

**University of Melbourne Student Union**

**Minutes of the Education Committee**

**Meeting 9/08**

***CONFIRMED***

**10.00 am. 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

**Location: Office Bearer Space, Union House**

**Agenda**

**1. Procedural Matters**

- 1.1 Election of Chair
- 1.2 Acknowledgement of Indigenous Owners
- 1.3 Attendance
- 1.4 Apologies
- 1.5 Proxies
- 1.6 Membership
- 1.7 Adoption of Agenda

**2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

**3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

**4. Correspondence**

**5. Office Bearers' Reports**

- 5.1 Education Academic Affairs
- 5.2 Education Public Affairs

**6. Other Reports**

**7. Motions on Notice**

**8. Other Business**

- 8.1 Education Conference Grants

**9. Next Meeting**

**10. Close**

**Meeting declared open by Education Academic Officer, Onagh Bishop at 10.15 am**

**Agenda Item 1; Procedural Matters**

**1.1 Election of Chair**

**Motion 1:** There being no other nominations Onagh Bishop elected chair  
Moved: Onagh Bishop; Seconded: Robert Anderson-Hunt  
**CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT**

**1.2 Acknowledgement of Indigenous Owners**

**1.3 Attendance**

**Office Bearers:** Robert Anderson-Hunt, Onagh Bishop

**Committee Members:** Rebecca Barrigós, Lucy Maxwell, Nicole Lynch, Hannah Hayman

**Guest:** Ohad Kozminsky

**Minute taker:** Mairi Neil

**Absent:** Lawrence Frawley, Joel Silver

#### **1.4 Apologies:**

Scarlet Love

#### **1.5 Proxies:**

None

#### **1.6 Membership:**

Joel Silver may have dropped off but awaiting notification from UMSU Secretary Scott Bloodworth

#### **1.7 Adoption of Agenda**

**Motion 2:** Proposal that Item 8 be heard before Office Bearer reports and the amended agenda adopted

Moved: Chair

**CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT**

#### **Agenda Item 2: Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

Last minutes were Inquorate

Hannah reminded meeting that the minutes of meeting 7 had not been confirmed. Robert Anderson-Hunt apologised for these minutes not being available.

**Motion 3:** That confirmation of previous minutes be deferred until next meeting when minutes of meeting 7 will be available.

Moved: Chair

**CARRIED**

#### **Agenda Item 3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

None

#### **Agenda Item 4: Correspondence**

13 applications for grants to Education Conference received. Chair read out the names, they are all union members.

#### **Agenda Item 8: Other Business**

8.1 Education Conference Grants

Registration to conference is \$75.00 per person there are funds to cover all applicants.

#### **Speaking list**

All are known members of Education Collective. Funds will cover registration costs but can also be given towards travel and accommodation costs which will be expensive because conference in Queensland.

Rob calculated that from the money set aside for the conference all applicants could have their registration paid plus \$117 towards either travel or accommodation if the amount available was divided equally and no one had applied for other funding.

Onagh read from the grant form:

'The National Union of Students Education Conference. "Activate Now!" is being held at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane. The University of Melbourne Student Union, inc. Education Department, is taking applications for subsidies for registration and other incurred costs.

**Union Member?** (Please note that non-members will be ineligible for subsidies)

**Have you been to NUS Education Conference in previous years?**  
**Please provide brief details as to why you would like to attend NUS Education Conference:**  
**What amount are you applying for? \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Have you applied for a subsidy from any other department of UMSU? And if yes, which?**  
**Please provide details of what these funds will cover:**

**Motion 4:** That subsidy money available for the Education Conference 2008 be split equally amongst the applicants.

Moved: Onagh Bishop; seconded: Robert Anderson-Hunt

**CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT**

Hannah clarified that people can use it for either travel or accommodation

Onagh will arrange with UMSU Manager, Justin Baré that all registration fees will be paid by close of business Friday 6th June. She will check in case any of the applicants have paid registration already.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Office Bearer Reports**

##### 5.1 Education Academic Report

Onagh apologised for no written report – her computer is still giving problems.

- She has been and will be very busy organising Exam Support Stalls
- Coffee Cart has been vetoed by the Melbourne Museum Management despite operating hours being different to the café in the Museum complex
- The new Commercial Operations Manager Rob Paterson has been organising other delights to have on the stall and Onagh still has lots of leftover chuppa chupps from previous events!

Hannah suggested that the Food Coop has chocolate covered coffee beans and perhaps they could be available.

