

University of Melbourne Student Union



Meeting of the Welfare Committee

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Meeting 5/15

10.00 AM, 04.05.2015

Location: OB Space, Union House

Meeting opened 10:15 AM

1. Procedural Matters

Motion 1: That James Bashford be elected chair.
Moved: James Bashford Seconded: Adam Wojcik
Carried Without Dissent

1.1. Election of Chair

1.2. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Owners

So acknowledged

1.3. Attendance

Office Bearers: James Bashford

Committee Members: Yan Zhuang, Adam Wojcik, David Coates, Lydia Wang

1.4. Apologies

Keefe Wong

1.5. Proxies

1.6. Membership

1.7. Adoption of Agenda

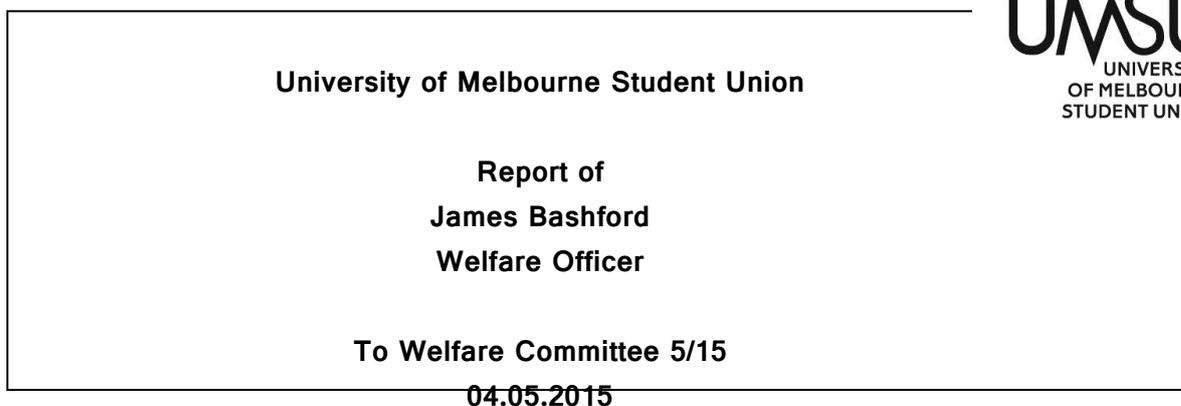
Motion 2: That the agenda be adopted as presented
Moved: James Bashford
Carried Without Dissent

2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Motion 3: That the minutes of meetings 2/15, 3/15 and 4/15 be ratified as true and accurate records
Moved: James Bashford

3. Correspondence

4. Office Bearer Report



Below is the report I have submitted for the UMSU AGM to be held tomorrow. It gives a comprehensive overview of the department's year so far and future plans.

Food Bank and other Support Services:

This I have brought a renewed focus to ensuring the Welfare Department offers practical services for students in need. This has involved the establishment of a well stocked food bank stored in my office. The service has been needed on a regular basis however awareness of the service is low amongst students and there is a need for more promotion.

The same is true of the Household Goods Service IO have established this year. Despite attracting significant interest in O-Week it has not been used significantly during semester. This is also a result of having to store the goods in my office making it somewhat difficult for students to access the service. Later this year I hope to secure a more public space in Union House to accommodate both the household goods service and food bank which will be a significant improvement to the services.

In addition to the above I have established emergency packs for students in urgent need. These packs contain staples such as long life milk and other food staples as well as hygiene products and have been made available at the UMSU Info Desk on the ground floor of Union House. These packs

have also been discussed with the University's Campus Community Team, who know to refer students in need to the service. The emergency packs are an incredibly important service to offer students and are something UMSU can be proud to be adding to its services for students this year.

Weekly Breakfast:

The Weekly Breakfast has been a very popular event this year, as always. By consistently holding the breakfast in a more visible location (South Court as opposed to North Court) and through better promotion over our own and other student social media like Unimelb Adventures (with many thanks to Daphane!), attendance has actually increased over the semester so far. This is a fantastic result given the typical drop off in attendance over the course of the semester.

