

University of Melbourne Student Union
Advocacy & Legal Student Advisory Group

MINUTES

2:00 pm, 15.11.2018

Meeting 2 of Semester 2

Advocacy & Legal Divisional Office
Level 4 Union House

Chair: Phoebe Churches, Manager, Advocacy & Legal

1 Welcome and Procedural Matters

1.1 Apologies

Ru Bee Chung & Elizabeth Chisanga Tembo.

1.2 Attendance

Phoebe Churches (Chair), Nadia Streistermanis (Minutes), Alan Yang, Donna Markwell, Isabelle Butler, Alanna Smith, Vanessa Stanton, Emily De Rango.

1.3 Confirmation of previous minutes

Donna Markwell confirmed.

2 A & L Service Reports

2.1 Advocacy case work

Phoebe (PC) discussed Advocacy Quarterly Report. Big response rate to Advocacy User Satisfaction Survey (68 responses). We met all our benchmarks, average score of above 3.5 which we achieved. Service users identified things they weren't happy about; changes in our service model reflect this. We need to tweak a few things. Previously we worked on an appointment basis in A&L, have moved away from this model. UMSU Legal has a phone service now, advocacy has a Drop-In Clinic and we are doing a lot of email advices across both services. We need to make sure we're not too impersonal though. We will discuss this at our final planning meeting at the end of the year. Overall, we are happy with the survey results.

PC talked about issues we have seen over the last quarter. Below satisfactory misconduct processes have continued to be an issue. PC has drafted a paper that discusses our concerns, waiting on CEO approval. Issues with special consideration continue, and we continue to see disappointing application outcomes from Faculty of Science. We are seeing more fraudulent documents this time of year. The cases we have seen now involve students amending/photoshopping HPR and medical certificates. This has decreased from this time last year though, and we have not seen any cases involving WeChat. No new issues other than what we have seen previously. Alanna (AS) and Donna (DM) agree with this.

DM commented on this, she has seen fewer students get terminated from MSD for fraudulent documents. There has been more suspensions rather than terminations. Training with the student reps who sit on these committees seem to have worked in helping to keep committees on point.

Emily (EDR) enquired about training for misconduct staff? PC said she intended to agitate this point in her paper. She is currently trying to persuade the Academic Secretary Office for staff who not only sit on committees to be trained, but also training through the whole academic line involved in this process. PC recently assisted a student with an allegation that derived from MU Sport, who conducted an investigation outside of authority. Work needs to be done to help the University better evaluate what triggers a formal investigation. The university acknowledged this in the proceedings.

2.2 Legal case work

Alan (AY) talked to the numbers for this quarter; similar to previous quarters. Since the last quarter, we have created a new category for "legal information referrals", if there is a conflict, or OP is a student, or the student required property or migration advice (something we cannot assist with). We have been using this category and it is working well. In terms of the demographic, 62% international students. Male/female is about half each. Tenancy still the biggest issue. Vanessa (VS) has started in financial counsellor role, she has been active in the two day a week role.

IB has had some tenancy wins, including a wide spread issue where providers of rooming houses have had invalid agreements with students (where there has been multiple agreements in the one rooming house). Chancellery working on IP document to inform housing rights, they have been in touch. Exempt from tenancy law some places in NSW, and IB is worried it will begin to happen here. EDR said the new housing place in development on Queensberry St might be the same, if owned by the University, exempt from tenancy law. EDR will keep us updated on that. Student volunteers have been working on our website to draft more legal information on various areas.

VS has met with Stop1 about referral processes, and has done the same at the VCA. She has taken materials over there and have had some good discussions. Casework – mainly MVA, with a bit of tax, super, talco. In a recent MVA case, the student had no insurance, so VS has been assisting them.

VS has also delivered anti-scam training with students. Been to various events on campus, explaining the role and what we can do.

VS has prepared training for clubs and society executives, this is ready to go now. Also prepared materials for them – spreadsheet and checklists, with input from Fiona and EDR. This will be distributed to all the clubs and societies. Training will be mandatory when it happens, ETA February, over a few sessions.

Nearly all the referrals are from UMSU Legal with one from Stop 1. Has also made connections with Welfare Dept.

2.3 Projects and initiatives

2.3.1 UMSU Advocacy Service

DM – video projects. Looking at update CUPC video based on new terminology that will be introduced. Also assessment disputes video. Might circulate script for assessment testing.

We have even had a few RHD assessment dispute come up recently. EDR says there has been pressure on faculties to grade thesis' faster, might be because of that. PC says we have seen these issues when third examiners are involved. For coursework assessment though we have seen increasing numbers, and students struggle to explain the logic of how the process works. We hope this vide will clarify this.

DM advocacy has drafted a referral document for the entire organisation which Nadia has put on the Wiki.

2.3.2 Legal Service

As above

Papers - Student Union Advocacy Service Report: July – September 2018 (herewith)
- Legal Service Statistics (to be tabled)

3 Reports from Student Office Bearers

3.1 Items of interests related to Advocacy or Legal Services

N/a

4 Other Business

N/a

5 Next Meeting

TBC

6 Close

2.56pm

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.