**Motion 5:** that up to \$50 be allocated to buy suitable food from the Food Coop for the exam support stalls.

Moved: Onagh Bishop; seconded: Rebecca Barrigós

**CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT**

Hannah wanted to know if everyone had read the Finance Report she tabled at Students' Council and did they have any questions

##### 5.2 Education Public Report

Robert Anderson-Hunt tabled and spoke to his report:

#### **Ed Public OB Report**

Hunkering down for exam time & getting ready for Education Conference.

Sick for much of last week.

Efforts directed at compiling and analysing UMSU Arts Experience Surveys- almost 200 gathered in one week.

Analysis so far is tabled.

### **UMSU Arts Experience Surveys Analysis**

The survey was completed and returned by 188, largely undergraduate, students.

The survey respondents consisted of:

- 87 students continuing pre-2008 Bachelor of Arts
- 32 New Generation students
- 23 students doing a combined Bachelor of Arts with another degree.
- 16 others including Bachelor of Creative Arts Students, non-Arts Melbourne Bachelors degree students and students undertaking other programs

The survey included 35 first-year students.

Few part-time students responded.

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### **New Generation student Experience:**

16 new generation students thought that their choice of major has been affected by courses/subjects being made unavailable.

23 new generation students have either had subjects which they planned to study recently been made unavailable or were concerned about subjects becoming unavailable.

Some new generation students raised concerns about IDF and Breadth studies being of low quality or limiting their opportunities to achieve a diverse degree within the Arts Faculty. One student described them as "all crap".

Some new generation students found a lack of support and information coming from the university about the structure of their degree and transition to University life.

### **Majors:**

Many students from all disciplines reported an inability to complete their majors at all, a lack of options in completing their majors, a lack of coherence in their majors, or being discouraged from attempting a major due to the subjects on offer or level of support available. One student "considered moving to Monash to complete German" there due to "lack of subjects on offer and lack of staff".

Respondents who had almost completed their degree expressed relief that they would do so before most subject cuts took place. One respondent felt bad for the people coming through the university in 2008 and beyond and that the university was "better" when they first enrolled five years ago.

### **Subject choice & availability:**

Overall, 138 students had been directly affected by subjects being made unavailable, either in their choice of major or by subjects they wished to take being made unavailable. A further 11 who had not been directly affected raised concerns about subjects being made unavailable. That makes 149 of 188 who either have been directly affected or are concerned that they will be affected by subject cuts.

Many of these students expressed disappointment and frustration at the situation. One respondent labelled the cancellation of a first-year subject on French Revolutions "fucking unforgivable". Another respondent had come from the United States on an exchange program to undertake an indigenous studies subject that is no longer offered. A significant proportion of respondents stated that they had concerns regarding the range of options offered in current and future Arts degrees.

Cuts to the history and philosophy departments have been highlighted as leaving those departments with a very narrow field of subject matter. One respondent is concerned about "Substantial cuts to marginal subjects, particularly in continental philosophy and non-Western histories... I'm tired of having the same Western dialogues being taught and re-taught."

### **Class sizes**

Respondents in later years of study tended to have smaller class sizes, both in tutorials and lectures. The same held true in subjects with different learning environments such as seminars or workshops.

Most respondents have not had difficulties with lecture sizes, though many noted that it can be impossible to find a seat in larger lectures.

105 respondents felt that their tutorial sizes were too large. Students in tutorials larger than 15, had a higher rate of dissatisfaction - almost all students in tutorials larger than 20 felt that their tutorials were too large. One respondent noted that their Spanish class had more than 30 people and that people would have to stand to attend the class.

The majority (136) of respondents had encountered difficulties stemming from the size of classes (tutorials, lectures or others). Most of these difficulties centred on the limitations that increased class sizes put on interaction and discussion. Linguistics students studying phonetics highlighted the difficulty of learning how to make sounds in a room full of people who are also trying to make the same sounds. Additionally, many respondents, particularly those in classes larger than 20, noted that it can be hard to find a seat in crowded tutorials.

Other issues focussed on the workload of tutors. In larger classes, many respondents pointed out that their tutors were overworked during class time in leading & facilitating discussion. Also, some students "feel guilty" about asking for help because they feel their tutors are overworked and underpaid.

### **Looking to expand this into a more complete analysis.**

By reports from the President, the Uni Council had been very productive- councillors grilled VC & Dean on effects of changes. Good chance of results, however looming cuts across the board remain on the horizon.

### **No Recommendations**

- Rob also said he had been locked out of his computer over the weekend.
- Thanked Mairi for work done setting up and typing information of UMSU Arts Experience Surveys.
- Asked Hannah to tell committee about Council meeting when survey results discussed

Hannah reported that at University Council:

- Extra security had been employed in case the building stormed
- Plenty of healthy discussion, lots of involvement from councillors and recognition that something is wrong with Arts Faculty.
- UMSU's motion discussed but VC's alternative carried, which includes that he recognise the importance of Arts Faculty and full funded programmes it delivers and that he must

- have a better report back system and effective communication strategy so that all staff and students know what is happening not just student and staff representatives.
- VC must report back to council in July and October

**Motion 6:** That Education Officers Reports be accepted en bloc.

Moved: Chair

**CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT**

### **Agenda Item 8: Other Business**

#### **Chair invited Ohad to speak.**

Ohad requested financial help for those arrested at G20.