The breakfasts are expensive events which take up a significant chunk of the Welfare budget. I've tried to minimise this by experimenting with different supermarkets and buying in bulk where possible. Nonetheless, the biggest cost is the hiring of BBQs, despite the fact this is done through AV@Melbourne which is a part of UMSU. This may ultimately lead to the department having to hire BBQs elsewhere which is a highly undesirable situation compared to hiring in house.

Fitness Classes:

This semester the Welfare Department has hosted free yoga classes on Tuesday afternoons and Friday mornings, taught by a self-employed instructor, as well as a Zumba class every Thursday afternoon taught by a Melbourne Uni Sport instructor. These classes are very popular amongst students and demand has been high, requiring a time consuming registration process. These classes will be continued next semester where the budget can afford them but I'll hopefully be able to secure larger venues to remove the need for sign ups.

Volunteer Collective:

The department's activities, in particular the weekly breakfast, have only been possible thanks to the many volunteers who have gotten involved in our collective. One volunteer has been getting up at 6am every Thursday to come in from Ballarat to help at breakfasts. I'm incredibly grateful for their support! To encourage volunteers, I've been providing them with vouchers

and will hopefully be able to offer training opportunities over the year. Volunteers have also been instrumental in providing me feedback and ideas for other activities to run and on improving the breakfasts.

Relationship with the University:

From the start of my term I've endeavoured to build a strong working relationship with the University. I've met with several staff members such as Sally Coates and Dan Persaud and have worked closely with Danielle Clayman from Wellness@Melbourne in particular. This led to us co-hosting a very successful BBQ early in the semester to promote Vichealth's No Excuse Needed campaign to promote responsible drinking. We had earlier planned to co-host Stress Less Week as well, but unfortunately the University was not ultimately able to partner with us for this event.

In working with the University, the repercussions of last year's Business Improvement Program (BIP) and subsequent 500 job losses have been clear. It has been disappointing that while the University administration has maintained that there would be no impact on the student experience there has been a clear impact on the services available for students. Obvious examples of this include the hours long waits for student cards in O-Week. Less obvious has been the difficulty in running welfare activities due to the reluctance of University staff who are overworked or focussed on trying to maintain services under significant strain.

Stress Less Week:

Stress Less Week is to be held from May 11th to 15th. This semester's week will be the largest held so far with a crowded timetable including events from various UMSU departments including UMSU Intl, events from the University's Campus Community team, Headspace, the GSA and several clubs and societies. Highlights of the week will include the first ever Stress Less Bean Bag Cinema showing the Lion King on Tuesday May 12 and the Stress Less Carnival on Thursday 14th with a petting zoo and significant involvement from clubs. While organising the event has taken many hours and a lot of work, it looks set to pay off and be a fantastic week for the students and UMSU,

New Student Precinct:

The University's move to create a new student precinct will have important implications for the welfare of students. The relocation of the health and counselling services is incredibly important to get right to ensure these services are accessible but still maintain anonymity. This relocation also offers opportunities for colocation with other services and a pharmacy. If the new location or building for the Union offers more space, there is also a great opportunity to establish a Survival Centre or Welfare Lounge which can house the department's food bank and household goods service.

The current uncertainty of the situation, however, poses several issues for the Union. The current food court and indoor eating space in Union House, for example, are incredibly valued by students. It is also vital that student spaces such as the Wom*ns Room, Queer Space, North Court, theatres and Food Co-op are maintained.

This issue has been discussed with the welfare collective, whose feedback has been passed on to the President.

Future Plans:

Going into the rest of this year, I have several priorities to build on the Welfare Department's work so far this semester. These include:

- Establishing an English Language Program, potentially as a student directorship, to assist students for whom English is a Second Language
- Finding a more accessible space for the food bank and household goods service
- Improved promotion of welfare services such as the food bank and household goods service
- Providing tea and coffee at libraries during the exam period
- Publishing a guide to welfare services on the UMSU website
- Campaigning for better concession card rights for international and postgraduate students and against any regressive plans to cut welfare services by the Abbott government

Motion 4: That the committee accepts the office bearer report.

Moved: James Bashford

Carried Without Dissent

5. Motions on Notice

