

**University of Melbourne Student Union
Advocacy & Legal Student Advisory Group**

MINUTES

2:00 pm, 08.03.2017

Meeting 1 of Semester 1

**Advocacy & Legal Divisional Office,
Level 4 Union House**

Chair: Phoebe Churches, Manager, Advocacy & Legal
Minutes: Nadia Streistermanis, Student Services Officer, Advocacy & Legal

1 Welcome and Procedural Matters

1.1 Apologies

Paul Hornsby, Xu Zhang, Winston Dzau.

1.2 Attendance

Phoebe Churches, Isabelle Butler, Nadia Streistermanis, Donna Markwell, Alice Smith, Georgia Daily, Alanna Smith, Reeanna Maloney, Desiree Cai, Wei Lee Ong.

1.3 Confirmation of previous minutes

Unconfirmed – could not locate minutes from last meeting.

2 A & L Service Reports

2.1 Advocacy case work

Phoebe Churches, Manager, provided a summary:
Last year, and continued into this year, we've been dealing with an increase in misconduct cases. Towards the end of last year, we saw several problems with this process at a Faculty level (procedural irregularities), and this year there has been problems at the Academic Board level, and general misconduct processes. The Advocacy Service is working on a paper to highlight these problems and the need for staff training.

This quarter we have seen a rise in misconduct case relating to students submitting fraudulent medical documents (HPR and other documents). We have observed this to be a cyclic issue – we have noticed this trend about every four years. During the last cycle a working group was established to tackle this – in conjunction with the University we worked on various campaigns to educate students on the seriousness of forging medical documents. After this peak roughly four years ago, it has quietened down until now. We believe that since then, a new cycle of students has started, that would not have been exposed to our previous campaigns, and the issue has raised again. Some have done this intentionally, others we believe have been scammed on 'WeChat'. A number of students have reported being sold fake medical certificates. The Social Media Intern in our Comms. Dept. is doing research into WeChat to see if we can understand this better.

Scammers target Chinese students, and we are working with the Comms. Intern to try and locate the source and attempt to shut it down. In addition to this, UMSU's Farrago Magazine will be doing an investigative journalism piece on the scammers on WeChat.

We have seen an increase of issues with cases that don't fit the strict criteria of special consideration. The students we assist are very unwell, and we see a real need for the University to prioritise resources for this process. From our experience, we think it is fair to say that the University takes the position that students are trying to "game the system" by applying for special consideration. Within the last few weeks, in the more than a dozen students we have assisted, every Grievance was upheld. These students had reported that this process had consequently exacerbated their illness. Phoebe was going to discuss some of these issues at the next Advocacy Reference Meeting but this was cancelled.

2.2 Legal case work

Reeanna Maloney, Principal Lawyer, provided a summary:

The Legal Service has been quiet over the summer months, and since semester has started back there has been an increase in service demand. Tenancy remains the number one issue. This quarter we have seen a gender balance, and international students remain over represented (over half of our advice is to international students). Over the summer months the service has seen an increase in graduate students.

Our Financial Counsellor, Kai Zauner-De Ville, started with our service last week. Her days of work will be Tuesday and Wednesday. This is a yearlong project funded by the Student Services and Amenities Fee Grant. It will be a few weeks before she starts seeing students.

Reeanna attended the CLC Conference in Brisbane last week. She presented on our service and the types of things we're doing to engage students in the law – 'Our House' was well received and everyone was interested in how we're promoting tenancy law to students.

Within the next few months UMSU Legal Service will be moving to a paperless system.

UMSU Legal Service has established an agreement with La Trobe University where we have had for law students commence a placement with our service. The students will receive credit for their placement hours. The Service was unable to run the program with UoM students as this would present as a conflict.

Isabelle gave an update on the recent cases she has been assisting with.

2.3 Projects and initiatives

2.3.1 UMSU Advocacy Service –planning day report back

2.3.2 Legal Service Financial Counsellor Pilot

Papers - Student Union Advocacy Service Report: October – December 2017

(herewith)

- Legal Service Statistics (to be tabled)

3 Reports from Student Office Bearers

3.1 Items of interests related to Advocacy or Legal Services

Desiree and Alice mentioned noted their attendance at the Academic Integrity working group. Points discussed:

- Cadmus trial for one subject
- Flex App: there has been a lot of discussion about the Melbourne Model
- The ATAR for Arts has been dropped to attract more applicants
- Looking at making further changes to course structure
- Introducing another undergrad course in Health

In addition to this, Alice discussed issues with Stop 1 this time of year. During the first two weeks of semester there was a 45-minute wait time to see someone. Alice is in the process of creating a survey to send to students rating their experience with Stop 1.

4 Other Business

Graduate Research Network: The Legal Service had a meeting with Emily and Felicity regarding IP experiences.

5 Next Meeting

TBA

6 Close

3.09pm

Membership:

Executive Officer & Chair: Phoebe Churches, Manager, Advocacy & Legal

2 representatives elected by and from the Education Committee;

2 representatives elected by and from the Welfare Committee;

2 representatives elected by and from the UMSU International Committee;

2 representatives from GSA;

Education (Academic Affairs) Officer(s);

Indigenous Officer(s);

Welfare Officer(s);

President, UMSU;

Secretary, UMSU;

President, UMSU International;

Vice-President (Education and Welfare), UMSU International; and

Members of the Student Representative Network.