Onagh said financial motions should be put in writing and listed under motions on notice.

Rebecca suggested meeting should hear proposal rather than deferring to motions on notice.

Ohad said there was urgency about the financial needs of G20 Solidarity Network and one woman in particular whose legal aid bill has increased from original quote to over \$4000.

The Network is supporting the 28 people arrested including 4 minors. The charges of rioting and affray have not been used in 30 years and yet G20 demonstrators were charged, also their occupation of buildings associated with the military would usually be a charge of trespass but instead they have been charged with aggravated burglary.

There have been lots of resources expended to pursue, catch, prosecute and punish the activists – strategic selected exercise undertaken to scare protesters especially environment and education activists.

12 of 28 pleaded not guilty and there cases have been put back until June 2009!  
Of the convictions of those who pleaded guilty no one went to gaol but all must pay back sizeable legal aid bills and fines and they have had community based orders as well.

Money given will show UMSU's solidarity with activists and recognize that the laws and the way they have been enforced is draconian.

#### **Speaking List**

Rebecca asked what amounts other departments have contributed.

Queer and Environment departments have donated \$500 for the appeal of the first person convicted because he received an unprecedented 28 month gaol term. (He has to pay lawyer and judge's fee just to request and appeal and then all costs for three judges to hear the appeal.)

Lucy would like a written statement of the objectives of G20 to see how this sits with UMSU's goals and the students UMSU represents. The day of protest not an issue but the way it was responded to. The issue is how activists and activism is treated. The use of anti-terror laws should be of concern and what the imperatives and directives of Education Committee are.

Onagh would like a written statement accompanying request for money because it is unclear whether money is for the woman with \$4000 plus legal bill or the appeal of an activist or those awaiting trial.

Ohad explained there were numerous costs including travel costs for those who have to come from interstate to attend court. The money would be spent on behalf of everyone but the case mentioned was the most urgent.

Rebecca supports the campaign of G20 Solidarity Network. It was the way police powers have been used with abandon that should concern all activists. Traditionally UMSU supports student voices and the right to protest without draconian police action. The cause should be supported in principle and it is important to challenge the cases now because the outcome in the Law courts will affect everyone.

Hannah thought \$500 was not enough – it was a scary campaign the police were operating. She supports the idea of giving money so the network can make money – E.g. Provide money to make t-shirts that they can then sell. UMSU could start an ongoing fund for this campaign to make money go as far as possible.

Rob should be given to the campaign with a clear statement as to why. Grant to be given to a person to help start of a campaign.

Nicole concerned that UMSU Regulations should be checked in case the fact the organization have already received \$1000 from other departments means they cannot receive anymore. It is a worthy cause but she thought the maximum anyone could receive as a grant from UMSU on any single cause was \$750.

**Chair moved to close speaking list.**

Hannah noted that UMSU has more money than Solidarity Network will ever have and yet their legal fees will be tens of thousands of dollars.

Chair asked speakers to be brief because Lucy had to leave

**Speaking List closed**

Rebecca said money was not going to individuals but to the Network. It was urgent we protect current and future activists. Regarding the expenditure of our resources this was a relevant pertinent cause. Despite Grant Regulations the Education Committee should be able to give money even if they have to wait for written report then give money.

Nicole agreed UMSU has money comparable to Network but legal fees a black hole. Money better spent lobbying to change law so legal fees are limited. Although using money for fundraising to generate more money a better idea.

Ohad said that the courtroom is a stage and this case was all about precedents being set. Money needs to go to current cases so they defend themselves and it is that stage where lobbying will happen to change law. Fundraising by t-shirts is limited - only so many people will buy t-shirts.

Hannah agreed fundraising may not be viable – putting more work on already exhausted and stressed activists. Committee should just give the money.

**Motion 7:** That Committee invite Ohad to return next meeting with a written motion detailing the importance of a grant to the G20 Solidarity Network.

Moved: Onagh Bishop; Seconded: Nicole Lynch

**CARRIED WITHOUT DISSENT**

**Agenda item 9: Next Meeting**

The motion from Ohad is urgent so next meeting needs to be soon but difficulty working around exams.

Agreed date Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at 2.30pm in OB Space

Email will be sent by Scott.

**Agenda Item 10:**

**Meeting closed at 11.06pm**