know. The USU is committed to supporting these students. **Professor Pattison** thanked the USU for the help with the video.

Resolved

B006/20

That Standing Orders be resumed.

Mover: Caitlin Brown

Seconder: Liliana Tai

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

3.2 Confidential Business

Resolved

B007/20

That the Board move *in camera*.

Mover: Yinfeng Shen

Seconder: Nick Forbutt

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

The Board moved *in camera* at 2:27pm.

Resolved

B008/20

That, in accordance with section 8.9.1 of the *Regulations*, the Board accepts the recommendation of the Electoral Committee and appoints James Hoare to act as Returning Officer for the 2020 USU Board and Executive Elections.

Mover: Caitlin Brown

Seconder: Yinfeng Shen

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

Resolved

B009/20

That the Board move *ex camera*.

Mover: Ruolin Ma

Seconder: Caitlin Brown

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

The Board moved *ex camera* at 2:57pm.

4. Matters for Discussion

4.1 CEO/Secretariat Report

Recommendation 1: That the Board notes the Report.

Alexis Roitman thanks Connor Wherrett for making himself so available during this time. She notes the difficulties with the lack of a proper secretariat. She is focusing a lot of time currently on the USU's relationship with the University and the University Infrastructure Strategy. There be a larger focus on the business side of the USU in the next few months. Transparency between the CEO, staff and Board is important. We must focus on retaining staff and student members. All the staff are working very hard and are exhausted after Welcome Week. Board reports will hopefully become more structured and concise. She notes there is planning about the response to the Coronavirus.

Ruolin Ma suggests doing a one-on-one greeting with the students. Connor Wherrett and others agree this should happen monthly.

Resolved

B010/20

That the Board notes the Report.

Mover: Marie Leech

Seconder: Jane Drummond

12 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

Maya Eswaran left the meeting at 3:06pm.

4.2 Finance Report

Recommendation 1: That the Board notes the Report:

1. USU Income Breakdown Charts
2. December 2019 Interim Results
3. January 2020 Interim Results

Note that these results are interim results, pending the audit in March 2020.

Alexis Roitman speaks about how there is a breakdown included on the income sources.

Ruolin Ma and **Nick Forbutt** asked for a graph about how money is spent on students. **Alexis Roitman** thinks we should report this at the AGM.

Alexis Roitman notes there was no Annual report done last year. Confusion about where it is, looks like there is only the Finance Report. A finance review will occur in March that will review the department and the systems there.

Jane Drummond notes our capital expenditure last year was greater than net surplus by approximately \$200,000 and asks if that will come out of reserves. **Alexis Roitman** answers affirmatively.

Resolved

B011/20

That the Board accepts the recommendation and notes the Report.

Mover: Ruolin Ma

Secunder: Marie Leech

11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

4.3 Operations Report

Recommendation 1: That the Board notes the Report.

Ruolin Ma asks whether there is a Manning and communication strategy. **Alexis Roitman** says we need to make a new strategy, including short-term strategy about trying to engage DJs and other solutions. We can explore opening it one day a week and try to ensure there is something that draws people there.

Ruolin Ma asks about our relationship with Fisher Library for the after \$6 Meals After 6pm pop up. **Alexis Roitman** said it was a great idea and says the USU is working on flexible food ideas.

Ruolin Ma wants to get information on relationship with Fisher and food truck updates for next Board meeting.

Resolved

B012/20

That the Board notes the Report.

Mover: Nick Forbutt

Seconded: Lachlan Finch
11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

4.4 Sales, Marketing and Membership Report

Recommendation 1: That the Board notes the Report.

Nick Forbutt wants to note for the future that marketing for Welcome Fest should have been earlier, a month in advance not promoted two weeks before. Whilst Tania Moroko said it is always two weeks before, this should be changed to a month earlier. **Connor Wherrett** said that is noted and good.

Resolved

B013/20

That the Board notes the Report.

Mover: Ruolin Ma

Seconded: Yinfeng Shen

11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

4.5 Programs Report

Recommendation 1: That the Board notes the Report.

Caitlin Brown asked about the miscommunication to move the Palladian Cup activities to Seymour Centre. She spoke to Tom from Programs but she heard it ended up being moved. **Alexis Roitman** agreed to follow up with Programs about what is happening with Palladian Cup and so there should be better communication between staff and changes.

Ruolin Ma raises issues about Mandarin Debating Club. **Connor Wherrett** notes will be discussed further in CCE.

Resolved

B014/20

That the Board notes the Report.

Mover: Nick Forbutt

Seconded: Yinfeng Shen

11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

4.6 Entrepreneurship & Innovation Report

Recommendation 1: That the Board notes the Report.

Alexis Roitman gives a CRM update and says USU is waiting for the reworked contract from ASG. Ash is in meeting with Nick and University today regarding their experiences, but we will see what happens.

Nick Forbutt asks about whether there is a revised timeline and what the legal issues were. **Alexis Roitman** said the contract was just not robust. Timeline will probably be pushed back into mid-March.

Yinfeng Shen said would be good to see Bright Ideas back.

Resolved

B015/20

That the Board notes the Report.

Mover: Ruolin Ma

Seconded: Jane Drummond

11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

4.7 Facilities Report

Recommendation 1: That the Board notes the Report.

Recommendation 2: That the USU escalates the urgent repairs with the University Infrastructure and Student Experience Working Group or other committee to be advised.

Alexis Roitman notes that the report has good news. Cleaning procurement is done and contract is robust. Jason Denne and Alexis Roitman went to see Ben Hoyle and the risk factors were discussed.

Decheng Sun wants Alexis Roitman to check up on the University with regards to the Reading Room repairs.

Nick Forbutt wants the repairs to Courtyard not to be made during semester. **Alexis Roitman** says it will be scheduled over the breaks.

Resolved

B016/20

That the Board accepts the recommendations and notes the Report.

Mover: Caitlin Brown

Seconded: Jane Drummond

11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

4.8 People and Culture Report

Recommendation 1: That the Board notes the Report.

Ruolin Ma questioned staff turnover. **Alexis Roitman** said turnover is a combination of personal reasons and professional circumstances.

Resolved

B017/20

That the Board notes the Report.

Mover: Yinfeng Shen

Seconded: Marie Leech

11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

Resolved

B018/20

That the Chair be moved to the Vice President.

Mover: Nick Forbutt

Seconded: Jane Drummond

11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

4.9 Executive Report

Recommendation 1: That the Board notes the Executive Report.

Connor Wherrett speaks to his report and notes that the Board should let him know if there is not enough communication.

Resolved

B019/20

That the Board notes the Executive Report.

Mover: Yinfeng Shen

Seconder: Nick Forbutt

11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

Resolved

B020/20

That the Chair be moved to the President.

Mover: Ruolin Ma

Seconder: Caitlin Brown

11 For / 0 Against / 0 Abstain

5. Matters for Noting

5.1 Minutes of the Work Health and Safety Committee

The Minutes were noted.

5.2 Minutes of the Debates Committee

No minutes were presented for noting.

5.3 Other Matters for Noting

No further matters for noting.

6. Close of Meeting

6.1 Matters for Disclosure

No matters for disclosure.

6.2 Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for Friday 27 March 2020 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm in the Cullen Room.

The meeting closed.