



President's April Memo

April has given students and staff some well needed mid-semester break time. As we get to the middle of the Semester, a lot is still happening and the USU is excited for the months ahead!

1. Board Elections

The Board elections will be happening next month on the 15th of May. Good luck to all the candidates who are running: Elinor Stephenson, Zizheng Bai, Benny Shen, Nick Forbutt, Thomas Manousaridis, Di Wang, Ruolin Ma, Caitlin Brown and Christina Lee.



2. Easter's Debating

Congratulations to multiple USU teams who broke, though sadly only 3 were able to debate in the final rounds due to the institutional cap. Congratulations to USU3 for making the semi-finals! Big congratulations also to Emily Kim who was not only the best novice speaker but also the best overall speaker of the tournament. It was a great start to the year but there are many exciting events coming including USU Championships which is open to debaters who did not attend Easter's: <https://www.facebook.com/events/535093887018967/>.

3. International Opal Card Concession

We received a response from the Transport for NSW office which you can find at the end of this report. We found the response very disappointing and as an organisation the USU will continue to fight for the right of international students to receive a student concession price for public transport.

4. C&S Forum

Thanks to everyone who came to the C&S Forum. The event was open to all USU members and it was great to see so many C&S Executives come along and engage with our staff. There were a lot of engaging questions and clarification was made as to how the new funding model works. We reiterated the temporary nature of the change and that the USU will be revisiting the model in May. There will be a student panel so if you are interested in being a part of the revision of C&S funding please contact C&S!

5. Pride Festival

Pride Festival was a three day event to celebrate the amazing diversity and LGBTQI community on campus. The Festival hosted a series of events, panel discussions and special food offerings. Glitter Gala, which is the annual ball that celebrates the LGBTQI community, also occurred during Pride Festival this year.



6. Interfaith Dinner

The USU hosted the annual Interfaith Dinner in April which saw students and alumni from diverse religious communities come together for a dinner. It was a great night of mingling and yummy food. Thanks to Jacob, the Interfaith Council and C&S staff for organising and promoting the event.

Our Ref: 00780667

Ms Liliana Tai
President
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Dear Ms Tai

Thank you for your correspondence to the Minister for Transport and Roads about transport concessions for international students. I have been asked to respond to you.

I note your comments and appreciate the reasons that prompted you to write.

I am advised that international students are granted a visa to study in Australia only if they provide evidence that they would be financially self sufficient for the duration of their study here. On this basis it is understood that they can afford to pay their transport costs. The only exceptions are those students who have been awarded an Australian government-funded scholarship or exchange position.

There are no plans to amend Section 88 of the *Transport Administration Act (1988)* at this time.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely



20/04/2019

Terry McSweeney
Principal Manager, Ministerial & Government Services